

OFFICIAL NAME: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

CAPITAL: Amman

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy

AREA: 92,190 Sq Km (35,595 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 4,765,800



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Jordan is located in the Middle East. It is bound by Syria to the north, Iraq to the northeast, Saudi Arabia to the east and south as well as Israel to the west. The country consists of a sloping plateau region in the northwestern corner of the Great Arabian Plateau. The dominant topographic region is the Red Sea-Jordan Rift Valley which is a branch of the Great African Rift Valley system. The Dead Sea Lowland in the west forms the edge of the plateau region, with barren desert plains located in the eastern and southern areas. The principal river is the Jordan. Major Cities (pop. est.); Amman 963,500, az-Zarqa 344,500, Irbid 208,200, as-Salt 187,000, ar-Rusayfah 131,100 (1994). Land Use; forested 1%, pastures 9%, agricultural-cultivated 5%, desert and other 85% (1993).

CLIMATE: Jordan has a Mediterranean climate with hot dry summers and cool damp winters, while August is the hottest month and January the coolest. The prevailing winds are the hot Khamsin which is dust laden and the dry Shamal that blows for days at a time. Average annual precipitation is 300 mm (12 inches) and average temperature ranges in Amman are from 4 to 12 degrees Celsius (39 to 54 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 18 to 32 degrees Celsius (64 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Jordanians of Bedouin Arab origin. The Palestinian Arabs account for 40% of the population and the Bedouins represent 5% while Arabs as a whole constitute 98% of the population. Other ethnic minorities include the Circassians, Armenians and Kurds.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 37 persons per sq km (96 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 68.0% urban, 32.0% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 51.5% male, 48.5% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 70.0 years male, 73.0 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 44% under 15, 32% 15 to 29, 12% 30 to 44, 8% 45 to 59, 3% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 45.7 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 4.7 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 41.0 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 38.0 per 1,000 live births (1991).

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Islam with 93% of the population Sunni Muslims while Christians account for 5% of the population.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Arabic while the people speak a dialect which is common to Syria, Lebanon and areas of Iraq. English is also widely understood.

EDUCATION: Aged 14 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 47.9%, primary 19.8%, secondary 26.4%, higher 5.9% (1979). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 80.1% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: During the 1948 to 1949 Arab-Israeli War, the Transjordan Arab Legion gained control of Central Palestine west of the Jordan River, annexed the West Bank and expelled the Jewish troops from the Old City of Jerusalem or East Jerusalem, which it also annexed in 1950. In 1949 the country was renamed from Transjordan to Jordan. In 1951 King Abdullah was assassinated and his son Tallal became King until 1952 when Abdullah's other son Hussein became King at the age of 17. During the 1950's many Jordanians wanted to end their country's ties with Britain while some wanted Jordan to unite with Egypt. In 1957 King Hussein ended Jordan's Defense Treaty with Britain and in the same year after numerous coup attempts banned all political parties. In 1958 King Hussein formed a federation with Iraq which only lasted a few months. During the mid 1960's attempts were made to assimilate the Palestinians into Jordan's politics but the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) resisted the move declaring it wanted a separate nation. In 1967 Jordan signed a defense agreement with Egypt and other Arab states forming the Arab League because of the escalating tension between the Arab states and Israel. In 1967 Israel defeated Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon in the Six Day War. Jordan was also expelled from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which resulted in further influxes of Palestinian refugees. In 1970 the Jordanian army attacked the Palestinian guerrillas (PLO) and expelled them from Jordan, however, fighting flared up several times during the 1970's. In 1973 Jordan joined Egypt, Syria and other Arab nations in a new war against Israel. In 1974 the Arab League announced that the PLO was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians and Jordan gave up its claim to the West Bank. In 1983 King Hussein reconciled with Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader and moved to reinitiate Middle East peace negotiations. In 1988 King Hussein ended Jordan's role in the West Bank and called for the PLO to take over the financial support and other functions that Jordan had continued to handle after it gave up its claim to the West Bank in 1974. In Apr. 1989 serious riots broke out over increasing economic difficulties and in November the country's first parliamentary elections in 22 years took place. In 1990 after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, King Hussein aligned himself diplomatically with "brotherly Iraq" and called for an "Arab solution" to the problems. In Feb. 1991 when the US-led Arab coalition initiated military action against Iraq, the King condemned the "savagely and large-scale war" and called for a cease-fire. In July 1991 King Hussein lifted Martial Law which had been imposed since 1967 and agreed to be involved in

