

JORDAN'S TIGHTROPE WALK

Strategy and Survival in the Israel-Palestine Conflict



Hirak Jyoti Das

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CONFLICT

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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ISBN: 978-81-994564-2-6

First Published: February 2026

Price: Rs.275/-

Published by: Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg,
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010
Tel. (91-11) 2671-7983
Fax.(91-11) 2615 4191
Website: <http://www.idsa.in>

Cover Courtesy: Image sourced from <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/149002>

Cover &
Layout by: Geeta Kumari

Printed at: Pentagon Press LLP
206, Peacock Lane, Shahpur Jat
New Delhi-110049
Tel. (91-11) 26491568, 26490600
Fax: (91-11) 26490600
email: rajanaryaa@gmail.com
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website: <http://www.pentagonpress.in>

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCM	Billion cubic metres
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
Fatah	<i>Al-Harakat Al-Tahrir Al-Filastini</i>
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
GNP	Gross National Product
Hamas	<i>Harakat Al-Muqawam Al-Islamiyya</i>
HTS	<i>Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham</i>
IAF	Islamic Action Front
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IS	Islamic State
ISF	International Stabilisation Force
JHCO	Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation
JIPTC	Jordan International Police Training Center
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MCM	Million cubic metres
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NEPCO	National Electric Power Company
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
PA	Palestinian Authority
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PLA	Palestinian Liberation Army
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PMF	Popular Mobilisation Forces
PNC	Palestinian National Council
POW	Prisoners of War
QIZ	Qualified Industrial Zone
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSC	United States Security Coordinator
WFP	World Food Programme

1 INTRODUCTION

Despite its limited resources, economic base, and military capabilities, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has managed to foreground its interests and ambitions due to the state's extensive role in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In the process, it has proved itself as a credible security ally for the United States (US). Historically, Israel maintained secret talks with Jordan, viewing it as a critical buffer state and favouring the survival of the ruling Hashemite family. Jordan was the second Arab state after Egypt to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. Jordan's national interests are intrinsically linked to the Israel-Palestine conflict due to the kingdom's borders with Israel and West Bank, preserving the demographic balance and custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Israel's war against Hamas following the 7 October 2023 attack by the Palestinian group has invigorated the discussions within Israel about displacement and the complete annexation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The so-called Jordanian option propagated by the Israeli right envisions Israel's annexation of the West Bank and the accommodation of Palestinians in Jordan.¹ The option came to the forefront with a new intensity under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party government, which has historically opposed a Palestinian state.²

¹ “25 Years Of Wadi Araba: The State Of Jordanian-Israeli Relations And The Future Of The Peace Treaty”, European Institute of the Mediterranean, 28 October 2019, at <https://www.iemed.org/publication/25-years-of-wadi-araba-the-state-of-jordanian-israeli-relations-and-the-future-of-the-peace-treaty/#:~:text=There%20is%20real%20fear%20in,conflict%20with%20Palestinians%20is%20envisioned>. (accessed on 25 August 2025).

² Thomas W. Lippman, “How Israel's Likud Party Played The Long Game Toward Annexation Of The West Bank”, Responsible Statecraft, 18 May 2020, at <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2020/05/18/how-israels-likud-party-played-the-long-game-toward-annexation-of-the-west-bank/> (accessed on 27 August 2025).

Likud backed by far-right blocs such as the National Religious Party–Religious Zionism and Otzma Yehudit—seeks to solve the Palestinian issue at Jordan's expense.³ During the course of the war, Jordan has been diplomatically proactive to de-escalate the war and achieve a ceasefire, maintain vocal opposition to the Israel Defence Forces' (IDF) actions while preserving the peace treaty with Israel and continue cooperation on security, energy, and water.

For Jordan, the Israel-Palestine conflict is both a foreign policy issue and a domestic concern, and its security and national interests are tied to resolving the Palestinian issue. While preserving its influence over any settlement of the Palestinian issue, Jordan has prioritised a two-state solution, considered vital for its sovereignty and stability.

The paper seeks to explore Jordan's strategic challenges pertaining to the contemporary developments in the Israel-Hamas war. The paper briefly delves into the drivers of Jordan's foreign policy in Chapter Two. Chapter Three seeks to identify the key trends in Jordan's policy towards the Palestine issue since the kingdom's formation in 1921 until the present. Chapter Four evaluates Jordan's engagement with Israel before and after the 1994 peace treaty and examines the areas of cooperation. Chapter Five analyses Jordan's role in the Israel-Hamas war, explores the key concerns and assesses the kingdom's role in the post-war scenario.

³ “Smotrich And Ben-Gvir Rally Behind Trump's Gaza Emigration Idea”, *The Times of Israel*, 27 January 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-and-ben-gvir-rally-behind-trumps-gaza-emigration-idea/> (accessed on 27 August 2025); “Israeli Settler Association Calls For Displacement Of Palestinians To Jordan”, *Middle East Monitor*, 23 September 2024, at <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240923-israeli-settler-association-calls-for-displacement-of-palestinians-to-jordan/> (accessed on 28 August 2025).

2

DRIVERS OF JORDAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

Jordan's foreign policy choices have been shaped by structural constraints: internal fragility, external dependence, and hostile regional environment.⁴ The impact on strategic depth due to its small territorial size (89,318 sq.km);⁵ limited population (11.4 million in 2023);⁶ modest economic and military capabilities; finite natural resources such as phosphates, potash and natural gas; shortage of water; and sparse arable land providing less than 15 per cent of the population's food intake contribute to the state's vulnerability. Due to the lack of a strong economic base, Jordan relies on external support, initially from Britain between 1921 and 1957,⁷ and then the US since the 1957 Eisenhower Doctrine⁸ as well as the Gulf states.

⁴ Lawrence Tal, *Politics, the Military and National Security in Jordan, 1955-1967*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, pp.1-2.

