AMMAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES

NEWS LETTER

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In special consultative status with UN ECOSOC

Honorary of UN Human Rights Prize 2023

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مركز عمان لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

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ABOUT THE CENTER

FUNDAMENTALS AND PRIORITIES

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) is an independent non-governmental Think Tank center advocating for the enhancement of democracy and human rights in Jordan and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The Center's seven priorities are:



THE RIGHT TO LIFE
THE RIGHT TO SPEAK
THE RIGHT TO THINK
THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE
WOMEN'S RIGHTS
THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL PROTECTION
YOUTH RIGHTS

The Center works to achieve its goals by lobbying; spreading awareness via conferences and symposiums; writing official statements, declarations, reports, articles, and booklets; and establishing and maintaining relations with international organisations and embassies.

Furthermore, ACHRS has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Disseminating human rights and spreading knowledge about international human rights and humanitarian law in Jordan and the Arab region;
- Contributing to a more democratic society and enhancing the rule of law in a way that respects human rights;
- Providing a free platform for dialogue for coordinating efforts undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organisations that are active in human rights;
- Aiding governmental and non-governmental organisations in monitoring, documenting, and following up on human rights, as a step towards enforcing these rights on all legislative and executive levels;
- Participating in the revision of local laws and regulations in order to support and uphold human rights;
- Dedicating attention to those segments of society in need of special protection.

INTERNSHIPS AT THE CENTER

The ACHRS looks to welcome several new interns from the summer months and onwards in 2026. The Center provides a dynamic and engaging internship for research minded individuals. Recruitment is ongoing and we look forward to reading all applications. More information can be found on the image below:



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

The ACHRS organized and participated in various conferences, seminars, and public events aligning with its core human rights priorities. Our team actively engaged with UN and government representatives, as well as international civil society, to ensure that regional perspectives, particularly from Jordan and the Arab world, were represented in global forums. Several events were also conducted in collaboration with ambassadors, human rights experts, and policy-makers, reinforcing the AHCRS' commitment to fostering accountability and inclusive participation in shaping human rights policies.

MEETING: ACHRS AND THE AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MARCH 2026

On Monday 30 March 2026, Dr. Nizam Assaf and Mr. Tshepo Tlhacoane met with the South African Ambassador to Jordan, Her Excellency, Ms. Tselane Mokuena and Political Counsellor, Advocate David Zweli Nkosi at the South African embassy in Amman, Jordan.



For over 20 years, ACHRS has enjoyed an excellent professional relationship with colleagues from the South African embassy, and this meeting sought to discuss the continuation of this relationship.

ACHRS would like to publicly repeat our gratitude to the Government of South Africa for their support of the Palestinian people at the International Court of Justice and all other forums. Post-Apartheid South Africa has repeatedly shown its commitment to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the various human rights conventions. We are honoured to be aligned with people with such strong human rights credentials.

MEETING: PROTECTION WORKING GROUP (1)

APRIL 2026

Ayla Qawas and Tshepo Tlhacoane, on 1 April 2026, represented the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) at the Protection Working Group at the Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Amman, Jordan.

The Protection Working Group is chaired by UNHCR and the National Council for Family Matters (NCFA) and aims to:

1. Ensure that people are at the center of all actions, and that no one is left behind
2. Champion the inclusion of refugees in national systems
3. Forge stronger strategic partnerships and deepen collaboration with developmental actors to bridge humanitarian and developmental efforts, and
4. Invest in local and national capacities to deliver sustainable protection solutions.

On the agenda for this meeting was a presentation by NCFA, with an update on the National Multi-Sectoral Prevention and Response Plan (NAP) 2026-2030 on child protection and domestic violence against women and girls. This was followed by a presentation by UNHCR on the findings of their Socio-Economic Survey on Refugees in Jordan, which is set to be released later this month. Finally, the meeting contained a discussion on the Working Group's priorities and modalities.



ACHRS joined these Working Groups after meeting with the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit of UNHCR, and is also participating in the Working Groups on Education, Economic Empowerment, and the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Sub-Working Group, as they align with our priorities. We will continue to work with all relevant actors to progress our individual and collective goals.

At a time where funding cuts to the human rights ecosystem have limited people and organizations' capacity to do their work, ACHRS appreciates such forums which allow relevant actors to pool human and other resources together in order to assist the highest number of beneficiaries.



