

URGENT ACTION

POLITICAL ACTIVIST FACING TRIAL BEFORE MILITARY COURT FOR FACEBOOK POST

On December 21, 2023, the Jordanian authorities arrested Ayman Sanduka, political activist and mathematics professor, in relation to a Facebook post addressed to the King in October 2023 where he criticized Jordan's diplomatic relations with Israel. On February 12, 2024, a prosecutor at the State Security Court, an exceptional military court, charged Ayman Sanduka with "incitement to oppose the political regime", under article 149 of the Penal Code. Ayman Sanduka's next hearing before the SSC is scheduled for March 26. The Jordanian authorities must drop all charges and immediately and unconditionally release Ayman Sanduka as he is being prosecuted solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 26.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein

Royal Hashemite Court
Amman, Jordan
Twitter: [@KingAbdullahII](#)

Embassy of Jordan in the United States

Her Excellency Ambassador Dina Kawar
3504 International Drive,
NW, Washington DC 20008
Email: hkjconsular@jordanembassyus.org

Your Majesty,

I am writing to express my grave concern about **Ayman Sanduka**, a political activist and mathematics professor, who is being prosecuted before the State Security Court (SSC) for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Ayman Sanduka was initially summoned by the public prosecutor on December 18, 2023, in relation to Facebook posts expressing pro-Palestinian sentiments. On January 24, 2024, a criminal court sentenced Ayman Sanduka to three months in prison on charges of "defaming an official body", under the new Cybercrime Law.

Security forces also subjected him to verbal humiliation, and, during his transfer, tightly tied his hands and feet. On February 12, 2024, the State Security Court prosecutor added an additional charge against Ayman Sanduka of "incitement to oppose the political regime", under article 149 of the Penal Code. Ayman Sanduka's next hearing before the SSC is scheduled for March 26. The SSC is a military court which fails to meet international standards of impartiality and independence and is often used to prosecute civilians and silence dissent in violation of international law.

I urge you to ensure that the Kingdom of Jordan does not violate international human rights law and that Ayman Sanduka is immediately and unconditionally released and that all charges against him are dropped as they stem from his legitimate expression online.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since October 2023, Jordanian authorities have intensified their crackdown on pro-Palestinian activists using vague and overly broad criminal provisions, including the Crime Prevention Law, the 1960 Penal Code, and the newly amended Cybercrime Law. At least 1,000 people – protesters and bystanders – were arrested during protests in support of Gaza in Amman within a one-month period between October and November 2023. As of February 2024, more than 2,000 people have been arrested in connection with the pro-Palestine protests.

The recent crackdown is part of a demonstrable pattern of Jordan's crackdown on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression through the use of repressive laws. In a visit to Jordan in September 2023, Amnesty International documented the authorities' prosecution of nine activists, journalists, and others for criticizing the authorities' conduct and policies, organizing discussions on issues deemed "sensitive" by the authorities, and calling for anti-government protests. In 2023, the authorities, including security forces and civilian and military courts, investigated, or prosecuted at least 43 individuals for online expression using abusive and vague laws such as the Cybercrimes Law of 2015, Anti-Terrorism Law, and Penal Code.

Jordanian authorities use the State Security Court (SSC), a special military court, as a tool to crack down on freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Jordan's Counterterrorism Law of 2006 was amended in 2014 to broaden the definition of terrorism to include acts such as "disturbing relations with a foreign state", a charge that was already criminalized in the Penal Code, as well as "disturbing the public order". These amendments enabled the judiciary to criminalize peaceful human rights activism as acts of terrorism tried before the SSC instead of as misdemeanors tried by other criminal courts, resulting in lengthy prison terms. In addition, the Penal Code criminalizes any act that "undermines the political regime or incites opposition to it". These provisions have been frequently used by the SSC and security agencies to arrest and charge activists for speech-related offences.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Arabic, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: July 12, 2024

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ayman Sanduka (He/him)