



**Congressional  
Research Service**

Informing the legislative debate since 1914

---

# Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations

Updated January 8, 2026

**Congressional Research Service**

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

RL33546



**RL33546**

January 8, 2026

**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.

Since the October 2025 ceasefire and prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas, the United States has sought Jordanian support should Israel and Hamas advance to "phase two," a reference to the implementation of President Trump's 20-point plan for post-conflict transition in Gaza. King Abdullah II has rejected any direct Jordanian participation in any international peacekeeping force in Gaza, citing domestic political sensitivities.

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 \$33.8 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.

During the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, Congress has considered the following legislation pertaining to Jordan: P.L. 119-28, the Rescissions Act of 2025, exempted from rescission FY2025 Economic Support Funds (ESF) for Jordan, Egypt, and the Countering PRC Influence Fund. The FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 119-60, enacted December 18, 2025) requires a report describing all of the available authorities to provide assistance to the governments of Jordan and Lebanon. In addition, the law contains a new \$1 million authorization for cyberspace sustainment and cooperation between the United States and Jordan. During House consideration of H.R. 4016, the FY2026 Defense Appropriations bill, an amendment to strike funding (up to \$500 million) to support the armed forces of Jordan failed by a vote of 30-400.

## Contents

Overview and Latest Developments.....	1
Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank.....	1
Iran-Israel Confrontations.....	2
Syria.....	3
Government Outlaws the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood.....	4
Country Background.....	5
The Hashemite Royal Family.....	6
Political System and Key Institutions.....	6
U.S. Relations.....	7
U.S. Foreign Assistance to Jordan.....	9
Economic Reforms and U.S.-Jordanian Trade.....	10
The Case of Ahlam al Tamimi.....	11

## Figures

Figure 1.Jordan: Country Map.....	3
Figure 2.King Abdullah II meets with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa.....	4
Figure 3.King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein.....	6

## Contacts

Author Information.....	11
-------------------------	----

## 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. As of December 2024, the United States had 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> In Israel-Iran fighting in 2024-2025, Jordan intercepted some Iranian missiles and drones that were crossing its territory.

### Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank

Since the October 2025 ceasefire and prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas, the United States has sought Jordanian support should Israel and Hamas advance to “phase two,” a reference to the implementation of President Trump’s 20-point plan for post-conflict transition in Gaza.<sup>3</sup> As part of that plan, the United States, along with Arab and international partners, would create an International Stabilization Force (ISF) for Gaza aimed at training and supporting “vetted Palestinian police” who would have long-term responsibility for security. To date, King Abdullah II of Jordan has questioned whether the mandate of the ISF would be one authorized for “peacekeeping” or “peace-enforcing” activities.<sup>4</sup> It appears to be unclear whether UN Security Council Resolution 2803 provides a broad authorization—as provided under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter—for the ISF to use force against Hamas or other “non-state armed groups” in Gaza, such as for demilitarization activities outlined in the resolution.<sup>5</sup> King Abdullah II also has rejected any direct Jordanian participation in the ISF, citing domestic political sensitivities.<sup>6</sup> Jordan, along with Qatar, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey, has endorsed Resolution 2803.

In lieu of Jordanian troops, King Abdullah II may allow Palestinian security forces to be trained inside Jordan. Reportedly, some Palestinians from Gaza—including a number who have remained

<sup>1</sup> Some U.S. lawmakers and some Israelis 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. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names and Department of State refer to the territory as the West Bank. 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> United States Mission to the United Nations, Readout of Ambassador Mike Waltz’s Meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, December 8, 2025. Text of the 20-point plan available at The American Presidency Project (UC Santa Barbara), “White House Press Release - President Donald J. Trump’s Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict,” September 29, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Lazar Berman, “Jordan’s king says international forces in Gaza should ‘keep,’ but not ‘enforce,’ peace,” *Times of Israel*, October 28, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2803 (2025), Adopted by the Security Council at its 10046<sup>th</sup> meeting, on November 17, 2025; Samiksha Mukherjee and Sanmay Moitra, “An Analysis of Resolution 2803 and the International Stabilization Force: A Militarized Enforcement Mission with Precarious Legal and Strategic Implications,” *Just Security*, December 10, 2025. The resolution does not mention Chapter VII; explicit inclusion, per Mukherjee and Moitra, is customary but not imperative for its application.

