2024 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections Monitoring Report

Executive Summary

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Al-Hayat Center - RASED

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Executive Summary of the 2024 Parliamentary Elections Monitoring Process

RASED Coalition conducted the monitoring of the 2024 parliamentary elections using specially designed methodologies inspired by international best practices in election observation. The monitoring process was carried out through 250 field monitoring teams, with each team consisting of 4-3 observers, distributed over two observation periods: long-term and short-term.

RASED monitored all stages of the electoral process, including the preparation of preliminary and final voter lists, candidate registration, the election campaign period, election day proceedings, result aggregation and announcement, and the appeals phase regarding the validity of the results.

Based on the findings of the monitoring process, this executive summary presents the key results, which are as follows:

First:

The 2024 Jordanian parliamentary elections demonstrate the Jordanian state›s commitment to implementing the Royal vision for modernizing the political system while maintaining the democratic path despite complex regional challenges, particularly the escalation in the Gaza Strip. Holding parliamentary elections at this time reflects a clear political will aimed at protecting constitutional institutions and ensuring the continuity of the democratic process, thereby strengthening confidence in Jordan›s political system.

Second:

The Independent Election Commission successfully managed the electoral process efficiently and impartially, adhering to effective transparency standards at all stages of the elections—from the issuance of the Royal Decree and the preparation of voter lists to election day and the announcement of results. These procedures reflected the Commission›s commitment to the highest standards of integrity, in line with international best practices, which enhanced confidence in the electoral process and confirmed its ability to organize transparent and satisfactory elections for all stakeholders.

Third:

The elections were conducted under the government of Bisher Al-Khasawneh, which played a significant role in providing a well-organized and comprehensive electoral environment by maintaining a neutral stance toward all electoral parties. This neutrality was evident in the logistical and administrative support provided to the Independent Election Commission to ensure the highest levels of integrity and transparency throughout the electoral process.

At the same time, security institutions, led by the Public Security Directorate, played a pivotal role in ensuring that the electoral process was conducted in a secure and stable environment. The professionalism and efficiency of security performance contributed to enhancing citizens› sense of safety and confidence in the electoral process.

This integration between the government and security institutions

reflects the Jordanian state›s commitment to preserving the integrity of the electoral process and ensuring a democratic environment based on transparency and neutrality. However, the RASED report emphasizes the importance of maintaining this approach in all future electoral processes to further strengthen public confidence in national institutions.

Fourth:

A total of 1,638,351 voters participated in the elections out of 5,080,858 eligible voters, resulting in a %32.25 turnout rate. While the absolute number of voters was higher compared to the 2020 and 2016 elections, the overall participation rate remained low. This is particularly concerning given the high expectations surrounding recent political reforms, which were anticipated to significantly increase voter turnout. Major cities such as Amman and Zarqa recorded the lowest participation rates, reflecting deep-rooted challenges related to citizens› trust in state institutions and their belief in the effectiveness of electoral participation. The low turnout also highlights that two-thirds of Jordanians did not participate in the elections, and even among those who did, a notable percentage cast blank ballots, indicating weak affiliation with the party options available or a general lack of conviction in the electoral choices.

This voting behavior underscores persistent challenges linked to weak trust in political institutions, as well as the impact of social and economic factors, and issues related to identity and political integration.

Addressing this reality requires a comprehensive national dialogue to examine the underlying reasons for low political engagement. Additionally, in-depth qualitative and quantitative studies on voter behavior are needed to develop solutions that enhance citizens' trust in state institutions and ensure broader and more effective political participation in the future.

Fifth:

The 2024 elections served as the first practical test for the outcomes of the Royal Committee for Political System Modernization, which was established following a nationwide dialogue. This approach contributed to voter satisfaction, leading to a high level of public acceptance of the legislative and procedural reforms. The announcement of election results was met with widespread public approval, reflecting public confidence in the electoral process and the Independent Election Commission (IEC).

Additionally, the results indicated relative public acceptance of political parties, with 109 party-affiliated MPs elected out of 138, marking a positive development in the role of political parties. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding the lack of transparency in candidate selection mechanisms within party lists and the ranking of candidates, necessitating improvements in party regulations and greater internal transparency in political parties.

Sixth:

A key challenge observed in the electoral process was the coexistence

of party-based and non-party lists, alongside candidates who either declared or denied their party affiliations. This situation led to political fragmentation, with some believing that partisan work should not be linked to local constituencies. As a result, some newly established parties received a large number of votes at the local level but very few votes at the national level.

