

Promoting Accessible Tourism for Persons with Motor and Visual Disabilities: Ajloun Castle and Mar Elias Hill



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1 Executive Summary

The percentage of persons with disabilities reached 11.2% of the total Jordanian population, aged five years and over, (11.7% of all Jordanian males and 10.6% of all Jordanian females). Visual impairment was the most prevalent among Jordanians at a rate of 6%, followed by motor disability at 4.8%.¹

Recently, human rights activists have made calls shedding light on the issue of accessible tourism. In essence, these calls embodied the need to reconsider the extent to which tourist places are accessible in a manner that commensurate with the needs of persons with disabilities (PwDs) without jeopardising the monuments' identity. The majority of touristic places suffer from insufficiency or lack of capabilities that persons with disabilities need, particularly those who suffer from mobility and visual disabilities. It is more difficult for their families and caretakers to accompany them to such places, which is another reason for why persons with disabilities are confined to their homes.²

This policy brief is designed to study the status of the touristic places in Ajloun Governorate, specifically Ajloun Castle and Mar Elias Hill, and the extent to which they are prepared in a manner appropriate for the needs of persons with motor and visual disabilities. The policy brief concluded with a number of suggested recommendations for decision makers and relevant authorities to ensure accessible tourist places, in a manner that guarantees that they enjoy their right to access tourist sites.

The brief identified several challenges facing persons with visual and motor disabilities that impede their access to Ajloun Castle and Mar Elias Hill. These challenges are a result of the following: the difficult geographical nature of the area, poor reasonable accommodating arrangements, poor accessibility, high financial cost required to ensure accommodating arrangements, the small number of guides and tour guides (aware of accessibility requirements), the low inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in higher education curricula. These challenges negatively affect PwDs' psychological and social states, as well as impede their right to religious practices at Mar Elias Hill in particular.

This policy brief concluded with the following number of suggested recommendations:

- **First:** Improving environmental preparedness and accessibility for persons with disabilities to touristic places, in partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), the Ministry of Public Works (MPWH), local municipalities, as well as the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD).

¹Higher Population Council, Report on: "Jordan participates with the world on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities," December 3, 2020.

<https://www.hpc.org.jo/ar/content/الإعاقاة-ذوي-الأشخاص-الدولي-باليوم-الاحتفال-العالم-بالمشارك-الأردن-بشارك-العالم-الاحتفال-باليوم-الدولي-للأشخاص-ذوي-الإعاقاة>

² Enjoying Tourism... In the Presence of Persons with Disabilities, Samer Abdel Dayem, Al-Anbat, September 25, 2022. <https://alanbatnews.net/article/343123>

- **Second:** Increasing the percentage of persons with disabilities working in the tourism sector, in partnership between MoTA, the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the Civil Service Bureau, and HCD.
- **Third:** Increasing investment in touristic and archaeological sites, taking into account the rights of PwDs, in cooperation between MoTA, the Ministry of Investment (MoIn), HCD, and local municipalities.

2 Paper Methodology

To achieve its objectives, the policy brief applied the following methodology:

First: Reviewing secondary sources and references, as well as legislation and laws related to accessible tourism and persons with disabilities.

Second: Conducting in-depth interviews with the competent authorities, and here are their names with due respect to their titles:

Hamza Al Zaghoul	Mayor, Ajloun Municipality.
Raad Al-Tal	University of Jordan, Dept of Economics.
Samer Ababneh	Ajloun College (Balqa Uni), Dept of Tourism Management.
Abdul Rahman Salama	Activist in the field of tourism for PwDs.
Faisal Al-Nawasra	Ajloun National University, expert on the rights of PwDs
Majed Alwan	Director of the Public Works Directorate, Ajloun.
Muhammad Al-Deek	Tourism Director, Ajloun Governorate.

Third: Holding 1 focus group discussion with 6 people with motor and visual disabilities in Ajloun Governorate.

