



**Congressional  
Research Service**

Informing the legislative debate since 1914

---

# Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations

Updated May 19, 2025

**Congressional Research Service**

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

RL33546



**RL33546**

May 19, 2025

**Jeremy M. Sharp**  
Specialist in Middle  
Eastern Affairs

## Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a key U.S. partner in the Middle East, and the two countries have cooperated on a number of regional and international issues. Jordan remains at peace with Israel and is a primary interlocutor with the Palestinians. Ongoing conflict and instability in the West Bank/Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and security concerns in Iraq and the Gulf states magnify Jordan's strategic importance to the United States. Jordan also is a longtime U.S. partner in global counterterrorism operations. U.S.-Jordanian military, intelligence, and diplomatic cooperation seeks to empower political moderates, reduce sectarian conflict, and eliminate terrorist threats in the region. U.S. officials frequently express their support for Jordan. U.S. assistance has helped Jordan address serious vulnerabilities, both internal and external. Jordan's small size, refugee burden, and lack of major economic resources have made it dependent on aid from Western and various Arab sources. Jordan also hosts nearly 4,000 U.S. troops.

The ongoing Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and conflicts with Iran and Iran-supported groups are profoundly affecting the kingdom in myriad ways. The Jordanian government has expressed concern that fighting between Israel, Iran, and Iran-supported groups could spill over into Jordan. Already, three American soldiers have been killed inside Jordan by an Iran-supported Iraqi group, and a direct Iranian missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attack against Israel traversed Jordanian airspace. Overall, ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza and the West Bank resulting in Palestinian civilian casualties also are of concern to the Jordanian government in part because a significant percentage of Jordan's population is of Palestinian descent.

Annual U.S. aid to Jordan has tripled in historical terms over the past 15 years. The United States has provided economic and military aid to Jordan since 1951 and 1957, respectively. Total bilateral U.S. aid (overseen by the Departments of State and Defense) to Jordan through FY2025 amounted to approximately \$33.6 billion.

On September 16, 2022, the United States and Jordan signed their fourth Memorandum of Understanding governing U.S. foreign aid to Jordan. The seven-year agreement (FY2023-FY2029), subject to appropriations of Congress, commits the Administration to seeking a total of \$1.45 billion in annual economic and military aid for Jordan.

Announced pauses and reviews of federal funding, the reorganization of U.S. agencies, and the recall of some U.S. staff posted abroad may affect the implementation of Jordan-related U.S. foreign aid and humanitarian assistance programs. For FY2025, P.L. 119-4, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, maintains aid levels to Jordan at FY2024 levels. On April 30, Reuters reported that Jordan "has won assurances from Washington that the bulk of financing worth at least \$1.45 billion annually remains intact, including military and direct budgetary support."

## Contents

Overview and Latest Developments.....	1
A Changing Regional Dynamic for Jordan .....	1
Government Outlaws the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood .....	5
The Economy and Domestic Reforms .....	6
Country Background .....	6
The Hashemite Royal Family.....	7
Political System and Key Institutions .....	7
U.S. Relations.....	9
U.S.-Jordanian Security Cooperation.....	9
The Case of Ahlam al Tamimi.....	10
U.S. Foreign Assistance to Jordan.....	10

## Figures

Figure 1. King Abdullah II Meets with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa .....	2
Figure 2. Jordan: Country Map .....	5
Figure 3. King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein.....	7

## Contacts

Author Information.....	12
-------------------------	----

## Overview and Latest Developments

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has long been a close U.S. security partner in the Middle East, and the two countries have cooperated on a number of regional and international issues. Since signing a peace treaty in 1994, Jordan has remained at peace with Israel, and it serves as a primary interlocutor with Palestinians in the West Bank (Jordanians of Palestinian origin make up an estimated 55% to 70% of the kingdom's population).<sup>1</sup> Jordan also has been a longtime U.S. partner in global counterterrorism operations. U.S.-Jordanian military, intelligence, and diplomatic cooperation has sought to empower political moderates, reduce sectarian conflict, and eliminate terrorist threats in the region. Currently, the United States has deployed nearly 4,000 U.S. troops in the kingdom for military operations against the Islamic State in neighboring Syria and Iraq and to enhance Jordan's security.<sup>2</sup>

From a security standpoint, Jordan has been subject to periodic confrontations between Iran and Israel and between Iranian-supported groups and the United States. In January 2024, three U.S. service personnel serving in Jordan were killed and more than 40 were injured following an uncrewed aerial system (UAS, or drone) attack emanating from Iraq that struck a military base near the Syrian border. In April 2024, shrapnel from projectiles fired by Iran at Israel landed inside Jordan, though there were no reports of casualties. On October 1, 2024, Iran again attacked Israel with ballistic missiles; after Jordan's air defense intercepted some of the incoming projectiles, Jordanian authorities reported two minor injuries from falling missile debris.<sup>3</sup> In November 2024, shrapnel from an Israeli interceptor fired at an incoming projectile emanating from Iraq landed in the Jordanian Red Sea city of Aqaba; no casualties were reported.<sup>4</sup>