<sup>6</sup> “Jordan’s king,” *Times of Israel*.

on the Palestinian Authority's payroll since Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007—have received police training from Egypt and Jordan to prepare them to assume roles in preserving law and order in Gaza under the transitional government referenced in the U.S. 20-point plan. An estimated 9,000-10,000 vetted Palestinians may receive police training from Egypt, Jordan, and the European Union. Jordan is home to the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC), which was first used to train Iraqi security forces after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and has since also been used to train Palestinian Authority security forces based in the West Bank.

Humanitarian cargo continues to enter Gaza from Jordan, and total aid amounts are anticipated to increase substantially after Israel's reopening of the Allenby Crossing from Jordan into the West Bank. The crossing had been closed to commercial traffic for months following the killing of two Israeli guards by a Jordanian truck driver.<sup>7</sup>

When compared to Gaza, which does not directly border Jordan, the West Bank is generally of greater concern to Jordanian policymakers. They may fear that West Bank instability could destabilize the kingdom if more Palestinians seek refuge in Jordan.<sup>8</sup> Jordanian leaders also have periodically condemned the actions of certain Israeli government figures who have, in their view, undermined King Abdullah II's custodianship and administration of the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Jordan has continued to condemn Israeli settlement construction and settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.<sup>10</sup> Jordan likely welcomed President Trump's September 2025 declaration he would not allow Israel to unilaterally annex the West Bank.<sup>11</sup>

## Iran-Israel Confrontations

Since 2023, 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 when an uncrewed aerial system (UAS, or drone) attack attributed to Iran-backed Iraqis struck a military base in Jordan 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>12</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>13</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> "Israel to reopen Jordan border crossing for passage of aid and goods," Reuters, December 9, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> "Why Egypt and other Arab countries are unwilling to take in Palestinian refugees from Gaza," Associated Press, October 18, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> "Israeli minister sparks anger by praying at sensitive Jerusalem holy site," BBC News, August 3, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Qatar News Agency, "Jordanian Foreign Minister Warns of Continued Settlement Expansion Undermining Peace Prospects, Two-State Solution Efforts," November 29, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> "President Trump Signs Executive Orders," CQ Newsmaker Transcripts, September 25, 2025; "Read the Full Transcript of Donald Trump's Interview on the Gaza Ceasefire With TIME," *Time*, October 23, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Laith al Junaidi, "Jordan reports 2 injuries from falling missile debris following Iranian attack on Israel," Anadolu Agency (Turkey), October 1, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> "Errant Israeli interceptor appears to hit Jordan's Aqaba," *Times of Israel*, November 18, 2024.

Figure I. Jordan: Country Map



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

During the June 2025 12-day war between Israel and Iran, Jordan again found itself in the crossfire of conflict. As Israel conducted sorties against Iran, and Iran responded with missile and drone attacks, shrapnel from interceptors, drones, and missiles fell on Jordanian territory, injuring several Jordanians and causing some property damage.<sup>14</sup> During the conflict, the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) said they would not allow any violation of the country’s airspace, and the JAF used the kingdom’s limited air defense assets to intercept several Iranian missiles and drones.<sup>15</sup> From a diplomatic standpoint, Jordanian officials condemned Israel’s surprise attack on Iran while also signaling to both parties that Jordan would act to protect its sovereign air space.<sup>16</sup> It is unclear whether Israeli planes crossed Jordanian air space to reach Iran and, if so, whether the Jordanian authorities permitted it or chose to not comment publicly on it.

## 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, foreign ministers from both countries have met to discuss border security and counter-narcotics

<sup>14</sup> Nurit Yohanan, “Caught in the crossfire, Jordan (quietly) shields Israel as Iranian shrapnel rains down.” *Times of Israel*, June 24, 2025.

<sup>15</sup> Eyad Kourdi, Zeena Saifi and Simone McCarthy, “Two civilians injured in Jordan from a falling ‘explosive object,’ official media says,” *CNN’s Live Blog*, June 14, 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Ofir Winter, “A Delicate Balance: Jordan’s Dilemmas Amid the Israel–Iran War,” *The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)*, June 17, 2025.

cooperation. Jordan also may be seeking to revive a dormant electricity and natural gas supply deal to Lebanon and Syria. The repeal of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 in the FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act could potentially facilitate such a deal.