⁵ “Surface Area (Sq Km)-Jordan”, World Bank, 2025, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.SRF.TOTL.K2?locations=JO> (accessed on 21 April 2025).

⁶ “Population, Total-Jordan”, World Bank, 2025, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=JO> (accessed on 21 April 2025).

⁷ From Britain, Jordan received £100,000 or US\$ 135,856 in mid-1920s, £2 million or US\$ 2.7 million in mid-1940s and £12.5 million or US\$1.69 million in 1957. Jordan received US\$ 34 million from the US in 1958. For more, Lawrence Tal, 2002, p. 3.

⁸ The US committed economic and military aid to West Asian states to counter Soviet Union's influence. The US, between 1951 and 2025, provided around US\$ 33.6 billion to Jordan and an additional US\$ 2.3 billion in security assistance through defence appropriations accounts since 2015. For more, Jeremy M. Sharp, “Jordan: Background And US Relations”, Congressional Research Service, May 2025, at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33546> (accessed on 19 May 2025).

The kingdom is surrounded by more populous and economically stronger states tussling for regional leadership and entangled in political and ideological disputes. Israel's nuclear capabilities, military and technological superiority, and larger armies of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iraq underscore Amman's strategic challenge. The state's limited military capabilities, lack of indigenous arms industry and financial ability to procure required quality and quantity of weapons have led to reliance on the western imports.⁹ The state's vulnerability shapes its foreign policy centred on external reliance, preserving independence and conflict avoidance.¹⁰

Despite geographic, military, and economic constraints, Jordan has pursued a proactive foreign policy since its independence from the British rule in 1946. The monarchy has sustained by preventing entrenchment of pan-Arab and pan-Islamist ideologies, historical process of state-building, control over economic resources, and the ability to use coercion.¹¹ Jordan has adapted to shifting global power structures, regional security threats, and inter-Arab rivalries.¹² The kingdom's economic and military limitations do not pose a threat to the Arab states vying for leadership, such as Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, ensuring its survival.¹³ Its foreign policy emphasises pragmatism, moderation, preventive diplomacy, mediation, and Arab unity. In dealing with the Arab world, the kingdom is committed to key pillars such the Arab League Charter, support for Arab solidarity,

⁹ Brent E. Sasley, "Changes And Continuities In Jordanian Foreign Policy", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 6 (1), 2002, pp. 36-37, at https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/sab02_01.pdf (accessed on 14 May 2025).

¹⁰ Bassel F. Salloukh, "State Strength, Permeability And Foreign Policy Behavior: Jordan In Theoretical Perspective", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 18 (2), 1996, pp. 38-40.

¹¹ Bassel F. Salloukh, 1996, pp. 38-40.

¹² Brent E. Sasley, 2002, pp. 37-38.

¹³ Mohammed B.E. Saaida, "Decision-Making For Jordan's Foreign Policy", *International Journal of Research*, December 2021, pp. 376-384, at <https://ijrjournal.com/index.php/ijr/article/view/303/253> (accessed on 23 May 2025); Joseph Nevo & Ilan Pappe, "Introduction", in Joseph Nevo & Ilan Pappe (eds.), *Jordan in the Middle East: The Making of a Pivotal State*, Routledge, London, 2013, pp. 1-2.

cooperation and integration in various fields, reliance on dialogue to resolve differences, while nurturing moderation, regional stability, and advocacy of the Palestinian cause.¹⁴

The Palestinian question is fundamental to Jordan's domestic politics, demography, security, and foreign policy. Palestine's centrality in Jordan's foreign policy stems from the Hashemite custodianship of Jerusalem's holy sites, securing the boundaries with Israel and West Bank, and preserving the delicate demographic balance between citizens of Palestinian and Jordanian descent.¹⁵ The Hashemite clan, descendants of Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatima and Caliph Ali, leverages its religious legitimacy to influence Arab-Israel dynamics and preserve custodianship of Jerusalem's Islamic holy places since 1924 and Waqf properties outside the old city. Therefore the foreign policy decision-making is necessitated for the survival of the monarchical regime.¹⁶

Israel shares the longest boundary, around 327 km, with Jordan. The borders have been prone to cross-border raids, infiltration, and smuggling, severely affecting the kingdom's stability. Demographically, more than half of Jordan's total inhabitants are of Palestinian origin, 350,000-400,000 people arriving after the 1948 Arab-Israel war, and after the 1967 Arab-Israel war, another 300,000 people settled in the kingdom.¹⁷ The Jordanian

¹⁴ Saddoon N. Al-Majali, "Jordanian Foreign Policy Towards The Countries Of The Gulf Cooperation Council (1999-2019)", *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*, 2019, p. 53, at <https://rsglobal.pl/index.php/ijitss/article/view/948> (accessed on 21 May 2025).

¹⁵ Anne Bauer, "Jordan And The Palestinian Cause", Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, October 2022, p. 4, at <https://www.kas.de/documents/268421/16446927/Jordan+and+the+Palestinian+Cause.pdf/637518a0-7cf3-066f-caeb-ecd0a8788b49?version=1.0&t=1664645271140> (accessed on 23 May 2025).

¹⁶ Mohammad Saleh Bani Issa, "Factors Of Stability And Sustainable Development In Jordan In Its First Centenary 1921-2021 (An Analytical Descriptive Study)", *Heliyon*, 9 (11), 2023, pp. 2-3, at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844023082014>, (accessed on 14 May 2025).

¹⁷ "Jordan-History-The Disaster Of 1967", The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2025, at http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/his_periods3.html (accessed on 23 May 2025).

socio-political structure, based on Bedouin tribal norms and clan-based loyalty, has been tussling since the large-scale entry of Palestinians. Moreover, Palestinian sensitivities continue to impact Jordan's foreign policy and its engagement in the Israel-Palestine issue.

