

LABOR PROTESTS IN JORDAN 2021



REPORT



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JORDAN LABOR WATCH / / PHENIX CENTER
FOR ECONOMIC AND INFORMATICS STUDIES

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لدراسات الاقتصادية والمعلوماتية
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Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies The Phenix Center for Economic & Informatics Studies is a non-governmental organization dedicated to independent policy research and measuring public opinions on impactful current and emerging issues in areas of economics, society, and its legislative environment in Jordan. The Center was founded in Amman, Jordan in 2003 under the registration number 142203. It works to promote a sustainable developmental paradigm in Jordan, rooted in human rights and the principles of democratic governance by focusing on reforming the labor policies, lifting of restrictions on freedom of association, and strengthening of social protection policies. The Center specializes in promoting inclusivity in development processes. It compiles databases of relevant actors and stakeholders, develops research, studies, papers and reports, conducts conferences and advocacy campaigns, and empowers several actors to take part in steering development through capacity building.

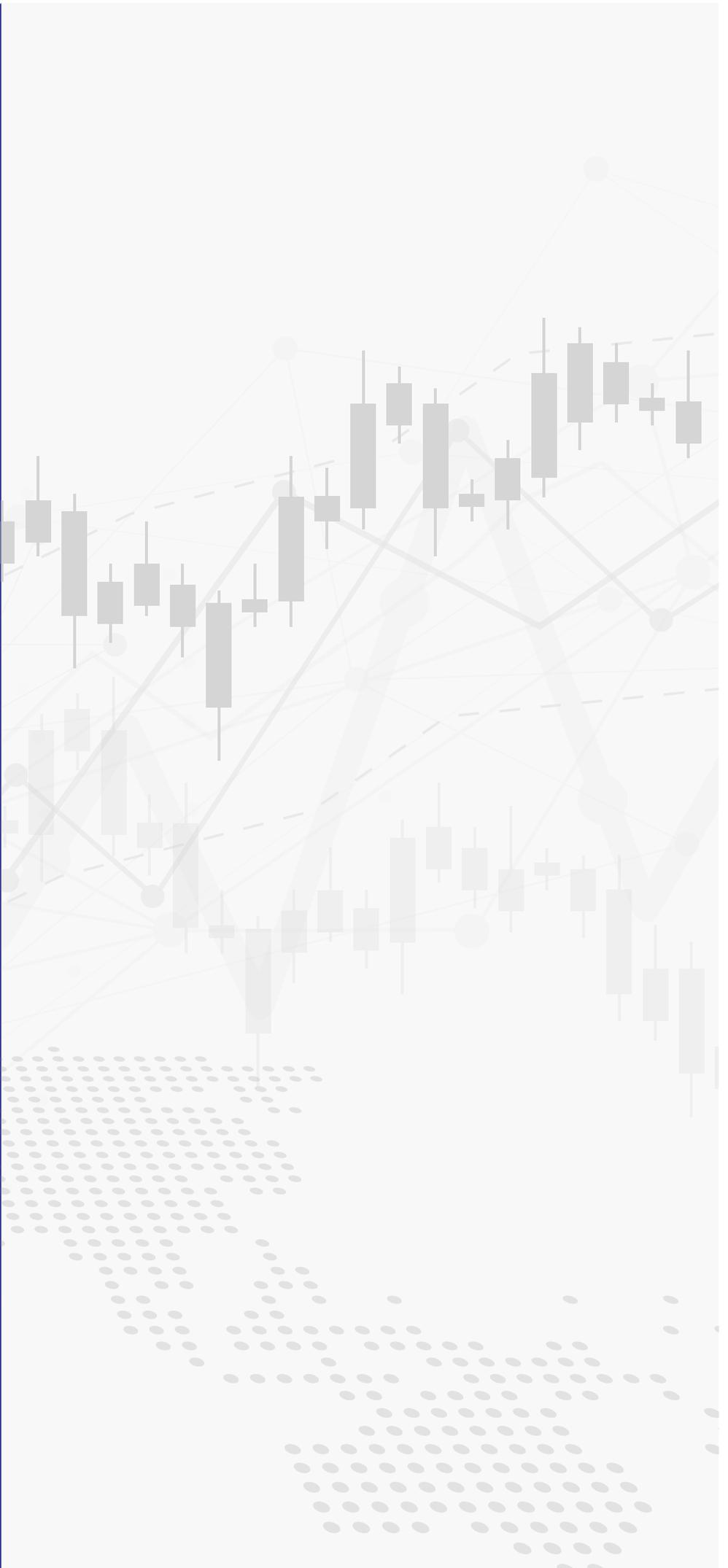
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Jordan Labor Watch Jordan Labor Watch contributes to improving work conditions for all workers in Jordan in accordance with international labor standards. This is done through developing studies and reports covering various aspects of labor issues related to workers, uncovering violations and abuses to which workers are exposed in the work place. The program provides a comprehensive database covering various indicators related to the labor market, trade unions, labor organizations, laws and regulations, as well as governing performance. Furthermore, the program strives to present alternative policies that tackle challenges facing the Arabian and Jordanian labor market as well as conducting training programs that support upgrading skills and capabilities of advocates in the labor movement.

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INTRODUCTION:



This report aims to provide an analytical, economic, and social reading of all labor protests that took place in Jordan in 2021.

As part of the Jordan Labor Watch program, launched in 2009, the Phenix Center for Economics and Informatics Studies has been monitoring political and practical developments in Jordan's labor market, as well as labor movements and transformations in the ground. The Jordan Labor Watch team prepares an annual report on labor protests in Jordan. This report aims to provide an analytical, economic, and social reading of all labor protests that took place in Jordan in 2021. The labor protests were documented through direct communication with the actors at the protests, as well as through analysis of news coverage by Jordanian media. Jordan Labor Watch documented different forms of labor protests, including strikes, strike threats, boycotts, marches, sit-ins, etc.

The world witnessed an era of instability at the beginning of 2020, as a result of the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic had repercussions that reached far beyond health, impacting the socio-economic and political foundation of countries worldwide. One of the consequences of the rapid spread of the Coronavirus in 2020 was the decline in the global availability of civil space, reducing the availability of civil society organizations to enable human rights practices.

In Jordan, the government attempted to control the outbreak at the beginning of the pandemic through lockdowns. However, this led to negative economic consequences for the majority of citizens. Additionally, the free space of civil space narrowed for both individuals and groups. Civil space is the cornerstone of any open and democratic society. With open civil space, individuals and civil society organizations are able to organize, participate and communicate without hindrance, defend human rights and influence the political and social structures around them. This can happen only when the State is committed to its duty to protect its citizens, to respect and facilitate their fundamental rights to association, peaceful assembly, and freedom of opinion and expression.

Understanding the transformations of social and labor movements in Jordan that are occurring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic requires a careful reading of the frameworks governing the work of these movements, as they determine the breadth or narrowness of the workspace.

Social protest, according to social science literature, is a collective effort that aims to change the character of settled social relations within a specific society. Social movements are collective efforts seeking to establish a new

mode of life. They are based on a feeling of dissatisfaction with the prevailing model and a desire to establish a new model that includes the basic components for survival and success - namely, continuity, organization, awareness, and change. The conditions that cause people to resort to protest vary, but they typically include the failure or collapse of collective bargaining as a viable means of achieving workers' de

mands, or a lack of available channels for negotiation with management and/or employers.