MEETING: EDUCATION SECTOR WORKING GROUP (1)

APRIL 2026

Representatives of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies attended a meeting of the Education Sector Working Group at the United Nations Children's Fund office in Amman, Jordan. The Working Group, chaired by UNICEF, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Queen Rania Foundation, works to improve coordination between organizations supporting equitable access to education for children, adolescents, and youth in Jordan.

The group's objectives include supporting educational access and inclusion, strengthening the education system in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, generating and sharing research and data, advocating for equitable education policies, and facilitating knowledge-sharing among members.

The meeting mainly focused on the election of new co-chairs, with interested organizations presenting their qualifications before a vote by members. The session also included a presentation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on findings from its Socio-Economic Survey on Refugees in Jordan (VAF survey), particularly regarding education. The presentation examined school enrolment rates, barriers preventing access to education, and challenges faced by students in schools.
ACHRS thanked members of the Working Group for their efforts to ensure equal access to education and emphasized that education is essential for the realization of broader human rights and freedoms. The organization reaffirmed its commitment to working with relevant stakeholders to advance quality education across Jordan and the Arab Region.



DR. ASSAF PARTICIPATES IN STUDY VISIT TO CHINA

APRIL 2026



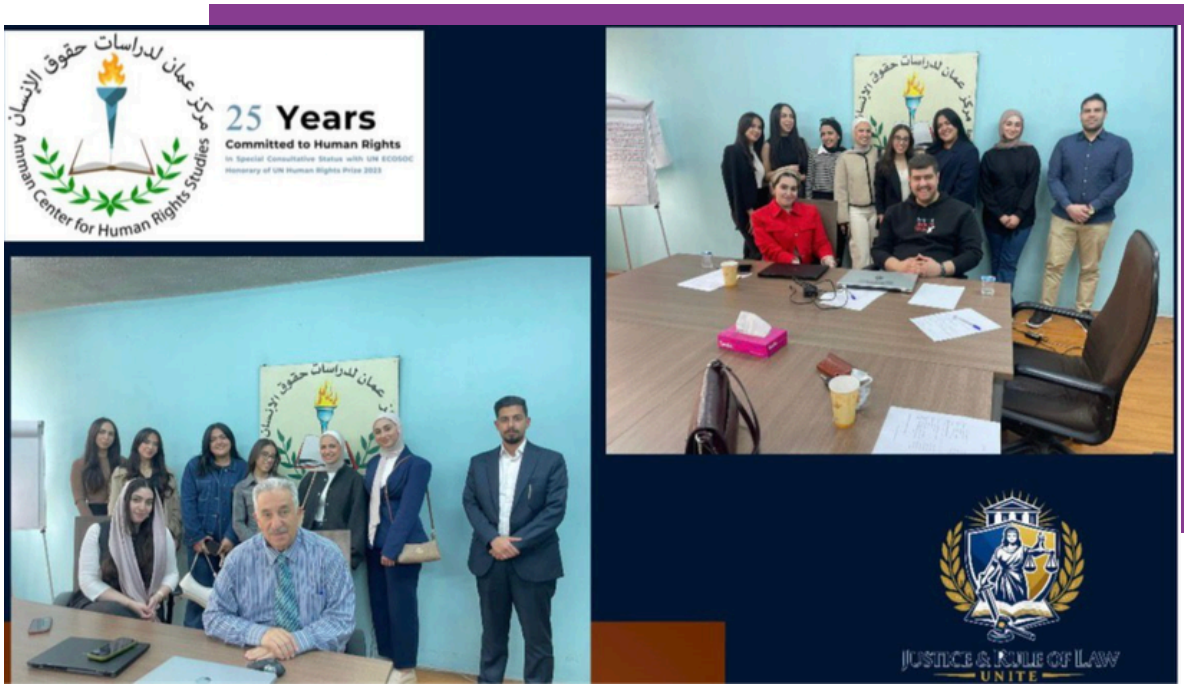
Dr. Nizam Assaf, member of the Advisory Board of the Global Civilization Initiative research Center, participated in a study visit to the People's Republic of China. The visit, organized by the Global Civilization Initiative research Center, was at the invitation of the International Department of the Communist Party of China and took place from April 6-14, 2026.

