

About Jordan



Jordan

Country

Jordan, officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is an Arab kingdom in the Middle East, on the East Bank of the River Jordan, and extending into the historic region of Palestine. [Wikipedia](#)

Capital: [Amman](#)

King: [Abdullah II of Jordan](#)

Currency: Jordanian dinar

Population: 6.181 million (2011) [World Bank](#)

Government: Unitary state, Parliamentary system, Constitutional monarchy

Official language: Arabic Language

Jordan (pron.: [/ˈdʒɔrdən/](#); [Arabic](#): [الأردنّ](#) *Al-'Urdunn*), officially the [Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan](#) ([Arabic](#): [المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية](#) *al-Mamlakah al-'Urdunniyyah al-Hāshimīyyah*), is an [Arab](#) kingdom in the [Middle East](#), on the East Bank of the [River Jordan](#), and extending into the historic region of [Palestine](#). Jordan borders [Saudi Arabia](#) to the south and east, [Iraq](#) to the north-east, [Syria](#) to the north and [Israel](#) to the west, sharing control of the [Dead Sea](#) with the latter.

The desert kingdom emerged out of the post-World War I division of the Middle East by Britain and France. In 1946, Jordan became an independent sovereign state officially known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan. After capturing the West Bank area of [Cisjordan](#) during the [1948–49 war](#) with Israel, Abdullah I took the title [King of Jordan](#) and Palestine, and he officially changed the country's name to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1949.

Modern Jordan is classified as a country of "medium human development"^[8] by the 2011 [Human Development Report](#), and an [emerging market](#) with the third freest economy in West Asia and North Africa (32nd freest worldwide).^[9] Jordan has an "upper middle income" economy.^[10] Jordan has enjoyed "advanced status" with the [European Union](#) since December 2010,^[11] and it is also a member of the [Euro-Mediterranean free trade area](#). Jordan is a founding member of the [Arab League](#),^[12] and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation ([OIC](#)).

History

Main articles: [History of Jordan](#) and [Timeline of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan](#)



 The [Roman](#) Oval Piazza in the ancient city of [Jerash](#).

In antiquity, the present day Jordan became a home for several ancient kingdoms including: the kingdom of Edom, the kingdom of [Moab](#) and the kingdom of [Ammon](#). Throughout different eras of history, parts of the country were laid under the control of some regional powers including [Pharaonic Egypt](#) during their wars with the [Babylonians](#) and the [Hittites](#); and for discrete periods of times by [Israelites](#). The [Mesha Stele](#) recorded the glory of the [King of Edom](#) and the victories over the Israelites and other nations. The Ammon and Moab kingdoms are mentioned in ancient maps, Near Eastern documents, ancient [Greco-Roman](#) artifacts, and Christian and Jewish religious scriptures.^[13]

Classical Transjordan

Due to its strategic location in the middle of the ancient world, [Transjordan](#) came to be controlled by the ancient empires of [Persians](#) and later the [Macedonian Greeks](#), who became the dominant force in the region, following the conquests of Alexander the Great. It later fell under the changing influence of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire from the North and the Parthians from the East.

The [Nabatean kingdom](#) was one of the most prominent states in the region through the middle classic period, since the decline of the Seleucid control of the region in 168 BC. The Nabateans were most probably people of Arabian ancestry, who fell under the early influence of the Hellenistic and Parthian cultures, creating a unique civilized society, which roamed the roads of the deserts. They controlled the regional and international trade routes of the ancient world by dominating a large area southwest of the [fertile crescent](#), which included the whole of modern Jordan in addition to the southern part of [Syria](#) in the north and the northern part of [Arabian Peninsula](#) in the south. The Nabataeans developed the [Arabic Script](#), with their language as an intermediary between [Aramaean](#) and the ancient [Classical Arabic](#), which evolved into [Modern Arabic](#).

The Nabateans were largely conquered by the Hasmonean rulers of Judea and many of them forced to convert to Judaism in the late second century BC. However, the [Nabataeans](#) managed to maintain a sort of semi-independent kingdom, which covered most parts of modern Jordan and beyond, before it was taken by the Herodians and finally annexed by the still expanding [Roman empire](#) in 106 AD. However, apart from Petra, the Romans maintained the prosperity of most of the ancient cities in

Transjordan which enjoyed a sort of city-state autonomy under the umbrella of the alliance of the [Decapolis](#). Nabataean civilization left many magnificent [archaeological](#) sites at [Petra](#), which is considered one of the [New Seven Wonders of the World](#) as well as recognized by the UNESCO as a [world Heritage](#) site.

Following the establishment of Roman Empire at [Syria](#), the country was incorporated into the [client Judaeen Kingdom of Herod](#), and later the Iudaea Province. With the suppression of [Jewish Revolts](#), the eastern bank of Transjordan was incorporated into the [Syria Palaestina](#) province, while the eastern deserts fell under [Parthian](#) and later [Persian Sassanid](#) control. During the Greco-Roman period, a number of semi-independent city-states also developed in the region of Transjordan under the umbrella of the Decapolis including: [Gerasa \(Jerash\)](#), Philadelphia ([Amman](#)), [Raphana \(Abila\)](#), [Dion \(Capitolias\)](#), [Gadara](#) (Umm Qays), and [Pella \(Irbid\)](#).

With the decline of the Eastern Roman Empire, Transjordan came to be controlled by the Christian [Ghassanid](#) Arab kingdom, which allied with Byzantium. The [Byzantine](#) site of [Um er-Rasas](#) is a UNESCO [World Heritage Site](#).

Middle Ages to World War I

In the seventh century, and due to its proximity to [Damascus](#), Transjordan became a heartland for the [Arabic Islamic Empire](#) and therefore secured several centuries of stability and prosperity,^{[[citation needed](#)]} which allowed the coining of its current Arabic Islamic identity. Different Caliphates' stages, including the [Rashidun Empire](#), [Umayyad Empire](#) and [Abbasid Empire](#) controlled the region. Several resources pointed that the Abbasid movement, was started in region of Transjordan before it took over the Umayyad empire. After the decline of the [Abbasid](#), It was ruled by several conflicting powers including the [Mongols](#), the [Crusaders](#), the [Ayyubids](#) and the [Mamluks](#) until it became part of the [Ottoman Empire](#) in 1516.^[14]

The Umayyad caliphs constructed rural estates such as [Qasr Mshatta](#), [Qasr al Hallabat](#), [Qasr Kharana](#), [Qasr Tuba](#), and [Qasr Amra](#). Castles constructed in the later Middle Ages including [Ajloun](#), [Al Karak](#), and [Qasr Azraq](#) were used in the Ayyubid, Crusader, and Mamluk eras.

