Guide on Combating Violence against Women in Public Life

النساء يجلبن
للسياسة قيم وآراء ورؤى مختلفة
ويضعن معايير أكثر تنوعاً ل عملية
صناعة القرار. فالجهود الدولية
لزيادة نسبة مشاركة المرأة في
السياسة تصطدم بكثير من
التحديات والمقاومة ومن أبرزها
(العنف السياسي) فقي حين تنادي
أجندة التنمية المستدامة ٢٠٣٠
وعبر الهدف الخامس منها بإزالة
العقبات في الفجوة بين
الجنسين وإعطاء النساء تمثيل
متساوي ل كل المواقع ٥٠%
نجد من يحاولون إعادة المرأة
ال القضايا المغلقة على اعتبار
أنها البنية الطبيعة للمرأة التي لا
يجوز أن تخرج منها كما نجد من
يحاولون اظهارها غير كفؤة في
المواقع القيادية وغير صالحة للعمل
العام ومن يحاولون وضعها كذلك بصورة
التابع غير القادر على ان يكون الأول أو القائد.
ومن يحاولون نزع الصفة الانسانية عن
النساء القويات والقادرات على اعتبار
أنهن نساء مسترجلات او أمهات
أو زوجات مقصرات. وبذا
كل هذه الصفات
التي يحاولون ألصاقها بالمرأة
يعود بالمرأة
إلى المرأة

Politics will not be
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Women bring different values,
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followers
who are
unable to be the
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neglecting mothers

WFD

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FOREWORD

There is a general understanding that the political violence that women are subjected to, is part of the cost that they must pay, in exchange for her participation in political life, the truth is the exact opposite, the real price is the absence of the women's participation in political life.This Guide highlights among many other factors, the main characteristics and forms of violence against women in politics or in public life. It also provides protection and prevention measures that women can adopt in order to address violence. I believe that the guidance, and practical options to build capacity and support Arab women who decide to enter the sphere of politics and public life, which is often not easy; will have its benefits reflected in the short and long term.

Among the features of the guide is the participatory and consultative approach that was adopted during its preparation, in addition to the diversity of the experiences of its developers, and the importance of information collected directly from the field, based on the opinions and experiences of a large number of Jordanian women, some of which shared their suffering from political violence. The content of this guide is considered a practical tool for the use of parliamentarians, members of municipal councils, political parties, trade unionists, activists in student councils, members of boards of directors, workers in the public and private sectors, and many other sectors.

Therefore, I would like to express my deep appreciation, and my sincere thanks to everyone who supported and contributed to the preparation of this guide, the National Democratic Institute, the Coalition of Women Parliamentarians, and the National Advisory Team to Combat Violence against Women in Public Life , and to all the women who participated in the meetings and sessions, and contributed to sharing their experiences and suffering they underwent with political violence, which added real life experience to the Guide and gave it more credibility.

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal

Politics will not be whole without women, as women bring different values, opinions, and visions to politics and set diverse standards in the decision-making process. International efforts to increase women's participation in politics are met with many challenges and resistance, most notably Violence against Women in Public Life(VAW-PL). While the agenda for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals calls for eliminating hurdles in the gender gap and giving women equal representation in all positions through Goal 5, there are still those who try to bring women back to closed spaces. There are those who try to show women as incompetent in leadership positions and unfit for public work; and those who try to place women in the category of followers who are unable to be the first in rank or leadership. There are those who try to dehumanize women who are strong and capable, accusing them of being manly or neglecting mothers or wives.

Amidst all these obstacles that aim to set women back, a clear fact remains and must be highlighted. No country can achieve sustainable development, democracy, progress, good governance, and reform without women's real and equal inclusion. This shifts the demand for women's participation from being categorized as a feminist demand to a national demand. Women must believe that their participation in public life is not an option or a luxury, but rather an obligation and commitment to their homelands. There is a lost opportunity—politically economically, and socially—for any country that does not utilize the strengths and competencies of its women and girls.

