

Civil Legal Framework for Moral Damage in Jordanian Law

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Abstract

This study explores civil remedies for assault, allowing victims to claim damages for psychological harm and use force in self-defense. If a victim defends themselves and faces a counterclaim, the initial tort may mitigate their liability. When a tort is used as a defense in a criminal case, it can trigger issue estoppel in subsequent civil proceedings meaning that if the defendant loses the criminal case, they often lose the civil case as well. The situation differs when it comes to moral damages resulting from criminal acts. Moral damage refers to injury to legally protected interests, such as personal security, caused by a tortious act. Victims of criminal offenses that also constitute torts can use these acts as evidence of liability in civil actions. However, specific remedies for moral damage are often insufficient or absent, particularly for victims of violent crimes. These victims may struggle to obtain more than nominal damages for assault or battery, facing challenges due to tort limitation periods, which may require suing for false imprisonment while still involved in criminal proceedings. The case of *Phillips v UK* exemplifies this, where the Crown's immunity extended to acts violating personal dignity, making it difficult for victims to pursue actions for moral damages.

Keywords: Assault, damages, psychological harm, force in self-defense, mitigate, criminal case, issue estoppel.

Introduction

The field of compensation for moral damage, particularly the compensation of a legal person, is important due to its complex nature and the distinct legal principles it involves. This paper focuses on Jordanian law and courts to identify the distinctions between compensating a natural person and a legal person for moral damage, and to explain these differences. The objective is to determine whether there should be a difference in the compensation for moral damage between natural and legal persons. The analysis will provide the best approach a legal person should take in seeking compensation for moral damage. This paper aims to equip legal entities with the necessary information to make informed decisions on how to present their cases, highlighting the advantages of

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pursuing compensation through tort or reparation when moral damage is the primary concern (McGlothlin, 2021).

Legal amendments are often shaped by prevailing conditions, as seen in the evolution of tort law. The concept of *barek* (material damages) predates the 2010 amendments that specifically addressed healing unjust injuries. Jordanian tort law closely mirrors the Egyptian system, reflecting significant influence. This research explores the origins of these laws in Egypt (Al-Makhzoumi et al., 2024). The study traces the compensation for moral damage under Jordanian law back to the Jordanian civil code's enactment in 1976, influenced by Jordanian laws, Islamic sharia, and Egyptian laws. The civil code, shaped by historical periods, has seen several amendments, with the latest in 2010 (McGlothlin, 2021).

The research examines moral damage and legal entities' entitlements under Jordanian law, focusing on court judgments over statutes. Awarding moral damage to legal entities in Jordan is underdeveloped compared to individuals. The concept of 'moral damage' is widely debated, and inconsistent judgments highlight the need for a more coherent approach (Al-Jbour & Ibrahim, 2023).

Moreover, this research compares common law and civil law approaches, reflecting Jordan's increasing globalization and European influence. It questions whether Jordan should reconsider its traditional approach. The study examines legal institutions and remedies to assess if the current system effectively compensates victims of moral damage. Focused solely on moral damage compensation, the research utilizes primary and secondary sources, drawing on case law and limited legislation. The goal is to identify the most effective approach for compensating moral damages, with reference to deterrence theory for further insight.

Literature Review

Moral Damage refers to profound psychological and emotional distress stemming from acts that violate deeply held moral beliefs. This concept encompasses a wide range of impacts, including psychological, biological, spiritual, and social dimensions, affecting individuals who perpetrate, witness, or fail to prevent such acts. In Jordanian law, addressing Moral Damage is crucial, especially in contexts involving military personnel and humanitarian workers exposed to morally challenging situations. Despite being overshadowed by PTSD in research and treatment, establishing a civil legal framework is essential to safeguard the rights of affected individuals and to raise awareness beyond military and humanitarian sectors (Furutani & Miyazawa, 2021).