Since the fall of the Asad regime, Jordanian officials have publicly denounced Israeli incursions into Syria and Israel's expansion of its zone of control there,<sup>17</sup> while, according to Jordanian officials, privately assuring Israel that Jordan would not allow their common foes, such as Iran-supported groups or foreign terrorist fighters, to threaten both Israel and Jordan.<sup>18</sup>

UN agencies report that there were around 460,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan as of November 2025; some have resided in camps or have lived among the general populace for over 12 years.<sup>19</sup> According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), between December 2024 and November 2025, around 173,000 UNHCR registered Syrian refugees in Jordan returned home.<sup>20</sup>

In December 2025, Jordanian aircraft accompanied U.S. jetfighters in striking Islamic State targets inside Syria.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 2. King Abdullah II meets with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa**

February 2025



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

## Government Outlaws the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood

In early April, Jordanian authorities arrested 16 members of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (two of whom served in the group's leadership) for allegedly acquiring and manufacturing weapons (explosives, rockets, and drones) and coordinating their efforts with groups in Lebanon. On April 23, 2025, the Jordanian government announced an outright ban of the organization, prohibiting it from operating in the kingdom. Although the Jordanian government has long tolerated open Brotherhood political activity (it is the largest opposition party in Jordan's parliament, winning 31 of 138 seats in 2024 elections), Jordanian authorities opted for a public and harsh response to Brotherhood militancy in a context featuring popular opposition to Israel's war in Gaza, and concern about potential Iranian intervention in Jordanian affairs.<sup>22</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 had continued to permit the Brotherhood's political arm (Islamic Action Front or IAF) to operate legally as a registered political party. Following the government's April announcement of the Brotherhood ban, it is unclear what additional action the IAF may have to take to continue operating legally. On July 22, 2025, the

<sup>17</sup> Burcu Ozcelik, "Israeli Attacks on Syria Risk Destabilizing Jordan," *ForeignPolicy.com*, May 7, 2025.

<sup>18</sup> CRS conversation with Jordanian officials, May 8, 2025.

<sup>19</sup> See, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor>.

<sup>20</sup> See, <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-operational-update-november-2025>.

<sup>21</sup> CENTCOM, "CENTCOM launches Operation Hawkeye Strike against ISIS in Syria," December 19, 2025.

<sup>22</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.



Brotherhood announced that it had permanently dissolved itself, citing it was best to do so in the “national interest.”<sup>23</sup>

For years, the Jordanian government’s permissive attitude toward the Brotherhood reflected the palace’s accommodationist approach toward some non-violent Islamist movements—provided that those same groups respected monarchical rule. If Islamist-led political activities are 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>24</sup>

It is unclear how President Trump’s November 2025 Executive Order<sup>25</sup> focused on the Muslim Brotherhood could affect politics inside Jordan. In October 2025, Jordan’s State Security Court sentenced nine Jordanians in multiple cases over alleged plots to acquire weapons and destabilize the kingdom mentioned above. A few defendants were acquitted, and the cases may be appealed to Jordan’s highest court.<sup>26</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>27</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>28</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>29</sup> According to Marwan Muasher, a former Jordanian foreign minister and current vice president at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

---

<sup>23</sup> “Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan officially dissolves itself amid security crackdown,” *Al Bawaba News*, July 22, 2025.

<sup>24</sup> Rana F. Sweis and Vivian Nereim, “Jordan Cracks Down on Muslim Brotherhood,” *New York Times*, April 23, 2025.

<sup>25</sup> The White House, Designation of Certain Muslim Brotherhood Chapters as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists, November 24, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> “After banning group, Jordan sentences nine in Muslim Brotherhood ‘terrorist’ plot,” *The Arab Weekly*, October 9, 2025.

<sup>27</sup> For historical background, see Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Country Profile: Jordan*, September 2006.

<sup>28</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>29</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.



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>30</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.

The king’s son, Prince Hussein bin Abdullah (born in 1994), is the designated crown prince.<sup>31</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>32</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.

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



Source: Alexandros Michailidis/Shutterstock.com.

## Political System and Key Institutions

The Jordanian constitution, most recently amended in 2022, gives the king broad executive powers.<sup>33</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 two years.<sup>34</sup> The king can circumvent parliament through a constitutional mechanism that allows

<sup>30</sup> Marwan Muasher, “Jordan’s Redline on Admitting Palestinians Is Unlikely to Change,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 21, 2023.

<sup>31</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 31, 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>32</sup> “A wishful wedding: Can Jordan fall in love with Saudi Arabia?” *The Economist*, May 25, 2023.

<sup>33</sup> In the past 15 years, Jordan’s constitution has been amended three times (2011, 2016, and 2022).

