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Jordan and the October 7th War: Between National Interests and Palestinian Solidarity

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The war between Hamas and Israel, which erupted on October 7, 2023, has posed one of the most significant challenges to Jordan in recent years. While striving to uphold its peace treaty with Israel and maintaining the strategic partnership with Jerusalem, Jordan also views itself as deeply committed to the Palestinian question, particularly given the overwhelming public support for Hamas within the country. As a result, the Jordanian regime has had to carefully balance between its national and strategic interests, on the one hand, and expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people and efforts to assist them during the war, on the other.

With the outbreak of the war, Jordan's priorities were clear: bring the conflict to an immediate end and advance a political process centered on a two-state solution. Jordan feared that a prolonged war could escalate into other arenas, destabilizing the region and even threatening Jordan's own political stability. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, King Abdullah launched an intensive diplomatic campaign. During the war's first year, he undertook more than 30 working visits abroad, engaged with over 180 foreign leaders, and received approximately 90 phone calls from global figures—all in an effort to organize international pressure on Israel to agree to a ceasefire.¹

The Jordanian press appeared eager to highlight King Abdullah as the sole Arab leader spearheading international efforts for a ceasefire. However, he was not alone in this endeavor. Egyptian President 'Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, who was also concerned about the continuation of the war, also actively worked

¹ ["Diligent and continuous royal efforts"](#) [Arabic], *Al-Dustour*, October 7, 2024.

to stop it. Their first meeting, held in Cairo on October 19, 2023, underscored their cooperation. The two leaders stressed the importance of strengthening coordination between their countries “at the highest political levels” and reaffirmed their shared commitment to securing a ceasefire and advancing peace process based on a two-state solution.²

Jordan overtly sided with the Palestinians in Gaza immediately after the war broke out. It recalled its ambassador from Israel to Jordan, organized humanitarian aid for Gaza people through Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), collected donations, and admitted some sick and injured to Jordanian hospitals. As part of its aid efforts, Jordan established a military hospital in Khan Yunis in the end of November 2023 to provide urgent medical assistance to injured Palestinians.³

Moreover, Jordan delivered humanitarian aid to Gaza by both air and land. On November 6, 2023, the Jordanian Air Force air dropped medical supplies to the Jordanian military hospital in Gaza, setting a precedent that was later followed by the United States, Britain, and France.⁴ This aerial aid was addition by convoys of trucks transporting supplies from the King Hussein Bridge (Allenby Bridge) to Gaza via the Kerem Shalom Crossing. The Jordanian press extensively covered these efforts, framing them as “breaking the siege on Gaza” to emphasize that the Palestinians were not alone—Jordan stood by their side.⁵

Jordan between Hamas and Israel

Despite attempts to characterize Jordan’s humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza as an expression of support for Hamas, this is not the case.⁶ Jordan’s relationship with Hamas has remained tense since the government shut down the organization’s offices and expelled its leaders in November 1999, citing interference in the country’s internal affairs. Since then, Hamas has not reopened its offices and its leaders have not been allowed to enter Jordan.⁷

From the Jordanian regime’s perspective, Israel’s war against Hamas aligns with Jordan’s strategic interests, leading to covert support for Israel for two key reasons. First, there is deep concern over

² “[President El-Sisi Meets Jordan's King His Majesty King Abdullah II](#),” The Arab Republic of Egypt Presidency, October 19, 2023.

³ The Jordanian newspaper *Al-Dustour* dedicated its [November 20, 2023 issue](#) [Arabic], to the establishment of the Jordanian hospital in Khan Yunis. It includes a transcript of a conversation between the king Abdullah and the hospital manager, a description of the establishment of the hospital, a commentary on the significance of the establishment of the hospital, etc.

⁴ King Abdullah II, [X.com Post](#), November 6, 2023, 1:02am.

⁵ See for example, the remarks of the Jordanian ambassador in Cairo. “[Adaileh: Jordan broke the siege on Gaza by sending the new hospital](#) [Arabic],” *Al-Dustour*, November 21, 2023.

⁶ For example, in an [April 2024 interview](#) [Arabic] with the Iranian news channel *Al-Alam*, Hamas political bureau member Mousa Abu Marzuk emphasized the strong ties between Jordan and Hamas.

⁷ Asher Susser, *Jordan, Palestine, and the Politics of Collective Identity* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2024), p. 206.

