

**United Nations Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
17th Session – Review of JORDAN**

Geneva, 24 October 2013

Statement by AUSTRIA

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Mr. President,

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the UPR and thanks them for their national report and presentation.

At the beginning, let me commend Jordan for its herculean efforts in receiving and hosting refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and express our full awareness of the major challenges this influx of refugees poses to your country and the pressure it places on Jordan's resources and infrastructure.

We also commend Jordan for the positive steps towards the implementation of the recommendations accepted during the first review. However, despite the progress made, there remain challenges that have to be effectively addressed.

Austria is concerned about new legislation, in particular the amendments of the Press and Publications Law in September 2012, that threatens the right to freedom of expression and extends executive control over online media outlets despite Jordan having made a commitment to promote a free and open press during its last review.

We are also concerned that - despite amendments to Article 8 of the Constitution in 2011 to explicitly ban torture and other ill-treatment as well as the use of torture tainted evidence during trials – reports of the use of torture and ill-treatment in Jordan's police stations and prisons still emerge.

Austria would therefore like to make the following recommendations:

- to promote and uphold freedom of the media and the right to freedom of expression and to ensure that legislation and state practice are brought in line with Article 19 ICCPR; to that end
- to re-evaluate the recent amendments to the Press and Publications Law, the Law of Information System Crimes and the Penal Code which threaten the right to freedom of expression, in particular online.
- to conduct impartial investigations into all cases of attacks, harassment and intimidation of journalists and bring perpetrators to justice;
- to officially and publicly condemn all acts of torture and ill-treatment and to ensure transparent, effective and impartial investigations into any alleged cases as well as to ratify the OP-CAT