It must be emphasised here that the information contained in this policy brief does not necessarily reflect the views of the participants, and they are not responsible for its contents. This brief represents the positions and conclusions of the research team after analysing the experiences and information regarding touristic places and persons with disabilities in Ajloun Governorate, in addition to the results of the focus group discussion and the desk research conducted by the team.

3 Introduction

Jordan is considered one of the most important touristic attractions in the Middle East due to its rich religious and historical heritage, in addition to the diversity of terrain and archaeological, religious, therapeutic, cultural and recreational touristic sites.³ Jordan has five archaeological and touristic sites that are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, which are as follows: the ancient city of Petra, Amra Palace, Wadi Rum, Al-Maghtas (Baptismal Site of Jesus Christ), Umm Al-Rasas area.⁴ Jordan also has other touristic attractions, such as: (Wadi Rum desert, the Roman amphitheatre, Karak Castle, Ajloun Castle, Mar Elias, the Dead Sea, Ma'in Hot Springs, Wadi Mujib, Umm Qais Antiquities, and Dana Biosphere Reserve).

Despite the low percentage of Jordanian employees in the tourism sector, which is around 2%⁵, the tourism sector in Jordan is one of the most important sectors for stimulating and reviving the national economy, as its contribution to the GDP is approximately 14%,⁶ and the revenues generated from this sector constitute a total of 4 billion and 300 million dinars.⁷ According to the statistics of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities MoTA, nearly 2.3 million tourists visited Jordan last year,⁸ with an increase of nearly 90% compared to 2020, due to the immobility imposed by the COVID-19.⁹

Due to the importance of the tourism sector, MoTA in cooperation with Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) launched a national programme called “*Urdunna Jannah*”¹⁰ literally meaning *Our Jordan is Heaven* in 2021, which aimed to encourage the demand for domestic tourism, with support exceeding 50% from MoTA and JTB.¹¹

Ajloun Governorate has a diverse tourist nature, which ranges between tall mountains, waterfalls, valleys, and green spaces. The governorate also has a number of historic monuments, castles, mosques, churches, and ancient buildings that represent different civilisations such as the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic civilisations.¹² In view of this, it is necessary to focus on making all touristic places available to all citizens and in a manner corresponding to their different needs. In this context, persons

³ Tourism in Jordan, Jordan University of Science and Technology, 2021.

<https://www.just.edu.jo/ar/iso/Pages/Tourism.aspx>

⁴ Tourism in Jordan.. Huge revenues translate international prestige, Al-Ain News, 2021.

<https://al-ain.com/article/centenary-jordan-major-capital-world-tourism>

⁵ Economic Policy Council, Jordan Economic Growth Stimulus Plan, 2018-2022.

https://mohe.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page.2022-2018_الخطط_الاقتصادية_الأردنية.pdf

⁶ More than 4 billion dinars, the contribution of the tourism sector to the GDP,” Al-Mamlaka, February 10, 2021.

https://www.almamlakatv.com/news/56688_أكثر-من-4-مليارات-دينار-مساهمة-القطاع-السياحي-في-الناتج-المحلي

⁷ An in-depth interview with the economic expert in Jordan, Dr. Raad Al-Tal.

⁸ Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2021 statistics.

⁹ Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2020 statistics.

¹⁰ For more information on “Our Jordan ..A Paradise”, visit the following link:<https://www.jannah.jo>

¹¹ The official website of Hosna Radio, the program on “Our Jordan ..A Paradise”, will start today, June 10, 2021.

¹² Tourism in Ajloun, the most beautiful areas. 2021. Kitabi site.

with disabilities need better environmental facilities and accommodating arrangements that ensure their access to all touristic places.

The absence of environmental facilities and accommodating arrangements in touristic sites prevents PwDs from enjoying their right to tourism through visiting archaeological and touristic sites. It also denies the state the effective participation of all human resources in its GDP. This is stressed by economist Dr. Raad al-Tal who said: "Improving the infrastructure of the touristic sites in a manner commensurate with the needs of PwDs will increase the number of visitors, and thus increase the productivity of the touristic site, and eventually the income and revenues from such places.