Labor protest movements cannot be studied away from social movements, because labor protest movements are part of social movements. Many experts studying social movement theory believe that the economic factor is the main driver of social mobilization, and increasing labor protest movements are creating more social movements.

The importance of preparing this report stems from the Jordan Labor Watch team's belief that labor protests are among the most important indicators of economic and social crises, especially within the labor market itself. As such, they accurately reflect prevailing labor relations, which are characterized by an imbalance among various factors such as workers, employers, and the Government.



NUMERICAL INDICATORS

The year 2021 witnessed an increase in the number of labor protests, increasing by 55% from 2020, reaching 225 in 2021 compared to 145 in 2020.

This indicates that the phenomenon of labor protests as a manifestation of social protest in Jordan is still apparent despite declining in numbers in previous years.

These protests express the severity of the current socio-economic crisis in Jordan, the continued stagnation of low wage levels, and the decline in the economic well-being of citizens in the aftermath of COVID-led partial and total shutdowns. The national COVID response policies have led workers to struggle to meet their basic needs and led to increased tension with employers, as the Defense Orders

permitted the reduction of employees' salaries by 30-50%.

In addition, other factors leading to the increased number of protests include the decline in working conditions for the majority of workers, a significant decrease in wage rates, stagnant minimum wage rates, and the suspension and/or delay in payment of the salaries of many employees. Broad sectors of the Jordanian labor market do not enjoy the basic labor rights provided for by Jordanian law in many sectors. These labor rights include maximum working hours, annual leave, sick leave, leave on public holidays, availability of occupational health and safety standards, access to social insurance provided by the Social Security Corporation, health insurance, and other conditions for decent work.

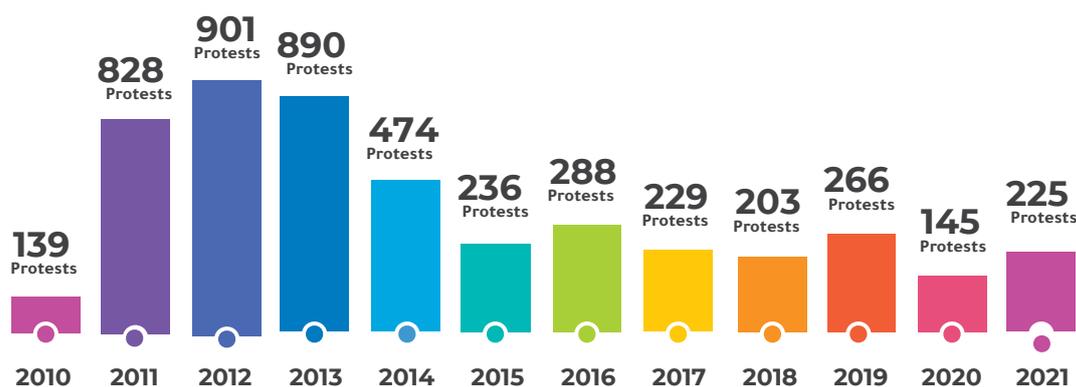


Table 1 shows the number of labor protests from 2010 to 2021

Number of protests	Year
139	2010
828	2011
901	2012
890	2013
474	2014
236	2015
288	2016
229	2017
203	2018
266	2019
145	2020
225	2021

REASONS FOR THE PROTESTS

The reasons for which the labor protests have been carried out have varied. They have included demands to increase wages and bonuses, better benefits and incentives for employees, objecting to dismissal from work, demanding permanent contracts, as well as various other factors.

The priorities of salaried workers in Jordan were focused on repealing laws that caused harm to workers. This was ranked as the primary priority within 55 protests (24.4%) out of all protests recorded in 2022. These protests included protests by teachers against the decision to refer 120 union activists to early retirement, protests by the trade union committees that were dissolved by the General Union of Electricity Workers and against the amendments to the Unified Trade Union System that prevented the members from participating in the elections of the union, and workers in the transportation sector (including the drivers of yellow taxis, drivers of public transport buses, and drivers who work for ridesharing companies).

Most of the reasons for public transport drivers' protests were the government's decision to reduce the seating capacity of public transport by 50% to limit the outbreak of the Coronavirus in March, the decisions of the Amman municipality to relocate service drivers to other places away from the main street, and the takeover of private transport vehicles over the public transport sector. Drivers of mobile ridesharing applications protested against the policies and procedures of the ridesharing companies, the Ministry of Transport, and the Land Transport Regulatory Authority. Ridesharing companies are deducting more than 30% of the drivers' revenue throughout the total trip. In September, the Ministry renewed the operating contracts of ridesharing companies for another year and a

half with the same percentage (30%). The Land Transport Regulatory Authority also reduced the operational life of ITS vehicles from seven to five years.

The second most-frequent priority for protestors was to increase or disburse wages and bonuses, as this was the priority for 37 protests (16.4 percent of all protests in 2021). Most of these were carried out by employees of the Jordanian-Syrian Land Transport Company, who had their salaries suspended for approximately 30 months. The demand for the availability of jobs was the third most-frequent priority for protestors, as it was the priority for 33 protests (14.7% of all protests in 2021), most of which were implemented by unemployed people.

In fourth place, 17 protests (7.6%) protested the claims for job security and permanent positions at work. Most of these protests were held by day laborers at the Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT). The protestors' demands centered around being made part of the company's staff. Finally, in fifth place, 16 protests (7.1% of all protests) had multiple goals or objectives.

Additionally, Jordan Labor Watch's team recorded 9 protests (4%) demanding the reform of the current union or forming a new trade union, most of which were related to the union committees of the General Union of Electricity Workers and candidates from the General Trade Union of Workers in Mining and Metal Industries. Finally, 5 protests against dismissal were recorded (2.2%).

Table (2) shows the proportional distribution of labor protests by root cause or reason for the protest.