Wafa Bani Mustafa
Chairperson of the Coalition of Arab MPs to Combat Violence against Women

Violence against women in politics is one of the most significant barriers to women's political and public participation. Women are wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. Throughout the world, women are routinely threatened, harassed, deprived of resources, assaulted, and killed simply because they want to exercise their right to participate in political processes and public life. Often, women are reluctant to participate or withdraw from the political process and leadership positions due to violence they are exposed to or as a result of fear of potential violence. A common perception is that violence- in its various forms- is the cost of women's participation in political and public life and leadership roles; however, this violence is 'not the cost.' In reality, the cost of political violence against women is the loss of women's participation in the political process and leadership roles. Women are an essential pillar of society, and the loss of their participation will negatively affect participatory decision-making and responsibility. In 2016, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) launched the '#NotTheCost' initiative to highlight this phenomenon and work to reduce it. In 2018, NDI launched the "Think10" tool that helps women pre-assess the risks they may be exposed to due to engaging in political or public work. This guide is an introduction to clarify the concept of violence against women in public life, describe forms of violence and elements related to this form of violence, and outline some steps that may help women protect themselves and prevent it.

Ali Saleh Al-Omari
National Democratic Institute

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women in public life (VAW-PL) is a visible phenomenon, but it is often exercised through hidden tools. This phenomenon represents a real and serious concern for all those working to promote democracy and public work worldwide. Violence against active women in political and public life may hinder building a sustainable and resilient democracy that would benefit from a policy created on inclusion, equality, justice, and equal opportunities. It covers all political sectors and targets women - whether personally or through a family member or via the Internet - regardless of their political roles, age, background, or status.

The political party offices of Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) held a two-day international summit on Violence against Women in Political and Public Life, featuring 54 speakers and 150 delegates from over 20 countries. The conference produced a rich collection of ideas and experiences, highlighting the universality of the issue of VAW-PL. While the forms and dynamics behind VAW-PL are localized, the experience across contexts is universal.

At the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in the World (CSW), which will be held in 2021, the United Nations will adopt as its priority theme: "the full and effective participation of women and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, to achieve gender equality and empowering all women and girls." Former MP Wafa Bani Mustafa took part as an expert in the 65th CSW expert group meeting. The team drafted a report containing a summary of the discussion and recommendations, which will be presented at the 65th session of the CSW and on the UN Women website.

Additionally, UN Women, in cooperation with the Arab League, will hold a preparatory meeting for the Commission on the Status of Women hosted by member states on a rotating basis, where MP Mustafa will be part of this group of experts.

Violence applied to women active in political and public life should not be "the cost of politics." In fact, it costs politics the benefits of sustainable and responsive democratic governance that an inclusive political space can create. #NotTheCost.[1]

According to a study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 44 percent of women parliamentarians were subjected to some form of political violence, and a fifth of that percentage reported sexual violence[2]. A study conducted by NDI shows that 46 percent of women activists were threatened with sexual assault or assault in 172 countries.[3]

In a recent survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the women MPs surveyed reported their exposure to the forms of violence shown in the table below: [4]

1 OECD (2011), Public Servants as Partners for Growth: Toward a Stronger, Leaner and More Equitable Workforce, OECD, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264166707-en
OECD (2014), Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth, OECD, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264210745-en
2 IPU. 2016. "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians." http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf
3 NDI 2016. Not the Cost Program Guide https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/not-the-cost-program-guidance-final.pdf
4 Ibid IPU

Type of Violence	Psychological Violence	Economic Violence	Physical Violence	Sexual Violence
Percentage of female parliamentarians experiencing it	82%	32%	25%	21%

The hardest part of violence against women in public life is the feeling that the institutional environment tolerates this type of behavior. Women leaders feel that reporting in these cases affects their image, career, political future, and support level provided by their family. This often creates an imbalance of power between genders and causes a lack of specific mechanisms to confront violence against women in public life or creates doubts about the effectiveness of these mechanisms in cases of violence in public life.

