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Jordan: Release of detainees ‘too little, too late’

The king of Jordan’s decision to release 116 people detained for protesting about the cut in fuel subsidies announced on 13 November is “too little, too late”, Amnesty International said.

“There’s a danger King Abdullah’s announcement will be seen as nothing more than a PR exercise because the reality is that dozens of people in 2012 have been detained solely for peacefully calling for economic and political reforms,” said Ann Harrison, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

“This stifling of political dissent is entirely unacceptable and though we’re pleased 116 people are to be set free, unless this means there are wider human rights reforms planned then it really is too little, too late.

“At the same time we urge the government to take all steps to ensure that following this announcement the 116 are released without delay particularly those like ‘Adnan al-Howeish who are in urgent need of specialized medical care.”

“There are 13 individuals who are not being released under this Royal Decree. We’re seeking assurances that they are not being held to punish them for legitimate protest, not being subjected to ill treatment and given a fair hearing according to international standards.”

Amnesty International also called for prompt, thorough and independent investigations into claims that those held had been subject to beatings, denied adequate medical treatment and refused access to lawyers and family members.

“The Jordanian authorities also must stop prosecuting people before the State Security Court which is presided over by judges a majority of whom are from the armed forces and where proceedings fall short of international standards for fair trials,” Harrison added.

[See Amnesty International’s briefing “Jordan: Arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment and lack of adequate medical care of detained protestors”](#)