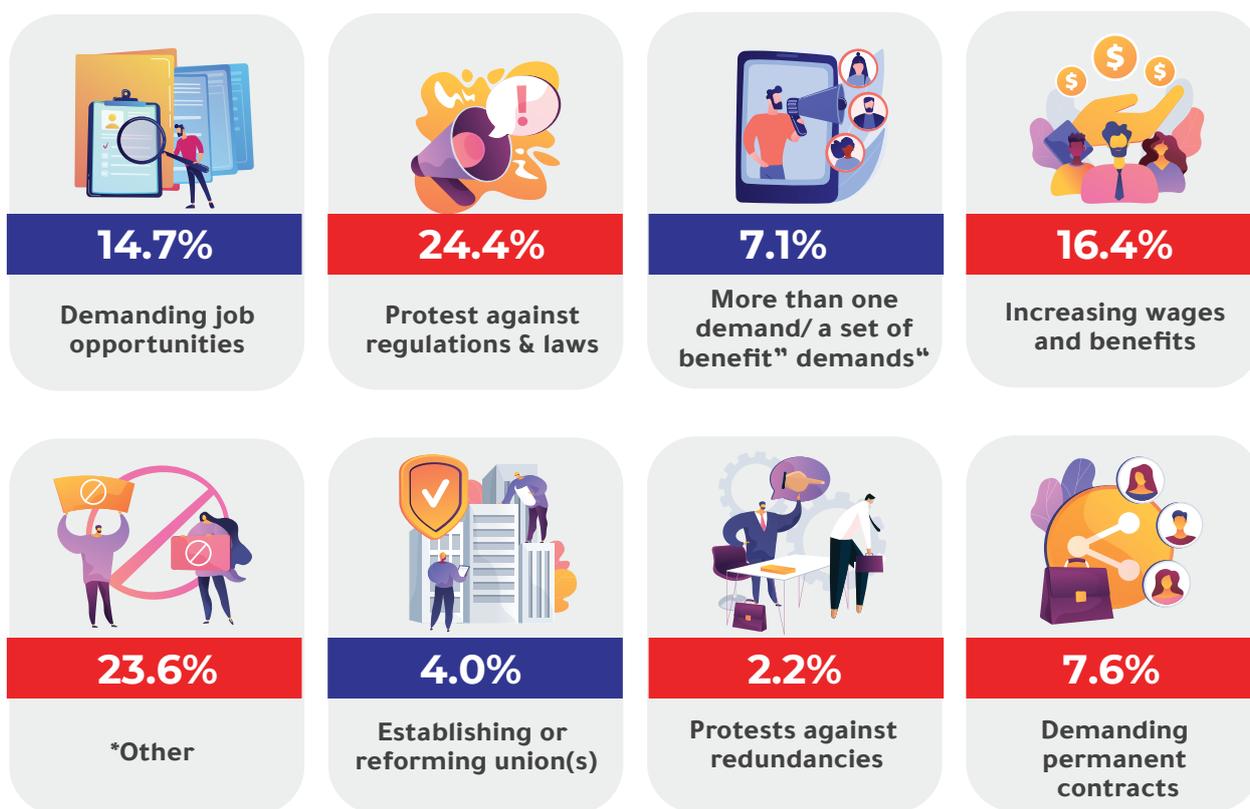
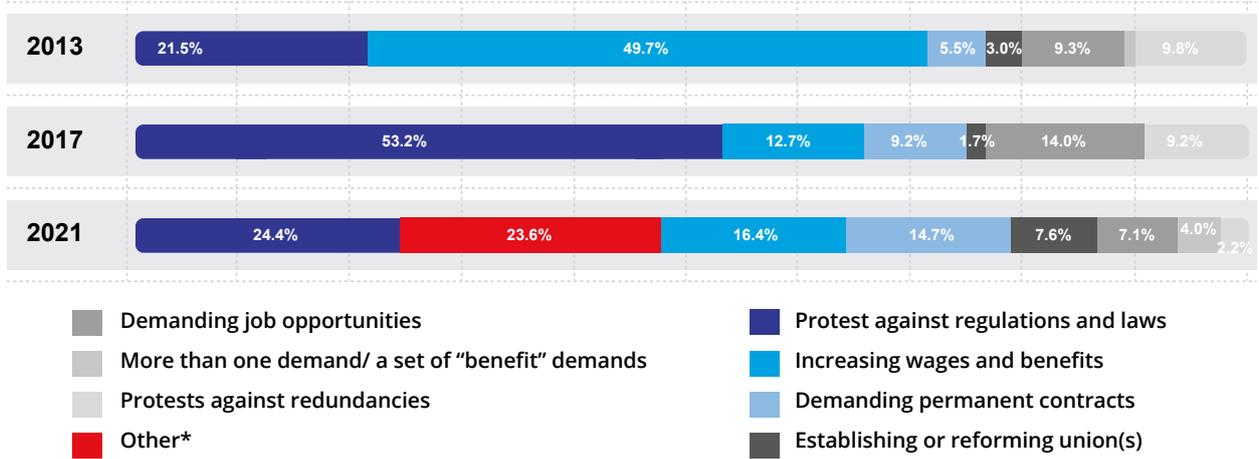


Table (2): Distribution Of Labor Protests By Reason

Reasons for Protests	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Protest against regulations and laws	21.5%	25.2%	33.1%	25.0%	53.2%	38.4%	30.5%	24.8%	24.4%
Increasing wages and benefits	49.7%	32.2%	22.0%	11.0%	12.7%	21.2%	19.2%	23.4%	16.4%
Demanding job opportunities	5.5%	17.0%	12.7%	13.0%	9.2%	6.4%	28.9%	11.0%	14.7%
Demanding permanent contracts	3.0%	2.5%	3.0%	1.0%	1.7%	1.0%	1.5%	0.0%	7.6%
More than one demand/ a set of "benefit" demands	9.3%	11.2%	14.4%	30.0%	14.0%	22.7%	12.8%	2.8%	7.1%
Establishing or reforming union(s)	0.9%	1.5%	1.3%	--	--	0.5%	--	--	4.0%
Protests against redundancies	9.8%	5.7%	7.2%	10.0%	9.2%	4.9%	6.4%	4.8%	2.2%
Other*	--	4.4%	6.4%	10.0%	0.0%	4.9%	0.8%	4.1%	23.6%

*Other: These included health insurance, occupational health and safety conditions, an appropriate work environment, and conflicts of interests between employees and other entities.... etc.

Graph (2): Distribution Of Labor Protests By Reason



FORMS OF PROTESTS

For the purposes of this report, the types of labor protests carried out were divided into strikes, sit-ins, threats of these measures, marches, and threats of self-harm (suicide). 54.2% of protests in 2021 were sit-ins (122), with sit-ins being held by unemployed people, teachers, and workers in public transportation being the most common. The second most common form of protest is strike threats and threats to protests (23.6%, or 53). Workers in public transportation, workers in UNRWA, and workers in medical support services were the most common to pursue strike threats and threats of other forms of labor protest.

Strikes were the third most-common form of labor protest at 16%, with 36 strikes taking place in 2021. The majority of strikes were conducted

by workers in public transportation. Marches were the fourth most-common form of labor protest, with 10 marches taking place in 2021. The majority of marches were conducted by teachers, in protest of the government’s decision to refer 120 teachers to early retirement and to shutter the Teachers’ Syndicate.

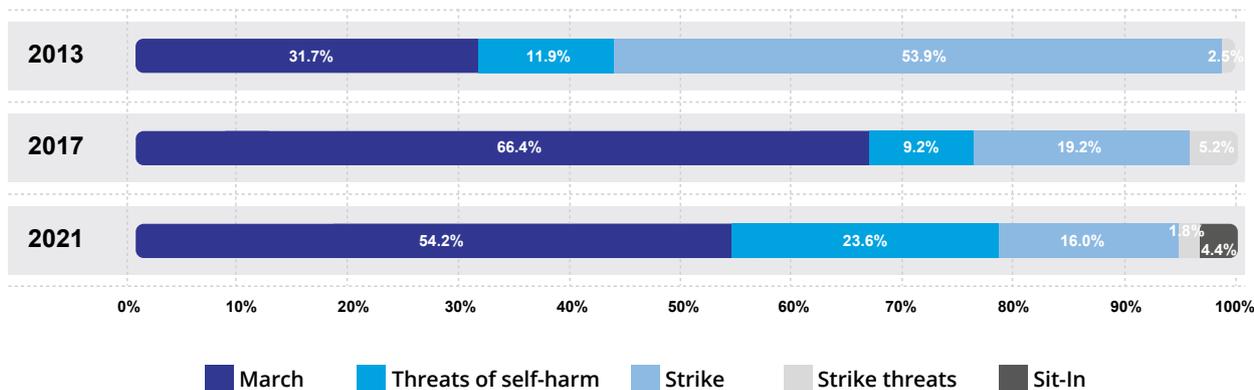
Finally, threats of suicide or self-harm was the least common form of labor protest in 2021 at just 1.8%, with 4 incidents taking place. Three of these incidents were unemployed people in Ma’an, Madan, and Theeban. One incident was by an employee at the Jordanian Aircraft Maintenance Limited.

