

Position Paper

## Occupational Safety and Health in Jordan

On the occasion of the World Day for Health and Safety at Work

Prepared by

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Amman, 25 April 2017

Occupational safety and health is a decent work standard and a fundamental principle of labor rights that is also enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition to protecting the right to life and the enjoyment of the highest possible standards of health, it is an essential component in the promotion of sustainable development and increased productivity, as it promotes the preservation of skilled and efficient human resources by reducing both the amount of lost time in the production process and the direct and indirect costs associated with occupational injuries and illnesses and their required treatments.

On the occasion of the World Day for Health and Safety at Work, the Phenix Center points out and recommends the following:

1. The ratification of all ILO conventions pertaining to occupational safety and health, namely Conventions No. 155, 161, and 170. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has devoted over 16 conventions to this issue, of which Jordan has ratified a mere 3.
2. The enforcement of the provisions and protections contained in the Jordanian Constitution and legislation. The Jordanian Constitution stipulates in Art. 23 that businesses must abide by rules concerning sanitation. In addition, Labor Law No. 8/1996 and its respective amendments, along with the Social Security Law No.1/2014 and Public Health Law No.47/2008, ensure the protection of several standards concerning occupational safety and health, which have informed numerous regulations, instructions, and decisions.
3. Develop an accurate and comprehensive database of work-related accidents, injuries, and illnesses. The only database available is issued by the Social Security Corporation, and it only covers cases in which the workers are covered by the social security system, which covers only half of Jordan's workforce in both the formal and the informal sector. As such, there are broad gaps in the data, which could be addressed through the development of a more comprehensive database.
4. According to the Social Security Corporation, 14,616 work-related accidents, injuries and illnesses were reported in 2015 alone. Of these, 19.4% of those involved were migrant workers and 8.7% were female. Additionally, 15.6% of these incidents took place in the retail sector, followed by 15.6% in the construction sector and 10.6% in the hotel and restaurant sector.
5. The number of deaths resulting from work-related injuries in 2015, according to the Social Security Corporation, was 135 – of which 11 were women and 16 migrant workers.  
Numerous cases go undocumented.
6. Social Security Corporation figures show a decline in the number of work-related accidents, injuries and illnesses over the past 10 years. In 2005, there were 2.5 incidents per 1000 workers, whereas in 2015 this figure dropped to 1.1. However, it must be underlined that this figure pertains to only half of the national workforce, which indicates that only approximately 50% of cases are reported.
7. Application of workplace safety and health norms varies according to the size of the business or establishment in question. Whereas most large businesses tend to abide by international workplace safety and health standards, compliance dwindles among medium and small enterprises.
8. Increase public awareness of occupational safety and health standards. Large numbers of workers are unaware of the standards and tools which help to protect their wellbeing at work.
9. Promote institutional coordination in ensuring compliance with international occupational workplace safety and health standards. The Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Health, and civil society should all be invested in—and cooperating towards—the promotion of wellbeing at work. Efforts should include the strengthening of monitoring and inspection mechanisms.