The delegation was headed by Dr. Kawa Mahmoud, President of the Global Civilization Initiative research Center, and included a select group of experts from Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as several staff members from the Center. The Center is the first knowledge institution in the Middle East specializing in the study of the "World Civilization Initiative." It was founded by Dr. Kawa Mahmoud.

The visit included the cities of Beijing and Shanghai, during which visits were made to the History Museum of the Communist Party of China, the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Beijing Economic and Technological Development Zone, the Robotics Exhibition, the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the China Institute of International Studies, the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the School of Foreign Languages at Peking University, China Arabic Channel(CGTN), the Beijing Secondary Planning Center, the Great Wall of China, Fudan University in Shanghai, the China-Arab Studies Center for Reform and Development at Shanghai International Studies University, the Oriental Pearl Tower.

SPECIALIZED TRAINING COURSE IN CYBERSECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS – JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW UNIT

APRIL 2026



ACHRS through its Justice and Rule of Law Unit, organized a two-day training course titled “Cybersecurity and Human Rights” on 18–19 April 2026. The programme, delivered by trainee lawyer Yasmin Shammout, aimed to raise awareness about the relationship between cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and human rights.

In his opening remarks, Nizam Assaf stressed the importance of approaching cybersecurity and AI issues from a human rights perspective because of their growing impact on societies. Attorney Obada Alwardat introduced the Unit’s objectives, which include promoting access to justice, judicial independence, accountability, anti-corruption efforts, youth empowerment, human rights protection, and policy research. The training featured active participation from attendees, who engaged with discussions on linking human rights principles to digital security and AI-related challenges. ACHRS stated that the programme reflected increasing awareness among young people and human rights advocates of the need to address technological developments through a rights-based approach in order to create safer, fairer, and more inclusive digital spaces.

Overall, the training was presented as part of ACHRS’s broader efforts to build knowledge and skills that help individuals and institutions respond to emerging technological challenges while upholding fundamental human rights and universal values.

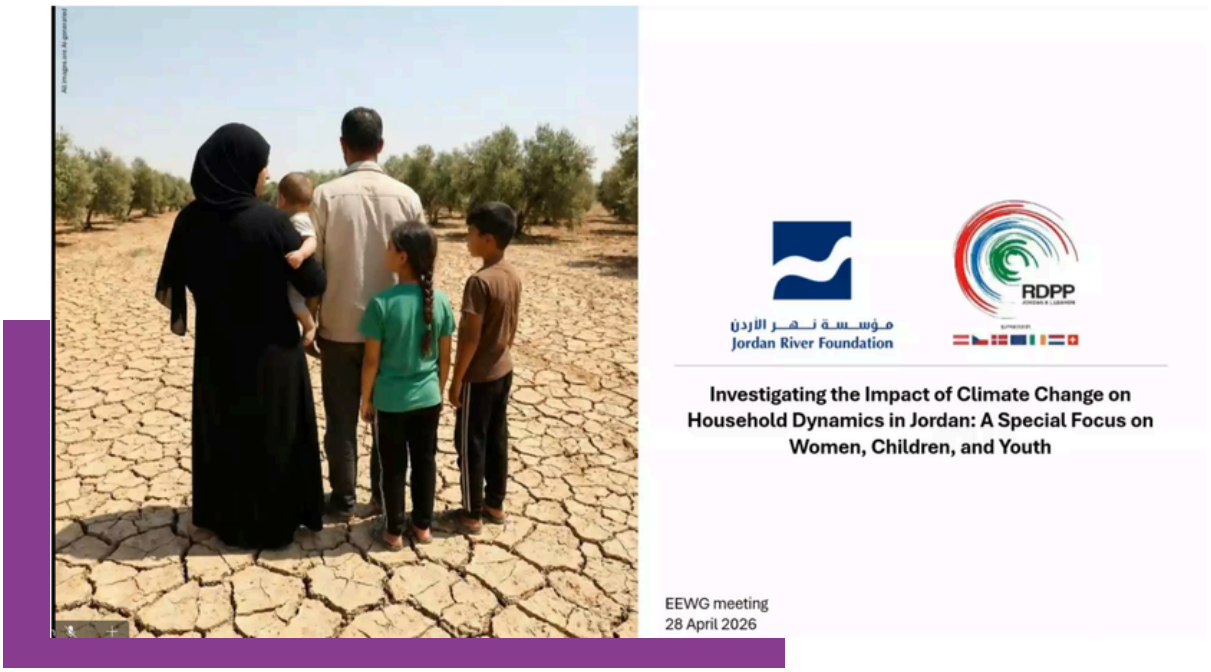
MEETING: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT WORKING GROUP

APRIL 2026

On 28 April, members of the Economic Empowerment Working Group met at the offices of the Jordan River Foundation in Amman. The Working Group, established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Inter-Agency Task Force and chaired by the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization, and the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, aims to strengthen sustainable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in Jordan through cooperation between humanitarian and development organisations.