Table (3) displays the proportional distribution of labor protests, divided by type of protest.

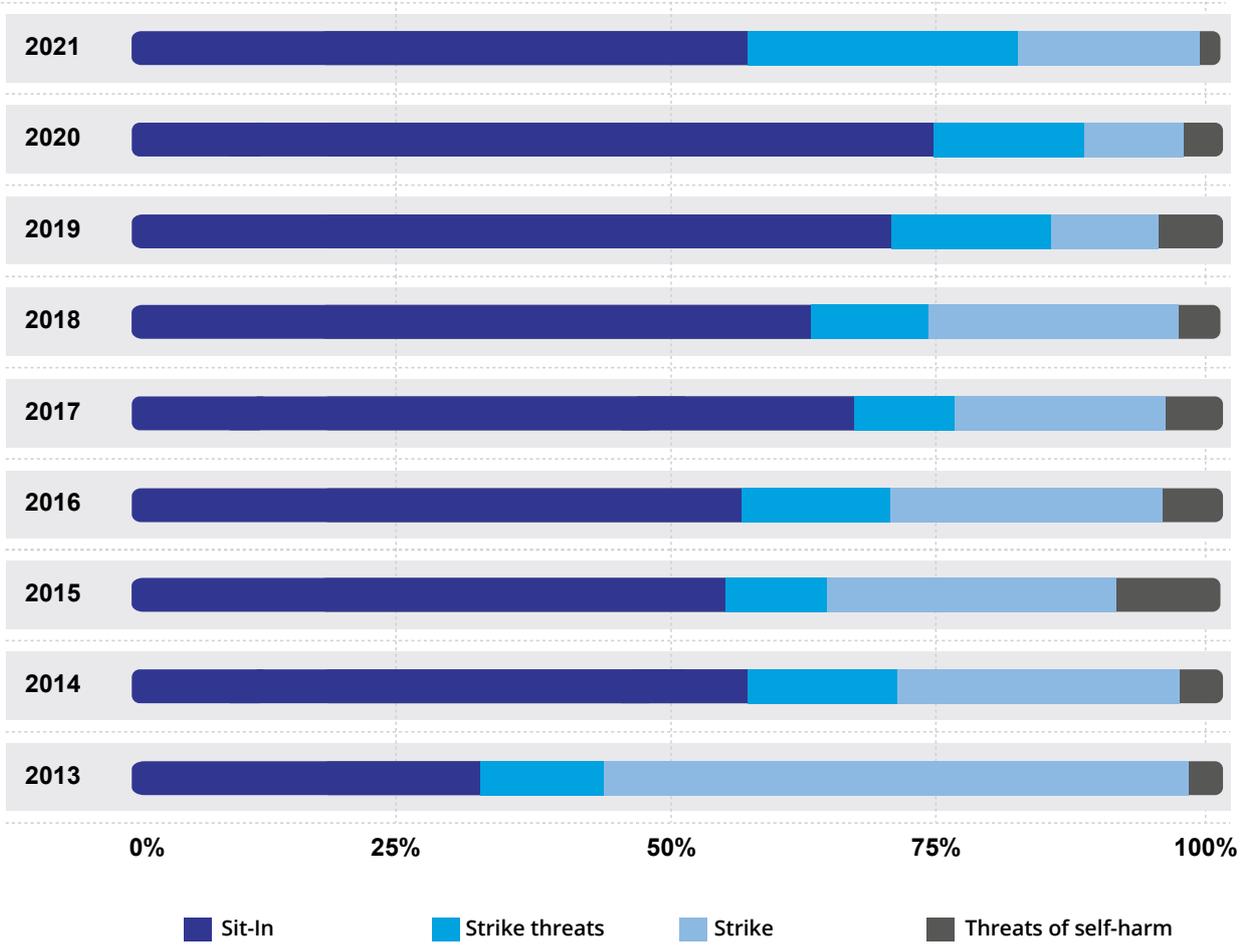
Table (3): Proportional Distribution Of Labor Protests By Type of Protest

Type of Protest	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sit-In	31.7%	56.5%	54.2%	56.0%	66.4%	62.6%	69.2%	62.1%	54.2%
Strike threats	11.9%	13.7%	9.7%	14.0%	9.2%	10.8%	14.7%	11.7%	23.6%
Strike	53.9%	26.2%	26.7%	25.0%	19.2%	22.7%	9.8%	7.6%	16.0%
March	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15.9%	4.4%
Threats of self-harm	2.5%	3.6%	9.3%	5.0%	5.2%	3.9%	5.3%	2.8%	1.8%

Table (3): Distribution of Protests by Reasons for Protests in Percentages



**Graph (3): Proportional Distribution Of Labor Protests
By Type of Protest as a Percentage**



DISTRIBUTION OF PROTESTS BY SECTOR

Workers in the public sector conducted 58 labor protests in 2021, or 25.8% of all labor protests. Workers in the private sector conducted 120 labor protests in 2021, or 53.3% of the total. Unemployed people conducted 29 labor protests, or 12.9% of the total. Additionally, 9 labor protests were conducted by workers in both the private and public sectors, amounting to 4% of the total. Finally, workers at UNRWA conducted 9 labor protests, also amounting to 4% of the total.

The continued decrease of labor protests in the public sector over the past few years is notable. In 2020, 44.1% of all labor protests were conducted by public sector workers, compared to 25.8% in 2021. This decline can be attributed to a number of factors. The momentum of labor protests has declined annually, and structural changes have been made to the salaries of public sector employees that have led to an increase in the wages of workers in many public organizations.

The increase in the percentage of labor protests in the private sector compared to previous years can be explained by the continued decline of various conditions of employment, including low wages, weak social protection for workers,

and restrictions on workers' right to organize and collectively bargain. Article 98, paragraph (d) of the Labor Law stipulates that "the Minister and the Registrar of Trade Unions shall classify sectors and economic activities in which trade unions may be established, so that no industry or economic activity has more than one trade union."