In this context, it is necessary to shed light on the concept of accessible tourism and how to achieve it for PwDs, in order to ensure the provision of an appropriate environment to create a tourism experience that makes tourists with disabilities enjoy the tourist sites.

4 Key Terminology

Persons with disabilities: "Any person who has a long-term deficiency in physical, sensory, mental, psychological, or neurological functions, which, as a result of its interference with physical and behavioural barriers, prevents the person from carrying out one of the main life activities, or exercising one of the rights or one of the basic freedoms independently".¹³

Persons with motor disabilities: "A non-sensory disorder or defect that prevents an individual from using his or her body normally to carry out motor functions".¹⁴

Persons with visual disabilities: "People who lose the ability to use their sense of sight effectively, which negatively affects their performance and growth. The loss of vision may be total or partial".¹⁵

Reasonable Accommodating Arrangements: "Modifying the environmental conditions in terms of time and place to enable a person with a disability to exercise a right or a freedom or achieve access to a service on the basis of fairness with others".¹⁶

Accessibility: "Preparing buildings, roads, facilities, and other public and private places available to the public, and making them suitable in accordance with building requirements codes for the disabled issued under the provisions of the Jordanian National Building Law and any special standards issued or approved by the Council".¹⁷

¹³ Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20 of 2017, Article No. (3).

<http://hcd.gov.jo/ar/content/القانون-حقوق-الأشخاص-ذوي-الإعاقات>

¹⁴ "Mobility disability, introduction, concept, definition, types, causes, Shams website.

<https://www.starshams.com/2021/10/blog-post.html>

¹⁵ Ragab, Ahmed. 2013, Introduction to Visual Impairment.

¹⁶ Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. 20 of 2017.

¹⁷ Ibid

Comprehensive Design: "The harmonisation of services and goods in the stages of their design, production and provision, in order to allow their use in an accessible manner for all".¹⁸

Accommodating tourism: "This type of tourism is related to caring for persons with disabilities, the elderly, and pregnant women who are unable to enjoy the tourism experiences, due to circumstances beyond their control. This is done by providing them with special services in tourist destinations, thus removing challenges and problems, and finding an innovative solution".¹⁹

5 Legal Framework

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,²⁰ which was ratified by Jordan and adhered to in 1975, in its Article No. (2) guarantees that rights are exercised without any discrimination based on race, colour, sex, or other reasons, including disability.

The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²¹ affirmed its rejection of discrimination, specifically on the basis of disability, and defined such discrimination in Article No. (2) as: "Discrimination on the basis of disability means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation". The Convention also stressed in all of its clauses the emphasis on the full exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities without any discrimination, and their full and effective involvement in society, while taking all appropriate steps to ensure the availability of reasonable accommodating arrangements commensurate with their different needs.

The same Convention referred directly to the right of PwDs to tourism, as Article No. (30) referred to "anticipation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport" in item (5/c) "to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues", while item (5/e) of the same article stipulates the need: "to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organisation of recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting activities."

Locally, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD)²² is the main national reference for drawing up policies and implementing monitoring processes through clear scientific and methodological mechanisms, which aim to create a society where persons with disabilities enjoy a decent and sustainable life, ensuring their active participation based on the principles of fairness and

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Raslan, Amal, everything you need to know about affordable tourism. Youm7 Magazine, 2019.

²⁰ To view the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, via the following link:
<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/arab/b002.html>

²¹ To view the International Convention for Persons with Disabilities, visit the following link:
<https://www.ohchr.org/ar/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

²² The official website of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
<http://hcd.gov.jo/ar/contentالمحة-عامة/>

equality. According to Law No. 20 of 2017 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it aims at: “Ensuring the provision of reasonable accommodating arrangements, accessible forms, accessibility and inclusive design for persons with disabilities, as a necessary requirement for the exercise of their rights and freedoms,” in addition to: “Reducing physical and behavioural barriers for persons with disabilities, which includes the lack or absence of reasonable accommodating arrangements, accessible formats, or accessibility” is one of the main principles underlying the law.