3 TRENDS IN JORDAN'S PALESTINE POLICY

The former Ottoman territories of Transjordan and Palestine after World War I came under the British mandate following the April 1920 San Remo Conference. On 11 April 1921, the Emirate of Transjordan was established as a British protectorate under King Abdullah I, fulfilling promises to Sharif Hussein Bin Ali Al-Hashmi for an Arab state under the Hashemite monarchy. Palestine remained under British mandate with provisions to establish a Jewish national home as per the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Abdullah's initial plans to incorporate the entire British Mandate Palestine and provide autonomy to Jews within his kingdom could not fructify due to a lack of political and military capacity, dependence on Britain and the Zionist movement's momentum and international support for statehood. During the November 1947 United Nations (UN) Partition Plan, Abdullah consented to creating a Jewish state and annexation of Arab areas to Transjordan through understandings with Jewish Agency leaders, Elias Sasson (August 1946) and Golda Meir (17 November 1947), thereby undermining a Palestinian Arab state under the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin Al-Husseini.¹⁸

3.1. PERIOD OF INTEGRATION

The 26 November 1947 partition plan triggered Arab-Jewish paramilitary clashes and propelled Palestinian displacement, against the backdrop of Britain's exit strategy in Mandate Palestine.¹⁹ Transjordan entered the 1948

¹⁸ Efraim Karsh, "The Collusion That Never Was: King Abdullah, The Jewish Agency And The Partition Of Palestine", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34 (4), 1999, p. 583.

¹⁹ David Tal, "The Historiography Of The 1948 War In Palestine: The Missing Dimension", *Journal of Israeli History*, 24 (2), 2005, pp. 194-195.

Arab-Israel war focusing its military efforts on areas earmarked for an Arab state and East Jerusalem; avoided full-scale war in Jerusalem and supported a ceasefire.²⁰ Abdullah adopted a cautious combat strategy due to the Arab Legion's military weakness, the need to preserve British financial support, protect Islamic holy places, avoid violating the UN's guidelines, and retain hold over the Arab Legion-controlled West Bank and East Jerusalem.²¹ The territorial contours of the partition were decided on the battlefield, remaining unilateral, involuntary and contested.²² Arab states' rejection to recognise Israel's existence, division of Palestinian territories under Israel, Egypt, and Transjordan and internal differences blocked the prospect of an Arab Palestinian state.²³ Following the war, around 750,000 Palestinians were displaced, of whom around 350,000-400,000 settled in Transjordan held East and West Banks.²⁴

Transjordan's control over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was solidified after the 3 April 1949 armistice agreement with Israel, facilitating territorial adjustments and formalising Jerusalem's division into Jordanian and Israeli sectors.²⁵ The control over West Bank increased the state's territorial size and strategic prominence, changing the name from the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan to the Hashemite Kingdom of

²⁰ Avraham Sela, "Transjordan, Israel And The 1948 War: Myth, Historiography And Reality", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 (4), 1992, pp. 623-688.

²¹ Eugene L. Rogan, "Jordan And 1948: The Persistence Of An Official History", in Eugene L. Rogan & Avi Shlaim (eds.) *The War in Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, June 2012, pp. 118-119.

²² P.R. Kumaraswamy, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Ringside View*, Routledge, London, 2023, p.78.

²³ Andres E. Montenegro, "1948 Arab-Israeli War: Victory In Consolidation", US Army Command and General Staff College, 2020, p.15, at <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/trecms/pdf/AD1159457.pdf> (accessed on 25 May 2025).

²⁴ Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars: 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p.6.

²⁵ "Hashemite Jordan Kingdom-Israel General Armistice Agreement", United Nations (UN), 2025, at <https://peacemaker.un.org/en/node/9439> (accessed on 26 May 2025).

Jordan on 2 June 1949.²⁶ Abdullah took formal measures to enforce integration, propagate a new self-identity and allegiance under the idea of unified Jordan by providing citizenship to West Bank Palestinians, amending the Citizenship Law on 20 December 1949,²⁷ redrawing the electoral districts to include the West Bank, organising parliamentary elections in both banks on 11 April 1950,²⁸ and passing a resolution on 24 April 1950 to formally annex West Bank.²⁹

The pre-1948 socio-cultural structure, dominated by Bedouin and tribal norms and clan-based loyalty, shifted after the large-scale arrival of Palestinians. A majority of Palestinians were indifferent or hostile to Hashemite rule, exposing the kingdom to external subversion such as Al-Husseini's influence and pan-Arab and pan-Islamist ideologies.³⁰ On 20 July 1951, Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian nationalist, Mustafa Shukri Ashu, with ties to the Al-Husseini family,³¹ motivated by Jordan's annexation of the West Bank, alleged collusion with Israel and the king's perceived responsibility for the Arab defeat in the 1948 war.³²

²⁶ “Jordan (1946-Present)”, University of Central Arkansas, 2025, at <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/middle-eastnorth-africapersian-gulf-region/jordan-1946-present/> (accessed on 29 May 2025).

²⁷ Anis F. Kassim, “Palestinian Refugees In Jordan And The Revocation Of Citizenship”, Al-Majdal, 50, 2012, at https://badil.org/cached_uploads/view/2021/05/06/al-majdal-50-1620308746.pdf (accessed on 19 May 2025).

²⁸ Victor Kattan, “Jordan And Palestine: Union (1950) And Secession (1988)”, *Research Handbook on Secession*, November 2019, p. 5, at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3486037 (accessed on 21 May 2025).

²⁹ The formal annexation was deeply unpopular across the Arab world and was only accepted by Britain, Iraq and Pakistan. For more, Victor Kattan, 2019, p. 14.

³⁰ Anne Bauer, 2022, p. 4.