The meeting included operational updates and presentations from the Danish Refugee Council on labour market analysis, and from the Jordan River Foundation on the impact of climate change on households in Jordan, particularly women, children, and youth. The session concluded with presentations from organisations seeking election as co-chairs of the Working Group.

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies stated that it continues participating in these working groups because it believes socio-economic rights should be protected for everyone, including refugees and asylum seekers. ACHRS reaffirmed its commitment to promoting human rights, social wellbeing, peace, and security for all people regardless of legal status.



MEETING: PROTECTION WORKING GROUP (2)

MAY 2026

The Protection Working Group held its monthly meeting on 6 May at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees offices in Amman, with members attending both in person and online. Chaired by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the National Council for Family Affairs, the group focuses on protecting refugees' rights, promoting inclusion in national systems, strengthening partnerships, and supporting sustainable protection solutions.

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies was represented by Tshepo Tlhacoane. Discussions included UNHCR operational updates, gender dynamics in refugee responses, disability support services for refugees, and developments in civil documentation for refugees in Jordan.

ACHRS reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the rights of refugees and vulnerable groups across the Arab region, emphasizing that refugees have diverse needs and require different forms of protection and support.



MEETING: EDUCATION SECTOR WORKING GROUP (2)

MAY 2026

Members of the Education Sector Working Group met on 11 May at the Norwegian Refugee Council offices in Amman, with participation both online and in person. The Working Group, chaired by United Nations Children's Fund, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Queen Rania Foundation, focuses on improving access to education for children and young people in Jordan through coordination, research, advocacy, and capacity-building.

Tshepo Tlhacoane attended on behalf of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies. Discussions included updates from the co-chairs, an introduction from new member Darsel, survey findings from education partners, and concerns surrounding school fees for unregistered refugees. ACHRS expressed concern that vulnerable refugee children could be excluded from education because of financial barriers. The organisation stressed that access to education is closely linked to the enjoyment of wider civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and reaffirmed its commitment to working with stakeholders to help protect this right.

EMPOWERING YOUTH: KNOWLEDGE TO NAVIGATE THE DIGITAL WORLD SAFELY

MAY 2026

As part of the 9h Youth Leadership cohort, a specialized session on digital privacy and digital sovereignty in the age of mass surveillance was held on Saturday, May 16th, and delivered by Mohamad Abuazzoum, the Coordinator of the Digital Youth Rights Unit at ACHRS. This session aimed to highlight the importance of protecting personal data, understanding surveillance capitalism, and strengthening critical digital awareness skills.



The session covered key topics, including digital privacy as a fundamental human right, data tracking and surveillance systems, social media and behavioral targeting, and practical tools for cybersecurity and digital protection.

At ACHRS, we believe that empowering youth leaders starts with strengthening digital rights awareness and responsible technological use.

A LECTURE TITLED "KNOWLEDGE AND THINKING"

MAY 2026

On Saturday, May 23rd, the sixth training day for participants in the ninth cohort of the Youth Leadership Program concluded. The lecture, delivered by Professor Dr. Tawfiq Shomer, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Jordan, addressed the concepts of knowledge and thinking, the acquisition of knowledge, and its various forms, including description, inheritance, interaction, and instinct, with a focus on the human mind and its capabilities. Dr. Shomer's interactive lecture also explored the concept of perception and its relationship to imagined reality, clarifying the difference between individual and collective knowledge, and the key elements of the relationship between the individual, the self, and the object.



EMPOWERING YOUTH: BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

MAY 2026



The Digital Youth Rights Unit at the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies successfully concluded its interactive workshop titled “The Digital Divide: Who Is Excluded from the Digital World?” The workshop was presented by the unit’s coordinator and researcher, colleague Mohammad Abu Azzoum.

