**8 November 2018**

**31st Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Jordan**

**Statement by AUSTRIA**

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

Let me commend Jordan for its tremendous hospitality and efforts in 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 of 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 second review. However, remaining challenges have to be effectively addressed.

Austria is especially concerned about the 2018 amendments to the already restrictive Cybercrime Law, which expand the definition of hate speech and toughen the sanctions for cybercrime. Lack of an objective process to determine instances of “hate speech” and criminal sanctions for defamation are inconsistent with Article 19 of the ICCPR and thwart Jordan’s previous commitments to promote a free and open press.

We are also very concerned that the Penal Code still does not meet the requirements set by the Convention against Torture, to which Jordan is party. Reports of cases of torture and ill-treatment in police stations and prisons and the persistent use of torture-tainted evidence in trials are alarming.

Austria would like to offer the following recommendations:

* Re-evaluate the recent amendments to the Press and Publications Law, the Cybercrime Law and the Penal Code to ensure that legislation and practice are in conformity with international human rights law and standards, in particular the right to freedom of expression under Art 19 ICCPR;
* As previously recommended, ratify the OP-CAT as well as officially and publicly condemn all acts of torture and ill-treatment committed by the public authorities; classify torture as a criminal offence, assign jurisdiction over all cases to regular courts and provide protection and compensation to victims;
* Reinstate a moratorium as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty;
* Implement the 2017 recommendations by the CEDAW Committee, in particular by amending provisions in the Personal Status Law concerning guardianship and preventing the practice of early and/or child marriage in all groups of society.