Hamas’s growing strength and popularity in both the West Bank and Jordan itself. Amman fears that Hamas could destabilize the West Bank, weaken the Palestinian Authority, and potentially replace it in the future—an outcome that could threaten Jordan’s own security. Second, Jordan is concerned about Iranian subversion within its own borders. Iran’s increasing influence in the region, its support for the so-called Axis of Resistance, and its assistance to Hamas early in the war pushed the Jordanian regime, according to rumors in the Arab world, to strengthen its ties with Israel, the United States, and Western allies.⁸ As a result, the shared strategic interests between Jordan and these countries became even more pronounced during the war, culminating in Jordan’s cooperation in thwarting Iran’s two attempted attacks on Israel in April and October 2023.⁹

Cooperation between Israel and Jordan has continued throughout the war. This includes supplying agricultural produce to Israel, renewing the bi-lateral water supply agreement, and opening of border crossings for the movement of people and vehicles. Yet despite this broad cooperation, bilateral ties have been strained by numerous crises, damaging Israeli-Jordanian relations. The most significant crisis emerged at the start of the war when senior Jordanian officials, including Queen Rania, accused Israel of allegedly committing “war crimes” in Gaza.¹⁰ Jordan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ayman al-Safadi, has also accused Israel of committing war crimes, repeating the accusation on various occasions. These claims have fueled anti-Israel rhetoric and legitimized ongoing anti-Israel demonstrations in Jordan.¹¹

The Effects of the War on Jordan

The war in Gaza had several significant effects on Jordanian society, primarily affecting the economy and increasing support for political Islam in the kingdom. Alongside periodic demonstrations and strikes, a consumer boycott was declared against international companies perceived as cooperating with Israel, including Starbucks, McDonald's, and Pizza Hut. This boycott severely affected the operations of these global chains, forcing some to close branches and scale back their activities in Jordan. Estimates suggest that approximately 15,000 Jordanian jobs were affected, potentially exacerbating the country's unemployment rate, which currently stands at 21.5 percent overall and is even higher among young people.¹²

⁸ Jordan has officially denied rumors of military ties between Israel and Jordan or the transfer of American weapons to Israel since the outbreak of the war. See: “[Army: One bullet was not transferred to the Israeli army from Jordan](#) [Arabic],” *Al-Ghad*, October 29, 2023.

⁹ “[Interior Ministry says 2 people were lightly injured by shrapnel](#),” *The Jordan Times*, October 1, 2024.

¹⁰ [Queen Rania of Jordan: 'What's happening in Gaza today... is a war crime'](#), *MSNBC*, May 3, 2024.

¹¹ See for example an [interview \[Arabic\] with al-Safadi](#) on October 13, 2023 on *Al-Mamlaka TV*. See, also: “[Safadi: Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza](#) [Arabic],” *Al-Jarida*, November 4, 2023.

¹² “[Jordan businesses pledge solidarity as 15,000 face job losses over Israel boycott](#),” *The New Arab*, December 1, 2023; “[Jordan's unemployment rate drops to 21.5% in Q3 2024](#),” *The Jordan Times*, December 10, 2024.

It is important to note that, despite initial concerns that the war would negatively impact Jordan's tourism sector—which accounts for approximately 16 percent of the country's GDP—this did not materialize as expected. In the early months of the war, hotel reservations in Jordan dropped by nearly 60 percent, with projections estimating losses of millions of dollars per month.¹³ However, a well-executed tourism campaign, particularly targeting visitors from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) successfully revitalized the sector. As a result, the number of foreign tourists rebounded, and by the end of 2024, the decline compared to 2023 was limited to just 3.8 percent (i.e., 6.108 million tourists in 2024 compared to 6.353 million tourists in 2023).¹⁴

The second major effect of the war on Jordan has been the surge in support for the Muslim Brotherhood. A public opinion poll conducted by the Arab Barometer in May 2023, before the October 7th War, had already highlighted strong backing for political Islam across the Middle East.¹⁵ According to the survey, nearly half of Jordanians favored the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in Jordanian politics. This growing support was evident in Jordan's September 2024 general elections, where the Islamic Action Front—the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood—achieved a decisive victory. It secured 31 out of 138 seats (23%), tripling its representation from the previous elections and making it the largest faction in the House.¹⁶

While public sentiment had been shifting in its favor, the war played a crucial role in bolstering the Front's success. Muslim Brotherhood activists actively led resistance efforts against Israel, aligning themselves fully with Hamas and its struggle. They mobilized resources—raising funds, collecting supplies, and organizing daily demonstrations in Jordan. As a result, on election day, many Jordanians rewarded the movement for its steadfast support of the Palestinian cause.

Trump's Gaza Plan and Jordanian Opposition

President Trump's proposal to resettle approximately 2 million Palestinians from the Gaza Strip in Egypt and Jordan, while redeveloping the territory over the next 15 to 20 years, has sparked intense opposition. Following the plan's release in early February 2025, a wave of criticism emerged, particularly in Jordan and across the Arab world, where media campaigns swiftly mobilized against the initiative.