Ensuring the access and inclusion of persons with disabilities was not far from the demands of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is explicitly referred to in Article No. (32) in Clause (b)

The Ministry of Public Works and Housing in coordination with the Greater Amman Municipality, the municipalities, and entities considered within their jurisdiction, the Jordanian National Building Commission, the HCD, government and non-government organisations of relevance, will execute the following: “Draw up a national plan for the implementation of alterations to buildings, facilities, places of worship, and tourist sites that extend services to the public...

Based on the necessity of advancing the tourism situation in Jordan, by emphasising the importance of creating sustainable tourism development values, and dealing with the challenges facing the tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism launched a number of national visions and strategies, the latest of which was the national strategy for the year 2021-2025 and the inclusion of PwDs and the endeavour to integrate them in society as one of its goals.

6 Accommodating arrangements, Ajloun castle and Mar Elias Hill

6.1 Ajloun Castle

Ajloun Castle (Al-Rabad Castle) was built by Izz al-Din Osama on one of the Bani Awf mountains. It overlooks the main crossings of the governorate, the most important of which are: Kufranja valley, Rajib valley, and Al-Rayyan valley. It is also strategic because it controls the transportation routes between Syria and southern Jordan. The aim of its construction was to monitor the movements of the Crusaders and to exploit the existing iron mines in the Ajloun Mountains.²³ In addition, it is considered one of the most attractive archaeological sites for tourists, as the number of visitors to it reached 226,457 in 2019.²⁴

²³ Archaeological Sites in the Governorate-Ajloun, the official website of the Ministry of Interior.

<https://moi.gov.jo/AR/Pages/المواقع الأثرية في المحافظة عجلون>

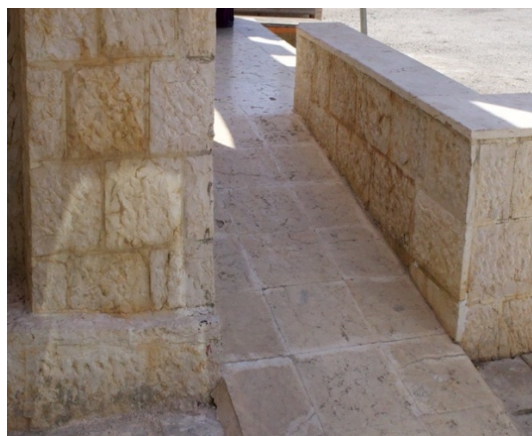
²⁴ The reality of the tourism sector, Ajloun News Agency, March 4, 2021.

<https://www.ajlounnews.net/facts/واقع-الطرق-والخدمات/>

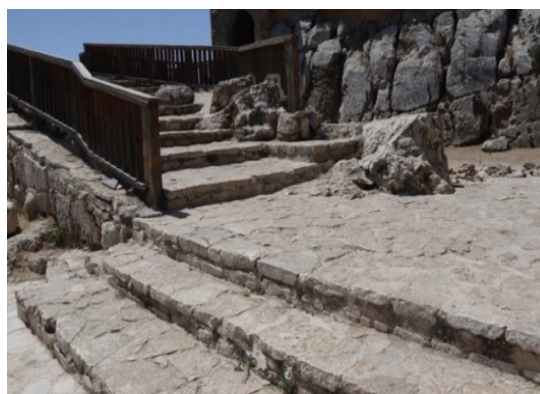
After the research team monitored the environmental accommodating arrangements and the availability of access for PwDs to the site of Ajloun Castle, two locations must be addressed, as follows:

- **Visitor Centre:** It is the center designated to receive all visitors to the castle before they visit the castle, regardless of nationality.

The location monitoring showed that the visitor's entrance was prepared to suit people with mobility disabilities only through the "ramp." The centre also contains a health facility (bathroom) for PwDs, and it was noted that it was closed and being used for personal purposes by the director of the center.



- **Ajloun Castle:** The castle, with all its entrances, buildings and health facilities, is not equipped for people with visual and motor disabilities.