This reality revealed that emerging parties lack sufficient awareness of how to effectively manage party lists, organize local election campaigns, and connect them to national lists. This posed a significant challenge for most participating parties, emphasizing the need for a review of the electoral system to strengthen party identity at the local level. This, in turn, would encourage parties to increase their efforts and develop electoral programs that align more comprehensively with the aspirations of Jordanians.

Seventh:

The elections saw the continuation of vote-buying practices and financial corruption within party structures. Electoral bribery was primarily observed in vote-buying, while party corruption was seen in the payment of money to secure candidate rankings on some national lists. These practices directly impacted the integrity of the electoral process and the freedom to run for office, while also weakening public trust in political parties.

Although the Independent Election Commission referred some cases to the judiciary, and verdicts were issued against offenders, the

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measures taken were insufficient to deter violations. This necessitates strengthening and improving electoral laws and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard the integrity of elections.

Although the number of reported violations on election day was lower than in previous elections, combating electoral bribery requires a collective effort involving all official institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities. Public awareness and community engagement remain crucial in the fight against this phenomenon.

Eighth:

The elections revealed the absence of effective oversight tools to regulate campaign spending, with some candidates and lists engaging in excessive spending, undermining the principle of electoral fairness. This highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive review of election-related laws to enhance enforcement and implement stricter monitoring mechanisms.

Additionally, despite the widespread use of social media in election campaigns, the lack of regulation led to disorderly and unstructured campaign periods, negatively affecting campaign fairness. Another issue was the non-compliance of many candidates with regulations governing campaign posters and banners, particularly those placed on traffic signs, streets, and roundabouts. The Independent Election Commission removed many illegal posters, underscoring the need for more flexible and equitable regulations that account for both digital and traditional campaign methods.

Ninth:

Election monitoring revealed that tribal consensus mechanisms continue to influence the electoral process in Jordan, limiting fairness and political competition, particularly affecting women and youth candidacies. These mechanisms often favor older male candidates with financial or social influence, while excluding women and young individuals.

Although recent electoral law reforms, such as expanding electoral districts and introducing a two-vote system per voter, have partially reduced the influence of tribal mechanisms, they still pose a significant challenge in many regions. Additionally, women remain excluded from the internal tribal nomination process, commonly referred to as "internal elections", preventing them from selecting their representatives and limiting their ability to participate in elections.

Tenth:

Women made significant progress in these elections, with 27 female MPs elected, while youth secured 6 seats, reflecting increased participation. The electoral law contributed to this progress by raising the number of women's quota seats in local districts to 18 and lowering the candidacy age to 25 years, making it a mandatory requirement for party lists.

However, youth and women continue to face financial and social barriers that hinder their full participation. Many female candidates experienced online harassment and cyberbullying, leading some to withdraw from the 2024 parliamentary race. Additionally, the lack of

funding sources for women's election campaigns was a major obstacle, preventing them from conducting campaigns on par with male candidates.

Despite legal requirements mandating that at least 20% of a political party's founding members must be women, weak networking between parties and female members, along with its limitation to specific groups, restricted women's ability to run on party lists.

Regarding persons with disabilities, significant accessibility challenges were observed at polling stations, with many lacking adequate accommodations for their needs.

Eleventh:

Blank ballots accounted for 15% of total votes on national lists, highlighting major knowledge gaps among voters regarding the new electoral system. Several factors contributed to this issue, including a lack of voter awareness about the importance of the national vote, voter reluctance to support any party, and limited political awareness among certain segments of the population due to insufficient political education campaigns.

