

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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JORDAN: MARKING A YEAR OF OPPRESSION, FRESH CALLS TO SCRAP CYBERCRIME LAW

This week marks one year since Jordan's new draconian Cybercrime Law entered into force. This law has proven to be a tool for state repression, stifling dissent and curtailing the human rights of individuals online, including the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy. The law has produced an environment of self-censorship and fear, shutting down one of the few remaining avenues for people in Jordan to engage in public debate and criticise public policies and authorities.

We, the undersigned local and international human rights organisations, urge the new Jordanian Parliament to repeal or substantially amend the new [Cybercrime Law](#) and ensure that any legislation tackling cybercrime fully complies with international human rights law and standards on freedom of expression, privacy and due process. We also call on the Jordanian authorities to drop all charges and release journalists, human rights defenders and individuals who have been arrested and prosecuted solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

The Cybercrime Law was hastily adopted by Jordan's Parliament on 27 July 2023, without sufficient consultation with civil society, journalists, or political parties. It came into force on 12 September 2023 despite widespread [condemnation](#) from human rights groups. The new law introduced amendments to Jordan's 2015 Cybercrimes Law. In particular, it expanded the scope of criminal offences with new provisions criminalising "spreading fake news," "inciting immorality," "online assassination of personality," "provoking strife," "threatening societal peace," and "contempt for religions." These broad and vaguely-defined provisions do not comply with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which requires that any restrictions on freedom of expression comply with the principles of legality, legitimacy, necessity and proportionality. Instead, these provisions grant the authorities extensive powers to punish individuals for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Human rights organisations have documented how, over the past year, the authorities have weaponized the new Cybercrime Law to target journalists, human rights defenders, and individuals expressing dissent or criticism of the authorities. According to [Amnesty International](#), the Jordanian authorities charged hundreds of individuals under the Cybercrime Law between August 2023 and August 2024, including journalists for social media posts expressing pro-Palestinian solidarity, criticising the authorities' policies toward Gaza, or calling for peaceful protests. For instance:

In February 2024, lawyer and human rights defender Moutaz Awad was [detained](#) over posts on X (formerly Twitter) in which he criticised Arab countries' trade deals with Israel. In July 2024, he was charged with "provoking sedition or strife" under article 17 of the Cybercrimes Law and fined 5,000 Jordanian Dinars (around 7,000 USD).

On March 2024, a journalist was [interrogated](#) by the General Security Department and then the Cybercrime Unit regarding his online activity and reporting on pro-Palestinian demonstrations. The journalist was later acquitted by the court.

In June 2024, journalist Hiba Abu Taha was [sentenced](#) to one year in prison by a criminal court in Amman under the Cybercrime Law for criticising "Jordan's role in defending the enemy entity" in an article published in April 2024. The article discussed Iranian rockets intercepted over Jordanian airspace targeting Israeli locations. The court convicted Abu Taha of "spreading fake news, or insulting or defaming a governmental authority or official body", as well as "provoking strife or sedition or threatening societal peace or inciting hatred or violence".

In July 2024, journalist Ahmad Hassan Al-Zoubi was [arrested](#) based on an appeals court ruling from August 2023 in which he was convicted of "inciting strife" over a Facebook post criticising the authorities' response to fuel price protests in late 2022.

One year on, it is clear that Jordan's Cybercrime Law continues to undermine human rights.

We call on the Jordanian authorities to cease their use of the Cybercrime Law to target and punish dissenting voices and stop the crackdown on freedom of expression. We also urge the new Parliament to repeal or substantially amend the Cybercrime Law and any other laws that violate the right to freedom of expression and bring them in line with international human rights law.

Signatories:

- Ahel (Jordan)
- Access Now
- American Center for Justice (ACJ)
- Amnesty International
- ARTICLE 19
- Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists (Jordan)
- Electronic Frontier Foundation
- European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESOHR)
- Front Line Defenders
- Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
- Justice Center for Legal Aid (JCLA–Jordan)
- SMEX
- Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights (Jordan)