¹³ This was the assessment of the Jordanian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Makram al-Queisi. See: "[Jordanian tourism will lose about \\$250 million per month if the war on Gaza continues](#) [Arabic]," *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, December 26, 2023.

¹⁴ [Tourism statistics](#) [Arabic], Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan.

¹⁵ "[A New Dawn for Political Islam?](#)," Arab Barometer, May 8, 2023.

¹⁶ [Final results of the 2024 House of Representatives elections](#) [Arabic], Independent Election Commission – Jordan.

The question of Palestinian displacement during the war is not new. At the Cairo Summit for Peace on October 21, 2023, King Abdullah strongly condemned the forced displacement of Palestinians, declaring, “This is a war crime according to international law, and a red line for all of us.”¹⁷ A month later, in a meeting in the House of Representatives between the Jordanian Prime Minister Bashar al-Khasawneh and the heads of the parliamentary blocs and committees, Khasawneh reaffirmed this position. He emphasized that from Jordan's perspective, the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza or from the West Bank remains a “red line,” and it represented a “declaration of war.”¹⁸

Jordan's opposition to the Trump plan is not surprising. Jordan's security doctrine is firmly based on the two-state solution and any alternative that does not lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state is unacceptable to Amman. This stance explains why, following the plan's publication, Jordanian leaders reaffirmed their long-standing position with the slogan: “Jordan is for the Jordanians, and Palestine is for the Palestinians.”¹⁹ In essence, Jordan rejects any notion of serving as an alternative homeland for the Palestinian people, insisting a Palestinian state must be established within Palestinian territory.

Moreover, the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza would not only dismantle the two-state solution but also set a dangerous precedent for similar actions in the West Bank. Jordan has recently referred to remarks by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who declared that 2025 will be the year of sovereignty. From Jordan's perspective, this statement, coupled with ongoing Israeli military operations in the northern West Bank—particularly in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Qabatiya—reinforces Jordanian fears of a broader Israeli effort to push the Palestinians out of the West Bank. The large-scale destruction of buildings and infrastructure, an operation launched in January 2025, is seen by Jordan as further evidence of Israeli intentions to displace Palestinians from the West Bank as well.

Finally, the Jordanian concern that more Palestinians will arrive in Jordan is rooted in the fear that it would change the demographic balance in favor of the Palestinians and turn Jordan into a Palestinian state in accordance with the vision of the Israeli right. Researchers have indicated that Palestinians make up currently around half of Jordan's population, though some estimates indicate their actual share may be even higher.²⁰

¹⁷ [“Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II at the Cairo Summit for Peace,”](#) Cairo, October 21, 2023.

¹⁸ [“Al-Khasawneh: Displacing Palestinians is a red line and continued aggression is a violation of international law \[Arabic\],”](#) *Al-Yum Al-Sabi'*, November 6, 2023.

¹⁹ [“Jordanian Foreign Minister: We told Trump that Palestine is for the Palestinians and Jordan is for the Jordanians \[Arabic\],”](#) *Al-Jazeera*, February 12, 2025.

²⁰ Susser, *Jordan, Palestine*, p. 197; Oroub El-Abed, “The Invisible Citizens of Jordan,” in Paolo Maggiolini and Idir Ouahes (eds.), *Minorities and State-Building in the Middle East: The Case of Jordan* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2021) p. 111.

Fortunately for Jordan, there is an Arab consensus in opposition to the Trump plan. This opposition includes traditional U.S. partners (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates), and therefore it will be difficult for Trump to implement it.²¹ Instead, the Arab League has presented an alternative—the Egyptian plan—that aligns with both Jordanian and Egyptian interests. This approach focuses on Gaza’s reconstruction while firmly rejecting any forced Palestinian displacement.

In conclusion, the Jordanian regime sees great importance in the peace treaty with Israel despite the war and has no intention of canceling it. The kingdom’s policy playing both sides of the conflict, which was expressed during the war, is a permanent policy in relation to Israel. On the one hand, it criticizes Israel and supports the Palestinians, but on the other hand it continues to quietly cooperate with Israel behind the scenes. However, Jordan has clear red lines tied to its national and security interests. Therefore, Israel must take these considerations into account when shaping the future of Gaza, as any misstep could jeopardize the stability of peace between the two countries.

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²¹ “[Saudi Arabia says no to displacement of Gazans, rejects relations with Israel without Palestinian state](#),” *Arab News*, February 5, 2025.