### A Changing Regional Dynamic for Jordan

From late 2024 to the present, the strategic landscape surrounding Jordan has changed significantly. Israel has resoundingly weakened Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Gaza militarily. In neighboring Syria, the Assad regime, which had allied itself with Iran and engaged in narcotics trading into Jordanian territory, has fallen and has been replaced by interim authorities led by Sunni Islamists. In Lebanon, for the first time in decades, Hezbollah is not part of the government. Some observers contend that Iran's "axis of resistance" against Israel and U.S. Arab partners is on the wane, though still dangerous.<sup>5</sup>

Even with shifts in the region, multiple dynamics threaten Jordan's stability, and Jordanian leaders appear to oppose some changes in U.S. policy that they argue may create risks for the kingdom (see below).

**West Bank.** In the West Bank, where Israeli settlers and Palestinians have clashed, and where Iran has sought to smuggle weapons through Jordan to Palestinian militants, Israel has increased

<sup>1</sup> Some U.S. lawmakers refer to the West Bank as "Judea and Samaria," the biblical names for the region. Recognizing Judea and Samaria Act (S. 384 and H.R. 902); Ephrat Livni, "U.S. Evangelicals Press for Annexation of West Bank," *New York Times*, March 10, 2025. As reflected on the State Department website, March 31, 2025, the State Department uses the term "West Bank" under regulations last updated in March 2024. See <https://fam.state.gov/FAM/05FAH03/05FAH030410.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The White House (Biden Administration), "Letter to the Speaker of the House and President Pro Tempore of the Senate Regarding the War Powers Report," December 6, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Laith al Junaidi, "Jordan reports 2 injuries from falling missile debris following Iranian attack on Israel," Anadolu Agency (Turkey), October 1, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> "Errant Israeli interceptor appears to hit Jordan's Aqaba," *Times of Israel*, November 18, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Arman Mahmoudian, "Iran's 'Axis of Resistance' Weakened but Still Dangerous," *Stimson*, January 10, 2025.

its military operations.<sup>6</sup> In the Palestinian refugee camps in Jenin, and at Nur Shams, and Tulkarm, press reporting suggests that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are adopting certain tactics used in Gaza (e.g., demolishing residential areas used by armed groups).<sup>7</sup> Perhaps reflecting the sensitivity of the Palestinian issue resonating amongst the Jordanian public, Jordan's government has condemned Israel's actions and called for de-escalation.<sup>8</sup>

**UNRWA.** Legislation passed in Israel (and the United States) affecting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) may have an impact in Jordan.<sup>9</sup> According to UNRWA, more than 2 million registered Palestine refugees (comprising original refugees and certain descendants) live in Jordan, the largest number of registered refugees of all UNRWA field sites, with 18% of all registered refugees living in the 10 recognized camps inside Jordan.<sup>10</sup> For 2025, UNRWA estimates that it requires at least \$159 million for operations inside Jordan.<sup>11</sup>

**Syria.** As Syria's new Islamist-led government seeks international legitimacy, Jordanian authorities have embarked on a path of cautious, pragmatic engagement. Over the past few months, respective foreign ministers from both sides have met to discuss border security and counter-narcotics cooperation. Jordan's Chairperson of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also met with the new Syrian Minister of Defense to discuss prospects for enhanced military cooperation. On April 29, the Jordanian Ministry of the Interior announced new regulations for Syrians entering and leaving Jordan, providing exemptions for security screening for certain categories of visitors (e.g., students or business travelers).<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 1. King Abdullah II Meets with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa**

February 2025



**Source:** The Royal Hashemite Court, February 26, 2025.

UN agencies report that there were more than 546,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan as of April 2025; some have resided in camps or have lived among the general populace for over 12 years.<sup>13</sup> According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of early May, 62,500 Syrian refugees have returned from Jordan to Syria since December 2024, an average of 380 refugees returning each day. According to UNHCR:

<sup>6</sup> Ben Caspit, "Israel sees surge in Iran weapons smuggling to West Bank via Jordan," *Al Monitor*, January 7, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> "Israel clears another refugee camp as squeeze on West Bank tightens," Reuters, March 3, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> "Jordan condemns Israeli aggression on Jenin, calls for protection of Palestinians," *Jordan Times*, January 23, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> See CRS InFocus12863, *UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): Background and U.S. Funding Trends*, by Jim Zanotti and Rhoda Margesson.

<sup>10</sup> UNRWA, "Where We Work," available at <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>; see also <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/refugees> and CRS Report RL34074, *The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.unrwa.org/how-you-can-help/how-we-spend-funds/core-programme-budget>.

<sup>12</sup> Jordan News Agency (Petra), "Interior Ministry Announces New Entry, Exit Procedures for Syrian Nationals," April 29, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor>.