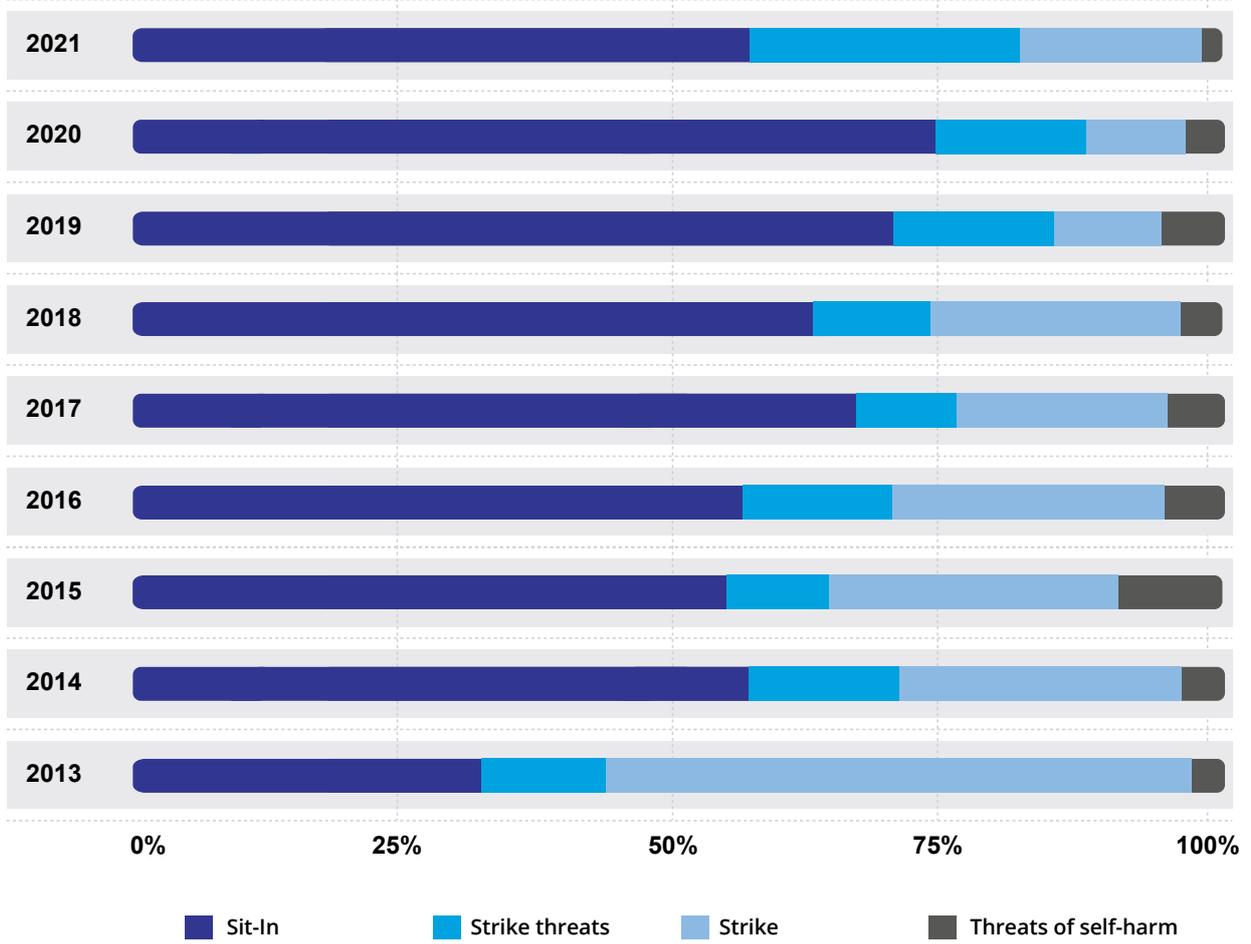
The rate of labor protests by unemployed people has continued to decline, although the unemployment rate has continued to rise, reaching 23.3% during Q4 2021. This can be explained by the continuing government restrictions that prevented gatherings until September of 2021. In 2021, a slight increase in the number of labor protests by workers in UNRWA, where they carried out 9 protests - 4% of all labor protests, compared to 3.4% in 2018. One of the main reasons why workers in UNRWA carried out protests was the administrative directions carried out by UNRWA to declare exceptional unpaid leave for all workers for up to 4 months in order to ease the economic burden on UNRWA.

Table 4 shows the proportional distribution of labor protests by the labor sector.

Table (4): Proportional Distribution Of Labor Protests By Labor Sector

Sector	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Private sector	40.3%	45.5%	47.9%	64.0%	56.3%	50.2%	33.5%	43.4%	53.3%
Public sector	54.2%	37.6%	41.1%	23.0%	34.5%	31.5%	36.1%	44.1%	25.8%
Unemployed	5.5%	16.9%	11.0%	13.0%	9.2%	5.9%	28.2%	12.4%	12.9%
Public and private sectors	--	--	--	--	--	8.9%	--	--	4.0%
UNRWA	--	--	--	--	--	3.4%	--	--	4.0%

**Graph (7): Proportional Distribution Of Labor Protests
By Labor Sector by Percentage**



ORGANIZERS AND PARTICIPANTS OF LABOR PROTESTS

For the first time in the past 10 years, the percentage of protests carried out by workers who are not members of formally recognized trade unions has gone down. While 90 protests (40% of all protests in 2021) were carried out by non-union-dues paying labor groups, the same number was 59.3% in 2020 and 89% in 2019. This is linked to a number of factors, including the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, many of these workers who are not members of an organized trade union are more likely to lose their jobs in light of the pandemic. Moreover, because decent work conditions have declined in many sectors, more workers have normalized poor working conditions in the aftermath of the pandemic. Nevertheless, for the eleventh consecutive year, the majority of the labor protests were carried out by labor groups that are not formally organized through a regulatory framework.

32.9% of all labor protests (74 protests) were carried out by trade unions and their committees (counting both official and independent trade unions). 13.3% of all labor protests (30) were

carried out by unemployed people. Meanwhile, 9.8% of all labor protests (22) were carried out by workers organized through a professional association. Lastly, UNRWA workers carried out 4% of all labor protests (9).

What is notable here is that labor protests were primarily carried out by workers that did not have a union framework organizing them, or by workers who went outside their union frameworks and replaced these with self-organized bodies to defend their interests and demands. This is an indication of the weakness or the absence of channels for dialogue and negotiation between various classes of workers with management and with employers. This, in turn, has fueled an increase in protests. This indicates that the lack of active labor organizations has largely impacted the worsening working conditions in Jordan. The labor sectors that enjoy decent working conditions in Jordan are the sectors in which workers are able to exercise their right to unionization and collective bargaining.