6.2 Mar Elias Archaeological Hill

The hill dates back to the time of Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. It is located in a forest area. It is a small hill that rises 900 meters above sea level. In 1999, a huge church was discovered in the place with an area of 1,340 square meters, dating back to the beginning of the sixth century AD.²⁵ It has been approved for Christian pilgrimage since 2000. The number of visitors to Mar Elias Hill reached 4,250 in 2019.²⁶



²⁵ Religious Sites in the Governorate-Ajloun, the official website of the Ministry of Interior.
<https://moi.gov.jo/AR/Pages/المواقع الدينية في المحافظة عجلون>

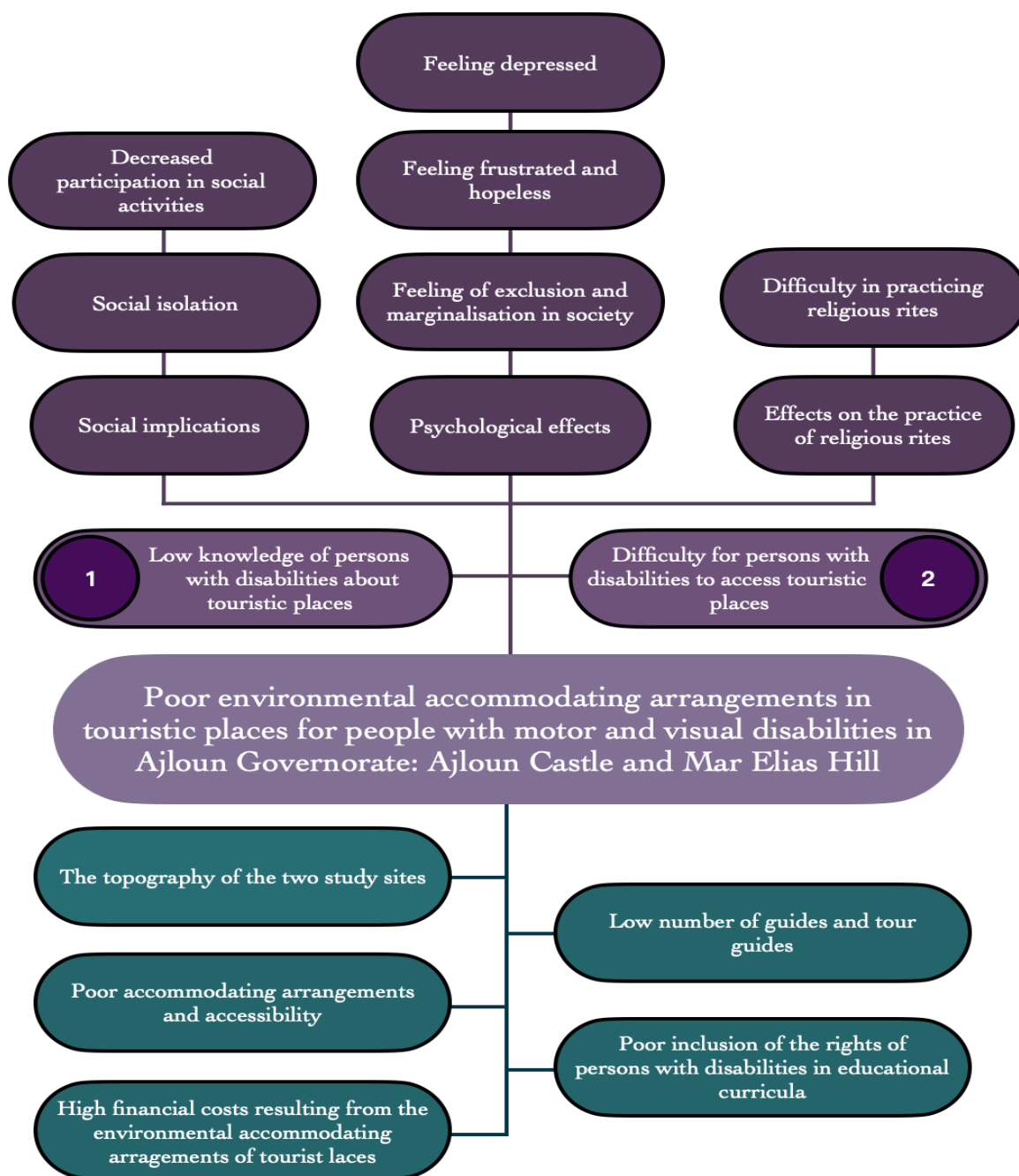
²⁶The reality of tourism in Ajloun, previous reference.