This situation exposed shortcomings in pre-election awareness efforts, which were neither comprehensive nor impactful. Despite efforts by the Independent Election Commission and political parties, campaigns failed to reach all target groups and were not launched early enough to address these gaps effectively.
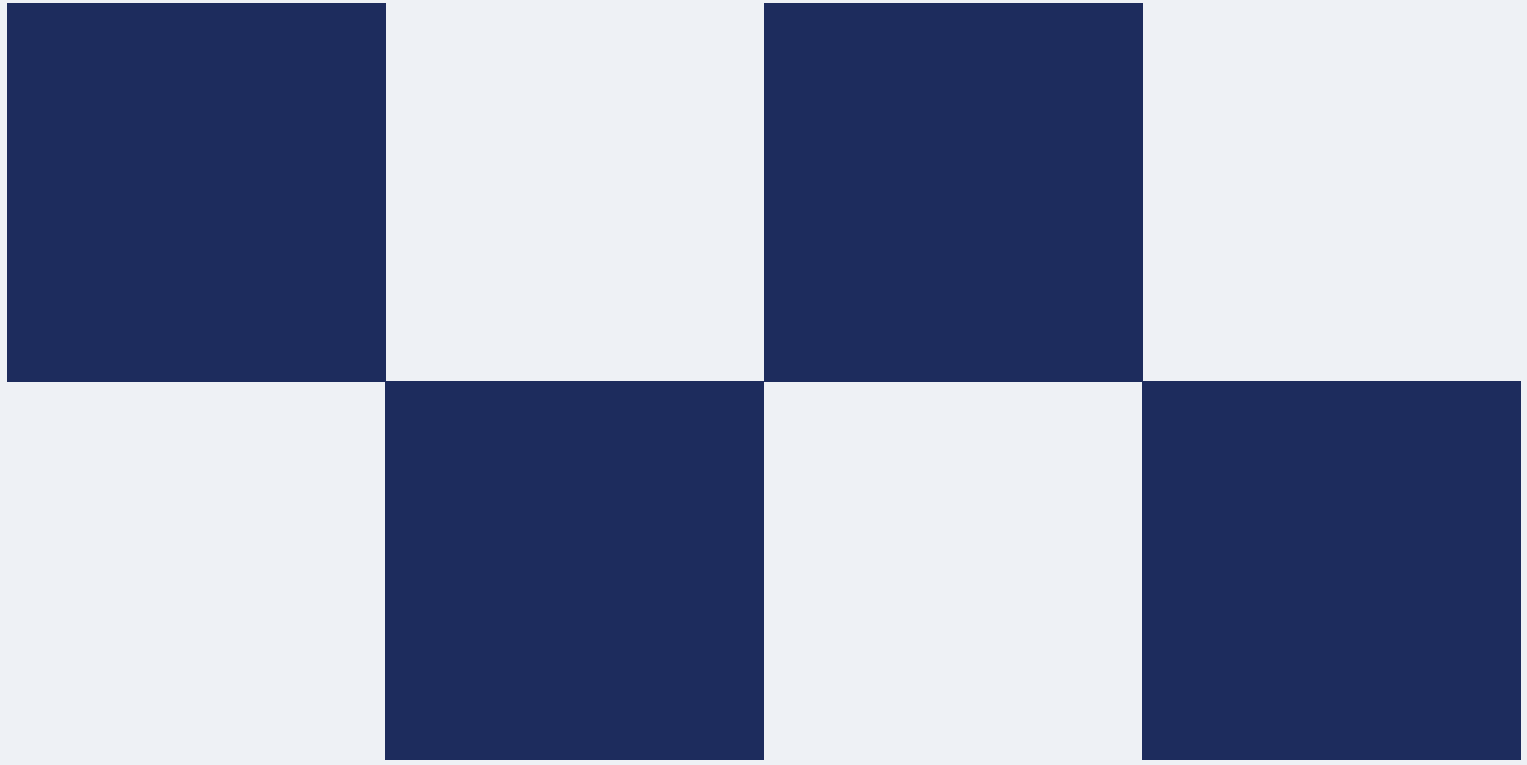
Political awareness is a shared responsibility involving the IEC, political

parties, civil society organizations, and the media. Moving forward, election awareness efforts must be revised to include early, well-planned campaigns that target all social groups, particularly underrepresented and low-turnout areas.

Political parties must also analyze these gaps carefully, revise their programs and outreach strategies, and nominate representatives capable of engaging with and convincing voters. Addressing these challenges is essential to enhancing political participation and ensuring the successful implementation of the new electoral system.

Conclusion

The 2024 parliamentary elections marked notable progress in transparency and integrity, yet they also highlighted several challenges that require serious and immediate action to strengthen the democratic process. The RASED report calls for enhanced electoral monitoring tools, empowerment of diverse social groups, and expanded political awareness efforts to ensure a fairer and more inclusive electoral environment.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the 2024 parliamentary election monitoring process in Jordan, these recommendations aim to support political reform efforts and enhance integrity, transparency, and fairness in elections. The recommendations take into account the governing laws, namely the Election Law and the Political Parties Law, while proposing legal amendments, enforcement mechanisms, and practical programs to increase participation and ensure equal opportunities for all.