In the 11th century, Transjordan witnessed a phase of instability, as it became a battlefield for the Crusades which ended with defeat by the Ayyubids. Jordan suffered also from the Mongol attacks which were blocked by Mamluks. In 1516, Transjordan became part of the Ottoman Empire and remained so until 1918, when the Hashemite Army of the [Great Arab Revolt](#) took over, and secured the present day Jordan with the help and support of Transjordanian local tribes.



 Arab Revolt Tribal Cavalry – Tribes of Jordan and Arabia, c. 1918.



[Adyghe \(Circassian\) horsemanship](#) in [Transjordan](#), April 1921.

During [World War I](#), the Transjordanian tribes fought, along with other tribes of the [Hijaz](#), the [Tihamah](#), and [Levant](#) regions, as part of the Arab Army of the Great Arab Revolt. The revolt was launched by the [Hashemites](#) and led by [Sherif Hussein of Mecca](#) against the Ottoman Empire. It was supported by the [Allies of World War I](#). The chronicle of the revolt was written by [T. E. Lawrence](#) who, as a young [British Army](#) officer, played a liaison role during the revolt. He published the chronicle in London, 1922 under the title "[Seven Pillars of Wisdom](#)",^[15] which was the basis for the iconic movie "[Lawrence of Arabia](#)".

The Great Arab Revolt was successful in gaining independence for most of the territories of Hijaz and the Levant, including the region of east of Jordan. However, it failed to gain international recognition of the region as an independent state, due mainly to the secret [Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916](#) and the [Balfour Declaration of 1917](#).^[citation needed] This was seen by the Hashemites and the Arabs as betrayal of the previous agreements with the British, including the [McMahon–Hussein Correspondence](#) in 1915, in which the British stated their willingness to recognize the independence of the Arab state in Hijaz and the Levant. However, a compromise was eventually reached and the Emirate of Transjordan was created under the reign of the Hashemites.

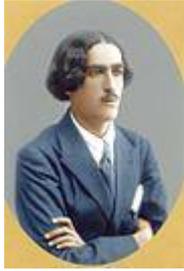
British Mandate on Transjordan

Main article: [Transjordan](#)

In September 1922 the Council of the [League of Nations](#) recognized [Transjordan](#) as a state under the [British Mandate](#) and [Transjordan memorandum](#) excluded the territories east of the [River Jordan](#) from all of the provisions of the mandate dealing with Jewish settlement.^[16] The Permanent Court of International Justice and an International Court of Arbitration established by the Council of the League of Nations handed down rulings in 1925 which determined that both a Jewish and an Arab state in the Mandatory regions of Palestine and Transjordan were to be newly created successor states of the [Ottoman Empire](#) as defined by international law.^[17] The country remained under British supervision until 1946.

The Hashemite leadership met multiple difficulties upon assuming power in the region. The most serious threats to [emir Abdullah](#)'s position in Transjordan were repeated [Wahhabi incursions](#) from Najd into southern parts of his territory.^[18] The emir was powerless to repel those raids by himself, thus the British maintained a military base, with a small [air force](#), at Marka, close to [Amman](#).^[18] The British military force was the primary obstacle against the Ikhwan, and was also used to help

emir Abdullah with the suppression of local rebellions at [Kura](#) and later by [Sultan Adwan](#), in 1921 and 1923 respectively.^[18]



[Arar](#) (1897–1949), poet of Jordan

Independence

On 25 May 1946 the United Nations approved the end of the [British Mandate](#) and recognized Transjordan as an independent sovereign kingdom. The Parliament of Transjordan proclaimed [King Abdullah](#) as the first King. The country's name was later changed from Transjordan to Jordan.^[19]

On 24 April 1950, Jordan formally annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem, an act that was regarded as illegal and void by the [Arab League](#). The move formed part of Jordan's "Greater Syria Plan" expansionist policy,^[20] and in response, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria joined Egypt in demanding Jordan's expulsion from the Arab League.^{[21][22]} A motion to expel Jordan from the League was prevented by the dissenting votes of Yemen and Iraq.^[23] On 12 June 1950, the Arab League declared the annexation was a temporary, practical measure and that Jordan was holding the territory as a "trustee" pending a future settlement.^{[24][25]}

Abdullah I was assassinated in 1951 by a Palestinian militant Mustafa Ashu, of the jihad al-muqaddas, as he was leaving the [al-Aqsa Mosque](#) in [Jerusalem](#). The reason for his murder was allegedly the power rivalry of the al-Husseinis over control of Palestine, which was declared a part of the Hashemite Kingdom by Abdullah I. Though [Amin al-Husseini](#), former mufti of Jerusalem, was not directly charged in the plot, Musa al-Husseini was among the 6 executed by Jordanian authorities, following the assassination.

On 27 July 1953, [King Hussein of Jordan](#) announced that [East Jerusalem](#) was "the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom" and would form an "integral and inseparable part" of Jordan.^[26] In 1957 Jordan terminated the [Anglo-Jordanian treaty](#), one year after the king sacked the British personnel serving in the Jordanian Army. This act of [Arabization](#) ensured the complete sovereignty of Jordan as a fully independent nation.



Field marshal [Habis Al-Majali](#) and former prime minister [Wasfi Al-Tal](#)

In May 1967, Jordan signed a military pact with Egypt. In June 1967, it joined Egypt, Syria and Iraq in the [Six Day War](#) against [Israel](#), which ended in an Israeli victory and the capture of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The period following the war saw an upsurge in the activity and numbers of Arab Palestinian paramilitary elements (*fedayeen*) within the state of Jordan. These distinct, armed militias were becoming a "state within a state", threatening Jordan's rule of law. King Hussein's armed forces targeted the *fedayeen*, and open fighting erupted in June 1970. The battle in which Palestinian fighters from various [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) groups were expelled from Jordan is commonly known as [Black September](#).