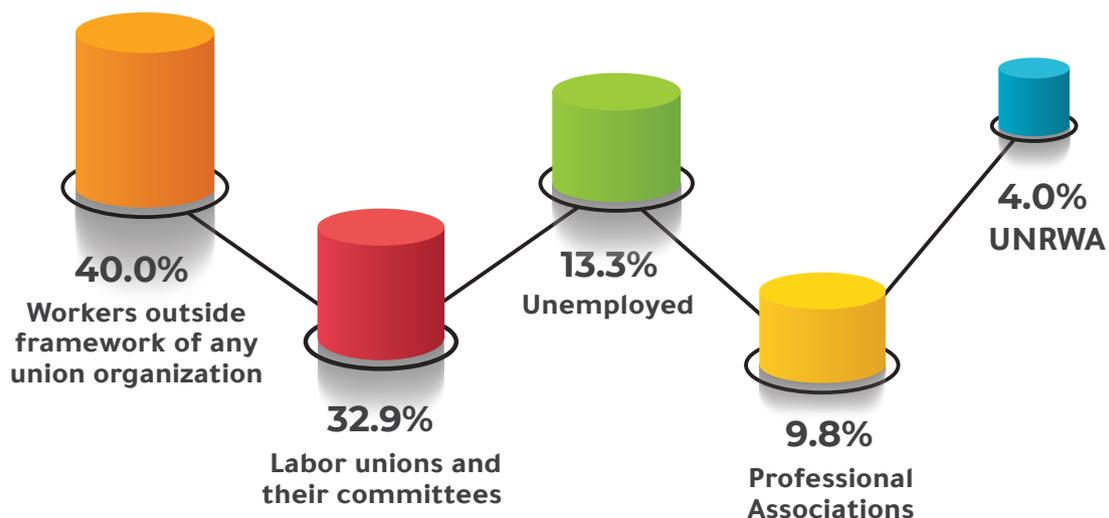
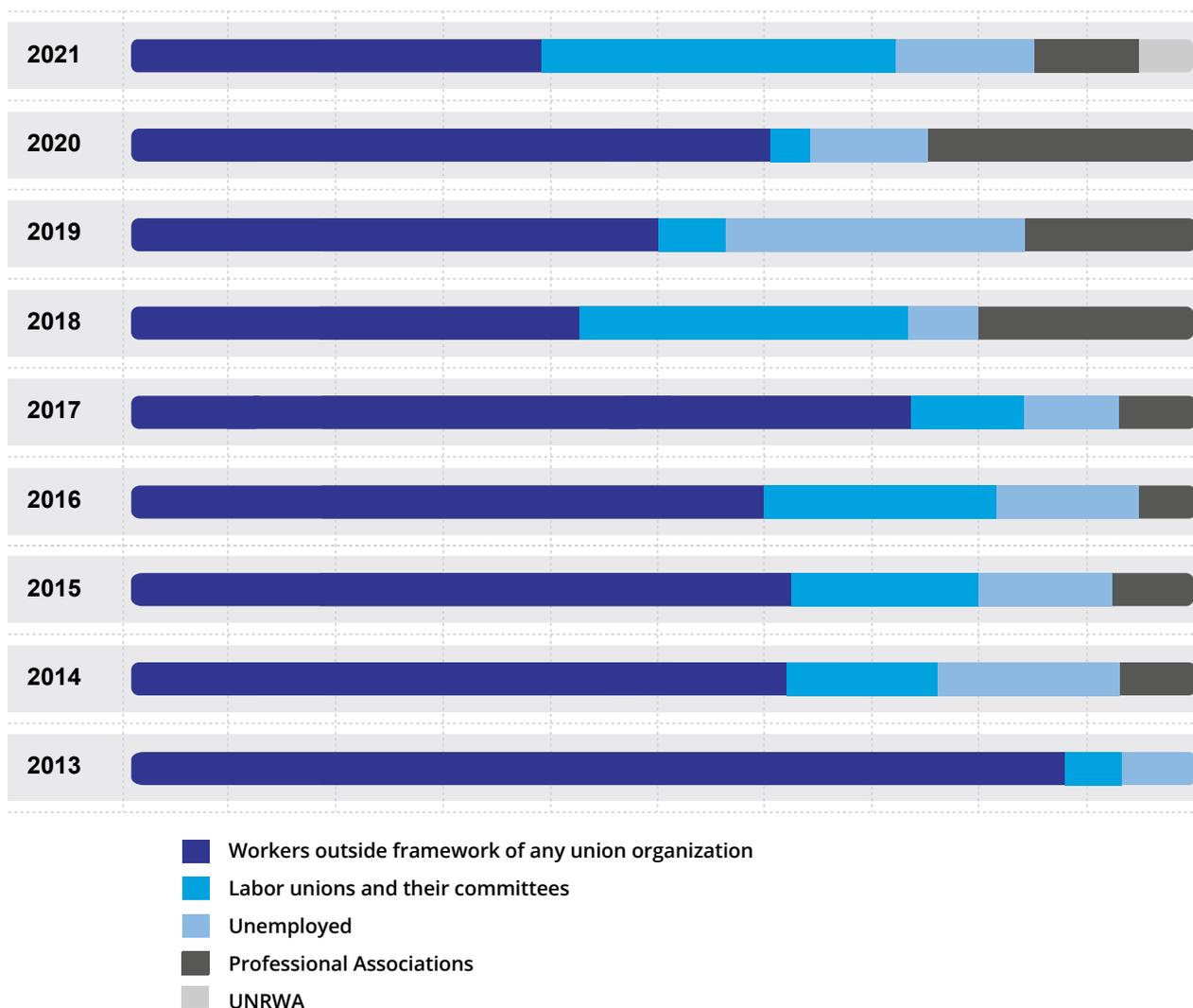


Table (5): Proportional Distribution Of Protests By Body Carrying Out Protest

Body Carrying Out Protest	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Workers outside framework of any union organization	89.0%	62.4%	62.3%	60.0%	72.5%	42.4%	50.8%	59.3%	40.0%
Labor unions and their committees	5.5%	14.8%	17.4%	22.0%	10.5%	31.0%	6.1%	3.4%	32.9%
Unemployed	5.5%	16.9%	12.7%	13.0%	9.2%	6.4%	28.2%	11.0%	13.3%
Professional Associations	--	5.9%	7.6%	5.0%	6.5%	20.2%	14.9%	23.4%	9.8%
UNRWA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.0%

Table (5): Proportional Distribution Of Protests By Body Carrying Out Protest by Percentage



It is worth mentioning that the great majority of wage workers do not enjoy the right to freely join a union. The total number of workers who are union members in Jordan is less than five percent, and the rest do not have the right to organize themselves into unions. This includes workers in the public sector, as well as most workers in the private sector, who are deprived by law of the right to organize themselves into unions. Additionally, there is a lack of democratic practices among the great majority of the formally recognized labor unions. These undemocratic practices deprive hundreds of thousands of workers of the ability to participate in collective bargaining.