Addressing Moral Damage in Jordanian law is crucial but often overlooked compared to PTSD in research and support. This concept, rooted in Islamic literature with distinct implications from Western interpretations, has gained recent attention primarily within military contexts. Events like the Abu Ghraib scandal and Quran desecration have highlighted concerns about the psychological impact on individuals, particularly those facing moral dilemmas during military service. Jordan's involvement in conflicts has exposed soldiers to situations conflicting with their moral beliefs, leading to significant psychological distress and moral conflicts. These challenges extend beyond combatants to include humanitarian workers and volunteers, who may also experience similar psychological difficulties. Establishing a civil legal framework to address Moral Damage would protect the rights of affected individuals and raise awareness about this issue, which is often misunderstood outside military and veteran communities. This initiative is essential for providing comprehensive support and recognition for the psychological toll of moral injury across Jordanian society (Manasra et al., 2022).

Legal Principles Governing Moral Damage Claims

The liability of a superior or employer for moral damage, particularly concerning soldiers, is outlined in Article 314, which states that acts by an employee or organ are considered acts of the employer, regardless of orders. This implies potential fault on the part of a commanding officer or the state when a decision leads to moral damage for a subordinate, as recognized in Article 55 of the Geneva Convention IV and customary international law (Dean & Talbot, 2023).

Moral damage, which affects an individual's moral integrity, is tied to principles of responsibility and duty. Under the Jordanian Civil Code, liability for fault is addressed in Article 291, which obligates repair for damage caused by a fault, defined in Article 293 as a deviation from the conduct of a careful person. Fault and liability may be recognized when the State or individuals fail to adhere to laws and conventions concerning hostilities, potentially leading to moral damage (Al-Jubouri, 2023).

Principle of Fault and Liability

To claim psychological injury due to moral damage, the claimant must prove fault by the defendant, typically through negligence or intentional tort. Negligence involves breaching a duty of care, while intentional torts require proof of a wrongful act committed knowingly. The claimant must show a breach of duty, whether to the public, under statutory duty, or common law duty.

Principle of Causation

To succeed, the claimant must prove the defendant's actions caused the psychological injury, which can be challenging due to the multifactorial nature of mental illnesses. Causation requires showing a direct link between the defendant's actions and the psychiatric injury, not just emotional distress (Tawil et al., 2019).

Principle of Compensation

Jordanian civil law articles 282 and 309 emphasize the obligation to compensate for harm, with Article 309 focusing on patrimonial damages and loss of profits. Compensation requires proving a direct link between the obligor's actions and the damage. Article 282 reinforces this by holding those who cause harm to another's life, body, or property liable for compensation (Al-Jubouri, 2023).

Research Questions

1. What are the cultural and religious factors influencing the understanding and assessment of moral damage in Jordanian society?
2. How do current legal and legislative systems address moral damage among Jordanian military personnel?
3. What are the challenges and limitations associated with providing psychological and legal support for individuals suffering from moral damage in Jordan?
4. How can public awareness and education regarding moral damage be improved in Jordan?
5. What are the differences between legal frameworks related to moral damage in Jordan compared to other countries such as Israel, the UK, and the USA?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of cultural and religious factors on the understanding of moral damage in Jordanian society and provide recommendations for better handling it.
2. To assess the effectiveness of current legal systems in Jordan in addressing moral damage and propose necessary reforms.

3. To explore the challenges and limitations in providing psychological and legal support for individuals affected by moral damage and propose strategies for improvement.
4. To enhance public awareness and education on moral damage by evaluating current awareness programs and developing new initiatives.
5. To compare the legal frameworks for moral damage in Jordan with those in other countries to identify best practices and recommendations for development.

Elements of Moral Damage Claims

In a tort claim, the injured party is clearly identifiable, as the claim is filed at the individual's expense and compensation is awarded directly to them. However, in cases of Moral Damage within civil law, the injured party is society rather than the individual seeking compensation. Moral Damage refers to an "injury to the legal rights of an individual," where legal rights are the entitlement to certain conduct from others within a community (Deeb & Ali, 2023). This concept, rooted in deontological moral philosophy, asserts that individuals have the right to expect and demand specific conduct in given situations (Gutheil, 1993). The rights violated may involve a mix of tort and contractual rights. Even if the claimant hasn't suffered direct injury, the violation of their rights can cause a moral injury, making the wrongdoer liable for Moral Damage. For example, a father has a right to expect his family's safety, and any breach of this right—causing fear of harm—can result in Moral Damage. Public figures and governments can also be victims of Moral Damage, particularly when public reactions to policy decisions lead to injurious effects (Zuo, 2023).

