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: ّ اَألُرْدُن‎  
 Al-ʾUrdunn), officially the Hashemite   
Kingdom of Jordan (Arabic: اَلمَمْلَكَةّاَألُرْدُنِيَّةّاَلهَاشِمِيَّة‎  
 al-Mamlakah al-ʾUrdunniyyah   
al-Hāšimiyyah), 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).   
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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 Judaean 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, Mafraq, 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.   
   
No. Governorate Capital   
   
   
Governorates of Jordan   
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   
   
Sunni Muslims   
     
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]