The location monitoring showed the following:

- The entrance to the restroom is suitable for people with mobility disabilities only, with a sanitary facility (bathroom) for PwDs.
- Mar Elias Hill, with all its entrances and buildings, is not suitable for PwDs.

7 Discussing Challenges

7.1 Problem Tree²⁷



²⁷ "A methodology to identify the problem, its causes and effects, the trunk represents the main problem, the roots represent the causes of the basic problem, and the branches represent the effects resulting from the problem".
<https://sswm.info/ar/taxonomy/term/2647/problem-tree-analysis>

7.2 Discussing Challenges

The results showed poor environmental accommodating arrangements of tourist places - Ajloun Castle and Mar Elias Hill - for people with visual and motor disabilities in Ajloun Governorate, due to the following reasons:

7.2.1 The geography of the two sites

Ajloun Castle and Mar Elias Hill are located within a rather difficult natural topography, as they are located in places with high mountains and rocky terrain. This constitutes an obstacle in establishing the required accommodating arrangements, as indicated by an activist for the rights of persons with disabilities, who said: "Ajloun Castle and similar places, have difficult topography". If it is possible to work on preparing it, then this requires large sums of money, in addition to the difficulty of obtaining approvals, as the time period for obtaining approvals is somewhat long, according to what one of the activists indicated: "I entered the castle, and I saw how difficult it is from the inside. We can do something but it requires approval from UNESCO, because Ajloun Castle is registered on UNESCO's list of heritage, so it needs approvals". This was confirmed by another expert who pointed out, saying: "Ajloun Castle is included in the Islamic Heritage Organisation, and therefore any development of new buildings that contradict the archaeological reality will be rejected by the organisations".

Despite the difficult topography of the two study sites, MoTA is still looking for solutions to that problem. According to the Director of Tourism in Ajloun Governorate: "Ajloun Castle and Mar Elias Hill are the only two tourist places that can be made suitable for people with mobility disabilities, for example: in Mar Elias Hill, a special path has recently been created for persons with mobility disabilities, and more work is still underway. This development came due to the nature of the construction that distinguishes Mar Elias Hill from Ajloun Castle, because the nature of the construction of Ajloun Castle does not allow for the creation of a special path for people with mobility disabilities as there is only one entrance to the castle, and because of the very high slope, but work will be done to develop something like an electric elevator to serve them during the coming years".

7.2.2 Poor accommodating arrangements and accessibility

The study showed that the two sites have prepared their entrances and provided bathroom facilities for PwDs. Yet, preparing entrances does not mean the accessibility of the tourist site, the accommodating arrangements for PwDs need to be from the entrance and all the way to the desired tourist destination on site. One of the activists stressed this point, saying: "We do not have a technique or a car for persons with mobility disabilities. Now the visually impaired can use a normal car, but a person with mobility disability cannot do that. There must be specific cars and buses designated for persons with mobility disabilities, but unfortunately we lack this."

And one of the specialists added: "They will not be able to go inside the site, because there is no place designated for them. If a person with a mobility disability wants to enter the castle from the inside,

he/she cannot, because there are no accommodating arrangements for them inside the castle, but their entry to the main square is possible”.