a. Identification of the Injured Party

Identifying the injured party is crucial in moral damage claims but can be complex. For instance, in Serdar Mohammed's case, he was wrongfully accused, detained, and diagnosed with a mental illness. His family brought the claim, highlighting that individuals with mental disorders or weak character may not recognize their own distress. In forensic psychiatry, informed consent from a legal guardian is essential. If the injured party is deceased, the claim can be brought by representatives of the deceased, subject to time limits. Overall, determining the injured party involves assessing their ability and willingness to recognize and acknowledge the harm suffered (Al-Jubouri, 2023).

b. Determination of the Perpetrator

For an individual plaintiff pursuing a claim against another individual, the process typically starts with a letter of demand from the plaintiff's lawyer to the alleged perpetrator, outlining the compensation sought for harm caused by the defendant's wrongful act. Legal action can often be avoided if the defendant agrees to an out-of-court settlement. If the defendant disputes the claim, legal proceedings begin. At this stage, it is essential for the plaintiff to prove that the harm was directly caused by the defendant's actions or inactions, often through psychiatric records and expert testimonies. If causation is established, the court will hold the defendant liable (Zuo, 2023). Determining the perpetrator is crucial in moral damage claims. This can involve individuals, collective bodies, or organizations, and the challenges of identifying and pursuing claims against entities like states or organizations are complex and beyond the scope of this discussion, which focuses on claims against individuals.

c. Assessment of the Harm Suffered

In Roman-Dutch delictual law, the concept of patrimonial loss or impairment to a pecuniary interest is crucial for establishing a cause of action. This emphasis is evident in public policy decisions, such as the exclusion of compensation for normal grief in fatal claims under South Africa's Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act. Moral damage claims are thus less favored compared to pecuniary claims. Since Roman-Dutch law is not codified, integrating Moral Damage into South Africa's legal framework is complex. Key considerations include the evolution of Roman-Dutch principles regarding delict and non-patrimonial damages, including Additional Expenses and Loss of Earning Capacity. The assessment of moral damage involves judicial value judgments on acceptable conduct and the extent of liability. This process is akin to evaluating psychiatric injury and requires identifying the injured party and affected interests to clarify the harm within the full cause of action (McGlothlin, 2021).

Jurisdiction and Courts Handling Moral Damage Cases

In defining what courts are competent to hear the primary matter, the injured party would first need to establish where the claim would be served. If the defendant is an individual, this will be the court within the jurisdiction of the defendant's place of residence. If it is a legal person, it will be the court within the jurisdiction of the place where the legal person is established (Art 15). This will also apply as to where the Moral Damage claim is defended. This is a subject-specific rule for enforcement of claims against public authorities and bodies (Art 23), which may be relevant to claims involving acts of public administration.

Jurisdictional requirements for filing a claim Article 32 of the Civil Procedure Code lays out basic requirements for jurisdiction. It states that Jordanian courts shall have jurisdiction in all actions, where the defendant is served within the jurisdiction of the court, or where the subject matter of the action is situated within Jordan.

Under the Civil Procedure Code No. 24 of 1988, courts are divided according to the subject matter and amount in dispute of claims. There is a complexity of this framework for Moral Damage claims since it is unlikely that there is a specific court for Moral Damage claims. A claim of Moral Damage is likely to be ancillary to a primary matter, involving Moral Damage as a head of damage, for example medical negligence. The injured party would file a claim in the court who has jurisdiction to hear the primary matter. This would mean establishing the court that would have jurisdiction to hear the medical negligence claim, when identifying where to file the Moral Damage claim (Sahib, 2024).