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE [5]

Violence against women in public life is defined as an act or a group of acts of pressure, aggression, persecution, harassment, disregard, exclusion, threat, or declining to perform specific actions, committed by a person or group of persons directly or indirectly or through third parties, against women candidates or elected women at all levels of representation (local , municipal and governorate councils, or parliament) or appointed to government or leadership positions, trade unions, women's rights advocates, leaders and members of political parties, civil society, associations or leaders in the private sector or who are practicing a public / political role and all women in decision-making positions and public affairs, personally or against their families or those who represent their interests, with the aim of minimizing, suspending, preventing or restricting their job functions which are an integral part of their position in order to induce or compel them to do work against their will, or to make them reach to the point of negligence in performing their job duties or in exercising their rights. It is performed in a context that establishes a general view that shows women's inability to take on work in public affairs and focus on women's traditional stereotypical roles in private spaces.

CHARACTERISTICS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

- It targets women because of their gender.
- Its very form can be gendered, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence.
- Its impact is to discourage women in particular from being or becoming politically active.
- Cases of reporting this type of violence are few due to a culture of silence and fear of appearing weak or incapable to enter the world of politics. It is also possible that such cases are not taken seriously by the authorities, mainly when there is no apparent physical violence.

POLITICAL LEADERS AFFECTED BY VAW-PL

1. Women members of the Ministerial Council and workers in the public sector.
2. Women parliamentarians (Members of Upper House and Lower House).
3. Women members of Municipal and Local Councils.
4. Women candidates for elections on the national and local level.
5. Women students running or winning council/ union memberships.
6. Women workers in electoral campaigns.
7. Women members of unions, associations, Chambers of Commerce and Trade and board members for companies.
8. Women members of political parties.
9. Women activists in civil and community work.
10. Local women leaders (Tribal).

5 NDI 2016. Not the Cost Program Guide https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/not-the-cost-program-guidance-final.pdf
In addition to the not the cost guide, this information was gathered from the recommendations of workshops held by the National Democratic Institute and the Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Violence against Women in May 2019 and October 2019.

WHO CAUSES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

Political violence may occur by some:

On the social level	On the political level
Local community	Political parties
Family members	Members of the elected councils
Non-governmental organizations and private companies	Persons working in Media
Activists on social media	Employees of the elected institutions
Media	Members of the government or parliament

FORMS OF VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE: [6]

1. Psychological violence: involves hostile behavior and abuse intended to cause fear and/or emotional damage. In politics, this may include threats of physical violence, blackmail, or putting women under pressure by threatening to discredit her social status in society, which may include criticizing how she looks or dresses. Violence, in this case, may be in the form of marginalization and denial of opportunities for women.

2. Physical violence: involves injuries inflicted on women directly and acts of bodily harm carried out against their family members. Examples include assassination, kidnapping, beating, and domestic abuse to prevent women's political participation. It could also include draining women's physical energies and keeping them away from their primary jobs.

3. Social violence: involves pressure on women because they belong to the family, tribe, or region. It also involves blaming women for causing loss, harming the tribe's consolidation, or negatively impacting alliances by practicing her political work. It also involves preventing women from running or forcing them to vote for specific people.

4. Economic violence: involves coercive behavior to control a person's access to economic resources. Women may lack financial support from their families, thus completely hindering or preventing their political activities or denying them basic political rights, including voting in elections. Women politicians may be systematically denied access to financial and economic resources that they are entitled to by law or otherwise available to politically active male counterparts—resources necessary, such as campaigning, professional development, or routine political organizing.

5. Sexual violence: includes sexual assault, threats of abuse, harassment, implications or extortion, and sexual harassment of all kinds and forms.

6. Legislative violence: Violence based on harmful legislative discrimination towards women. It may include not considering gender when preparing or drafting legislation regulating public life. It also includes several levels, including laws, regulations, and instructions. The focus should be on legislation at all levels being gender-sensitive and allowing women to participate in all areas.