- **Legislative and Procedural Recommendations**

1. Enhancing Electoral Integrity

RASED recommends strengthening the implementation of Articles 26 and 27 of the 2022 Election Law through a set of concrete measures. First, executive regulations should be issued to establish clear mechanisms for monitoring compliance with the legal cap on election spending, ensuring that expenses remain within legally permitted limits.

Additionally, a transparent online platform should be established to publish periodic reports on campaign expenditures, increasing public confidence in the electoral process. Local monitoring teams should also be formed at the electoral district level to systematically and accurately oversee the financial activities of electoral lists.

The role of official oversight bodies such as the Audit Bureau, the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, and other relevant institutions should be clarified and strengthened under the Election Law to ensure coordinated and effective supervision. During the candidate registration process, electoral lists and candidates should be

required to submit a preliminary budget outlining their financial plans for campaign expenditures.

Moreover, political parties should be mandated to disclose their funding sources, integrating this requirement into the candidate registration process. Legal provisions should also be amended to allow for continuous monitoring of electoral spending throughout the campaign period, rather than restricting oversight to a post-election review. These measures will enhance transparency and integrity, creating a fair and competitive electoral environment for all participants.

2. Combating Electoral and Party Bribery

To tackle electoral and party bribery, RASED recommends establishing a special investigative unit within the Independent Election Commission (IEC) dedicated to detecting and addressing electoral bribery. This unit should operate under specific standards ensuring impartiality and professionalism, with capacity-building programs provided for its members to effectively carry out their duties. Its primary role would be to monitor violations and uphold electoral integrity.

Additionally, large-scale media campaigns should be launched to educate citizens on the legal consequences of electoral bribery and its negative impact on election transparency. These campaigns will raise public awareness about the importance of fair voting and encourage citizens to report bribery-related activities, fostering a more transparent and equitable electoral environment.

3. Regulating Media and Electoral Campaigns

To ensure fair and ethical use of media in election campaigns, RASED recommends enforcing Article 20 of the Executive Regulations by updating rules governing election-related advertisements on social media. These updates should include transparent standards for paid advertisements, ensuring equal opportunities for all candidates and boosting public confidence in the election process.

A specialized unit should be established within the IEC to monitor election advertisements on social media, ensuring that candidates comply with ethical and legal standards in their campaigns. This unit should also track violations and enforce regulations effectively.

To provide equal media access for all candidates, financial limits should be imposed on social media advertising to prevent wealthier candidates from dominating the electoral landscape.

For physical campaign materials, RASED recommends adding a provision to Article 22 that imposes fines for unauthorized campaign materials in public spaces. Candidates should be required to obtain prior permits from local authorities such as municipalities before placing campaign materials in public areas. Additionally, the law should require candidates to submit a detailed plan ensuring compliance with legal advertising regulations.

To enhance field monitoring, dedicated teams should be deployed to routinely inspect campaign materials and identify violations in real-time. Digital tools, such as mobile applications for reporting violations,

should be introduced, allowing users to upload photos and location data for rapid enforcement actions.

Fines should increase progressively for repeat violations, and candidates should be required to cover the costs of removing illegal campaign materials. Major violations should factor into candidate eligibility assessments, strengthening compliance and deterring misconduct.

Furthermore, educational workshops should be organized to familiarize candidates with campaign regulations, while public awareness campaigns should inform voters about the consequences of electoral violations and encourage them to report infractions.

To ensure the enforcement of these regulations, coordination with judicial authorities should be strengthened to expedite rulings on campaign-related violations and enforce sanctions transparently.

Finally, the IEC should strictly enforce the election silence period, with legal penalties for violations. Maintaining election silence is a key indicator of fair campaign practices, ensuring that no candidate gains an unfair advantage during the final hours of the election.

4. Strengthening the Role of Political Parties

To enhance the role of political parties in the electoral process, RASED recommends requiring parties to submit periodic reports detailing their candidate selection processes and the level of transparency involved. These reports will help build trust between parties and voters while reinforcing the principles of transparency and credibility in party operations.

RASED also recommends implementing specialized training programs to equip political parties with effective campaign strategies. These programs should focus on campaign management, voter engagement, and policy communication, ensuring that parties can articulate comprehensive political visions aligned with societal needs. The IEC could play a role in supporting these efforts.