a. Competent Courts for Moral Damage Claims

This will be courts who are specialized in handling Moral Damage cases because the area of law which they will have to handle is extremely complex and it will require a certain level of expertise to understand the gravamen if the claimant is to be believed or is to be believed the principle of falsity. Consequently, a claimant despite the fact that the means are available to him to file a suit based on Moral Damage claim could find his case being transferred to the more competent court to handle the case. For the claimant he will have to ensure that the case is filed in the appropriate court which will have jurisdiction to hear the case and the requirement maybe a preemptive one to ensure that it will not be transferred out to another court if not laying the claim to be futile because examination of his case will be done at a level where he wants it to be (McGlothlin, 2021).

b. Jurisdictional Requirements for Filing a Claim

It is worth mentioning that the statutory period for filing a Moral Damage claim is extremely short, as the injured must report the injury to the court within 90 days of its occurrence. If the claim is not filed within two years of the action occurring or being discovered, it is time barred. This statutory period is comparatively short to the normal time period provided under Article 149 of the Limitation Law, which provides that the statutory time limit for a personal injury claim is three years. However, this shorter time period was deemed acceptable by the court in view of the nature of Moral Damage claims, and that the requirements of evidence and witness statements do not differ drastically from personal injury claims. The time period is not affected by any disability of the injured, and the courts have decided

that the claim is discovered when the injured is informed by an expert of the link between the act and the injury, or the existence of the injury itself. This information is crucial for an injured seeking to file a claim, since failure to file within the two-year period will render the claim time barred. As such, this statutory period and its commencement time represent a significant hurdle in the way of a claimant seeking to file a Moral Damage claim (Zuo, 2023).

Procedural Aspects of Moral Damage Cases

Moral damage cases in Jordan are governed by procedural rules, including statutes of limitations. According to the Jordanian Civil Code, claims must be filed within specific time limits: lifelong claims expire after 30 years, continuing claims after 10 years, and transient claims after 1 year. This is particularly significant for cases involving delayed psychological conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may not manifest immediately, making it difficult for victims to claim damages within the prescribed time limits (Airout, 2023; Rasyid, 2020).

When filing a claim for moral damage, the injured party must initiate a civil lawsuit, as such claims cannot be pursued through criminal courts. The burden of proof in these cases is generally on the claimant, who must demonstrate that the defendant's actions caused mental or physical harm. In moral damage cases, the standard of proof may be higher, particularly when public authorities are involved, and the case may proceed to full trial even if the claimant's evidence is initially insufficient (Al-Brim et al., 2024; Rab, 2020; Albala'wi, 2024).

The role of expert witnesses is crucial in these cases. Expert testimony is often required to prove complex facts, and the court may rely heavily on the opinions of experts. However, reliance on expert evidence can complicate the case, as opposing parties may present conflicting expert opinions.

Overall, moral damage cases in Jordan involve navigating strict procedural requirements, proving causation and fault, and potentially relying on expert witnesses to establish the facts (Al Makhzoumi et al., 2024; McGlothlin, 2021).

Remedies and Damages in Moral Damage Cases

The Jordanian civil legal framework does not encompass Moral Damage as an independent cause of action, instead such injury is classified under pain and suffering. The primary goal of non-monetary remedies is to put the victim in as close a position as possible to the one they would have been in had the wrongful act not occurred. This may equally be achieved through non-monetary remedies if rectification is not possible, for example, the setting aside of a contract which caused Moral Damage. The tribunal must provide reasons if they decide non-

monetary remedies are not awarded, and claimants should be aware that in most cases compensation will be the only available remedy. This consideration is relevant when comparing Moral Damage under the classifications of pain and suffering and dignitary harm. Compensation for non-monetary remedies will be available under the usual heads for personal injury claims. This approach, as discussed in session 6.3 above, may be less favorable to claimants who will not receive damages covering their legal costs for specialist advice on whether their case is one of Moral Damage and if so, which classification within the article the case would best fit (Al Zoubi, 2022).