7. Cyber violence: It is very common today due to the prevalence and ease of use of technology. Cyber violence is a challenge for women because of the psychological, economic, and social impact it may have on them. This includes abusing women by bullying them on social media, avoiding positive criticism, and generalizing mistakes committed by some to the public. Another form of cyber violence is piracy, which exposes women's private lives and could lead to many negative effects. Society in general and women, in particular, should be aware of the negative impact of the inappropriate use of technology. Deterrent legislation should be put in place, and at the same time, the difference between freedom of expression of citizens and character assassination should be clarified.

Cyber violence takes the following forms:
• Bullying and attacks on women politicians (or in public life) based on their gender and away from the right of expression and criticism of the public figure
• Hacking, which is targeting and penetrating the pages and accounts of women politicians.
• Stalking, which is stealthily pursuing political women on all social media and public pages in a manner intended to harm women involved in public affairs.[7]

THE CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE

- **In the short term**
- Decreases the number of female participants, female candidates, and women's involvement in public affairs.
- Intimidatesthe political community and the disruption of the principles of equality / democracy.
- Distorts the image of women involved in public affairs and leadership positions.
- The withdrawal of some women leaders from public affairs as a result of the frequency of political violence.

- **In the long term**
- Destroys democratic structures and creating general frustration for the younger generation, especially girls.
- Decreases levels of general openness towards developing the concept of positive development.
- Creates a state of hesitation among young people and young generations to participate in the political and public life of all kinds.
- Stands as an obstacle in the face of national and international efforts to increase women's political participation.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE

All women are subject to violence in public life. Actions to combat violence against women in public life must be on several levels.

At the National Level
1. Urge states and governments to abide by the incorporation of international conventions on women's rights or preventing discrimination against them and additional protocols in national policies and legislation and urging states to explicitly stipulate the place of international agreements and treaties within the national legislative sequence.

7 UNESCO documents, 'Combatting Online Violence against Women and Girls: A Worldwide Wake-Up Call.' launched by the the Broadband Commission Working Group on Gender, https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/highlightdocumentenglish.pdf

2. Encourage states and governments to pay attention to the 2030 sustainable development agenda, especially the fifth goal on gender equality and the target related to ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

3. Support and stimulate awareness programs and campaigns and instilling concepts of the importance of everyone's participation.

4. Periodically and continuously review school curricula to consolidate the concepts of human rights and women's rights, to ensure the creation of generations that adopt the concepts of gender equality in society and the participation of all in decision-making.

5. Implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, security, and peace, as the resolution urges states to take the necessary measures in matters related to women's participation in decision-making, negotiations, and peace processes. Additionally, integrate gender in training, peacekeeping, protecting women, and developing and implementing national plans for the resolutions in all countries.

6. Allocate budgets to support programs that enhance women's participation in political and public life and the development of women's leadership skills.

7. Develop a special system to assist women subjected to political violence and creating practical mechanisms to support and advocate for women defending women's rights.

8. Ensure legislative protection by stipulating in the constitution or relevant laws the compulsory representation of women in specific percentages in representational and leadership positions (government, parliament, parties, elected councils, unions … etc) and criminalizing all forms of violence, including political violence.

9. Encourage the formation of national alliances and networks supporting women involved in public affairs to patronize them.

10. Build the capacities of law enforcement officials to confront violence against women in political life in a way that ensures their ability to implement laws.

11. Conduct periodic surveys on the phenomenon, improving monitoring mechanisms, and providing indicators at the level of governmental and non-governmental institutions.

12. Activate the role of educational and legal institutions to raise awareness on the concept of political violence.

13. Ensure that departments concerned with protecting women and the family take all necessary measures to protect women from physical, sexual, and moral violence.

At the Parliamentary Level

1. Ensure the inclusion of the protection of women from political violence in the parliament's internal bylaws, codes of conduct, and the agendas of parliamentary conduct committees. Additionally encourage parliaments to adopt codes of conduct or codes of ethics and link them to parliamentary committees concerned with monitoring their implementation.

2. Work to gain support from parliament, parties, men, women, and the media to protect women from political violence, emphasize women's influential role in politics, and build a women-friendly political culture.