³¹ “From The Archive, 1951: Assassination Of King Abdullah”, *The Guardian*, 21 July 1951, at <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1951/jul/21/fromthearchive> (accessed on 23 May 2025).

³² Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist movement and the partition of Palestine*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, pp. 607-608.

King Hussein, after coming to power on 2 May 1953, continued to consolidate the integration of West Bank Palestinians into Jordan, adopting amendment to the Nationality law in 1954, to grant citizenship to all Palestinian residents in Jordan between 1949 and 1954. Hussein maintained stability through authoritarian measures, swift security actions, a carrot and stick policy and religious moderation in both East and West Banks until 1967.³³ West Bank including East Jerusalem contributed around 40 per cent of Jordan's Gross National Product (GNP), 25 per cent of arable land and nearly half of Jordan's industrial capacity until Israel's capture of Palestinian territories in the 1967 Arab-Israel war.³⁴

3.2. LOSS OF WEST BANK AND EAST JERUSALEM

During the 1967 Arab-Israel War, Israeli forces captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Besides territorial loss, Jordan faced an influx of around 300,000 refugees. Hussein nevertheless hoped to retrieve the lost territories through diplomacy, resuming communication with Israeli leadership including Director General of the Prime Minister's Office Yaakov Herzog, Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Prime Minister Golda Meir.³⁵

Jordan, rather than relinquishing its claim, modified the Palestinian policy, continued to constitutionally, legally, and administratively define the territory, as part of the Hashemite kingdom. Amman appointed and coordinated with pro-Hashemite mayors, functionaries, educationists and clergy in Israel-controlled West Bank, retained citizenship of West Bank Palestinians,

³³ Uriel Dann, “The Hashemite Monarchy 1948-88: The Constant And The Changing-An Integration”, in Joseph Nevo & Ilan Pappe (eds.), *Jordan in the Middle East 1948-1988: The Making of a Pivotal State*, Routledge, London, 2013, p. 20.

³⁴ David Rodman, “Friendly Enemies: Israel And Jordan In The 1973 Yom Kippur War”, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 6 (1), 2012, p. 91; Lawrence Tal, 2002, pp. 112-113, 121.

³⁵ Ziv Rubinovitz, “Blue And White ‘Black September’: Israel’s Role In The Jordan Crisis Of 1970”, *The International History Review*, 32 (4), 2010, pp. 689-690.

preserved custodianship over the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and in 1972, proposed a confederation between Jordan and Palestinian state on West Bank and Gaza Strip under the United Arab Kingdom which was rejected by all sides.³⁶

3.3. PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANISATION CHALLENGE

The creation of Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), an independent movement, during the First Arab League summit in Cairo on 13-14 January 1964 profoundly impacted Jordan's security. The PLO Charter, released on 28 May 1964, called for the complete restoration of the lost homeland and the 'liberation of Palestine', implying the destruction of Israel.³⁷ Article 9 of the amended 1968 Charter called armed struggle the only way to liberate Palestine.³⁸ Before the PLO's formation, Palestinian irredentism was mainly subdued due to the Hashemite monarchy's integrationist policies and the influences of Nasserism, Ba'athism and Islamism. PLO's formation propagated a fresh approach for Palestinian political aspirations, drawing Jordan into the conflict with radical Arab states.³⁹ PLO questioned Hussein's

³⁶ Jordan's plan aimed to preserve East Bank's predominance in the Jordanian-Palestinian equation while recognising the redundancy of the centralised policy between 1950-1967. The plan rejected by Palestinians and Arab states remained the cornerstone of Jordan's Palestine Policy in the 1970s. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir rejected the plan, citing its unilateral approach regarding Israel's borders, security and East Jerusalem. For more, Karol Sorby Jr., "Jordan In The Struggle For Its Own Survival, 1967-1974", *Asian and African Studies*, 31 (2), 2022, pp. 237-241, at https://www.sav.sk/journals/uploads/1201104101_SORBY_web.pdf.

³⁷ "PLO Charter, 1964", Middle East Institute, 2025, at <http://www.mei.org.in/constitutions/plo-charter> (accessed on 24 May 2025).

³⁸ "The Palestinian National Charter: Resolutions Of The Palestine National Council July 1-17, 1968", The Avalon Project, 2022, at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/plocov.asp#art33 (accessed on 16 May 2025)

³⁹ For Egypt, the PLO served as a potent tool to de-legitimise Hashemite rule among Palestinians, slow down the Jordanisation efforts, co-opt Palestinian resistance and regain political heft after the dissolution of the United Arab Republic (UAR) and failure of unity talks with Iraq and Syria. For more, Lawrence Tal, 2002, p. 100.

legitimacy over Palestinians, claims of representation based on legislative actions, challenged Jordan's integration model and authority over the Palestinian population in Jordan.

Al-Harakat Al-Tahrir Al-Filastini or Fatah's emergence in 1965 under Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf and Khalil Al-Wazir radicalised the Palestinian body, leading to PLO's cross-border raids from Jordan, provoking Israeli retaliation and widening tensions between Jordanians and Palestinians. Jordan projected PLO as a security threat, rejected demands to allow the organisation to open office in Amman in February 1965, offered Palestinian recruitment in Jordanian army, dissolved the Palestinian-dominated National Guard, rejected PLO's conscription of Palestinian citizens in a Palestinian army, blocked smugglers and local operatives providing logistical support to Fatah's guerrilla activities, penetrated and monitored Fatah cells eventually banning the group in June 1966.⁴⁰

After the 1967 war and Israel's capture of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the PLO claimed its credentials as a national movement of all Palestinians, both in the occupied territories and the diaspora, attracting Arab regional support for its exclusive rights to negotiate.⁴¹ Under regional pressure, Hussein publicly endorsed the 28 October 1974 Arab League Resolution, recognising the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Rabat resolution nullified Hussein as the legitimate spokesperson of the West Bank Palestinians and diluted Jordan's right to re-establish its sovereignty.⁴² Hussein continued to carry out secret negotiations with the Labour Party government between 1974 and early 1977, hoping that in the event of an Israeli agreement to complete

⁴⁰ Lawrence Tal, 2002, p. 105.