When asked about motivation to return, nearly 68 per cent of refugees in communities stated that the improvement in the security situation in Syria was a key driver for their return. However, nearly half of respondents stated that their decision to return was influenced by the problems they were facing in Jordan. In camps, the main reason cited for return was to reunite with relatives (37 per cent), an improved security situation in Syria (29 per cent) and the fact that the returnees no longer wished to live as a refugee in Jordan.<sup>14</sup>

Concern over the security situation in southern Syria remains refugees' main impediment to returning home.

On May 13, 2025, while visiting Saudi Arabia and before his meeting with Syrian President Ahmed al Sharaa, President Trump announced his intention to remove all U.S. sanctions on Syria.<sup>15</sup> In response, Jordanian officials expressed support for the decision, describing it as an important step toward Syria's reintegration with the international community.<sup>16</sup>

**Gaza.** The Gaza war has caused a conundrum for King Abdullah II and other leading Jordanian officials. On the one hand, Jordan seeks to maintain its 1994 peace treaty with Israel, security cooperation with the United States, and its long-standing policy of support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the other hand, Jordan's population strongly opposes Israel's military operations in Gaza, U.S. military support for Israel, and the current Israeli government's rejection of diplomatic options for Palestinian statehood.<sup>17</sup> The Jordanian government has had a troubled history with Hamas.<sup>18</sup> Hamas once operated officially in Jordan, and some Jordanians may support the group politically and/or materially. Historically, the activities and presence in Jordan of Palestinian armed groups and political movements have posed security and political challenges for the Jordanian monarchy.

In January and February, the Trump Administration increased political pressure on Jordan to accept displaced Gazans for an indeterminate period, while also raising ideas that have generated debate about possible U.S. responsibility for Gaza and its reconstruction. Despite the devastating level of humanitarian needs throughout the war in Gaza, Jordan (along with Israel and Egypt) has refused to provide sanctuary for large numbers of displaced Palestinians. Instead, Jordan has focused most of its humanitarian efforts on delivering aid into Gaza.<sup>19</sup> Jordan's monarchy may view the addition of Palestinians into the kingdom as upsetting the delicate internal equilibrium or as an Israeli effort to empty Gaza of Palestinians permanently (or both). In the days after the October 7 attacks, King Abdullah II said that any attempt to push Palestinians into Jordan would be "a red line."<sup>20</sup>

During his visit to the White House in February 2025, King Abdullah II announced that the Kingdom would accept 2,000 pediatric patients for medical treatment, which President Donald Trump said was a "really a beautiful gesture."<sup>21</sup> In early March, 29 children accompanied by 43

---

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR, "Regional Flash Update #26, Syria situation crisis," May 9, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> "Trump to remove US sanctions on Syria in major policy shift," Reuters, May 13, 2025.

<sup>16</sup> "Jordan welcomes U.S. decision to lift sanctions on Syria," Jordan News Agency (Petra), May 13, 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Aaron Magid, "Jordan was already walking a tightrope. Then the Gaza war happened," MENASource, The Atlantic Council, April 3, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> In 1999, King Abdullah II exiled Hamas's political leadership from Jordan to Qatar two years after a failed Israeli assassination attempt against then-Hamas politburo leader Khaled Meshaal elevated Meshaal's status in the eyes of many Palestinians and Jordanians. See William A. Orme Jr., "Jordan Frees Four Jailed Hamas Leaders and Expels Them," *New York Times*, November 22, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> "Jordan steps up aid efforts to Gaza with new partnerships, sends 100-truck convoy to war-torn Strip," Jordan Times, January 21, 2025.

<sup>20</sup> "King Abdullah on Gaza: 'No refugees in Jordan, no refugees in Egypt,'" Reuters, October 17, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> "Remarks: Donald Trump Holds a Bilateral Meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan," *Roll Call*, February 11, 2025.

relatives left Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza to Israel en route to Jordan for treatment.<sup>22</sup> In May 2025, Jordanian authorities evacuated four child cancer patients from Gaza along with 12 family members.

Amidst renewed fighting in Gaza and in response to President Trump's statements about the possible relocation of Gazans and potential U.S. and/or Israeli control over the territory, Egypt, Jordan, and other members of the Arab League have attempted to formulate an alternative governance and reconstruction plan. On March 4 at a summit in Cairo, Arab League members, including Jordan, endorsed the "Gaza Recovery, Reconstruction & Development Plan," which, among other things,

- upholds the Gaza Strip as an integral part of Palestinian territory and rejects any forced displacement;
- anticipates that a "Gaza Administration Committee," composed of non-factional figures would manage governance for six months before a transition to the Palestinian Authority; and
- calls for Egypt and Jordan to train Palestinian police personnel for future security arrangements, and an international peacekeeping presence under United Nations auspices.<sup>23</sup>