The heaviest fighting occurred in northern Jordan and Amman. In the ensuing heavy fighting, a Syrian tank force invaded northern Jordan to back the *fedayeen* fighters, but subsequently retreated. [King Hussein](#) urgently asked the United States and Great Britain to intervene against Syria. Consequently, Israel performed mock air strikes on the Syrian column at the Americans' request. Soon after, Syrian President [Nureddin al-Atassi](#), ordered a hasty retreat from Jordanian soil.^{[27][28]} By 22 September, Arab foreign ministers meeting in Cairo arranged a cease-fire beginning the following day. However, sporadic violence continued until Jordanian forces, led by [Habis Al-Majali](#), with the help of Iraqi forces,^[29] won a decisive victory over the *fedayeen* on July 1971, expelling them, and ultimately the PLO's [Yasser Arafat](#) of Jordan.

In 1973, allied Arab League forces attacked Israel in the [Yom Kippur War](#), and fighting occurred along the 1967 [Jordan River](#) cease-fire line. Jordan sent a brigade to Syria to attack Israeli units on Syrian territory but did not engage Israeli forces from Jordanian territory. At the [Rabat summit conference](#) in 1974, Jordan was now in a more secure position to agree, along with the rest of the Arab League, that the PLO was the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", thereby relinquishing to that organization its role as representative of the West Bank.

The Amman Agreement of 11 February 1985, declared that the PLO and Jordan would pursue a proposed confederation between the state of Jordan and a Palestinian state.^[30] In 1988, King Hussein dissolved the Jordanian parliament and renounced Jordanian claims to the West Bank. The PLO assumed responsibility as the Provisional Government of Palestine and an independent state was declared.^[31]



A handshake between [Hussein I of Jordan](#) and [Yitzhak Rabin](#), accompanied by [Bill Clinton](#), after signing the [Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace](#), 26 October 1994.

In 1991 Jordan agreed to participate in direct peace negotiations with Israel at the [Madrid Conference](#), sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union. It negotiated an end to hostilities with Israel and signed a declaration to that effect on 25 July 1994. As a result, an [Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty](#) was concluded on 26 October 1994. King Hussein was later honored when his picture appeared on an Israeli postage stamp in recognition of the good relations he established with his neighbor. Since the signing of the peace treaty, the United States not only contributes hundreds of millions of dollars in an annual foreign aid stipend to Jordan, but also has allowed it to establish a free trade zone in which to manufacture goods that will enter the US without paying the usual import taxes as long as a percentage of the material used in them is purchased in Israel.

The last major strain in Jordan's relations with Israel occurred in September 1997, when Israeli agents allegedly entered Jordan using Canadian passports and poisoned [Khaled Meshal](#), a senior leader of Hamas. Israel provided an antidote to the poison and released dozens of political prisoners, including [Sheikh Ahmed Yassin](#).



Visiting Washington, D.C., with Queen Rania, 6 March 2007.

Abdullah became king on 7 February 1999, upon the death of his father King Hussein. Hussein had recently named him [Crown Prince](#) on 24 January, replacing Hussein's brother [Hassan](#), who had served many years in the position. He is the namesake of King Abdullah I, his great grandfather who founded modern Jordan.^[32]

Jordan's economy has improved greatly since Abdullah ascended to the throne in 1999, and he has been credited with increasing foreign investment, improving public-private partnerships, and providing the foundation for [Aqaba](#)'s free trade zone and

Jordan's flourishing [information and communication technology](#) (ICT) sector. He also set up five other special economic zones: [Irbid](#), [Ajloun](#), [Mafrqa](#), [Ma'an](#), and the [Dead Sea](#). As a result of these reforms, Jordan's economic growth has doubled to 6% annually under King Abdullah's rule compared to the latter half of the 1990s.^[33] Foreign direct investment from the West as well as the countries of the [Persian Gulf](#) has continued to increase.^[34] He also negotiated a free trade agreement with the United States, which was the third free trade agreement for the U.S. and the first with an Arab country.^[35]

During the suspension of Parliament between 2001 and 2003, the scope of King Abdullah II's power was demonstrated with the passing of 110 temporary laws. Two of these laws dealt with elections and were criticized as having the effect of reducing the power of Parliament.^{[36][37]} In 2005 King Abdullah expressed his intentions of making Jordan a democratic country.^[38] Thus far, however, democratic development has been limited, with the monarchy maintaining most power and its allies dominating parliament. Elections were held in November 2010.

In response to domestic and regional unrest, in February 2011 [King Abdallah](#) replaced his prime minister and formed a National Dialogue Commission with a reform mandate. The King told the new prime minister to "take quick, concrete and practical steps to launch a genuine political reform process", "to strengthen democracy," and provide Jordanians with the "dignified life they deserve."^[39] The King called for an "immediate revision" of laws governing politics and public freedoms.^[40] Initial reports say that this effort has started slowly and that several "fundamental rights" are not being addressed.^[41]

Geography

Main article: [Geography of Jordan](#)



The mountains of [Jerash Governorate](#)



The [Gulf of Aqaba](#) is named after the historic port of [Aqaba](#)

Jordan lies between latitudes [29°](#) and [34° N](#), and longitudes [35°](#) and [40° E](#) (a small area lies west of 35°). It consists of an arid plateau in the east, irrigated by oasis and seasonal water streams, with highland area in the west of arable land and Mediterranean evergreen forestry.

The [Jordan Rift Valley](#) of the [Jordan River](#) separates Jordan from Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The highest point in the country is [Jabal Umm al Dami](#), at 1,854 m (6,083 ft) above sea level, its top is also covered with snow, while the lowest is the [Dead Sea](#) −420 m (−1,378 ft). Jordan is part of a region considered to be "the [cradle of civilization](#)", the [Levant](#) region of the [Fertile Crescent](#). Major cities include the capital [Amman](#) and [as-Salt](#) in the west, [Irbid](#), [Jerash](#) and [Zarqa](#), in the northwest and [Madaba](#), [Karak](#) and [Aqaba](#) in the southwest. Major towns in the eastern part of the country are the oasis town of [Azraq](#) and [Ruwaished](#).