3. Build supportive mechanisms such as the affiliation to political parties and blocs in the parliament.

4. Define and create credible mechanisms within the parliament, easily accessible by individuals to file complaints and impartially investigate them. Procedures should include due consideration of complaints of harassment, abuse, bullying, sexual harassment, and violent behaviors.

5. Amend legislation regarding political parties, the election law (quota), domestic violence, the labor law, the general budget law, the penal code, and the constitution to provide a safe and fair environment for women to participate in public life.

6. Build a bloc or a caucus for women politicians to contribute to confronting smear campaigns at all levels.

7. Find medical and psychological assistance and support services and ensuring confidentiality.

8. Provide legal aid services and facilitating access to justice.

9. Create a gender-sensitive policy within parliaments, and then training and educating parliamentarians and employees to deal with these policies.

10. Build a specific accountability system and determining deterrent penalties.

11. Develop parliamentary evidence to eliminate harassment and bullying in the workplace.

12. Strengthen the role of civil society institutions and the media in monitoring cases of political violence in the parliament.

At the Political Parties Level:

1. Pass internal regulations explicitly prohibits members' violent behaviors, with clear and enforceable penalties for those who violate them.

2. Conduct an internal audit to assess where internal procedures and practices overtly or inadvertently create disadvantages for or discrimination against women.

3. Educate members on the importance of the role of women and protecting them from violence.

4. Allocate a portion of party funds for women members to fund the personal protection plans they will need to remain safe and active in politics.

5. Strengthen the political capabilities of women, including negotiation and campaigning skills.

6. Take into consideration the party needs of women when approving their programs and budgets.

7. Allocate leadership seats for women during elections and inside parties.

8. Allocate a specific mechanism for women's affairs within the party.

At the Civil Society Level

1. Determine what actions society views as political violence against women.

2. Spread awareness among civil society organizations and individuals about the effects of political violence.

3. Adopt a mechanism to monitor and address political violence's effects, whether in elections, parties, government work, and the media.

4. Take into account political violence by monitoring legislation related to political action.

5. Identify specific actions that can be taken at the national, parliamentary, and political party levels and organize an effective advocacy campaign to push for these measures to be adopted and fully implemented.

6. Establish psychological support networks at the local level. Politically abused or fearful people can turn to these networks to obtain appropriate counseling and guidance.

7. Establish clubs and groups that train women and build their capabilities to provide them with the tools and skills needed to confront political violence forms.

At the Media and Social Media Level

1. Change the stereotype of women and clarifying actions that are political violence against women and strengthening the image of the importance of women's political participation.

2. Issue directives to all governmental and private media and film producers to use all available media platforms and focus them on women's achievement in public and private work, as well as changing the stereotype of women. [8]

3. Build communication with media professionals who cover political activities in parliament and the government on gender sensitivity and hold training workshops on this topic.

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8 Ibid

At the Cyber Violence Level:
Best practice should be based on 3 S's– (Sensitization, Safeguards, and Sanctions)

At the Sensitization level: Prevent cyber VAW-PL through changes in social attitudes:
1. Society to prevent all forms of cyber VAW-PL through training, learning, campaigning, and community development.
2. Justice and security/police to integrate cyber VAW-PL concerns into all criminal and cyber-security training. [9]
3. Work with influencers in the media, technical influencers, and influencers on social media to enhance women's political role.
4. Trainwomen involved in political work and public life on personal protection methods and maintaining and defending the individual reputation.

At the safeguards level: Oversight & monitoring to minimize risks for women & girls
1. Maintain industry-responsibility of Internet infrastructure & customer care practices.
2. Develop technical solutions.
3. Promote due diligence & duty to report abuse.[10]

At the sanctions level: Adapt & apply laws & regulations
1. Develop laws, regulations, and governance mechanisms.
2. Ensure courts and legal systems enforce compliance and effective punitive consequences for perpetrators.
3. Conduct consultations on a cyber civil rights agenda.[11]
4. Monitor and control social media and taking the necessary measures against the users of these means in the event of political violence against women.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE BY WOMEN GOING INTO POLITICAL OR PUBLIC LIFE?