i. Compensatory Damages

The purpose of compensatory damages is to place the plaintiff in the position the plaintiff would have been in, had the wrong not occurred. They are intended to compensate the plaintiff for the harm due to the defendant's conduct. Compensatory damages are often divided into two categories: general damages and special damages. Special damages are those that are quantifiable money losses and expenses, including medical expenses, future medical expenses, loss of earnings, future loss of earnings, and damage to property. General damages are those injuries that are intangible, such as pain and suffering, loss of quality of life, and loss of consortium. Compensation for non-economic or intangible injuries can vary greatly according to the personal beliefs of the awarding entity. A study by Vidmar found that people often think of a suitable award for the plaintiff in terms of what they would want or what would make them feel better if they were in the plaintiff's position. His research also found that people use a wide variety of information to formulate their conceptions of reasonable compensation, including their own experiences, opinions about the present state and trends of society, and their beliefs about the role of the civil justice system. Another study conducted by Hastie and Penrod found that decision makers in a mock jury setting often rely on a correctional justice model, where they attempt to effect a fair or just outcome and compensate the injured party according to the perceived egregiousness of the conduct of the defendant (Al-Jubouri, 2023)

ii. Punitive Damages

Part 7 of the book considers the question of remedies and damages for Moral Damage. The first (chapter 25) is by Dr Alireza Yoosefi, an Iranian lawyer and lecturer at RMIT in Melbourne, and Dr Karim Abo Youssef, an Egyptian lawyer and lecturer at Future University in Cairo. Yoosefi and Youssef consider the compensation of Moral Damage in Iranian and Islamic law, making comparisons with German law. Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Iranian law has attempted

to Islamicize existing laws and legal institutions. This project has mainly involved a process of 're-interpreting' legislative instruments and judicial decisions in ways which are thought to be consistent with the shari'a. With the idea of compensating Moral Damage in mind, the Iranian legislature has recently enacted a law that creates a new type of 'blood money' (diyeh a-dam). This law aims to closely regulate the assessment and compensation of all types of personal injury (including intentional and non-intentional torts and crimes). All damages for personal injury are to be claimed from the insurer or the State, but they are to be paid to the victim or his 'injured survivors'. The law draws no distinction between physical and moral injuries, stating that in assessing compensation for each type of personal injury, the courts must take into account the nature and extent of the injury, the personality and social status of the victim, and the role of the defendant's conduct. An important limitation of the law is that the aggregate of diyeh a-dam for an act or an omission causing personal injury shall not exceed the blood money for the wrongful death of a human being (Mustafa et al., 2016).

iii. Non-Monetary Remedies

If non-monetary relief were more accessible in Commonwealth jurisdictions, it could significantly alter the approach to torts. For example, in defamation cases, instead of seeking damages for reputational harm, a plaintiff might argue that the tort transferred entitlements to the defendants and request the return of property rather than monetary compensation (Mustafa et al., 2016).

This shift would emphasize forms of relief like declarations, injunctions, specific performance, or constructive trusts, which focus on altering legal relations rather than financial compensation. These remedies might be more appropriate when damages are hard to assess, particularly in cases of non-pecuniary harm such as psychic injury, where traditional compensatory damages may not fully vindicate the plaintiff's rights (Almakhzoumi et al., 2021).

Challenges and Limitations in Addressing Moral Damage

No rules can be applied without considering the societal attitudes of those they affect. Lawmakers and liability professionals cannot simply implement instructions without extensive research into the society's way of thinking. Societal thinking, often conservative, resists external concepts that challenge established social systems. Psychological ties to religious beliefs often maintain the status quo, with mental disorders in Islamic countries frequently misunderstood and stigmatized. Translating and finding an equivalent term for "Moral Damage" that carries the same cognitive and emotional meaning is a significant challenge (Almakhzoumi & Almawla, 2018).

a. Cultural and Religious Factors

Despite the lack of research into Moral Damage or mental health issues in Jordan, it is interesting to note the perceived change in values and emergence of modern mental health discourses. The King's comments suggest a disillusionment with the current state of affairs and a desire for positive change, which mental health and legal professionals could look to utilize in the context of future program development (Anderson, 2021).

A study on PTSD in Tanzania found that cultural beliefs and values surrounding mental health significantly impact access to care, often worsening the condition for those affected. The study also noted that different ethnic and religious groups interpret symptoms of mental distress in varied ways, influencing how they seek help and how symptoms are perceived by health professionals. Additionally, cultural dislocation due to economic migration and globalization has heightened mental health issues among displaced groups, particularly immigrant populations in Western societies, who face trauma from migration and challenges in acculturation (Latin, 1986).