Climate

Main article: [Climate of Jordan](#)

The climate in Jordan is semi-dry in summer with average temperature in the mid 30 °C (86 °F) and relatively cold in winter averaging around 13 °C (55 °F). The western part of the country receives greater precipitation during the winter season from November to March and snowfall in Amman (756 m (2,480 ft) ~ 1,280 m (4,199 ft) above sea-level) and Western Heights of 500 m (1,640 ft). Excluding the rift valley the rest of the country is entirely above 300 m (984 ft) (SL).^[42] The weather is humid from November to March and semi dry for the rest of the year. With hot, dry summers and cool winters during which practically all of the [precipitation](#) occurs, the country has a [Mediterranean-style climate](#). In general, the farther inland from the Mediterranean a given part of the country lies, the greater are the seasonal contrasts in temperature and the less rainfall.

Politics and government

Main articles: [Politics of Jordan](#) and [Government of Jordan](#)



[King Abdullah II](#), Jordanian Head of State.



[Queen Rania of Jordan](#)

The [Hashemite](#) Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with an appointed government. The reigning monarch is the chief executive and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The king exercises his executive authority through the prime ministers and the Council of Ministers, or cabinet.

The cabinet is responsible before the democratically elected [House of Deputies](#) which, along with the [House of Notables \(Senate\)](#), constitutes the legislative branch of the government. The judicial branch is an independent branch of the government.

[King Abdullah II](#) succeeded his father Hussein following the latter's death in February 1999. Abdullah moved quickly to reaffirm Jordan's [peace treaty](#) with [Israel](#) and its relations with the United States. Abdullah, during the first year in power, refocused the government's agenda on economic reform.

The [Parliament of Jordan](#) consists of two Chambers: The Chamber of Deputies ('Majlis al-Nuwaab') and the Senate ('Majlis al-Aayan'; literally, 'Assembly of Notables'). The Senate has 60 Senators, all of whom are directly appointed by the King,^[43] while the Chamber of Deputies/House of Representatives has 120 elected members representing 12 constituencies. The elected Chamber of Deputies can initiate legislation, but it has to pass through the senate and government, which are both appointed by the King.^[44]

Jordan has multi-party politics. Political parties contest fewer than a fifth of the seats, while the rest go to [independent](#) politicians.^[45] A new political parties law enacted in July 2012 placed parties under the jurisdiction of the [Ministry of Interior](#), and forbid the establishment of religion-based parties.^[46]

The [last parliamentary elections](#) were held on 23 January 2013. Because of a history of rigged elections, government critics have dismissed them as merely cosmetic. Some opposition groups, including the largest, the [Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood](#), and the protest network known as [Hirak](#) boycotted the vote.^[47]

Law



A female police officer in [Amman](#)

The [Jordanian legal system](#) is derived from the [Napoleonic code](#) (inherited from the [Ottoman](#) and [Egyptian](#) legal systems) and [Sharia](#). It has also been influenced by tribal traditions.^[48]

The highest court is the [Court of Cassation](#), followed by the [Courts of Appeal](#).^[48] The lower courts are divided into civil courts and sharia courts. Civil courts have jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases, while the sharia courts have jurisdiction over personal status for Muslims, including marriage, divorce, and inheritance; parallel tribunals handle such matters for non-Muslims.^[48] Shari'a courts also have jurisdiction over matters pertaining to the Islamic [waqfs](#). In cases involving parties of different religions, regular courts have jurisdiction.^[49]

The [Constitution of Jordan](#) was adopted on January 11, 1952 and has been amended many times. Article 97 of Jordan's constitution guarantees the independence of the judicial branch, clearly stating that judges are 'subject to no authority but that of the law.' While the king must approve the appointment and dismissal of judges, in practice these are supervised by the [Higher Judicial Council](#). Article 99 of the Constitution divides the courts into three categories: civil, religious and special. The civil courts deal with civil and criminal matters in accordance with the law, and they have jurisdiction over all persons in all matters, civil and criminal, including cases brought against the government. The civil courts include Magistrate Courts, Courts of First Instance, Courts of Appeal, High Administrative Courts and the Supreme Court.

The Family Law in force is the Personal Status Law of 1976.^[50] Sharia Courts have jurisdiction over personal status matters relating to Muslims.^[51]

[Jordan's law enforcement](#) ranked 24th in the world, 4th in the Middle East, in terms of police services' reliability in the Global Competitiveness Report. Jordan also ranked 13th in the world and 3rd in the Middle East in terms of prevention of organized crime, making it one of the safest countries in the world.^[52]

Foreign relations

Main article: [Foreign relations of Jordan](#)



King Abdullah II on a visit to The Pentagon.

Jordan has followed a pro-Western foreign policy and maintained close relations with the United States and the United Kingdom. These relations were damaged by Jordan's neutrality and maintaining relations with Iraq during the first [Gulf War](#). Following the Gulf War, Jordan largely restored its relations with Western countries through its participation in the Southwest Asia peace process and enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq. Relations between Jordan and the Persian Gulf countries improved substantially after King Hussein's death.