The Arab League plan did not explicitly address the future of Hamas's military wing; the plan was reportedly rejected by President Trump and the Israeli coalition government immediately after its release.<sup>24</sup> An Israeli Foreign Ministry statement said that the plan "continues to rely on the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA — Both have repeatedly demonstrated corruption, support for terrorism, and failure in resolving the issue."<sup>25</sup>

---

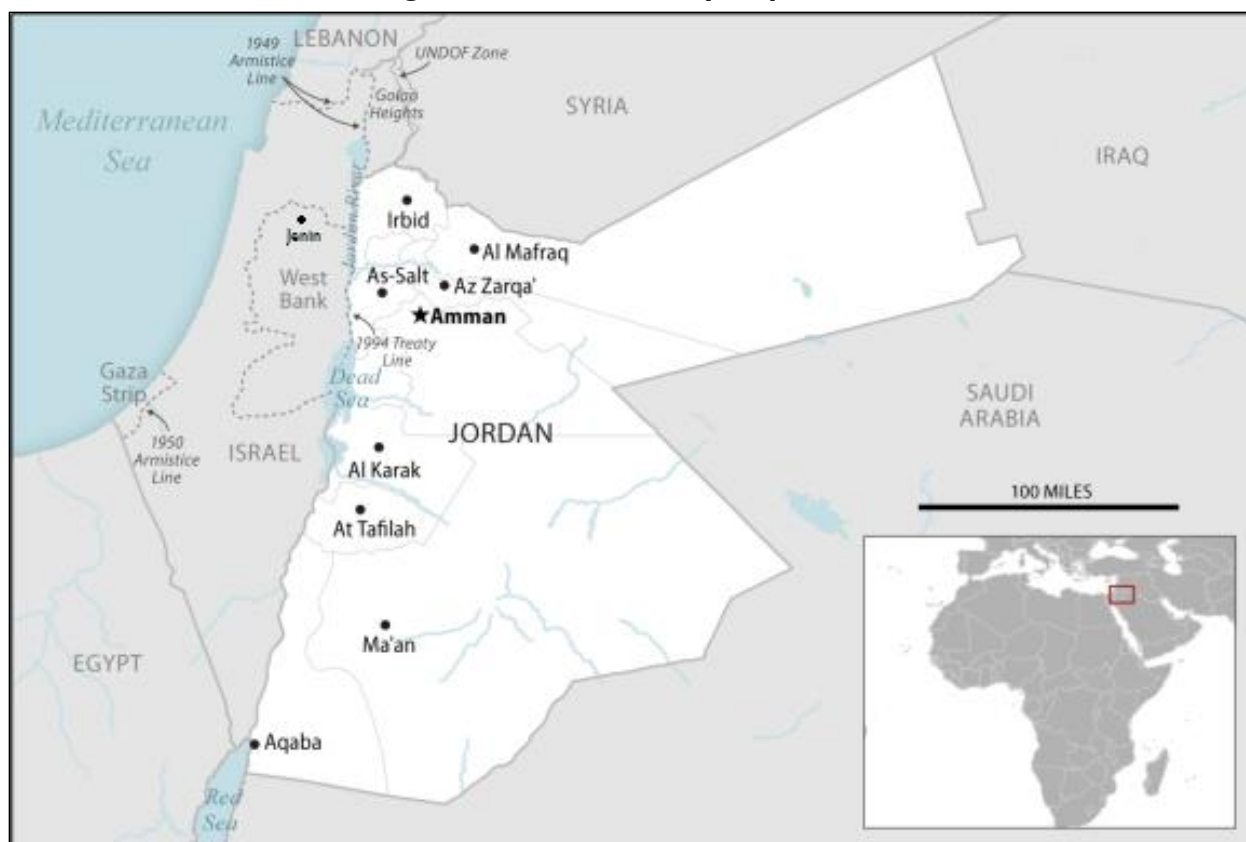
<sup>22</sup> "Jordan takes in 29 Gazan kids for medical treatment," *Times of Israel*, March 4, 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Embassy of Egypt in Washington, DC, "Gaza Recovery, Reconstruction & Development Plan," Fact Sheet.

<sup>24</sup> "US and Israel reject Arab alternative to Trump's Gaza plan," BBC News, March 5, 2025.

<sup>25</sup> X, Israeli Foreign Ministry Statement, March 4, 2025, <https://x.com/IsraelMFA/status/1897008026571206681>.



**Figure 2. Jordan: Country Map**

Source: CRS using U.S. State Department and ESRI resources.

## Government Outlaws the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood

In early April, Jordanian authorities arrested 16 members of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (two of whom served in leadership) for acquiring and manufacturing weapons (explosives, rockets, and drones) and coordinating their efforts with groups in Lebanon; on April 23, 2025, the Jordanian government outright banned the organization from legally operating in the kingdom. Although the Jordanian government has long tolerated open Brotherhood political activity (in 2024 it won 31 of 138 seats in Jordanian parliamentary elections), given the ongoing war in Gaza, popular opposition to Israel's war in Gaza, and concern about potential Iranian intervention in Jordanian affairs, Jordanian authorities opted for a public and harsh response to Brotherhood militancy.<sup>26</sup> While the government had closed the group's headquarters in 2016, and a 2020 court ruling had ordered the disbanding of the Brotherhood, the government has continued to permit the Brotherhood's political arm (Islamic Action Front, or IAF) to operate legally as a registered political party under the political parties law. It is unclear what additional action the IAF may have to take to continue operating legally.