7.2.3 High cost of accommodating arrangements of tourist places

Specialists in the field of tourism indicated that working on environmentally accommodating arrangements of touristic places in a manner that meets the needs of PwDs requires large financial budgets, and will result in increasing the financial burdens of the state. Large financial sums are needed for such accommodating arrangements, but from an economic point of view, the economist Raad Al-Tal had a different viewpoint: “If the tourist site is prepared for people in general at competitive prices, and places are allocated for persons with disabilities (health facilities, bathrooms, paths and routes, etc.), it is true that at that moment and that year and that month, you will incur financial costs, but I am completely confident that with the increase and attraction of more people and commercial activity, this will incur increasing financial returns, and the costs will turn into an increase in revenues according to the economic theory, and economists know that the higher the spending, the higher the state’s revenues”.

7.2.4 The low number of guides and tour guides

In this context, a specialist said: "There are not enough tour guides, there is only one tour guide in the governorate and he is in the Castle." The decrease in the number of guides and tour guides, in addition to the decrease in their skills in communicating with PwDs in a manner commensurate with their needs, will negatively affect PWDs’ knowledge of the touristic site and its historical importance.

7.2.5 Low inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in educational curricula

The clear decline in the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities and the etiquette of dealing with them in the field of tourism in the higher education curriculum was clearly noticed. This leads to a failure to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities, and the principles of dealing with them on a “rights”. This was confirmed by an academic specialist, who said: “Directly and at the diploma level in the major of tourism and antiquities, there is no course that tackles persons with disabilities, and at the undergraduate level, there is no course specialised on accessibility for PwDs, but in some courses, such as tourism services and tourist guidance, persons with disabilities are indirectly addressed, yet with reliance on the teacher of the subject and his/ her awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities”.

8 The effects on persons with disabilities

According to the above results, participants with disabilities confirmed their inability to exercise their right to tourism, which was reflected on their psychological and social conditions as follows:

8.1 On the psychological level

According to what was indicated by the participants with disabilities from the Ajloun governorate, Ajloun is like a paradise for them, as one of them pointed out, saying: "In general, Ajloun is paradise." Therefore, depriving them from enjoying the touristic areas reflects negatively on their psychological health through their feeling of frustration and despair, as one of the participants indicated, saying: "The absence, weakness, or lack of services, so we relapse and become frustrated," and thus their feeling of exclusion and marginalisation in society, as one of the participants indicated about saying: "We are marginalised by all". Another participant confirmed this saying: "What participation are you talking about... we are marginalised." In the same context, another participant confirmed this viewpoint: "**We are marginalised** by the state, .. let's stop pretending. **We are marginalised** in policies? **We are marginalised** in terms of tourism, scientifically, marginalised. Instead of comforting us psychologically, they destroy us psychologically. It is not surprising that the situation ends up being much worse and reaching the stage of depression". That is what one of the participants referred to saying: "I became depressed because of my disability, even my children became mentally ill and I became depressed."

8.2 On the social level

The social reality is not different from the psychological reality, as their feeling of marginalisation pushes them to social isolation, as one of the participants pointed out, saying: "I might have seen the Castle once, I don't know what is in it." Another participant added: "When I went for a walk with the children, they went to the waterfalls area, and I saw them embarrassed... and they were confused and distressed because they didn't want to leave me there alone. I told them it's OK..take me to my parent's house and I will sit for two hours. They were happy ... I was sad for my wife and children so I came up with this solution." In the same context, another added: "I am ashamed to go out with my daughters, and I do not let them feel that I have lost a part of my body," ending with what another participant added, saying: "I respect myself by telling them that I do not want to go, because if I want to go, I will give them a hard time".

8.3 With regard to practicing religious rites

The lack of environmental preparedness for people with disabilities in general in the Ajloun governorate and in religious places in particular, constitutes an obstacle to their exercise of their rights to practice religious rights, as one of the participants indicated saying: "I can reach here only, and I am also sure that anyone on a wheelchair wishes to visit the church, even those who walk on their feet find reaching it a challenge, so why?" Another added: "The religious places in Kufranja have only one

mosque in the Kasa'ir area, which is suitable for persons with mobility disabilities. We had a person with mobility disability in our residence, may God rest his soul, he used to suffer if he wanted to pray in a place other than this."