<sup>34</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>.

the cabinet to issue provisional legislation when parliament is not sitting or has been dissolved.<sup>35</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>36</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>37</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>38</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>39</sup> Religious courts for both Muslims and Christians adjudicate matters of personal status, including marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance.<sup>40</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.

## U.S. Relations

Successive Administrations have maintained close cooperation with Jordan, as bilateral relations have focused on an array of various regional and international issues over the years, including countering Islamist extremism, stabilizing Iraq and Syria, promoting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and thwarting Iranian regional influence. As discussed below, security cooperation is arguably the foundation of U.S.-Jordanian cooperation. The United States also is a significant contributor of foreign assistance to Jordan and has provided aid to key sectors, such as the kingdom's water distribution system.

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

---

<sup>35</sup> Amendments to Article 94 in 2011 put some restrictions on when the executive is allowed to issue temporary laws.

<sup>36</sup> Kristen Kao, "How Jordan's Election Revealed Enduring Weaknesses in Its Political System," *Washington Post*, October 3, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Rachel Bessette, "Jordan's Parliamentary Elections: Why They Do (and Don't) Matter for the Kingdom's Future," *Lawfare*, September 29, 2016.

<sup>38</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>39</sup> See U.S. Embassy in Jordan, "Jordanian Legal System," available at <https://jo.usembassy.gov/jordanian-legal-system/>

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of State, *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Jordan*.

Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, and a 2021 Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA).<sup>41</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>42</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>43</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>44</sup> where it operates in support of CJTF-OIR against the Islamic State.<sup>45</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>46</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>47</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>48</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation with Jordan,” fact sheet, May 21, 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Saud al Sharafat, “Critics react to US-Jordan defense agreement,” *Al Monitor*, April 1, 2021.

<sup>43</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>44</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>45</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force Central, “332<sup>nd</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing Fact Sheet.”

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force Central, “332<sup>nd</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing Fact Sheet.”

<sup>47</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>48</sup> Jeremy Binnie, “US Carrying out Major Upgrade to Jordanian Airbase,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, December 1, 2021.

## 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>49</sup>

Jordan’s small size, refugee burden, and lack of major economic resources have made it dependent on aid from various Western and Arab sources. Between FY1951 and FY2025, the United States provided approximately \$33.8 billion to Jordan, making it one of the top recipients of U.S. aid globally. Since FY2015, the United States has provided an additional \$2.5 billion in security assistance to Jordan through multiple 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 non-binding agreement (FY2023-FY2029), subject to congressional appropriations, commits successive administrations in principle to seeking a total of at least \$1.45 billion in annual economic and military aid for Jordan. When compared to the previous MOU, this fourth MOU would provide 13.7% more in annual aid and is set to last for seven fiscal years instead of five. If implemented fully, it will be the largest ever multi-year 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. Over the last decade, Jordan has been among the top ten recipients of U.S. foreign assistance. For FY2025, P.L. 119-4, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, maintains aid levels to Jordan at FY2024 levels (\$1.65 billion).

The future of some U.S. foreign assistance programs in Jordan is uncertain, and Jordanian officials have reportedly engaged Congress and executive branch agencies to seek clarity and assurances that U.S. assistance will continue. 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>50</sup> Currently, the United States provides Jordan \$845 million in direct budget support.

Recent Congressional action pertaining to U.S. foreign aid to Jordan include

P.L. 119-28, the Rescissions Act of 2025, exempted from rescission FY2025 Economic Support Funds (ESF) for Jordan, Egypt, and the Countering PRC Influence Fund.

The FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 119-60, enacted December 18, 2025) requires a report describing all of the available authorities to provide assistance to the governments of Jordan and Lebanon. In addition, the law contains a new \$1 million authorization for cyberspace sustainment and cooperation between the United States and Jordan.

During House consideration of H.R. 4016, the FY2026 Defense Appropriations bill, an amendment to strike funding (up to \$500 million) to support the armed forces of Jordan failed by a vote of 30-400.<sup>51</sup>

### Water Scarcity in Jordan and U.S. Aid

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Security Cooperation with Jordan,” Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, January 20, 2025.

<sup>50</sup> “Exclusive - Jordan wins Trump aid carve - out for strategic projects and support,” Reuters, April 30, 2025.

<sup>51</sup> See <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/119th-congress/house-amendment/56?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22h.r.4016%22%7D&s=a&r=2>.