For years, the Jordanian government's permissive attitude toward the Brotherhood reflected the palace's accommodationist approach toward some nonviolent political Islamist movements—provided that those same groups respected monarchical rule. If Islamist-led political activities are

<sup>26</sup> Ghaith al Omari, "The Brotherhood may have pushed Jordan too far this time," *PolicyWatch 4032*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 22, 2025.



banned, it is unclear how backers of Islamist parties may air their grievances in Jordan amidst the backdrop of continued war in Gaza. According to one Jordanian observer, “The relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood has fundamentally changed and will not return to its previous state.... By taking this clear stance, Jordan is aligning itself with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, all of which have adopted a hard-line approach to the Brotherhood.”<sup>27</sup>

## The Economy and Domestic Reforms

Though regional instability over the past several years has depressed economic activity in Jordan, the kingdom is slowly rebounding. In 2025, revenue earned from foreign tourism is up 9% from last year and total tourist arrivals have risen by 14%.<sup>28</sup> The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has extended financing to Jordan totaling \$1.2 billion (2024-2028), has praised the government’s economic reforms, recognizing measures to reduce the annual budget deficit and reforms of public utilities.<sup>29</sup> A 2025 public opinion poll conducted by the pro-government Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan found that 65% of Jordanians have expressed confidence in the government’s ability to govern effectively, which is the highest public confidence rating polled by CSS since it began polling on the question in 2011.<sup>30</sup>

## Country Background

Jordan, created by colonial powers after World War I, initially consisted of desert or semidesert territory east of the Jordan River, inhabited largely by people of Bedouin tribal background, the original “East Bank” Jordanians.<sup>31</sup> The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 brought large numbers of Palestinian refugees to Jordan, which subsequently unilaterally annexed a Palestinian enclave west of the Jordan River known as the West Bank—later captured by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.<sup>32</sup> The “East Bank” Jordanians, though probably no longer a majority in Jordan, remain predominant in the country’s political and military establishments and form the bedrock of support for the Jordanian monarchy. Jordanians of Palestinian origin make up an estimated 55% to 70% of the population. They tend to gravitate toward employment in the private sector, most likely due to their alleged general exclusion from certain public-sector and military positions.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Rana F. Sweis and Vivian Nereim, “Jordan Cracks Down on Muslim Brotherhood,” *New York Times*, April 23, 2025.

<sup>28</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, “Tourism in Jordan on track to rebound,” April 29, 2025.

<sup>29</sup> The International Monetary Fund, “Jordan — IMF Staff Reach Staff Level Agreement on the Third Review under the Extended Fund Facility and Make Progress Toward a Program Supported under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility,” April 17, 2025.

<sup>30</sup> “Public Trust in Jordanian Government Surges After 200 Days, Poll Finds,” Jordan News Agency (Petra), April 5, 2025.

<sup>31</sup> For historical background, see Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Country Profile: Jordan*, September 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Though there was little international recognition of Jordan’s 1950 annexation of the West Bank, Jordan maintained control of it (including East Jerusalem) until Israel took military control of it during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and maintained its claim to it until relinquishing the claim to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1988. In an address to the nation, the late King Hussein stated on July 31, 1988, that “We respect the wish of the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to secede from us as an independent Palestinian state.” See [http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/88\\_july31.html](http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/88_july31.html).

<sup>33</sup> Speculation over the ratio of East Bankers to Palestinians (those who arrived as refugees and immigrants since 1948 and their descendants) in Jordanian society is a sensitive domestic issue. Jordan last conducted a national census in 2015, and it is unclear whether or not the government maintains such national-origin statistics. Over time, intermarriage has made it more difficult to discern distinct differences between the two communities, though divisions do persist.

According to Marwan Muasher, a former Jordanian foreign minister and current vice president at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace:

Although the Jordanian constitution affirms that all citizens are equal before the law, the Jordanian establishment—the so-called East Jordanians, or the population in Jordan before 1948—never fully accepted that new order. The unwritten position is that Jordanians of Palestinian origin have to fully absorb the Jordanian identity, as defined by the East Jordanians pre-1948, no matter what the numbers of both communities are, out of fear that East Jordanian identity was in danger. This tension over identity remains unresolved.<sup>34</sup>

## The Hashemite Royal Family

Jordan is a hereditary constitutional monarchy under the Hashemite family, which claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad and once ruled the Hejaz and Muslim holy cities that are now in western Saudi Arabia. King Abdullah II (age 63) has ruled the country since 1999, when he succeeded to the throne upon the death of his father, the late King Hussein, who had ruled for 47 years. Educated largely in Britain and the United States, King Abdullah II had earlier pursued a military career, ultimately serving as commander of Jordan's Special Operations Forces with the rank of major general.