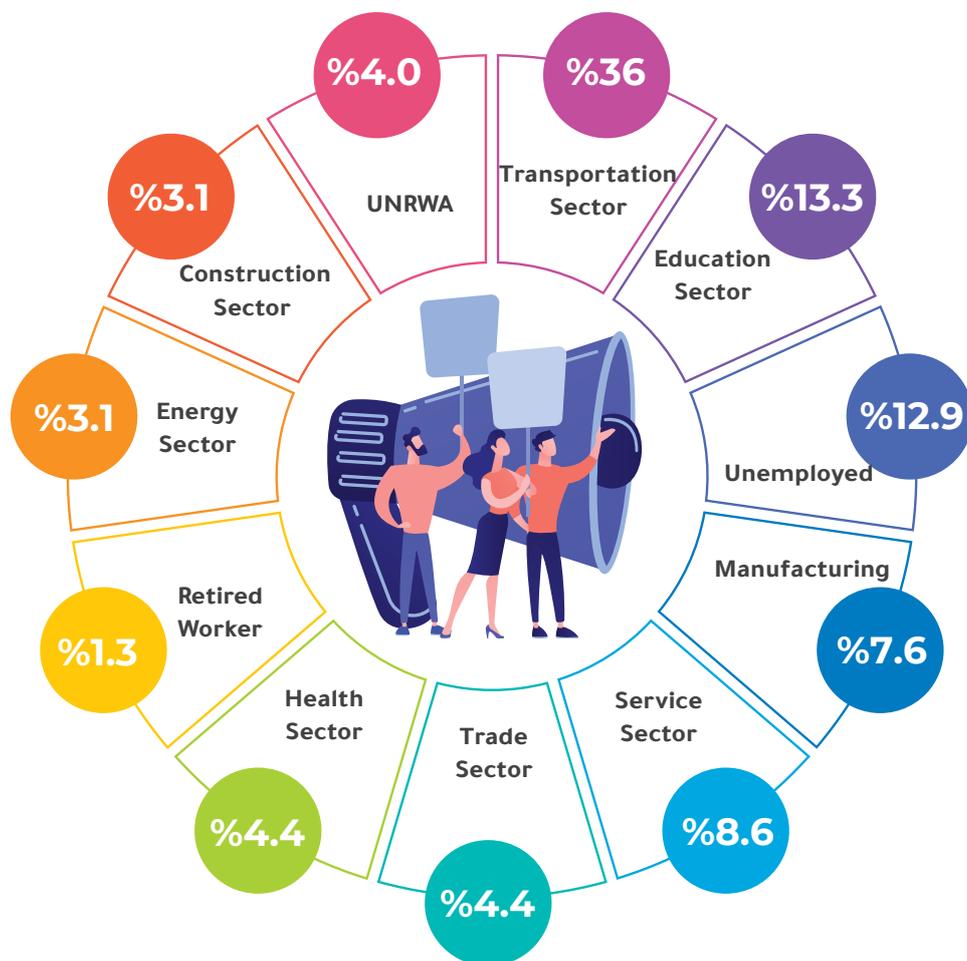
DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR PROTESTS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR

Labor protests in 2021 were distributed across a number of economic sectors. Labor protests in the transportation sector accounted for 36% percent of all protests, with a total of 81 protests. While workers in the transportation sector were the most frequent to conduct labor protests, workers in the education sector were the second most frequent with 30 protests (13.3% of all protests recorded in 2021). The majority of these protests were conducted by teachers demanding that teachers who

were forcibly referred to early retirement as a result of their labor activism be reinstated. Finally, unemployed people were the third most frequent group to conduct labor protests in 2021, accounting for 12.9% of all protests with 29 protests. Workers in the service sector were the fourth most frequent to conduct labor protests, accounting for 8.6% of all protests with 19 protests. Workers in the manufacturing sector were in fifth place for the frequency of labor protests, accounting for 7.6% of labor protests with 17 protests. Workers in the trade sector and the health sector tied for sixth place for frequency of labor protests, accounting for 4.4% of labor protests with 10 protests each. The majority of protests conducted by workers in the health sector were carried out by healthcare support workers. UNRWA workers were in ninth place for frequency of labor protest, carrying out 4% of all protests at 9 protests total. Workers in the construction sector and the energy sector were tied for tenth place, accounting for 3.1% of all protests or 7 protests each. The majority of protests by workers in the construction sector were conducted by workers in the Lafarge Jordanian Cement Company, while protestors from the energy sector were contractors from the Jordan Construction Contractors Association. Finally, workers in agriculture and retired workers tied for the least frequent protests among the sectors with recorded protests in 2021, accounting for 1.3% of all protests or 3 protests each.

**Table (6): Labor Protest Distribution By Economic Sector
by Numbers and Percentages**

Economic Sector	Number of Protests	As a Percentage of All Protests
Transportation Sector	81	36.0%
Education Sector	30	13.3%
Unemployed	29	12.9%
Service Sector	19	8.6%
Manufacturing	17	7.6%
Trade Sector	10	4.4%
Health Sector	10	4.4%
UNRWA	9	4.0%
Construction sector	7	3.1%
Energy Sector	7	3.1%
Agriculture Sector	3	1.3%
Retired Workers	3	1.3%
Total	225	100.0%



DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROTESTS BY REGION

Amman, the capital of Jordan, came in first place for the number of labor protests conducted in 2021. Labor protests taking place in Amman accounted for 102 labor protests, or 45.3% of all labor protests taking place in Jordan in 2021. Protests taking place in more than one governorate accounted for 36 protests, or 16% of all protests. Karak and Aqaba were tied for being the third most likely governorates for labor protests to take place in 2021, with 16 protests (7.1%) each. Ma'an came in fourth

place, with 15 protests (6.7%), while Madaba ranked fifth with 10 protests (4.4%), followed by Irbid with 9 protests (4%). In the seventh place, the Zarqa and Tafila governorates tied with 6 protests (2.7%) each. Jerash ranked eighth with 4 protests (1.8%). Al-Balqa was in ninth place, with (3) protests (1.3%). Finally, Al-Mafraq and Ajloun tied for the least with one protest each at 0.4%.

Table (7): Protest Distribution By Governorate

Governorate	Number of Protests	Percentage of Protests
Amman	102	45.3%
Multiple Governorates	36	16.0%
Karak	16	7.1%
Aqaba	16	7.1%
Ma'an	15	6.7%
Madaba	10	4.4%
Irbid	9	4.0%
Zarqa	6	2.7%
Tafila	6	2.7%
Jerash	4	1.8%
Al-Balqa	3	1.3%
Ajloun	1	0.4%
Al-Mafraq	1	0.4%
Total	225	100.0%

TEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE LABOR PROTESTS

As for the distribution of protests by month, November ranked first with 28 protests (12.4% of all protests). This is due to two main factors. Firstly, most of the protests carried out this month were by workers at UNRWA. Secondly, government restrictions that were in place to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus were reversed in September, allowing all sectors to open and permitting gatherings.

26 protests (11.6) took place in February, most of which were held by members of

the Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate. 11.1% of protests took place in October with 25 protests, while 10.2% of protests took place in September with 23 protests. 22 protests (9.8%) took place in August. 19 protests took place in December (8.4%), while 17 protests occurred in March and June respectively (7.6% each). 15 protests took place in July (6.7%). 13 protests took place in January (5.8%). 11 protests took place in April (4.9%). Finally, 9 protests took place in May (4%).

Table (8): Labor Protest Distribution By Month

Month	Number of Protests	Percentage of
January	13	5.8%
February	26	11.6%
March	17	7.6%
April	11	4.9%
May	9	4.0%
June	17	7.6%
September	15	6.7%
August	22	9.8%
July	23	10.2%
October	25	11.1%
November	28	12.4%
December	19	8.4%
Total	225	100.0%

LENGTH OF PROTESTS

The length of the labor protests varied according to those involved, their demands, and how the protest was dealt with. The protests ranged between one and over 25 days, as the strike carried out by the workers of the Rashidiya factory in the Jordanian Cement Manufacturing Company (Lafarge) reached its 96th day in 2021 and continued until the beginning of January 2022.