Jordan is among the most water-poor nations in the world, and ranks among the 10 countries with the lowest rate of renewable fresh water per capita.<sup>52</sup> In July 2021, after years of delays in evaluating the now-defunct trilateral project (Israel-Jordan-Palestinian Authority) known as the Red-Dead Sea Conveyance Project, Jordan moved ahead with plans to build its own desalination plant in Aqaba, along with a water treatment facility, pumping station, and a 280-mile pipeline to carry water to Amman and elsewhere.

The multi-billion-dollar megaproject, now known as the National Water Carrier Project (NCP), is slowly moving ahead with U.S. and other international support. In sum, the project aims to provide up to 40% of the kingdom's municipal water demand by 2040. The project's main partners are Jordan's Water & Irrigation Ministry and a consortium of French and Egyptian companies, such as Meridiam, Orascom Construction, VINCI Construction Grands Projets and SUEZ. The Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is providing up to \$1 billion in debt financing and political risk insurance for the project.<sup>53</sup> The State Department also has pledged up to \$300 million in grant aid along with other lenders, such as the Green Climate Fund, European Development Bank, and the International Finance Corporation.<sup>54</sup>

## Economic Reforms and U.S.-Jordanian Trade

With few natural resources and a small industrial base, Jordan has an economy which is heavily dependent on external aid from abroad, tourism, expatriate worker remittances, and the service sector. Among the long-standing problems Jordan faces are poverty, corruption, slow economic growth, and high levels of unemployment (including female and youth unemployment). As of 2026, public debt continues to be well over 100% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to one report, per capita incomes in Jordan are now lower than before the 2008 global financial crisis.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, though regional instability over the past several years has depressed economic activity in Jordan, the kingdom is slowly rebounding. 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>56</sup> In June 2025, the IMF extended a new 30-month, \$700 million lending arrangement to address long-term vulnerabilities in the water, electricity, and health sectors.<sup>57</sup> In its most recent assessment of Jordan's economy, the IMF noted that growth reached 2.7% in the first half of 2025 and is expected to reach 3% in the coming years "aided by major investment projects, deeper regional integration, and sustained implementation of structural reforms."<sup>58</sup>

As of August 2025, U.S. reciprocal tariffs on Jordanian exports to the United States are 15%. In 2001, Congress passed P.L. 107-43, which implemented the U.S.-Jordanian Free Trade Agreement; that agreement had eliminated duties and commercial barriers to bilateral trade in

<sup>52</sup> See <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.H2O.INTR.PC>.

<sup>53</sup> See [https://www.dfc.gov/sites/default/files/media/documents/Public%20Information%20Summary%20-%20National%20Carrier%20Project%20Company\\_0.pdf](https://www.dfc.gov/sites/default/files/media/documents/Public%20Information%20Summary%20-%20National%20Carrier%20Project%20Company_0.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> "Climate fund backs \$6 billion Jordan water project with its largest deal," Reuters, October 29, 2025.

<sup>55</sup> Dan Swift, "Jordan's economy in peril—here's how the US can help," *The Hill*, October 10, 2025.

<sup>56</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>57</sup> The International Monetary Fund, "Jordan—IMF Executive Board Completes Third Review of the Extended Fund Facility Arrangement and Approves US\$ 700 Million Arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility," June 25, 2025.

<sup>58</sup> The International Monetary Fund, Fourth Review under the Extended Arrangement under The Extended Fund Facility, Jordan, December 2025.

goods and services. In 2024, the total volume of bilateral trade between both countries was \$5.3 billion.

### 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>59</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>60</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>61</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>62</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>63</sup> In 2025, the parents of one of Tamimi's victims presented U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee with a petition signed by 30,000 people calling on the United States government to pressure Jordan into extraditing Tamimi to the United States.<sup>64</sup>

### Author Information

Jeremy M. Sharp  
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs

---

<sup>59</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>60</sup> The kingdom's courts have ruled that Al Tamimi cannot be extradited until such a treaty is endorsed by the Jordanian parliament.

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Jordan."

<sup>62</sup> Yonah Jeremy Bob, "Will Ahlam Tamimi be extradited from Jordan for the Murder of Malki Roth?," *Jerusalem Post*, April 30, 2021.

<sup>63</sup> Bob, "Will Ahlam Tamimi be extradited?"

<sup>64</sup> Nava Frieberg, "Parents of Sbarro bombing victim urge US to demand Hamas terrorist's extradition," *Times of Israel*, June 4, 2025.



---

## **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.