**Figure 3. King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein**



Source: Alexandros Michailidis / Shutterstock.com.

The king's son, Prince Hussein bin Abdullah (born in 1994), is the designated crown prince.<sup>35</sup> On June 1, 2023, Crown Prince Hussein married Rajwa al Saif, an architect, Saudi citizen, and second cousin to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Their marriage engendered speculation as to whether this union would foster closer Jordanian-Saudi ties.<sup>36</sup> Jordan is dependent on Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies for direct aid, soft loans, and work permits for Jordanian citizens seeking opportunities abroad.

## Political System and Key Institutions

The Jordanian constitution, most recently amended in 2022, gives the king broad executive powers.<sup>37</sup> The king appoints the prime minister and may dismiss him or accept his resignation. He also has the sole power to appoint the crown prince, senior military leaders, justices of the constitutional court, and all members of the senate, as well as cabinet ministers. The constitution enables the king to dissolve both houses of parliament and postpone lower house elections for

<sup>34</sup> Marwan Muasher, "Jordan's Redline on Admitting Palestinians Is Unlikely to Change," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 21, 2023.

<sup>35</sup> In July 2009, King Abdullah II named Prince Hussein (then 15 years old) as crown prince. The position had been vacant since 2004, when King Abdullah II removed the title from his half-brother, Prince Hamzah. Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, now 29, is a graduate of Georgetown University and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (UK). He holds the rank of second lieutenant in the Jordanian Armed Forces.

<sup>36</sup> "A wishful wedding: Can Jordan fall in love with Saudi Arabia?" *The Economist*, May 25, 2023.

<sup>37</sup> In the past 13 years, Jordan's constitution has been amended three times (2011, 2016, and 2022).

two years.<sup>38</sup> The king can circumvent parliament through a constitutional mechanism that allows the cabinet to issue provisional legislation when parliament is not sitting or has been dissolved.<sup>39</sup> The king also must approve laws before they can take effect, although a two-thirds majority of both houses of parliament can modify legislation. The king also can issue royal decrees, which are not subject to parliamentary scrutiny. The king commands the armed forces, declares war, and ratifies treaties. Finally, Article 195 of the Jordanian Penal Code prohibits insulting the dignity of the king (*lèse-majesté*), with criminal penalties of one to three years in prison. Article 38 of the constitution grants the king the power to issue pardons.

Successive Jordanian parliaments have mostly complied with the policies laid out by the Royal Court. The legislative branch's independence has been curtailed not only by a legal system that rests authority largely in the hands of the monarch, but also by electoral laws designed to produce pro-palace majorities with each new election.<sup>40</sup> Due to frequent gerrymandering, in which electoral districts arguably are drawn to favor more rural, pro-government constituencies over densely populated urban areas, parliamentary elections have produced large pro-government majorities dominated by representatives of prominent tribal families.<sup>41</sup> In addition, voter turnout tends to be much higher in pro-government areas, since many East Bank Jordanians depend on familial and tribal connections as a means to access patronage jobs.<sup>42</sup>

Jordan's constitution provides for an independent judiciary. According to Article 97, "Judges are independent, and in the exercise of their judicial functions they are subject to no authority other than that of the law." Jordan has three main types of courts: civil courts, special courts (some of which are military/state security courts), and religious courts. State security courts administered by military and civilian judges handle criminal cases involving espionage, bribery of public officials, trafficking in narcotics or weapons, black marketeering, and "security offenses."<sup>43</sup> Religious courts for both Muslims and Christians adjudicate matters of personal status, including marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance.<sup>44</sup> The king may appoint and dismiss judges by decree, though in practice a palace-appointed Higher Judicial Council manages court appointments, promotions, transfers, and retirements.

<sup>38</sup> The king also may declare martial law. According to Article 125, "In the event of an emergency of such a serious nature that action under the preceding Article of the present Constitution will be considered insufficient for the defense of the Kingdom, the king may by a Royal Decree, based on a decision of the Council of Ministers, declare martial law in the whole or any part of the Kingdom." See Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Constitutional Court, "Jordanian Constitution," available at <https://cco.gov.jo/en-us/Jordanian-Constitutional>.

<sup>39</sup> Amendments to Article 94 in 2011 put some restrictions on when the executive is allowed to issue temporary laws.

<sup>40</sup> Kristen Kao, "How Jordan's Election Revealed Enduring Weaknesses in Its Political System," *Washington Post*, October 3, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Rachel Bessette, "Jordan's Parliamentary Elections: Why They Do (and Don't) Matter for the Kingdom's Future," *Lawfare*, September 29, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Sean L. Yom, "Tribal Politics in Contemporary Jordan: The Case of the Hirak Movement," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 68, no. 2 (Spring 2014), pp. 229-247.