To ensure inclusivity, Article 11 should be amended to require accessible facilities and resources for persons with disabilities within party activities. This could include accessible party headquarters, assistive technologies, and active participation of individuals with disabilities in policy-making and campaign efforts.

5. Combating Hate Speech and Online Violence

RASED emphasizes the urgent need to combat hate speech and online violence in election campaigns. A new article should be added to the Cybercrime Law explicitly criminalizing hate speech and the targeting of candidates, voters, or parties online—particularly on social media. This law should clearly define hate speech and establish appropriate penalties for offenders, whether individuals or organized entities.

Additionally, RASED recommends organizing awareness workshops for journalists and social media influencers, training them in professional and responsible election coverage. These workshops should focus on promoting tolerance and respect, preventing misinformation, and avoiding smear campaigns against candidates or political parties.

Efforts should also extend to training candidates on running positive

and constructive digital campaigns, with guidance on responding to hate speech effectively. Moreover, collaboration with social media platforms should be strengthened to facilitate swift reporting and removal of harmful content.

By combining legal deterrence with media awareness, Jordan can reduce hate speech and online violence, fostering a safer and fairer electoral environment for all stakeholders.

• Programmatic Recommendations

1. Program to Enhance Transparency in the Electoral Process

A transparent electronic platform will assist candidates in recording and managing their campaign expenses in a way that is accessible to the public.

- Activities:

o Training candidates on how to use the platform

o Organizing workshops on financial disclosure

o Launching awareness campaigns to educate the public on the importance of transparency

2. Program for Empowering Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities

This program aims to politically empower marginalized groups by enhancing their leadership skills and improving accessibility in polling stations.

- Activities:

o Training workshops to develop leadership and advocacy skills

o Infrastructure improvements to make polling stations more accessible

o Media campaigns highlighting success stories of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in politics

3. Program to Combat Hate Speech and Electoral Violence

This program focuses on developing mechanisms to monitor and combat hate speech during elections.

• Activities:

o Establishing a specialized unit for tracking and addressing hate speech

o Training journalists and media professionals on responsible reporting

o Organizing community awareness campaigns to promote values of tolerance and respect

4. Program to Strengthen Dialogue Among Political Parties

The program seeks to enhance cooperation among political parties through structured dialogues and ethical commitments.

• Activities:

o Organizing political dialogue forums to encourage cross-party discussions

o Developing a Code of Electoral Conduct to ensure ethical campaigning

o Encouraging collaborative policy discussions to promote inclusivity

5. Voter Education Program

Aimed at increasing public awareness of the new electoral system and encouraging political participation.

• Activities:

o Producing educational materials about the election process

o Running digital awareness campaigns on social media and online platforms

o   Hosting information sessions in educational institutions and community   centers

6. Program for Ensuring Media Fairness

This initiative seeks to ensure equal media coverage for all candidates.

•   Activities:

o   Training journalists on impartial election coverage

o   Establishing mechanisms to monitor political advertisements

o   Implementing guidelines to prevent media bias in election reporting

7. Civil Society Engagement Program

This program aims to enhance the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in election monitoring.

•   Activities:

o   Developing policy frameworks with input from CSOs

o   Providing grants to support independent election monitoring initiatives

o   Encouraging citizen-led oversight of the electoral process

8. Program to Combat Online Harassment and Support Female Candidates

A program to enforce strict laws against cyber harassment of female candidates while providing them with legal and psychological support.

•   Activities:

o   Implementing stronger laws against digital harassment in elections

o   Providing legal and psychological support services to affected candidates

o   Launching awareness campaigns to counter digital violence and create a safe online space for women in politics

9. Program for Enhancing Funding and Logistical Support for Female Candidates

This initiative will establish a dedicated election fund to support female candidates through political parties or civil society organizations.

•   Activities:

o   Creating a special fund to finance women›s election campaigns

o   Training programs on cost-effective campaign management

o   Encouraging private sector contributions to support women in elections

10. Strengthening Networking Between Parties and Female Candidates

This program seeks to increase female representation in party leadership and improve networking between female candidates and decision-makers.

•   Activities:

o   Mandating political parties to include women in leadership positions

o   Organizing political forums that connect female candidates with party leaders

o   Promoting party-based candidacy to encourage greater female participation in politics