The session, held on Saturday, May 23, discussed the development of digital rights, examining how internet access has shifted from a modern luxury to an essential lifeline and a key enabler for exercising fundamental rights such as education, healthcare, and work.

The training highlighted the geographic, economic, and gender dimensions of the digital divide, as well as emerging challenges such as algorithmic exclusion, artificial intelligence bias, and the phenomenon of shadow banning.

Through practical activities, participants and young people brainstormed and drafted a comprehensive charter for digital rights, focusing on equitable access, affordability, and strong protection from digital surveillance.

In conclusion, the center expressed its appreciation to all participants, reaffirming its firm belief that empowering young leaders is the driving force for steering technology toward justice, human dignity, and digital inclusion.

STATEMENTS

The ACHRS published 10 statements between April and May 2026, raising awareness on human rights issues across the MENA region. Through these statements, ACHRS condemned various human rights violations and stood up for women and vulnerable populations.

WORLD AUTISM DAY

APRIL 2026

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) joins the international community and human rights defenders in reaffirming our collective commitment to building inclusive societies where every individual can thrive. World Autism Awareness Day highlights the ongoing global need to recognize the rights, dignity, and potential of autistic people, while addressing barriers that prevent full participation in education, employment, healthcare, and public life.

Autistic people face many obstacles in the Arab world, including the lack of available specialist services and social exclusion. Social stigma and misconceptions often compound these challenges, preventing full participation in society. These obstacles are not only social and economic issues but also fundamental human rights concerns, reflecting a failure to uphold principles of equality and non-discrimination.

This year's focus on valuing every life highlights that society benefits when autistic people are fully included. Embracing neurodiversity strengthens communities, enhances innovation, and enriches cultural and social life. Ensuring accessibility, understanding, and support is central to fostering societies that uphold the rights of all.



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN POLITICAL LIFE

APRIL *2026*



The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a thematic report to the 61st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council examining the equal participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life. The report builds on previous OHCHR work addressing the rights of persons with disabilities and was submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 53/14.

This issue remains critical in enhancing inclusive governance and aligns with overarching issues around equality, participation, and non-discrimination, especially in ensuring that no one is left behind in political and democratic processes.

Key Takeaways:

Political participation: The report has reinforced political participation as a rights issue.
Gaps in implementation: The report has shown that there remains a gap between rights being recognized and rights being implemented.
Participation: The report has shown that there cannot be participation if one does not actively engage in all spheres of life.
Intersection of barriers: Structural and attitudinal factors continue to reinforce exclusion.
The report added some insights to the debate in the Human Rights Council. It has reinforced that equal political participation for persons with disabilities remains one of the critical issues that has yet to be realized.

STATEMENTS

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, AND IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

APRIL 2026

The Human Rights Council discussed a report on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, during its 61st session in Geneva. The report, prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, documented settlement expansion and related human rights violations between November 2024 and October 2025.

According to the report, Israel intensified settlement expansion, land appropriation, demolitions, and administrative measures aimed at consolidating control over the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli officials openly supported policies intended to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, while new legislation and planning approvals accelerated annexation efforts.



The report highlighted major increases in settlement activity, including approval of thousands of new housing units, legalization of settlement outposts, and confiscation of Palestinian land. It also documented widespread demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures, particularly in East Jerusalem, often linked to restrictive permit systems.

Settler violence against Palestinians also increased significantly, with over 1,700 recorded incidents involving deaths, injuries, or property damage. The report stated that accountability remained extremely limited, with very few investigations leading to indictments. Thousands of Palestinians, including many children, were displaced due to settlement activity and violence.

The report further noted continued settlement expansion in the Jordan Valley and the occupied Syrian Golan, despite international law and United Nations resolutions prohibiting such actions.

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies expressed hope that continued international attention would contribute to accountability, reparations for victims, and an end to occupations in the Arab region.

STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REFLECTION ON THE 1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI IN RWANDA

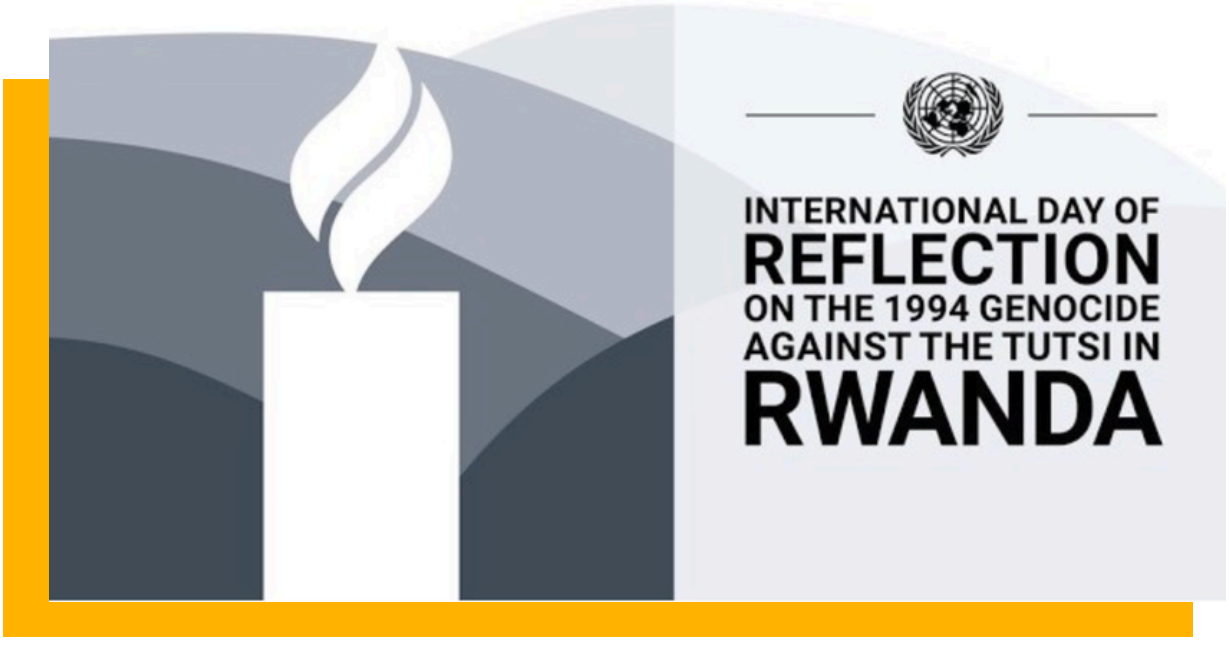
APRIL 2026

The ACHRS marked on the 7th of April the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda by honouring the victims and survivors of the genocide, during which over one million people, mainly Tutsi, were killed in 100 days.
The statement praises the resilience of survivors while also criticizing the international community for failing to prevent later atrocities. ACHRS argues that despite the promise of "never again" after Rwanda, the world has failed to stop what it describes as prima facie genocides in Palestine and Sudan.

The statement emphasizes that:

- Genocide is the gravest crime under international law
- States have legal obligations under the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish genocide
- The international community has repeatedly failed to act effectively
- Political polarization and "selective morality" weaken global responses to atrocities

ACHRS references remarks by António Guterres acknowledging the international community's failure during the Rwandan genocide and argues that similar failures continue today.
The overall message is that truly honouring victims of genocide requires active prevention of genocide everywhere, not just remembrance ceremonies.



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY 2026

MAY 2026



The ACHRS marked International Workers' Day 2026 by reflecting on the historical struggles of workers and highlighting the major challenges still facing labour markets globally and in the Arab Region. The statement recognises the achievements of labour movements in securing protections such as the eight-hour workday, maternity leave, and child labour laws, while arguing that many workers continue to face poverty, unemployment, and poor working conditions.

ACHRS notes that unemployment remains especially severe in the Arab Region, where the rate is almost double the global average, with youth unemployment particularly high in countries such as Jordan, Libya, and Tunisia. The statement also emphasises that employment does not always protect people from poverty, pointing out that millions of workers worldwide still earn extremely low wages and are subjected to unsafe labour conditions. It criticises governments and businesses that rely on low wages and weak labour protections to attract investment.

The organisation further highlights the exclusion of women and young people from the labour market. It argues that care responsibilities disproportionately prevent women from working, especially in the Arab Region, and stresses that youth unemployment continues to pose serious social and economic risks.