Jordan is a key ally of the USA and, together with Egypt, one of only two Arab nations to have made peace with Israel. [\[53\]\[54\]](#)

In Israel in 2009, several [Likud](#) lawmakers proposed a bill that called for a Palestinian state on both sides of the Jordan River, presuming that Jordan should be the alternative homeland for the Palestinians. Later, following similar remarks by the Israeli Speaker of the Knesset, twenty Jordanian lawmakers proposed a bill in the [Jordanian Parliament](#) in which the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan would be frozen. The Israeli Foreign Ministry disavowed the original proposal. [\[55\]\[56\]](#)

Military

Main article: [Jordanian Armed Forces](#)



Jordanian troops in a military parade in Amman

The Jordanian military enjoys strong support and aid from the United States, the United Kingdom and France. This is due to its critical position between Israel, the West Bank, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia with very close proximity to Lebanon and Egypt. The development of the [Special Operations Forces](#) has been particularly

significant, enhancing the capability of the forces to react rapidly to threats to state security, as well as training special forces from the region and beyond.^{[57][58]}

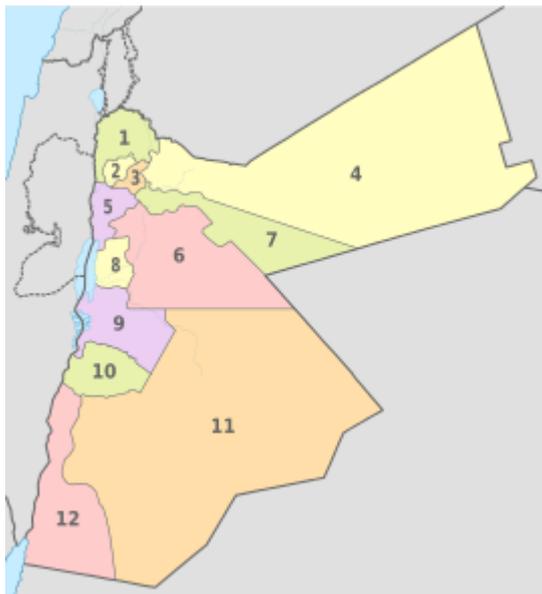
There are about 50,000 Jordanian troops working with the United Nations in [peacekeeping](#) missions across the world. These soldiers provide everything from military defense, training of native police, medical help, and charity. Jordan ranks third internationally in taking part in UN peacekeeping missions.^[59] Jordan has one of the highest levels of peacekeeping troop contributions of all U.N. member states.^[60]

Jordan has dispatched several field hospitals to conflict zones and areas affected by natural disasters across the world such as [Iraq](#), the West Bank, [Lebanon](#), Afghanistan, [Haiti](#), Indonesia, Congo, [Liberia](#), Ethiopia, [Eritrea](#), Sierra Leone and Pakistan. The Kingdom's field hospitals extended aid to more than one million people in Iraq, some one million in the West Bank and 55,000 in Lebanon. According to the military, there are Jordanian peacekeeping forces in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. Jordanian Armed Forces field hospital in [Afghanistan](#) has since 2002 provided assistance to some 750,000 persons and has significantly reduced the suffering of people residing in areas where the hospital operates. In some missions, the number of Jordanian troops was the second largest, the sources said.^[61] Jordan also provides extensive training of security forces in Iraq,^[62] the [Palestinian territories](#),^[63] and the [GCC](#).^[64]

Administrative divisions

Main article: [Governorates of Jordan](#)

Jordan is divided into 12 provinces named [Governorates](#), which are sub-divided into 54 departments or districts named [Nahias](#).



Governorates of Jordan

No. Governorate Capital

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Irbid | Irbid |
| 2 | Ajloun | Ajloun |
| 3 | Jarash | Jerash |
| 4 | Mafraq | Mafraq |
| 5 | Balqa | Salt |
| 6 | Amman | Amman |
| 7 | Zarqa | Zarqa |
| 8 | Madaba | Madaba |
| 9 | Karak | Al Karak |
| 10 | Tafilah | Tafilah |
| 11 | Ma'an | Ma'an |
| 12 | Aqaba | Aqaba |

Human rights

Main article: [Human rights in Jordan](#)

The 2010 Arab Democracy Index from the Arab Reform Initiative ranked Jordan first in the state of democratic reforms out of fifteen Arab countries.^[65]

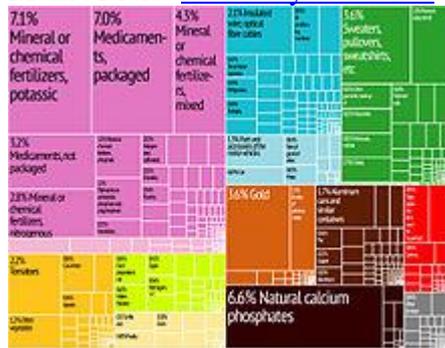
Civil liberties and political rights scored 5 and 6 respectively in Freedom House's [Freedom in the World 2011 report](#), where 1 is most free and 7 is least free. This earned Jordan "Not Free" status.^[66] Jordan ranked ahead of 6, behind 4, and the same as 8 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Jordan ranked 6th among the 19 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, and 50th out of 178 countries worldwide in the 2010 [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) (CPI) issued by [Transparency International](#).^[67] Jordan's 2010 CPI score was 4.7 on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean). Jordan ratified the [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#) (UNCAC) in February 2005^[68] and has been a regional leader in spearheading efforts to promote the UNCAC and its implementation.^[52]

According to a 2010 [Pew](#) Global Attitudes survey, 86% of Jordanians polled supported the [death penalty](#) for those who [leave Islam](#); 58% supported whippings and cutting off of hands for theft and robbery; and 70% support stoning people who commit adultery.^[69]

Economy

Main article: [Economy of Jordan](#)



Graphical depiction of Jordan 's product exports in 28 color-coded categories.

Jordan is classified by the [World Bank](#) as an "upper middle income country."^[10] The economy has grown at an average rate of 4.3% per annum since 2005.^[70] Approximately 13% of the population lives on less than US\$ 3 a day.^[70]

The GDP per capita rose by 351% in the 1970s, declined 30% in the 1980s, and rose 36% in the 1990s.^[71]^[not in citation given] Jordan has a free trade agreement with [Turkey](#).^[72] Jordan also enjoys advanced status with the EU.^[73]

The Jordanian economy is beset by insufficient supplies of water, oil, and other natural resources.^[3] Other challenges include high budget deficit, high outstanding public debt, high levels of poverty and unemployment.^[70] Unemployment for 2012 is nominally around 13%, but is thought by many analysts to be as high as a quarter of the working age population.^[74] Youth unemployment is nearly 30%.^[74] Jordan has few natural resources and a small industrial base.^[74] Corruption is particularly pronounced, and the use of [wasta](#) is widespread.^[74] Jordan suffers from a [brain drain](#) of its most talented workers.^[74] Remittances from Jordanian expatriates are a major source of foreign exchange.^[75]