peace talks to be held in Madrid, Spain in late Oct. 1991. On Nov. 16, 1991 Prime Minister Taher al-Masri resigned of the country's continuing political crisis with other Arab nations with King Hussein appointing his cousin Shariff Zaid ibn Shaker as his successor. Prime Minister ibn Shaker announced his new Cabinet that attempted to appease various Parliamentary factions, although it excluded extremists from the Muslim Brotherhood which held over 20% of the Assembly seats. In 1991 Jordan's economic situation had been further strained with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Kuwaiti refugees seeking asylum and on Dec. 30, 1991 the government passed an IMF approved austerity program. On March 12, 1992 King Hussein met with US President, George Bush that resulted in the restoration of bilateral relations between the nations, following a halt to aid from the West over Jordan's perceived pro-Iraq stance in the Gulf conflict. In Aug. 1992 King Hussein underwent successful cancer surgery in the US and on Sept. 26, 1992 after his return met with high-ranking West Bank Palestinian officials the first official meeting since legal and administrative relations had been cut off in July, 1988. In Aug. 1992 Saudi Arabia halted the importation of Jordanian produce citing contamination while relations further soured between King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and King Hussein over a dispute involving the repair of Islam's holiest shrine, the Dome of Rock in Jerusalem, until King Hussein offered to pay for the restoration from his private funds. In the same month the government passed legislation that legalized political parties that had been banned since 1957. On Nov. 20, 1992 King Hussein announced an amnesty for some prisoners that included two fundamentalist MPs sentenced on plotting to overthrow the government. On Sept. 14, 1992 Jordan signed agreements with Israel on future talks and on Sept. 15, 1992 US Pres. Bill Clinton released aid frozen since 1992 due to the improved relations. On Feb. 26, 1993 a Jordanian of Palestinian origin, Mohammad Salameh, was arrested in New York following the bombing of the World Trade Center. On June 25, 1993 King Hussein went to the US to hold talks with Pres. Clinton and a checkup at the Mayo clinic while on Oct. 1, 1993 Crown Prince Hassan and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Perez met in Washington with Pres. Clinton for talks. On Nov. 8, 1993 elections resulted in Muslim fundamentalists of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) retaining the largest bloc of deputies in Parliament. Also during 1993 Jordan had formulated an agreement with the PLO that would give the Central Bank of Jordan monetary responsibilities during the transitional period of Palestinian self-rule while King Hussein also continued to work to end Iraq's isolation in the Arab world.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dinar (JD) divided into 1,000 Fils.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$4,881,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$6,825,000,000 (1993). Imports; JD 2,362,600,000 (1994). Exports; JD 793,900,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$563,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; JD -1,362,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 706,000 or 19.3% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 15.0% (1992).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Iraq, Saudi Arabia, India, Romania, Kuwait and Pakistan.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Fruits, Olive Oil, Olives, Phosphates, Potash, Vegetables, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Chemicals, Fertilizers, Mining, Petroleum Products.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemicals, Fruit and Vegetables, Phosphates, Potash.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 788 km (490 mi) (1988), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 5,625 km (3,495 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 136,000 (1989), trucks and buses 68,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 6 (1990), deadweight tonnage 63,981 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 2,782,000,000 (1,729,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 253,676,000 (173,743,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 4 with a total circulation of 250,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 980,000 (1994). Television; receivers 250,000 (1994). Telephones; units 288,100 (1993).

MILITARY: 98,600 (1994) total active duty personnel with 91.3% army, 0.6% navy and 8.1% air force while military expenditure accounts for 7.1% (1994) of the Gross National Product (GNP).