Before or during political activity or public life, women should conduct an individual risk assessment. Self-assessments aim to provide women with an initial reading of the potential risks they may face by assessing their personal security, finding a plan to enhance their safety, and communicating with professionals to obtain appropriate advice.

To that end, the National Democratic Institute developed the #think10 [12] safety planning tool, which provides women in politics guidance on enhancing their personal security by combining scores from a self-assessment questionnaire and the country score from NDI's Women's Political Participation Risk Index. The WPPRI calculates the risk to politically active women in 172 countries. In using the tool, women in politics can develop a safety plan relevant to their personal and professional profiles, and in their political context.

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9 Ibid
10 Ibid
11 Ibid
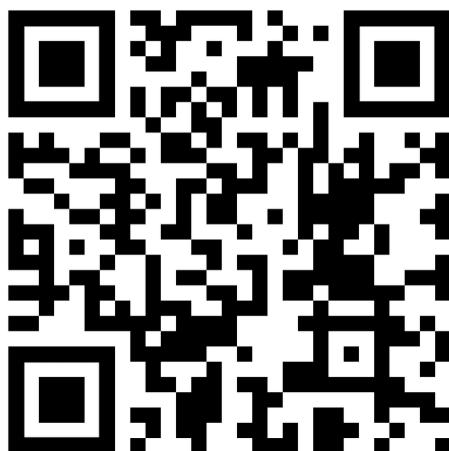12 NDI 2018, Think 10 https://think10.demcloud.org

AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

After the Assessment stage, take the following steps:

- Identify trusted contacts you can turn to talk about the situation you are facing. These entities (family members, civil society institutions, formal institutions, or non-governmental organizations) may communicate with these agencies to take advice, provide psychological support, and provide suggested solutions.
- Determine safe places; if this violence may affect your physical safety, you must specify safe places that you can resort to being safe. Consider accessibility to these places at any time.
- Protect personal information and protect important documents. You should always make sure that your personal information and important documents are safe. It is crucial to prepare backup copies, both paper and electronic, of all essential documents and information.
- Be cautious when traveling and while you are on the move. You should take into account the utmost caution when traveling and transportation, and that includes during the time of movement, the mechanism of movement, and the roads that you might take.
- Find the digital footprint and use advanced electronic protection methods. The highest degree of electronic protection must be activated by protecting social media accounts from hacking and avoiding becoming a victim of piracy.
- Know the support services provided to women in public work. You should familiarize yourself with government agencies, individuals, and civil society institutions that may provide you with protection and advice. You should contact these authorities in advance to open communication channels early, which will facilitate communication later.

> There are tools and entities in every country that deal with violence issues against women in all its forms. These entities vary between governmental and non-governmental institutions. For example, in Jordan, the **Family Protection Department** is part of the Public Security Directorate and can be reached in physical, psychological, or sexual violence cases. There is a Cyber Crime Unit that women may turn to in cases of cyber violence. As for non-governmental organizations, they include the **Coalition of Women Parliamentarians from Arab countries to combat Violence against Women**, which women can resort to if they feel any kind of violence, as it provides them with suggestions and directs them to what needs to be done to stop the ongoing violence or prevent possible violence.

A team to combat violence against women in public life was formed comprising 17 experts from Jordan. Five sub-teams emerged from it: Legislation and Legal Aid team, the Media Team, the Economic Team, the Academic Team, and the Cyber Violence Protection Team. An email was designated to receive all complaints about violence against women in public life: cvaw_arab@outlook.com

You can access Think10 website by scanning the QR code

This leaflet was produced by the coalition of women parliamentarians from Arab countries to combat violence against women and the National Democratic Institute – Jordan with support from the United States Agency for International Development and the Westminster Democracy Foundation

OECD (2011), Public Servants as Partners for Growth: Toward a Stronger, Leaner and More Equitable Workforce, OECD, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264166707-en.

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NDI 2018, Think 10 https://think10.demcloud.org