Due to slow domestic growth, high energy and food subsidies and a bloated public sector workforce, Jordan usually runs annual budget deficits, which are partially offsets by international aid.^[74]

Jordan's economy is relatively well diversified.^[75] Trade and finance combined account for nearly one-third of GDP; transportation and communication, public utilities, and construction account for one-fifth, and mining and manufacturing constitute nearly that proportion.^[75] Despite plans to increase the private sector, the state remains the dominant force in Jordan's economy.^[75] The government employs between one-third and two-thirds of all workers.^[74]

In 2000, Jordan joined the [World Trade Organization](#) and signed the [Jordan–United States Free Trade Agreement](#); in 2001, it signed an association agreement with the European Union.^[76]

Net [official development assistance](#) to Jordan in 2009 totalled USD 761 million; according to the government, approximately two-thirds of this was allocated as grants, of which half was direct budget support.^[70]

The [Great Recession](#) and the turmoil caused by the [Arab Spring](#) have depressed Jordan's GDP growth, impacting export-oriented sectors, construction, and tourism.^[3] Tourist arrivals have dropped sharply since 2011, hitting an important source of revenue and employment.^[77]

In an attempt to quell popular discontent, the government promised in 2011 to keep energy and food prices artificially low, while raising wages and pensions for bloated public sector.^[77] Jordan's finances have also been strained by a series of [natural gas pipeline](#) attacks in Egypt, causing Jordan to substitute more expensive heavy fuel oils to generate electricity.^[78] The government was then forced to spend at least \$500 million to cover the resulting fuel shortage.^[77]

The International Monetary Fund agreed to a three-year, \$2 billion loan in August 2012. As part of the deal, Jordan was expected to cut spending.^[74] In November 2012, the government cut subsidies on fuel.^[79] As a result, large scale protests broke out across the country, and the King subsequently reversed the increase.”^[74]

The total foreign debt in 2012 was \$22 billion, representing 72% of GDP. Roughly two-thirds of this total had been raised on the domestic market, with the remaining owed to overseas lenders.^[79] In late November 2012, the budgetary shortfall was estimated at around \$3 billion, or about 11% of GDP.^[79] Growth was expected to

reach 3% by the end of 2012, and the IMF predicts GDP will increase by 3.5% in 2013, rising to 4.5% by 2017.^[79] The inflation rate was forecast at 4.5% by the end of 2012.^[79]

The official currency in Jordan is the [Jordanian dinar](#), which is pegged to the IMF's [special drawing rights](#) (SDRs), equivalent to an exchange rate of 1 US\$ = 0.709 dinar, or approximately 1 dinar = 1.41044 dollars.^[80]

The proportion of skilled workers in Jordan is among the highest in the region.^[81] [Agriculture in Jordan](#) constituted almost 40% of GNP in the early 1950s; on the eve of the June 1967 War, it was 17%.^[82] By the mid-1980s, agriculture's share of [GNP](#) in Jordan was only about 6%.^[82] Jordan has hosted the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa six times and plans to hold it again at the Dead Sea for the seventh time in 2013.^[83]

Natural resources



A phosphate train at Ram station

[Phosphate](#) mines in the south have made Jordan one of the largest producers and exporters of this mineral in the world.^{[84][85][86][87][88]}

Four nuclear power plants are planned with the first one to be operational in 2019.^[89]

Since the beginning of 2010, the government of Jordan has been seeking approval from the US for producing nuclear fuel from Jordan's uranium for use in nuclear power plants that Jordan plans to build. According to [Haaretz](#), Jordan learned that the US position is essentially the Israeli position, and the US has rejected Jordan's request for approval.^[90]

Natural gas was discovered in Jordan in 1987, and the estimated size of the reserve discovered was about 230 billion cubic feet, and quantities are very modest compared with its neighbours. It was the development of the Risha field in the Eastern Desert beside the Iraqi border, and the field produces nearly 30 million cubic feet of gas a day, to be sent to a nearby power plant to produce nearly 10% of the Jordan's Electric needs.^[91]

Despite the fact that reserves of crude oil are non-commercial, Jordan possesses one of the world's richest stockpiles of oil shale where there are huge quantities that could be commercially exploited in the central and northern regions west of the country. The moisture content and ash within is relatively low. And the total thermal value is

7.5 megajoules/kg, and the content of ointments reach 9% of the weight of the organic content.^[92] A switch to power plants operated by oil shale has the potential to reduce Jordan's energy bill by at least 40–50 per cent, according to the National Electric Power Company.^[93]

Tourism

Main article: [Tourism in Jordan](#)



[Petra](#), one of the [New Seven Wonders of the World](#)

Tourism accounted for 10%–12% of the country's Gross National Product in 2006. In 2010, there were 8 million visitors to Jordan. The result was \$3.4 billion in tourism revenues, \$4.4 billion if medical tourists are included.^[94] Jordan offers everything from world-class historical and cultural sites like [Petra](#) and [Jerash](#) to modern entertainment in urban areas most notably [Amman](#). Moreover, seaside recreation is present in [Aqaba](#) and [Dead Sea](#) through numerous international resorts. Eco-tourists have numerous nature reserves to choose from as like [Dana Nature Reserve](#). Religious tourists visit [Mt. Nebo](#), the Baptist Site, and the mosaic city of [Madaba](#).

Jordan has nightclubs, discothèques and bars in Amman, Irbid, Aqaba, and many 4 and 5-star hotels. Furthermore, beach clubs are also offered at the Dead Sea and Aqaba. Jordan played host to the Petra Prana Festival in 2007 which celebrated Petra's win as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World with world-renowned DJs like [Tiesto](#) and [Sarah Main](#). The annual Distant Heat festival in [Wadi Rum](#) and Aqaba ranked as one of the world's top 10 raves.



Excavated remains of [Bethabara](#), Jordan, where [John the Baptist](#) is believed to have conducted his ministry.

[Nature reserves in Jordan](#) include the [Dana Biosphere Reserve](#), [Azraq Wetland Reserve](#), [Shaumari Wildlife Reserve](#) and [Mujib Nature Reserve](#).

