



Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center



The Electoral Framework of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Prospects for the 2007 Elections

Tuesday, 5 December 2006
Crown Plaza Hotel, Amman
Agenda

09:00 **Registration and Coffee**

09:30 – 10:00 Opening Remarks

Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center (UJRC)
Hani Hourani, Director

Democracy Reporting International (DRI)
Michael Meyer-Resende, Director

10:00 – 11:15

Session I: The Legal Framework for the 2007 Elections

Chairperson: Hani Hourani (UJRC)

Speaker: Richard Chambers (DRI)

The legal framework for elections in Jordan is a highly contentious issue ahead of future parliamentary elections: to what extent do these laws conform to international standards and best practice related to democratic elections, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)? Issues to be discussed include the impact of the existing electoral system (the so called 'One Man/One Vote' or 'Single Non-Transferable Vote') and options for its reform. The discussion will also address the protection of fundamental rights for genuine elections; the potential impact of the draft laws on political parties and municipal elections which are currently before parliament; the mechanism for electoral challenges; the system of quotas and reserved seats for minorities and women.

Floor open for discussion

11:15 -11:45 **Coffee Break**

- Supported by a grant from the German Foreign Ministry -

11:45 – 13:00

Session II: The Political Climate for the 2007 Elections

Chairperson: H.E. Shaher Bak, Commissioner of the National Centre for Human Rights

Speakers: Hussein Abu Rumman (UJRC)
Michaela Küfner (DRI)

The United Nations Human Rights Committee states that where citizens take part in public affairs through freely chosen representatives "it is implicit in article 25 that those representatives do in fact exercise governmental power". While many argue that Jordan's parliament's role is limited only to approving an appointed cabinet, any ten members of parliament can initiate parliamentary debate or propose draft legislation. Nevertheless, parliament-sponsored legislation remains the exception and the apparent consensus across the political party spectrum calling for reform of the election law fails to translate into parliamentary initiative. This raises the question why public debates fail to translate into parliamentary action? How do the parameters of the parliamentary electoral process and/or its set-up need to be adjusted to facilitate greater political initiative and accountability within the lower house? What role can civil society play?

Floor open for discussion

13:00 – 14:15 **Lunch Break**

14:15 – 16:00

Session III: Procedural Framework: Lessons Learned on the Election Administration, Campaigning, Observation and Media Coverage

Chairperson: Dr. Ibtesam Attiyat, United Nations University, Amman

- Election Administration and Complaint Procedures, Richard Chambers (DRI)
- Campaign and the Media, Michaela Küfner (DRI)
- Women's Participation, Hussein Abu Rumman (UJRC)
- Election Observation, Michael Meyer-Resende (DRI)

What are the lessons learned from the 2003 parliamentary elections and what steps can be taken to improve key issues related to the procedural framework for elections in 2007, in particular, to strengthen transparency and openness? What are the prospects for promoting public engagement in the election through active campaigning, the development of political platforms and coverage of the election by the media? The elections will be administered by the Ministry of Interior, but can there be greater opportunities for oversight by independent bodies, including the judiciary and domestic or international observers? How can the participation of women in the electoral process be increased?

Floor open for discussion

16:00 – 17:00

Concluding Discussion: Debate on the upcoming Steps