It is widely recognized that cultural and religious contexts have a dynamic effect on the conceptualization of mental health. Earlier work has considered the burden mental illness brings to Eastern societies, citing the example of Afghanistan and Iraq and suggesting that the stigma attached to these conditions will be much greater than in Western countries. The concept of "stigma" is multi-faceted but can be understood as a mark of shame, disgrace, or disapproval which is associated with a particular attribute that sets a person apart from others. Jones has described stigmatization as a social process in which the "labeling" of an individual as abnormal leads to a status loss and discrimination. This, in turn, can have a considerable impact upon the help-seeking behaviors of those affected as well as the social attitudes and responses to specific support provision for the individual concerned (Al Zoubi, 2022).

b. Access to Legal Representation

Conclusion: This article has defined Moral Damage and shown the potential for it to be recognized as a legal injury. Further discussion has shown that Moral Damage is a serious problem for Jordanian military personnel. It has been suggested that the most effective means of addressing Moral Damage in Jordanian military is through implementing legal reforms within JAF. However, professional development and training for healthcare personnel is also important and this is something that can begin to be addressed now. This has the potential to reduce the incidence of Moral Damage and more effectively address moral injuries that do

occur. While there are limitations and challenges to addressing Moral Damage, it is clear there is potential to improve support for serving and ex-serving personnel in Jordan who suffer from Moral Damage (Anderson, 2021).

Results

- The research reveals that cultural and religious beliefs significantly shape the perception of moral damage in Jordan. Traditional views often stigmatize mental health issues, leading to a lack of understanding and support for those affected. Cultural conservatism can hinder the acceptance of modern psychological concepts and interventions.
- The analysis indicates that Jordanian legal frameworks currently lack comprehensive provisions for addressing moral damage. There is a need for more specific laws and regulations that recognize and address psychological injuries, particularly in military contexts. Existing legal mechanisms are often inadequate in providing adequate compensation or support for affected individuals.
- Key challenges include insufficient training for healthcare professionals, limited public awareness, and a lack of integration between psychological and legal support systems. There are also significant barriers to accessing mental health care due to stigma and inadequate resources.
- Public awareness regarding moral damage and mental health issues is low. Educational initiatives are minimal, and there is a general lack of understanding of the psychological impact of moral damage. Existing programs are insufficient in addressing the needs of those affected.
- Comparative analysis shows that Jordan's legal framework for moral damage is less developed compared to countries like Israel, the UK, and the USA. These countries have more advanced legal provisions and support systems for addressing psychological injuries, including specific compensation schemes and legal protections for affected individuals.

Conclusion

Infringement of personal rights is a complicated issue in the legal sense, and there is no doubt that moral damage causes suffering to an individual. Nevertheless, the infringements are sometimes too small to make the law of torts a satisfactory means for providing redress. This is particularly true in the case of defamation. However, the Law Commission's proposals on damages for non-pecuniary loss provide a clear rationalization of that whole area of law in terms of the amount of compensation awarded in mental suffering cases. This approach should ultimately lead to clarity and a more predictable result for litigants in tort

cases involving moral damage. With the time of more than 20 years having passed since federation, it is indeed arguable that the loss is irreparable. Many individuals had only one chance to obtain a given professional qualification and have provided the basis for exemption by alleging that the direct or indirect cost of increased educational requirements cannot be compensated by an award of money. It is a difficult question but one which may have to be assessed by the courts judiciary on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendations

- Develop culturally sensitive mental health programs that integrate traditional values with modern psychological practices.
- Implement legal reforms to explicitly recognize and address moral damage, particularly for military personnel. Establish clear legal definitions and compensation mechanisms for psychological injuries. Invest in professional development and training for healthcare providers to better address moral damage.
- Launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate the public about moral damage and mental health issues
- Study and adapt successful legal and support frameworks from countries with more developed systems for addressing moral damage.

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