Medical tourism

Jordan has been a [medical tourism](#) destination in the Middle East since the 1970s. A study conducted by [Jordan's Private Hospitals Association \(PHA\)](#) found that 250,000 patients from 102 countries received treatment in the kingdom in 2010, compared to 190,000 in 2007, bringing over \$1 billion in revenue. It is the region's top medical tourism destination as rated by the [World Bank](#), and fifth in the world overall.^{[95][96][97]}

It is estimated that Jordan received 50,000 Libyan patients and 80,000 Syrian refugees, who also sought treatment in Jordanian hospitals, in the first six months of 2012.^[98]

Jordan's main focus of attention in its marketing effort are the ex-Soviet states, Europe, and America.^[99] Most common medical procedures on Arab and foreign patients included organ transplants, open heart surgeries, infertility treatment, laser vision corrections, bone operations and cancer treatment.^[100]

Transportation

Main article: [Transport in Jordan](#)



A Royal Jordanian [Airbus A310-300](#)

Being that Jordan is a transit country for goods and services to the [Palestinian territories](#) and [Iraq](#), Jordan maintains a well-developed transportation infrastructure. Jordan ranked as having the 35th best infrastructure in the world, one of the highest rankings in the developing world, according to the World Economic Forum's Index of Economic Competitiveness.^[101]

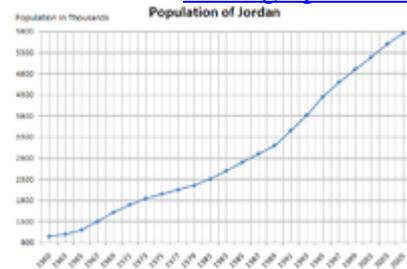
The Port of Aqaba was ranked as having the "Best Container Terminal" in the Middle East in 2006 by Lloyds List.^[102]

There are three commercial airports, all receiving and sending international commercial flights, two of them in [Amman](#) and the third is located in the city of [Aqaba](#). The largest airport in the country is [Queen Alia International Airport](#) in Amman that serves as the hub of the international airline [Royal Jordanian](#). The airport is currently under significant expansion in a bid to make it the hub for the Levant. [Amman Civil Airport](#) was the country's main airport before it was replaced by [Queen](#)

[Alia Airport](#) but it still serves several regional routes. [King Hussein International Airport](#) serves Aqaba with connections to Amman and several regional and international cities.

Demographics

Main article: [Demographics of Jordan](#)



Graph showing the population of Jordan, 1960–2005

The Jordanian Department of Statistics estimated the 2011 population at 6,249,000.^[103] In 2009, the population of Jordan was slightly over 6,300,000.^[104] There were 946,000 households in Jordan in 2004, with an average of 5.3 persons/household (compared to 6 persons/household for the census of 1994).^[105]

A study published by [Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza](#) found that the Jordanian genetics are closest to the [Assyrians](#) among all other nations of Western Asia.^[106]

Immigrants and refugees

In 2007, there were 700,000–1,000,000 [Iraqis in Jordan](#).^[107] Since the [Iraq War](#) many Christians ([Assyrians/Chaldeans](#)) from [Iraq](#) have settled permanently or temporarily in Jordan. They could number as many as 500,000.^[108] There were also 15,000 Lebanese who emigrated to Jordan following the 2006 War with Israel.^[109]

There are 1,200,000 illegal and some 500,000 legal migrant workers in the Kingdom.^[110] Furthermore, there are thousands of foreign women working in nightclubs, hotels and bars across the kingdom, mostly from Eastern Europe and North Africa.^{[111][112][113]}

Jordan is home to a relatively large American and European expatriate population concentrated mainly in the capital as the city is home to many international organizations and diplomatic missions that base their regional operations in Amman.^{[114][115]}

According to [UNRWA](#), Jordan was home to 1,951,603 [Palestinian refugees](#) in 2008, most of them Jordanian citizens.^[116] 338,000 of them were living in UNRWA refugee camps.^[117] Jordan revoked the citizenship of thousands of Palestinians to thwart any attempt to resettle West Bank residents in Jordan. West Bank Palestinians with family in Jordan or Jordanian citizenship were issued yellow cards guaranteeing them all the rights of Jordanian citizenship. Palestinians living in Jordan with family in the West

Bank were also issued yellow cards. All other Palestinians wishing such Jordanian papers were issued green cards to facilitate travel into Jordan.^[118]

Language

The official language is [Modern Standard Arabic](#), a literary language taught in the schools. The native languages of most Jordanians are dialects of [Jordanian Arabic](#), a nonstandard version of Arabic with many influences from English, French and Turkish.

English, though without an official status, is widely spoken throughout the country and is the *de facto* language of commerce and banking, as well as a co-official status in the education sector; almost all university-level classes are held in English.

[Russian](#), [Circassian](#), [Armenian](#), [Tagalog](#), [Tamil](#), and [Chechen](#) are quite popular among their communities and acknowledged widely in the kingdom.

It's believed that most, if not all, public schools in the country teach the English and Standard Arabic (to a degree). [French](#) is elective in many schools, mainly in the private sector. [L'Ecole française d'Amman](#) and [Lycée français d'Amman](#) are the most famous French language schools in the capital. French remains an elite language in Jordan, despite not enjoying the popularity it did in older times.

[German](#) is an increasingly popular language among the elite and the educated; it's been most likely introduced at a larger scale after the début of the [Deutsch Universität](#), or as officially named, the *German-Jordanian University*. A historic society of German Protestants of Amman continue to use the German language in their events and daily lives.^[119]

The media in Jordan revolves mainly around English, with many British and mostly American programmes and films shown on local television and cinemas. [Egyptian Arabic](#) is very popular, with many [Egyptian movies](#) playing in cinemas across the country.

The government-owned *Jordan TV* shows programmes and newscasts in Arabic (Standard and Jordanian), English and French; *Radio Jordan* offers radio services in Standard Arabic, the Jordanian dialects (informally), English and French, as well. It should be noted that when an English-language film is shown in a cinema, it'll be translated to both: French and Standard Arabic.

Religion

Main article: [Religion in Jordan](#)



Abu Darweesh Mosque

Religion in Jordan^[3]

Religion		Percent
<u>Sunni Muslims</u>		92%
Christians		6%
Other		2%

Islam is the official religion and approximately 92% of the population is Muslim, primarily of the Sunni branch of Islam.

