

# Country Assessment



RESOURCE  
& SUPPORT  
**HUB**



## Executive Summary

Jordan Hub

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The Country Assessment provides an analysis of the safeguarding landscape in Jordan with the aim of informing the design and operationalisation of the Jordan Hub, part of the UK Aid-funded Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub programme.

The assessment provides detail on the national context as well as the key stakeholders, initiatives and resources that already exist to address safeguarding and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) in Jordan. It further identifies the strengths, gaps, and needs, and provides recommendations on the immediate priorities and opportunities for the operationalisation of the Jordan Hub.

## Methodology

The information for this assessment was collected using a mixed-methods approach between July and November 2021. First, a desk review was conducted to identify existing policies and legislative frameworks relating to the protection of women and other marginalised groups, which support or undermine safeguarding.

Additionally, a survey was conducted with 33 International and National Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs/NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), located in governorates throughout Jordan. The survey ascertained the different organisations' knowledge of safeguarding, their existing safeguarding and protection measures, and the support needed to implement these measures better. Finally, 5 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with NGOs, and semi-governmental institutions to understand the safeguarding capacity of national and local actors and the challenges that different entities face when it comes to safeguarding.

## Context in Jordan

Jordan has ratified international conventions and has several key laws, policies, and strategies in place for safeguarding. It has signed both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In addition, the Jordanian Penal Code criminalises online sexual exploitation and abuse of children under 18 and prostitution, adultery, and rape, although rape within marriage is considered

permissible. Jordan has also ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Child's Rights to protect against the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Although the Jordanian Labour Law criminalises sexual harassment, the definition of harassment is vague and only addresses physical assault, not verbal.

There have been some more recent achievements that support safeguarding in Jordan. This includes the abolishment of Article 308 of the Penal Code, which formerly allowed a perpetrator of sexual crimes to evade punishment if he married his victim, and the launch of the Network to Combat Violence Against Women (Shama'a Network) which provides training and awareness campaigns on Violence against Women.

Despite existing laws and regulations in Jordan which offer some protection, gender inequality, discrimination, and Gender-based Violence (GBV) persist in Jordan. The country's social norms, attitudes, customs, and practices negatively impact women and girls who are often seen as inferior to men both legally and culturally. Certain legal stipulations within the country's legal framework, such as the Personal Status Law, play a role in reinforcing behaviours and perceptions that disparage women.

It is essential that NGOs and INGOs in the sector are aware of national laws and cultural norms. The vague definitions provided within them and the existing loopholes create risks for vulnerable individuals and must be properly understood in order to ensure their safeguarding policies and practices are applicable in the local context.

## Key stakeholders

The main safeguarding stakeholders are wide-ranging, from NGOs to semi-governmental organisations to international organisations.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network (PSEA Network) was established in 2015 under the guidance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As of 2016, the PSEA Network had more than 50 focal points from more than 30 organisations. However, most of the Non-Governmental Organisations contacted during the interview process were unaware of this network. Other coalitions/networks aiming to address SEAH are the Jordanian Women's Union, Jordan National NGOs Forum, Jordanian Women's Network to Defend Women's Rights and Participation in Jordan, Shama'a ("candle").

Official bodies that play a role in investigating reported instances of SEAH and referring cases for additional support are the Public Security Directorate and Family Protection Department.

## Key findings

Most of the organisations interviewed during the KIIs focused on having a written internal policy relevant to protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment (PSEAH) rather than safeguarding. This includes complaints mechanisms. The interviews revealed that the

Human Resources department also held responsibility for following up on complaints and implementing training for employees on relevant policies. Still, there are several obstacles that limit the utilisation of mechanisms. These obstacles include limited resources and support for safeguarding from within the organisation as well as a lack of funding from donors for GBV/SEAH response services such as psychological, social, and legal services.

Most Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) see referral pathways that they use as effective but not comprehensive or entirely secure. They would like to have access to an integrated national programme for referral pathways and case management, which is comprehensive for all parties and relevant authorities, whether they be governmental or non-governmental. This would allow these organisations and institutions to work together in an integrated manner while still maintaining the survivor's privacy.

The assessment found other challenges organisations in Jordan are facing when trying to implement safeguarding:

- **The application of 'international standards' for safeguarding.** This is especially challenging given there are no legal provisions mandating organisations adhere to safeguarding-related legislation
- **Culture and social norms.** This includes a patriarchal view within society and institutions in Jordan
- **Limited resources available for safeguarding.** This includes legal challenges to obtaining foreign funding and weak funding from donors for this type of protection
- **Limited safeguarding expertise in country.** Difficulty in forming qualified teams capable of enduring these challenges and the lack of qualified and specialised experts in the field of protection due to the high cost of retaining such individuals
- **Challenge in reporting concerns.** Legal government data related to protection is confusing and/or inaccurate and legislative procedures are carried out by the Family Protection Department. It can also be difficult to prove complaints related to psychological, verbal violence as the physical evidence is required
- **Challenge in responding to concerns.** Lack of trained professionals or NGOs who can provide psychosocial support to the victims and lack training on GBV referral systems. It is also possible that protection workers are threatened or assaulted by the families of the victims

## Recommendations

The Country Assessment includes the following recommendations:

- The Jordan Hub should support NGOs to strengthen their safeguarding capacity by ensuring that safeguarding policies and approaches are based on the local context

- The Jordan Hub should facilitate the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders to create integrated reporting systems and referral pathways
- The Jordan Hub should support key stakeholders in the humanitarian and development sectors in developing policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. This includes NGOs, semi-governmental organisations, and networks
- The Jordan Hub should work to support awareness-raising and contextualisation of global safeguarding standards for the local context and engage local and international organisations in dialogue around partnership in safeguarding

The Jordan Hub can strengthen capacity on safeguarding in the following ways:

- Use blended approaches where applicable by combining in-person and online trainings
- Leverage the high internet usage to maximise the use of the MENA Hub website and its features, such as the resource library
- Create dialogue platforms to address the root causes of SEAH in Jordan among NGOs and INGOs and National NGOs in the humanitarian and development sectors
- Offer long term engagement to NGOs to have a long-lasting impact
- Localise and contextualise the MENA Hub website and resources to the local context
- Facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges to work with and support partners in strengthening SEAH policies

For the full Country Assessment report, contact the Jordan National Associate or email [\*\*info@safeguardingsupporthub.org\*\*](mailto:info@safeguardingsupporthub.org)