<sup>43</sup> See U.S. Embassy in Jordan, "Jordanian Legal System," available at <https://jo.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-u-s-citizens/attorneys/jordanian-legal-system/>.

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Jordan*.

# U.S. Relations

## U.S.-Jordanian Security Cooperation

U.S.-Jordanian security cooperation is the heart of the bilateral relationship. According to the U.S. State Department, the United States and Jordan have a 1996 Status of Forces Agreement, a 2006 Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, and a 2021 Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA).<sup>45</sup> The 2021 DCA formalizes years of U.S.-Jordanian military cooperation, which became more visible at the start of Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) against the Islamic State (IS, also known as ISIL/ISIS) in 2014. In May 2024, the United States and Jordan participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> iteration of Eager Lion, the largest multinational military exercise hosted by Jordan.

Though the 2021 DCA governs U.S.-Jordanian military cooperation, the presence of armed U.S. military personnel in the kingdom remains a sensitive domestic issue in Jordanian politics.<sup>46</sup> According to the 2021 agreement

Jordan shall provide unimpeded access to and use of Agreed Facilities and Areas to U.S. forces, U.S. personnel, U.S. contractors, and others as mutually agreed, for activities including-visits; training; exercises; maneuvers; transit; support and related activities; refueling of aircraft; landing and recovery of aircraft; bunkering of vessels; temporary maintenance of vehicles, vessels, and aircraft; accommodation of personnel; communications; staging and deploying of forces and materiel; pre-positioning of equipment, supplies, and materiel; security assistance and cooperation activities; joint and combined training activities; humanitarian and disaster relief; contingency operations; and other activities as mutually agreed by the Parties or their Executive Agents.<sup>47</sup>

According to one media report, the 332<sup>nd</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing, which is officially located in “Southwest Asia” may be based in Jordan,<sup>48</sup> where it operates in support of CJTF-OIR against the Islamic State.<sup>49</sup> The wing operates combat aircraft, such as the F-15E and F-16C, transport and refueling aircraft, such as the HC-130P and KC-135R, and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) unmanned craft, such as the MQ-9.<sup>50</sup>

Jordanian air bases have been particularly important for the U.S. conduct of intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions in Syria and Iraq. U.S. forces have operated out of various Jordanian air bases, such as Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Azraq.<sup>51</sup> While the United States never officially acknowledged its presence at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base prior to the 2021 agreement, according to one media report, “satellite imagery shows it has hosted US Air Force (USAF) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and fast jets since at least 2016.”<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation with Jordan,” fact sheet, May 21, 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Saud al Sharafat, “Critics react to US-Jordan defense agreement,” *Al Monitor*, April 1, 2021.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Agreement between the United States of America and Jordan with Exchange of Notes, Treaties and Other International Acts Series 21-317*, signed at Amman January 31, 2021, entered into force March 17, 2021.

<sup>48</sup> J. P. Lawrence, “Pentagon awards latest contract in \$265 million project to expand remote air base in Jordan,” *Stars and Stripes*, May 13, 2022.

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force Central, “332<sup>nd</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing Fact Sheet.”

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> The National Defense Authorization Act for FY2018 (P.L. 115-91) authorized \$143 million in Air Force construction funds to expand the ramp space at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base.

<sup>52</sup> Jeremy Binnie, “US Carrying out Major Upgrade to Jordanian Airbase,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, December 1, 2021.

## The Case of Ahlam al Tamimi

Ahlam al Tamimi is a Jordanian national who was an accomplice in the 2001 suicide bombing of a Jerusalem pizza restaurant that killed 15 people, including two Americans. In Israel, she had been sentenced to life in prison but was released and returned to Jordan in 2011 as part of a prisoner exchange deal between Israel and Hamas. The U.S. Justice Department filed criminal charges against Tamimi in 2013, and those charges were unsealed in early 2017. Tamimi is on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Most Wanted Terrorist List.<sup>53</sup> The United States and Jordan have an extradition treaty, which, according to the U.S. State Department, entered into force on July 29, 1995.<sup>54</sup> The United States requested Tamimi's extradition in 2017, but Jordan's Court of Cassation ruled that the extradition treaty was invalid. In November 2019, the State Department said that "the United States regards the extradition treaty as valid."<sup>55</sup>