9 Options and Alternatives

Based on the foregoing, the policy brief came up with a number of recommendations aimed at improving environmental preparedness and accessibility to touristic areas in line with the needs of PwDs.

First: Improving environmental preparedness and accessibility for persons with disabilities to touristic places, in partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA), the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) and local municipalities, and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD).

Objective: To increase the ability of persons with disabilities to access touristic areas safely and easily.

Programmes:

- Preparing the infrastructure for the touristic places in a manner commensurate with the needs of persons with various disabilities, and in accordance with the conditions for preserving the identity of the site, such as: (ramps, a system for transporting persons with disabilities, visual and audio instructions, introductory videos...)
- Increasing the number of guides and tourist guides and training them in the basics and etiquette of dealing with persons with disabilities.
- Preparing a complaint system for persons with disabilities at the touristic site.
- Examining the experiences of advanced countries in the tourism sector especially with regard to PwDs, and work on preparing plans and programmes in order to implement them.

Advantages and opportunities of the proposed recommendation:

- Creating an appropriate touristic environment commensurate with the needs of PwDs
- Persons with disabilities enjoy exercising their right to tourism safely and easily.
- Persons with disabilities becoming acquainted with touristic places.
- An increase in the proportion of tourists from the categories of PwDs, thus enhancing the economy.

Challenges facing the implementation of the proposed recommendation:

- Achieving the recommendation requires real partnerships and the preparation of short and long-term strategic plans.
- High financial cost.

- The long period of time for implementation.

Second: Increasing the percentage of persons with disabilities working in the tourism sector, in partnership between MoTA, the Ministry of Labour (MoL), the Civil Service Bureau, and HCD.

Objective: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the tourism sector.

Programmes:

- Encouraging employers and establishments to employ persons with disabilities through some incentive packages for them, such as: facilities and tax exemptions, contributing to the salary allocated to a person with a disability... .
- Conducting training programmes for PwDs to raise their capabilities in tourism work.
- Training programmes for employees in the tourism sector on the basics for dealing with fellow persons with disabilities from a human rights perspective.

Advantages and opportunities of the proposed recommendation:

- Increase employment of persons with disabilities, thus reducing unemployment among them.
- Improving the conditions of persons with disabilities economically.
- Reducing negative stereotypes about people with disabilities.
- Short period of time for implementation.

Challenges facing the implementation of the proposed recommendation:

- The implementation of the recommendation depends on the extent of cooperation and coordination between the relevant authorities.

Third: Increasing investment in tourist and archaeological sites, taking into account the rights of persons with disabilities, in cooperation between MoTA, MoIn, HCD, and local municipalities.

Objective: Developing the tourism sector and increasing the investment volume.

Programmes:

- Improving the infrastructure, transportation and communication lines inside and outside Jordan.
- Providing legislative facilities, which contribute to reducing taxes and licenses resulting from investment projects.

- Cooperate with local municipalities in developing strategic plans for investment projects in order to implement them in a manner that meets the needs of the local community and the needs of PwDs.
- Preparing training programmes for members of the local community in accordance with the professions related to productive projects to ensure the employment and development of members of the local community, including PwDs.

Advantages and opportunities of the proposed recommendation:

- Reviving domestic tourism in Jordan by improving existing touristic destinations and creating new ones.
- Increasing the percentage of the tourism sector's contribution to the GDP.
- Providing job opportunities for members of the local community, including PwDs, thus reducing the unemployment rate.

Challenges facing the implementation of the proposed recommendation:

- The long period of time and the big sums of money needed for improving and developing the infrastructure necessary for investment.

In conclusion, the rights of persons with disabilities cannot be separated from any human right. Their right to tourism and the exercise of this right within all human rights conditions and standards that guarantee safety and security for them requires more national, institutional and legislative efforts towards advancing the tourism status, in order for this to reflect positively on their lives, and on their families and on the society as a whole.



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