Jordan has laws promoting religious freedom, but they fall short of protecting all minority groups. Muslims who convert to another religion as well as missionaries face societal and legal discrimination.^[120]

According to the Legatum Prosperity Index, 46.2% of Jordanians regularly attend religious services in 2006.^[121]

Jordan has an indigenous Christian minority. Christians made up 30% of the Jordanian population in 1950.^[122]

Other religious minorities groups in Jordan include adherents to the Druze and Bahá'í Faith. The Druze are mainly located in the eastern oasis town of Azraq, some villages on the Syrian border and the city of Zarka, while the village Adassiyeh bordering the Jordan Valley is home to Jordan's Bahá'í community.

Culture

Main articles: Culture of Jordan, Jordanian cuisine, and Sport in Jordan



Mansaf, the national dish of Jordan.^[123]



[Prince Ali bin Al Hussein](#), Vice President of the [FIFA](#).

Although religion and tradition play an important part in modern-day Jordanian society, Jordanians live in a relatively secular society that is increasingly grappling with the effects of globalization. Jordan is considered one of the Arab World's most cosmopolitan countries.^[124] 67% of Jordanian youth identify themselves as liberals, second highest in the Arab World after Lebanon.^[125]

According to the Center for Strategic Studies, 52% of Jordanians support a secular state in which religious practices were considered to be “private matters that must be differentiated from social and political life”, 6% express indifference towards a secular state or a more religious one, while 42% prefer more religious involvement in social and political life.^[126]

Arts

Main article: [Jordanian art](#)



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Popular culture

Main articles: [Music of Jordan](#) and [Cinema of Jordan](#)

Jordan imports the overwhelming majority of its music, cinema, and other forms of entertainment from other countries most specifically other [Arab](#) countries like [Lebanon](#) and [Egypt](#) as well as by the West primarily the United States. However, there has been a rise of home-grown songs, music, art, movies and television, but they pale in comparison to the amount imported from abroad.

Media

Main article: [Media of Jordan](#)

Jordan ranked 141 out of 196 countries worldwide, earning "Not Free" status in [Freedom House's 2011 Freedom of the Press 2011 report](#).^[127] Jordan had the 5th freest press of 19 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. In the [2010 Press](#)

[Freedom Index](#) maintained by [Reporters Without Borders](#), Jordan ranked 120th out of 178 countries listed, 5th out of the 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. Jordan's score was 37 on a scale from 0 (most free) to 105 (least free).^[128]

Health

Main article: [Health in Jordan](#)

Jordan prides itself on its health service, one of the best in the region.^[129] Government figures have put total health spending in 2002 at some 7.5% of Gross domestic product (GDP), while international health organizations place the figure even higher, at approximately 9.3% of GDP. The [CIA World Factbook](#) estimates life expectancy in Jordan is 80.18 years, the second highest in the region (after Israel).^[130] The WHO gives a considerably lower figure however, at 73.0 years for 2011.^[131] There were 203 physicians per 100,000 people in the years 2000–2004.^[132]

The country's health care system is divided between public and private institutions. In the public sector, the Ministry of Health operates 1,245 primary health-care centers and 27 hospitals, accounting for 37% of all hospital beds in the country; the military's Royal Medical Services runs 11 hospitals, providing 24% of all beds; and the [Jordan University Hospital](#) accounts for 3% of total beds in the country. The private sector provides 36% of all hospital beds, distributed among 56 hospitals. In 1 June 2007, Jordan Hospital (as the biggest private hospital) was the first general specialty hospital to get the international accreditation [JCAHO](#).^[133] The [King Hussein Cancer Center](#) is a leading cancer treatment center.

70% of the population has medical insurance.^[134] Childhood [immunization](#) rates have increased steadily over the past 15 years; by 2002 immunizations and [vaccines](#) reached more than 95% of children under five.^[133] Water and sanitation, available to only 10% of the population in 1950, now reach 99% of Jordanians, according to government statistics. They also show that electricity reaches 99% of the population, as compared to less than 10% in 1955.^[135]

Education

Main article: [Education in Jordan](#)



Medical halls of JUST as seen with [KAUH](#).

The adult literacy rate in 2010 was 92.6%.^[136] The Jordanian educational system consists of a two-year cycle of pre-school education, ten years of compulsory basic

education, and two years of secondary academic or vocational education, after which the students sit for the [Tawjihi](#).^[137] UNESCO ranked Jordan's education system 18th out of 94 nations for providing gender equality in education.^[138] 20.5% of Jordan's total government expenditures goes to education compared to 2.5% in [Turkey](#) and 3.86% in [Syria](#).^{[139][140][141]} Secondary school enrollment has increased from 63% to 97% of high school aged students in Jordan and between 79% and 85% of high school students in Jordan move on to higher education.^[142]

In Jordan there are 2,000 researchers per million people, compared to 5,000 researchers per million for the top-performing countries.^[143] According to the Global Innovation Index 2011, Jordan is the 3rd most innovative economy in the Middle East, behind [Qatar](#) and the [United Arab Emirates](#).^[144]

The kingdom has 10 public and 16 private universities, in addition to some 54 community colleges, of which 14 are public, 24 private and others affiliated with the [Jordan Armed Forces](#), the Civil Defence Department, the ministry of health and UNRWA.^[145] There are over 200,000 Jordanian students enrolled in universities each year. An additional 20,000 Jordanians pursue higher education abroad primarily in the United States and Great Britain.^[146] Jordan is already home to several international universities such as [German-Jordanian University](#), [Columbia University](#), [NYIT](#), [DePaul University](#), and the [American University of Madaba](#). [George Washington University](#) is planning to establish a medical university in Jordan as well.^[147]

According to the [Webometrics Ranking of World Universities](#), the top-ranking universities in the country are the [University of Jordan](#) (1507th worldwide), [Yarmouk University](#) (2165th) and the [Jordan University of Science & Technology](#) (2335th).^[148]

Jordan is the top contributor among all Arab countries in terms of internet content. 75% of all Arabic online content originates from Jordan.^[149]