According to an April 2021 media account, one reason why the U.S. and Israeli governments have not applied further visible pressure on the government of Jordan to extradite Tamimi is concern for the stability of Jordan.<sup>56</sup> One unnamed U.S. State Department official was quoted as stating that "while [King] Abdullah has no love for Tamimi, giving her up to America would put the king in a very difficult position with his own people."<sup>57</sup> In July 2022, the U.S. National Security Council stated that the "U.S. government continues to seek her extradition and the Government of Jordan's assistance in bringing her to justice for her role in the heinous attack."<sup>58</sup> During her confirmation hearing, U.S. Ambassador-designate to Jordan Yael Lempert remarked that "if confirmed, I will do everything in my power to ensure that Ahlam al Tamimi faces justice in the United States for her horrific crimes."<sup>59</sup> In January 2024, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations wrote to then-Secretary of State Blinken requesting that the United States "prioritize Tamimi's extradition in our bilateral relations with Jordan."<sup>60</sup> In 2025, there have been multiple media reports describing talks centered around the possible extradition of Tamimi.<sup>61</sup>

## U.S. Foreign Assistance to Jordan

Over decades, U.S. assistance has helped Jordan address serious vulnerabilities, both internal and external. According to the U.S. State Department, "Jordan's stability and security are priorities for the United States, which has provided Jordan with assistance since the late 1960s."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Most Wanted Terrorist: Ahlam Ahmad al-Tamimi," available at [https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/wanted\\_terrorists/ahlam-ahmad-al-tamimi/@download.pdf](https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/wanted_terrorists/ahlam-ahmad-al-tamimi/@download.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> The kingdom's courts have ruled that Al Tamimi cannot be extradited until such a treaty is endorsed by the Jordanian parliament.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Jordan."

<sup>56</sup> Yonah Jeremy Bob, "Will Ahlam Tamimi be extradited from Jordan for the Murder of Malki Roth?," *Jerusalem Post*, April 30, 2021.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> "US seeks extradition of Palestinian attacker in Jordan," Associated Press, July 11, 2022.

<sup>59</sup> CQ Congressional Transcripts, U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, hearing on Pending Nominations, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 4, 2023.

<sup>60</sup> "Letter to Secretary Blinken Demanding the Extradition of Ahlam Ahmad Al-Tamimi," The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, January 16, 2024.

<sup>61</sup> Gary Willig, "Report: US in talks with Jordan on extradition of Sbarro bomber Ahlam Tamimi," *Arutz Sheva* (7 Israel National News), April 30, 2025.

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Security Cooperation with Jordan," Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, January 20, 2025.

**Table 1. U.S. Bilateral Aid to Jordan: FY2021-FY2025 Request**

In millions of current U.S. dollars

Account	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Enacted	FY2025 Request
Development Assistance (DA)	85.00	—	—	—	—
Economic Support Fund (ESF)	1,122.40	1,203.40	1,210.80	1,210.80	1,035.00
Foreign Military Financing (FMF)	425.00	425.00	425.00	425.00	400.00
International Military Education and Training (IMET)	4.00	1.95	3.80	3.80	3.80
International Counter-Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE)	—	2.50	—	—	2.50
Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR)	13.60	13.20	10.40	10.40	5.90
Global Health Programs (GHP)	—	4.00	—	—	2.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,650.00</b>	<b>1,650.05</b>	<b>1,650.00</b>	<b>1,650.00</b>	<b>1,450.00</b>

**Sources:** Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Congressional Budget Justifications (FY2022-FY2025); P.L. 118-47, Division F; P.L. 118-50, Division A; and CRS calculations and rounding.

Jordan's small size, refugee burden, and lack of major economic resources have made it dependent on aid from Western and various Arab sources. Between FY1951 and FY2025, the United States provided approximately \$33.6 billion to Jordan.<sup>63</sup> Since FY2015, the United States has provided an additional \$2.3 billion in security assistance to Jordan through defense appropriations accounts.

In 2022, the United States and Jordan signed their fourth memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding U.S. foreign aid to Jordan. The seven-year nonbinding agreement (FY2023-FY2029), subject to congressional appropriations, commits successive administrations in principle to seeking a total of \$1.45 billion in annual economic and military aid for Jordan. When compared with the previous MOU, this fourth MOU provides 13.7% more in annual aid and lasts for seven fiscal years instead of five. It represents the largest multiyear U.S. foreign assistance commitment (\$10.15 billion over seven years) to the kingdom. Congress has appropriated between \$1.5 billion and \$1.65 billion in total annual aid to Jordan since FY2018.

Announced pauses and reviews of federal funding, the reorganization of U.S. agencies, and the recall of some U.S. staff posted abroad may affect the implementation of Jordan-related U.S. foreign aid and humanitarian assistance programs. For FY2025, P.L. 119-4, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, maintains aid levels to Jordan at FY2024 levels (see **Table 1** above). On April 30, Reuters reported that Jordan “has won assurances from Washington that the bulk of financing worth at least \$1.45 billion annually remains intact, including military and direct budgetary support.”<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> [www.foreignassistance.gov/data](http://www.foreignassistance.gov/data), accessed on May 19, 2025.

<sup>64</sup> “Exclusive - Jordan wins Trump aid carve - out for strategic projects and support,” Reuters, April 30, 2025.



## **Author Information**

Jeremy M. Sharp  
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs

---

## **Disclaimer**

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.