⁴¹ Nigel Ashton, "Taking Friends For Granted", *Diplomatic History*, 41 (3), 2017, pp. 625-626, at <https://academic.oup.com/dh/article-abstract/41/3/620/2996344> (accessed on 16 May 2025).

⁴² Ilan Pappe, "Jordan Between Hashemite And Palestinian Identity", in Joseph Nevo & Ilan Pappe (eds.), *Jordan in the Middle East: The Making of a Pivotal State*, Routledge, London, 2013, pp. 76-77.

withdrawal, he would set aside the Rabat resolution and discuss the future of West Bank.⁴³

3.4. DISENGAGEMENT FROM WEST BANK

By the 1980s, Hussein's West Bank policy oscillated between committing to a joint delegation, a future Palestinian state loosely tied to Jordan and engaging with Israel and the US to regain control over the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Jordan's attempt to rebuild ties with the PLO, suggesting a confederation, failed due to Palestinian internal opposition.⁴⁴ The outbreak of the Intifada in December 1987 placed the PLO at the centre stage. It gradually took an anti-Jordanian stance for alleged collusion with Israel, and demands grew for the resignation of pro-Hashemite representatives in West Bank. Hussein realised that preserving its entanglement in West Bank was counterproductive, denting its image for allegedly colluding with Israel, impeding Jordan's regional integration, the spillover of violence domestically, low support for Hashemite re-control and the inevitability of Palestinian leadership assuming governance in the West Bank post-Israeli withdrawal, making Jordan's reclamation unlikely.⁴⁵

On 31 July 1988, Hussein announced severing Jordan's legal and administrative ties with the West Bank including the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies on 30 July, Supreme Committee for West Bank Affairs and Ministry of Occupied Territory Affairs on 6 August and ordering retirement of nearly 18,000 Jordanian civil servants on 16 August, changes in Ministry of Interior Civil Registration Department and Department of Passports considering all Jordanian citizens residing in West Bank before 31 July as Palestinians and not Jordanians on 20 August and restrictions on Palestinian emigration to East Bank.⁴⁶ While legal and

⁴³ Nigel Ashton, 2017, p. 626.

⁴⁴ Ilan Pappe, 2013, p. 83.

⁴⁵ Joseph Nevo & Ilan Pappe, 2013, pp. 2-4.

⁴⁶ Asher Susser, "Jordan, The PLO And The Palestine Question", in Joseph Nevo & Ilan Pappe (eds.), *Jordan in the Middle East: The Making of a Pivotal State*, Routledge, London, 2013, pp. 216-218, 224.

administrative de-linking was implemented, Jordanian custodianship over Jerusalem's holy sites persisted.⁴⁷

Jordan, therefore, abandoned its dual approach, i.e. seeking a role in the peace process, claiming the West Bank as part of its territory under occupation, while recognising the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.⁴⁸ PLO transformed its Amman office into an Embassy in January 1989, maintained political coordination with Jordan, acknowledging the latter's role in West Bank's daily affairs and peace process. Jordan accepted the November 1988 Palestinian National Council (PNC) resolution declaring Palestinian independence, pushed for US-PLO dialogue, and held elections only in the East Bank in November 1989.⁴⁹ The end of the notion of 'Greater Jordan' in 1988 allowed the kingdom to shift its focus from the Palestinian question, conflict with Israel and shift its self-identity from a front-line state to a regional actor based on inter-Arab affinity.⁵⁰ Jordan, after disengagement, continued to preserve its influence, primarily through advocacy of the two-state solution and the custodianship over Jerusalem's holy sites.

3.5. ADVOCACY OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION

The early 1990s witnessed drastic regional and global shifts with the Soviet Union's collapse, the end of the Cold War, Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, and Israel's improved international standing⁵¹ offering a new set of constraints and opportunities for Jordan. Jordan joined the Madrid Conference (30 October- 4 November 1991) to overcome its isolation after declining to enter the US-led coalition against Iraq during the Gulf

⁴⁷ The Hashemite monarchy maintained the presence of around 3000 employees of the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs, including the Islamic religious court system. For more, Asher Susser, 2013, p. 218.

⁴⁸ Anne Bauer, 2022, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁹ Asher Susser, 2013, pp. 223-224.

⁵⁰ Anne Bauer, 2022, pp. 4-5.

⁵¹ Israel secured full diplomatic relations with India on 29 January 1992 and China on 24 January 1992, and the revocation of the 1975 UNGA resolution equating Zionism with racism on 16 December 1991.

War.⁵² Jordan's pariah status post-Gulf War was cut short due to its geopolitical status and role in preserving regional stability. The direct impact of the Madrid Conference—attended by Israel, Egypt, Syria and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation—was limited. The conference, nevertheless, facilitated Israeli secret negotiations with Palestinians and Jordanians, leading to the September 1993 Oslo Accords and the October 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty.⁵³

The Oslo Accords were signed on 13 September 1993, granting limited self-governance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁵⁴ Jordan's concerns were focused on Jerusalem's status, water resources, and refugees.⁵⁵ After Oslo Accords, Jordan pursued its own peace treaty with Israel, which was signed on 26 October 1994. Jordan's diplomatic efforts after the peace treaty focused on advocacy of the two-state solution, ensuring the survival of the PA and preserving the

⁵² Russell E. Lucas, "Jordan: The Death Of Normalisation With Israel", *Middle East Journal*, 58 (1), 2004, pp. 94-95.