Most one-day protests were halted for a variety of reasons, including pressure applied by the government and employers against protesting workers, as well as to give time to employers and government departments to consider the protesting workers' demands. Furthermore, most of the labor protests were staged without prior planning and occurred suddenly to protest specific measures.

Labor protests that lasted for one day accounted for 60.4% of the total protests, with a total of 136 protests. The second most frequent number of days for protests to last was between two and three days, accounting for 5.8% of protests. Protests that lasted between four to five days accounted for 1.8% of protests, with 4 protests total. Similarly, four protests lasting for six to 15 days were recorded, accounting for 1.8% of the total protests.

Three protests lasted between 16 and 25 days, accounting for 1.3% of all protests. Finally, protests lasting for more than 25 days accounted for 5.3% of all protests, with 12 protests total. The table below illustrates these figures.

Table (9): Labor Protest Distribution By Number Of Days

Length of Protest (by Day)	Number of Protests	Percentage of Protests
1	136	60.4%
2 - 3	13	5.8%
4 - 5	4	1.8%
6 - 15	4	1.8%
16 - 25	3	1.3%
More than 25 days	12	5.3%
Threats of protests	53	23.6%
Total	225	100.0%

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN LABOR PROTESTS

The number of participants in labor protests varied in accordance with the type of protest and those involved. Labor protests with 1-100 participants were in the first place, with 67.6% of the total protests, comprising 152 protests. Protests in which 101-500 protesters participated accounted for 14.2% of the total, with 32 protests. The protests in which 501-

1,000 protesters participated accounted for 3.7%, with 8 protests. Protests in which more than 1,000 participated accounted for 14.7% percent of protests, with 33 protests. The large numbers of participants in protests can be explained by the fact that in 2021 there was a spike of protests taking place in more than one governorate simultaneously. The table below illustrates these figures.

Table (10): Labor Protest Distribution By Number Of Participants

Number of Protestors	Number of Protests	Percentage of Protests
1 - 100	152	67.6%
101 - 500	32	14.2%
501 - 1000	8	3.6%
1000+	33	14.7%
Total	225	100.0%

THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN LABOR PROTESTS

varied in accordance with achievement of labor protest demands. Number of days of labor protests.

The numbers indicate that a majority of the labor protests in 2021 did not have their demands met. In 203 protests (90.2% of total protests), corporations and public officials did not respond to the demands of the protestors. In 10 protests (4.4%), the demands of the protestors were met. In just 2 protests (0.9%),

demands were partially fulfilled. This was the outcome of the protests by drivers and owners of buses for domestic and international transportation in Karak, and for drivers of ridesharing smartphone applications. In 10 protests (4.4%), Jordan Labor Watch's team was unable to garner information confirming that the demands of the protestors were met in full, in part, or were not met. The table below illustrates these figures.

Table (11): Labor Protest Distribution By Achievement Of Demands

Were the demands met?	Number of protests	Percentage of protests
Demands were not met	203	90.2%
Demands were met	10	4.4%
No information is available	10	4.4%
Demands were partially met	2	0.9%
Total	225	100.0%

The main reason that so many protesters' demands are not met can be attributed to the position taken by the government and the private sector to not respond to labor protesters in order to avoid encouraging further labor action. It can also be attributed to the lack of sufficient experience among most protesters in the skills for carrying out labor protests and the mechanisms and tools of collective bargaining, due to weak and ineffective trade unions.

The ineffectiveness of trade unions in Jordan, and the reason why the majority of workers in Jordan do not reach out to trade unions, is tied to the restrictions imposed within Jordanian Labor Law on the right of workers to collective bargaining. The Minister of Labor is given the authority to disband or dissolve any workers'

organization that is accused of wrong-doing. Additionally, the labor law prevents trade union pluralism and designates a minority of sectors as sectors in which workers are eligible to form trade unions.

Many sectors of workers in Jordan continue to suffer from clear challenges in the formation and regulation of trade unions in Jordan, especially as the Kingdom has yet to ratify ILO Convention No. 87 concerning the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize. Moreover, the authority of the Minister of Labor to classify and restrict the sectors in which workers are legally permitted to form trade unions, in accordance with Article 98 of the Labor Law, also represents a restriction on workers' rights to organize.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has found that while the number of labor protests in 2021 is less than the number of labor protests recorded in previous years over the past decade, the prevalence of labor protests is reflective of the fundamental power imbalances in labor relations, and this is reflective of tensions within the Jordanian labor market.

These protests reflect the depth of the economic and social crisis that Jordan is experiencing in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic, the decline in decent work indicators, the continued stagnation of and inequality in wage levels, and

the pressures that many economic sectors and workers face as a result of unjust economic policies. The labor market in Jordan continues to suffer from significant gaps in decent work standards and fundamental labor rights in terms of legislation, policies, and practices. This is evident in the national economy's inability to provide adequate decent employment opportunities, a weak social protection system for workers, and the failure to enable all workers to exercise their right to organize and bargain collectively and to promote social dialogue on multi-stakeholder policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Apply the principles and standards of decent work and fundamental principles and rights to work in all its components to all wage-earning workers in Jordan.
2. Article 31 of the Labor Law, which is relevant for the restructuring of organizations and permits for collective dismissals, must be amended.
3. The articles of the Labor Law relating to the formation of trade unions must be amended so that every wage-earning worker in Jordan is granted the right to freely establish a trade union. The monopoly that currently formally recognized trade unions enjoy over workers' representation must be abolished, as these trade unions lack the most basic provisions of democratic representation and do not allow for changes in leadership. The Labor Law must be amended so that it is compatible with the provisions of the Jordanian Constitution. Moreover, the process of establishing labor unions in Jordan must be reformed, bringing it into harmony with the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which was ratified by Jordan and promulgated in the Official Gazette. The International Labor Organization Convention 87 pertaining to union freedom and the right to organize must be urgently ratified.
4. Provisions of the Civil Service Code should be amended to allow public sector employees to establish unions freely and ensure their rights. These rights are set forth in the constitutional amendments of 2011 and the ruling of the Constitutional Court in its Interpretation No. 6 for the year 2013, which guarantees public sector workers the right to form unions. Amending the Civil Service Code should bring it into line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which Jordan ratified and which was promulgated in the Official Gazette. Among other changes, this should include allowing collective bargaining between government departments and workers, because it is unreasonable for labor protests in the public sector to be dealt with as absences that merit penalization.
5. Maximum wages need to be set. While the salaries of two-thirds of wage workers in Jordan are under 500 Jordanian Dinars per month, a number of high-level employees are working in the same public and private sector institutions and obtaining excessively high salaries, which is increasing social disparities and tensions.
6. The provisions of the Labor Law relating to the concept of labor disputes and settlement mechanisms should be amended. These have proven a failure in finding just solutions for escalating labor disputes. It has become necessary to use new mechanisms and techniques to resolve these disputes in a way that is in line with the provisions of the International Labor Organization Convention 98 pertaining to the right to organize and bargain collectively.
7. The effectiveness of the inspections carried out by the Ministry of Labor in the labor market to ensure the implementation of the Labor Law's provisions needs to be strengthened. This requires an increase in the allocations for the Ministry of Labor in the public budget so that the ministry can increase the number of inspectors and develop its inspection capacity.



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