The statement also discusses emerging challenges, particularly the impact of artificial intelligence and climate change. ACHRS warns that AI could increase inequality and lead to mass layoffs by replacing both routine and high-skilled jobs. Climate change is also described as a growing threat to sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and industry, with evidence already showing job losses and economic disruption in countries like Jordan.

In response, ACHRS calls on governments in the Arab Region to strengthen labour protections, establish minimum wages where necessary, create more opportunities for women and young people, and invest in climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable forms of employment. Overall, the statement argues that protecting workers' rights and ensuring decent living conditions remain essential goals in the face of both traditional economic problems and new global challenges.

LAUNCH OF THE SITUATION OF MARRIAGE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 IN JORDAN

MAY 2026

Representatives from the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, including Ayla Qawas, Basema Abu Shammaleh, and Tshepo Tlhacoane, attended the launch of The Situation of Marriage Under the Age of 18 in Jordan, organised by the National Council for Family Affairs in partnership with United Nations Population Fund.

The study examined child marriage in Jordan and the legislative, social, cultural, and economic factors contributing to it. Key findings showed that child marriage rates fell from 11.8% in 2020 to 8% in 2024, although social, family, and economic pressures continue to drive the practice. The report also highlighted education, especially completing secondary school, as one of the most effective ways to reduce child marriage.

During the event, Mohammad Miqdadi praised progress made in reducing child marriage while warning that continued efforts are necessary. Himyar Abdulmoghni described the decline as a national achievement and stressed the importance of supporting vulnerable groups with viable alternatives.

The event also included a panel discussion featuring representatives from the Department of the Chief Justice, the Ministry of Education, and the Institute for Family Health.
ACHRS welcomed the study and reaffirmed its opposition to child marriage, arguing that marriage should only occur when individuals are physically, emotionally, socially, and legally mature. The organisation also called for continued implementation of Jordan's National Plan to Reduce Marriage Under the Age of Eighteen.



REPORTS & UN CONTRIBUTIONS

THE 2026 ISRAELI DEATH PENALTY LAW: DISCRIMINATION, DUE PROCESS, AND LEGAL CONCERNS

30 MARCH 2026

On 30 March 2026, the Israeli parliament, the Knesset passed a bill reintroducing the death penalty in practice, with a majority of 62 members, granting the “State of Israel” the authority to execute Palestinian detainees for alleged acts of terrorism.

The law came following a long series of Inhumane acts committed by “Israel”: The genocide in Gaza, the daily unlawful arrests in the west bank, and many more.

The law mandates death by hanging as the default punishment for Palestinians, while judges can opt for life imprisonment under vaguely defined “special circumstances,” the death penalty would otherwise be mandatory and be carried out by prison guards within 90 days of sentencing.

As of March 2026, about 9,500 Palestinians are being held in inhumane conditions in Israeli prisons, roughly half of them under administrative detention or as “unlawful combatants,” without trial and with no ability to defend themselves.



IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND SAFEGUARDS FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT HUMANITARIAN REFORM PROCESSES

MAY 2026

The ACHRS submitted recommendations to the United Nations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the 2026 report on inclusive humanitarian assistance.

ACHRS stressed that humanitarian responses must be grounded in human rights principles such as equality, non-discrimination, accessibility, participation, and accountability. The submission highlighted that vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, refugees, internally displaced persons, and marginalized communities, are disproportionately affected during crises.

The report identified major challenges in humanitarian responses, including poor collection of disaggregated data, inaccessible services and infrastructure, limited participation of affected communities, gender-based protection risks, weak accountability systems, and insufficient funding for inclusive programming.

ACHRS also highlighted positive practices such as community-based approaches, inclusion of organizations representing persons with disabilities, accessibility-focused technologies, and stronger localization of humanitarian action.

The organisation recommended stronger implementation of international human rights obligations, improved accessibility, greater participation of marginalized groups, gender-responsive protections, better accountability mechanisms, increased funding for inclusion, and fuller adoption of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.



WHATS NEXT FOR ACHRS?

Research Areas in Focus

- **ACHRS will continue its focus on research in digital human rights**
- **Bring attention to developments and news in UN mechanisms and bodies**
- **Monitor the situation in the Middle East caused by the American-“Israeli” War on Iran, and the “Israeli” war on Lebanon**
- **Documenting developments in human rights practices and changes occuring in the Arab Region**
- **Contributing to the growing space of youth rights and advocating for its continued development.**

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