⁵³ The US proposal failed due to Israel's insistence on vetting Palestinian candidates for ties with the PLO. The PLO's support for Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War led to its regional alienation, creating conditions for renewed diplomacy excluding the group. For more, "The Madrid Conference, 1991", US Department of State, 2025, at <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/madrid-conference> (accessed on 27 May 2025).

⁵⁴ The occupied West Bank was divided into three areas, i.e. Area A under Palestinian administration and security control; Area B under Palestinian administration and joint-Israeli-Palestinian security control; and Area C under Israeli administration and security control. The agreed four stages were, transfer of governing powers in the Gaza Strip and Jericho; transfer of few civil authority responsibilities to Palestinians; negotiations for a formal interim arrangement for implementation of Declaration of Principles (DOP) and final status negotiations on Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours and other issues of common interest. For more, "Agreement – Declaration Of Principles On Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A.K.A. "Oslo Accord")", UN, 1993, at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-180015/> (accessed on 30 June 2025).

⁵⁵ Hassan A. Barari, "Jordan And Israel: A Troubled Relationship In A Volatile Region", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2nd edition, 2019, at <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/15279.pdf> (accessed on 13 May 2025).

custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound. These efforts have ensured Jordan's continued influence in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Jordan's role in Israel-Palestine dynamics and the advocacy of the two-state solution has helped the kingdom to assert its strategic position internationally. During the Wye River summit in October 1998, Hussein pressed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and PA President Yasser Arafat to compromise on controversial issues, which ultimately failed due to mutual distrust, security challenges, and the absence of complete and reciprocal implementation by both parties.⁵⁶ Jordan vocally opposed the confiscation of nearly 500 dunams of land around Jerusalem for Jewish settlement in April 1995, the approval of new settlements in Jabal Abu Ghnem and the construction of Har Homa settlement in East Jerusalem in 1997, and the building of a separation barrier in 2002.⁵⁷ The failure of the July 2000 Camp David Talks between Israel and the PA due to divergences over settlements, borders, Jerusalem, and refugees as well as the visit of Opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on 28 September 2000 triggered the Second Intifada, killing around 1,000 Israelis and more than 3,000 Palestinians between 2000 and 2005.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Lior Lehrs, "Even After 25 Years Of Peace: Israel-Jordan Relations Hinge On Palestinians", *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 December 2019, at <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/even-after-25-years-of-peace-israel-jordan-relations-hinge-on-palestinians-609769> (accessed on 29 June 2025).

⁵⁷ Russell E. Lucas, 2004, p. 97; Hassan A. Barari, 2019, p. 128.

⁵⁸ “Fatalities Since The Outbreak Of The Second Intifada And Until Operation ‘Cast Lead’”, B’tselem, 2025, at <https://archive.ph/20130414103627/http://old.btselem.org/statistics/english/Casualties.asp#selection-81.1-87.85> (accessed on 12 June 2025); “Victims Of Palestinian Violence And Terrorism Since September 2000”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20070403024612/http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-%20stacle%20to%20Peace/Palestinian%2Bterror%2Bs since%2B2000/Victims%2Bof%2BPalestinian%2BViolence%2Band%2BTerrorism%2Bsinc.htm> (accessed on 12 June 2025).

King Abdullah II, assuming the Hashemite throne in 1999, differed from his father's historical baggage, emotional attachment, and political ties over the Palestine issue. He was willing to completely de-hyphenate Jordan from the Palestinian territories.⁵⁹ Abdullah II, amid the Second Intifada, employed a near-zero-tolerance policy for public demonstrations due to concerns over transboundary instability and disruptions in Jordanian-Palestinian relations and government-opposition dynamics.⁶⁰

Due to Jordan's comparatively weak position, it largely followed Saudi Arabia and Egypt backing Riyadh-led March 2002 Arab Peace Initiative offering peace and recognition to Israel by the Arab League's 22 member states in exchange for withdrawal to 1967 borders, creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and a just solution to the refugee issue. Stressing its greater role after Israeli withdrawal, Jordan called for expediting the formation of an independent Palestinian state within three years, offered support for Palestinian reforms and constitution drafting process, increased medical and material assistance to the PA and defended its officials from charges of corruption by the US and Israel.⁶¹

Following the 2002 Operation Defensive Shield⁶² leading to IDF's entry in PA-controlled territories, attack on Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah and

⁵⁹ Hillel Frisch, "Jordan-Hamas Relations", in P.R. Kumaraswamy (ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore, 2019, pp. 313-314.

⁶⁰ David Schenker, "Jordan's New Election Law: New Tactics, Old Strategy?" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 26 July 2001, at <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/jordans-new-election-law-new-tactics-old-strategy> (accessed on 23 May 2025).

⁶¹ Joseph Nevo, "Jordan, The Palestinians And The Al-Aqsa Intifada", *Civil Wars*, 6 (3), 2003, pp. 74-75, 79-80.

⁶² "Operation Defensive Shield", Israel Defense Forces, 30 October 2017, at <https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/wars-and-operations/operation-defensive-shield/> (accessed on 27 May 2025).

a siege of Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity,⁶³ Jordan raised repeated concerns about the disproportionate Israeli retaliatory actions, repeated incursions, closures, trade link cuts with the West Bank, the possibility of expulsion leading to influx of Palestinians, complete derailment of talks and regional tensions weakening its economic situation.⁶⁴ During IDF's Operation Cast Lead against Hamas, Jordan recalled its ambassador Ali Al-Ayed from Israel in September 2009.⁶⁵ Abdullah II's addresses in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) have repeatedly emphasised the need to pursue the peace process and blamed Israel for the delay.

