

PROMEDHE Country Profile: Civil Protection and Cultural Heritage Safeguard in Emergency

JORDAN



Civil Protection in Jordan

Crisis management in Jordan is provided for in Article 4, Paragraph B, of Civil Defence Law n.18 of 1999 and its amendments.

The Supreme Council for Civil Defence is the highest decision making body of the national civil defence, authorized by law to undertake appropriate measures to manage disasters and coordinate respective contributions from involved ministries and services. The Supreme Council is chaired by the Minister of Interior, and includes the Director of the General Directorate of Civil Defence (GDCCD), as Vice President, and the Directors General of all public and private state institutions participating in disaster management. During the preparedness phase, the Council is responsible for the elaboration of national plans dealing with disasters and risks; when a disaster occurs, it coordinates all response operations. As of October 2004, the National Comprehensive Plan, validated by the Council, had defined tasks, duties and activities of all concerned parties in the event of emergencies and disasters.

The duties of the Supreme Council are the following:

- Establishing public civil defence policy to face emergencies and their consequences.
- Establishing the National Comprehensive Emergency Plan that indicates the necessary procedures to cope with emergencies and disasters, by defining roles and tasks of each agency involved in crisis management.
- Issuing required directives to organize the Supreme Council's duties and managing its operation rooms, the operation rooms of the parties represented within, and the operation rooms of civil defence committees in the administrative divisions and provinces.
- Specifying duties and tasks of civil defence committees formed in the administrative divisions.
- Establishing the duties of the Armed Forces and public security in case of emergency; training volunteer teams of civilians – within the following age group: from 18 to 50 years – to support civil defence activities.

- Organizing drills and simulations on alert techniques to protect citizens in case of emergency, specifying required methods.
- Establishing financial plans to face emergencies and disasters submitted to the Ministry of Finance to be confirmed and included within the public budget.

According to the 1999 Civil Defence Law n. 18, the General Directorate of Civil Defence (GDCD) is the formal and operational body authorized to protect citizens and properties against potential dangers and in case of natural disasters through self-prevention and protection procedures. GDCD represents the Civil Protection Authority and is organised in 12 civil defence directorates, one per each region, and three more rescue and support directorates aimed at strengthening the regional directorates in case of major accidents. Fire-fighting, rescue and ambulance operations are implemented through a network of 154 civil defence centres distributed across the Kingdom.

While the preparation of national plans is a duty of the Supreme Council for Civil defence, the planning for coping with minor contingents is set by GDCD, which plays a major role in the preparation of public and private emergency plans and procedures.

GDCD provides for the following tasks:

- Operational*: management of fire-fighting, search and rescue operations and emergencies requiring the intervention of ambulances.
- Supervision*: supervision and monitoring of existing buildings and projects under construction to ensure their compliance with fire-prevention and protection measures according to the Fire and Building Code; provision, supervision and organization of alert procedures during disasters and emergencies.
- Disaster-related*: as a member of the Supreme Council for Civil Defence, GDCD is assigned many duties in case of disaster. Among the most important are: equipping and administering the operational room of the Supreme Council for Civil Defence; carrying out fire-fighting, rescue and emergency management in case of disaster, in conjunction with the concerned authorities; educating and training citizens on how to deal with emergencies; providing means and tools to alert citizens on possible emergencies, including organization and supervision of response operations.
- Prevention and protection activities related to gas facilities.*

Concerning disaster prevention, the Supreme Council for Civil Defence and GDCD are both responsible, the latter being in charge of providing, for example, early warning systems (alarm siren) or disaster-related awareness and campaigns. Likewise, disaster preparedness is dealt with by the Supreme Council for Civil Defence through the National Comprehensive Emergency Plan, which is planned by GDCD. The Supreme Council for Civil Defence also coordinates emergency response, and takes care of tourist assistance in case of mass evacuations together with GDCD and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

National contingency plans for the protection of tourist areas have been drafted by the "Enhancing Institutional Capacities to Reduce Disaster Risk and to Integrate Climate Change in Jordan" (2011 –2014) project, and the "Country Risk Assessment for Enhancing Emergency Planning Process in Jordan" project.

Cultural Heritage

In Jordan, the institutions responsible for cultural heritage safeguarding are The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Civil Defence Authority through their administrative divisions. National catalogues that list all cultural heritage and tourist sites, together with specialized programs documenting archaeological sites, are available.

The Ministry of Interior, GCDC and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities draft the national guidelines and instructions in relation to safety and security. In this respect, two national legislations on cultural heritage safeguarding have been issued, the Law n.5 of 2005 on Protection Architectural Heritage and Urban of 2005,¹ and the Law n.21 of 1998 on Antiquities (amended by law n.23 of 2004).² Shared institutional procedures for cultural heritage protection are elaborated by the Supreme Council for Civil Defence; according to this, a set of Memoranda of Understanding between the Jordan Civil Defence Authority and other line Ministries (Tourism, Culture, Health, Environment, Defence, Armed Forces) defines respective roles and tasks during joint interventions, including cultural heritage protection. However, the Memoranda – together with the National Comprehensive Emergency Plan and other national tools addressed to facilitate interinstitutional collaboration during crisis management - do not foresee mixed teams and do not include specific SOPs for activating, deploying and coordinating specialized teams from different disaster management players. Professional experts are employed to evaluate risks that could affect cultural heritage, without a regulatory framework. However, technical protocols, tactical handbooks, SOPs on activation of cultural heritage protection are not available.

Regarding cultural heritage storage and maintenance, Jordan has many store areas and warehouses all over the Kingdom belonging to both the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the local museums (in some tourist sites), even though they are not equipped to protect cultural heritage in case of disaster, and are not included in emergency plans.

¹ http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=246033

² https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/law-of-antiquities.html/Law_of_Antiquities-1-jordan.pdf