Jordan saw the US' 5 January 2017 decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem⁶⁶ and the Deal of the Century plan released on 28 January 2020 as indicative of a decline in the kingdom's strategic status.⁶⁷ Trump's proposal did not allude to a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation. Jordan, objected to the prioritisation of economic-humanitarian incentives over a political solution, emphasising the two-state solution.⁶⁸ Jordan viewed the Israeli permanent control over the Jordan Valley as a threat to its security and rejected the Israeli right's plan to project the kingdom as an alternative homeland for Palestinians. The plan was, therefore, designed to be immediately rejected by the Palestinians while providing political cover to pursue the complete annexation of most Jewish settlements and the

⁶³ "Operation Defensive Shield", Economic Cooperation Foundation, 2025, at <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/982> (accessed on 27 May 2025).

⁶⁴ Joseph Nevo, 2003, pp. 74-75.

⁶⁵ "Jordan Recalls Ambassador To Israel", Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement, 1 September 2009, at <https://www.bdsmovement.net/news/jordan-recalls-ambassador-israel> (accessed on 23 June 2025).

⁶⁶ "Relocating US Embassy To Jerusalem A Red Line – Jordan", *The Jordan Times*, 6 January 2017, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/relocating-us-embassy-jerusalem-red-line-%E2%80%94-jordan> (accessed on 28 June 2025).

⁶⁷ Doron Matza, "Israel-Jordan Relations: Possibilities And Risks", The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), 16 July 2021, at <https://besacenter.org/israel-jordan-relations-possibilities-and-risks/> (accessed on 22 June 2025).

⁶⁸ Anne Bauer, 2022, p. 5.

Jordan Valley.⁶⁹ In early 2020, Abdullah II reacted harshly to Israel's plan of annexation, warning of a 'massive conflict' with Jordan and leading to extremism in the region.⁷⁰ Jordanian Prime Minister Omar Razzaz mentioned that Trump's proposal and Israel's annexation plans would jeopardise the peace treaty, going into "deep freeze mode".⁷¹

Following the 2020 Abraham Accords, Jordan perceived the normalisation of relations between Israel and other Arab states diminishing its own strategic relevance and bargaining leverage. Jordan refused to send representatives to the White House ceremony marking the Abraham Accords, stressing on addressing the Palestinian issue, negotiations based on the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, and the establishment of a Palestinian state on the pre-1967 lines.⁷² Jordan also refused to participate in the March 2022 Negev Summit and the 2023 Abu Dhabi meeting over the non-inclusion of Palestinians.⁷³

⁶⁹ Osama Al Sharif, "Why Jordan Was So Quick To Reject Trump's Peace Plan", Middle East Institute, 3 February 2020, at <https://www.mei.edu/publications/why-jordan-was-so-quick-reject-trumps-peace-plan> (accessed on 30 June 2025).

⁷⁰ "Jordan Warns Israel Of 'Massive Conflict' Over Annexation", *Al Jazeera*, 16 May 2020, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/5/16/jordan-warns-israel-of-massive-conflict-over-annexation> (accessed on 27 June 2025).

⁷¹ Zeena Saifi and Becky Anderson, "Trump's Middle East Plan Could Jeopardize Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty, Jordan PM Says", *CNN*, 3 March 2020, at <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/03/middleeast/jordan-trump-middle-east-peace-plan-intl/index.html> (accessed on 26 June 2025).

⁷² "Israel Has To Choose Between Peace And Conflict – FM", *The Jordan Times*, 14 August 2020, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/israel-has-choose-between-peace-and-conflict-%e2%80%94-fm> (accessed on 16 June 2025).

⁷³ Despite Jordan's reluctance to join the Negev Forum, the kingdom has benefitted from Israel-UAE normalisation. On 8 November 2022, the three states signed an MOU to swap solar energy for desalinated water. For more, Sue Surkes, "Israel, Jordan, UAE Sign New MOU On Deal To Swap Solar Energy For Desalinated Water", *The Times of Israel*, 8 November 2022, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-jordan-uae-sign-new-mou-on-deal-to-swap-solar-energy-for-desalinated-water/> (accessed on 21 June 2025); "Instead Of Sending His Foreign Minister To The Negev Summit, Jordan's King Abdullah Visits Palestinian Leader In Ramallah", *All Arab News*, 28 March 2022, at <https://allarab.news/instead-of-sending-his-foreign-minister-to-the-negev-summit/>

While Jordan still enjoys credibility with its regional and extra-regional partners, the state's traditional role as interlocutor in the Israel-Palestine conflict has diminished due to reduced leverage on conflicting parties and international players. Jordan's present dilemma is that while its dependence on the US for economic aid and Israel for resources has increased, the diplomatic ties with Netanyahu remain at a low point. Moreover, while Jordan shares warm relations with the PA, it is unwilling to carry out full rapprochement with Hamas. Concerning PA, Jordan is aware of the domestic frustration regarding Abbas' authoritarian tendencies, corruption charges and weak strategy to pursue the peace process with Israel.⁷⁴ Following the preparation of PA elections in 2021, which were eventually cancelled, Jordan quietly expressed concerns about the possibility of Hamas winning the elections.⁷⁵ Jordan's dynamics with the key actors have, therefore, affected its leverage.

3.6. HASHEMITE CUSTODIANSHIP OF AL-AQSA MOSQUE

While insisting on respecting its legal and historic status quo in Jerusalem, Jordan has remained assertive in defending its custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Amman has accused Israel of expanding Jewish access to the site, carrying out excavations without prior consultation, restricting the entry of Muslim worshippers, and curtailing Hashemite

jordans-king-abdullah-visits-palestinian-leader-in-ramallah/ (accessed on 27 June 2025); "US Encourages Jordan, Palestinian Authority To Join Negev Summit", *i24 News*, 11 January 2023, at <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/middle-east/1673386273-u-s-encourages-jordan-palestinian-authority-to-join-negev-summit> (accessed on 24 June 2025).

⁷⁴ Anne Bauer, 2022, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁵ Aaron Boxerman & Jacob Magid, "In Jordan And Egypt, Quiet Qualms That Palestinian Elections Will Boost Hamas", *The Times of Israel*, 13 March 2021, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-jordan-and-egypt-quiet-qualms-that-palestinian-elections-will-boost-hamas/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CEgypt%20satisfies%20all%20sides%20%E2%80%94%20Qatar,security%20concerns%20that%20they%20have.%E2%80%9D> (accessed on 23 July 2025).

authority over the Waqf Council's management and appointments.⁷⁶ These developments have escalated the tensions between Jordan and Israel, forcing the former to continually react to the happenings in Jerusalem while shaping the Jordanian attitude towards Israel.⁷⁷

After coming to power in February 1999, Abdullah II positioned himself as the defender of the Holy Places in Jerusalem to maintain his political and religious legitimacy, especially in the context of the PA, Hamas, and Saudi Arabia's entanglement over the mosque-compound issue.⁷⁸ The king, as the custodian, played a key role in various diplomatic efforts to manage Jerusalem-related crises. Jordan recalled its ambassador, Walid Obeidat, on 5 November 2014 after Israeli security forces stormed the mosque compound; protested Israel's decision to install metal detectors at the mosque's entry in July 2017; backed the Waqf Council's decision to open the Gate of Mercy or Golden Gate in February 2019 and objected to Israeli arrests of Waqf officials and guards. Amman condemned then Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennet's announcement rejecting foreign interference regarding the mosque compound's fate in May 2022 as well as the cancellation of scheduled visits by Crown Prince Hussein in March 2021 and Jordanian ambassador to Israel, Ghassan Majali, in January 2023.⁷⁹

Besides Israel, the PLO challenged Jordan's claim to the Islamic holy sites, calling for non-separation of political and religious sovereignty over Islamic

⁷⁶ Anne Bauer, 2022, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁷ "Defusing The Crisis At Jerusalem's Gate Of Mercy", International Crisis Group (ICG), 3 April 2019, at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/israel-palestine/b067-defusing-crisis-jerusalem-s-gate-mercy> (accessed on 29 June 2025).

⁷⁸ "The Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty At 25: A Slightly, Tarnished, But Still Important Silver Anniversary", The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS), 20 June 2019, at https://jiss.org.il/en/krasna-the-jordan-israel-peace-treaty-at-25/#_edn2 (accessed on 12 June 2025).

⁷⁹ Israel backtracked from installing metal detectors. For more, William Booth, "Israel Begins To Remove Metal Detectors From Al-Aqsa Mosque Following Protests", *The Washington Post*, 24 July 2017, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/netanyahu-and-jordans-king-abdullah-end-diplomatic-showdown-over-embassy-shooting/2017/07/24/

sacred places. PLO refused to unequivocally endorse Israeli recognition of the Hashemite monarchy's special role under the Washington Declaration and the 1994 Peace Treaty, interpreting it as Jordan's acceptance of Israel's political sovereignty in East Jerusalem. During the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting in December 1994-January 1995, the PLO, backed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco, denied Hashemite administrative responsibility in the Islamic holy sites, leading to Hussein's walkout.⁸⁰

Amid Israel's increased Judaisation efforts in Jerusalem, the PA joined forces with Jordan formally recognising the latter's custodianship role on 31 March 2013 to protect the Al-Aqsa Mosque endowed Waqf properties.⁸¹ Jordan, to preserve coordination with Palestinians in February 2019, expanded the Waqf Council from 11 to 18 members, adding PA officials

74fc774c-7071-11e7-8c17-533c52b2f014_story.html (accessed on 28 June 2025); “Israel Briefly Detains Top Waqf Official Over Temple Mount Protests”, *The Times of Israel*, 24 February 2019, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-to-arrest-top-waqf-officials-over-temple-mount-protests/> (accessed on 30 June 2025); Sarah Abu-Saad, “Bennet’s Inflammatory Statement On Al-Aqsa Threatens An Already Precarious Relation”, *Jordan News*, 10 May 2022, at <https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-106/Features/Bennet-s-inflammatory-statement-on-Al-Aqsa-threatens-an-already-precarious-relation-16464> (accessed on 27 June 2025); “Crown Prince Cancelled Al Aqsa Visit After Israel Violated Arrival Protocols-FM”, *The Jordan Times*, 12 March 2021, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/crown-prince-cancelled-al-aqsa-visit-after-israel-violated-arrival-protocols-%E2%80%94-fm> (accessed on 17 June 2025); Motasem A Dalloul, “Is Jordan Really The Custodian Of Jerusalem’s Holy Sites?” *Middle East Monitor*, 19 January 2023, at <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230119-is-jordan-really-the-custodian-of-jerusalem-s-holy-sites/> (accessed on 28 June 2025).

⁸⁰ The closing statement was published without reference to the Hashemite role. For more, Menachem Klein, “The Islamic Holy Places As A Political Bargaining Card (1993-1995)”, *Catholic University Law Review*, 45 (3), 1996, pp. 751-755, at <https://scholarship.law.edu/lawreview/vol45/iss3/9> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

⁸¹ “Jordanian-Palestinian Agreement To Jointly Defend Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa”, Royal Hashemite Court, 31 March 2013, at <https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/jordanian-palestinian-agreement-jointly-defend-al-masjid-al-aqsa> (accessed on 31 June 2025).

and religious leaders.⁸² Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, in the Arab League's Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Cairo on 21 April 2019, announced that, "Sovereignty over Jerusalem is Palestinian and the custodianship over its holy sites is Hashemite, yet defending the city, its identity and legal status is a Jordanian, Palestinian, Arab, Islamic, and international responsibility."⁸³

Jordan has faced competition from Saudi Arabia over the custodianship issue, especially after the 1988 Disengagement from the West Bank. The Saudi royal family in 1992 pledged US\$ 9 million to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) rather than the Jordanian Ministry of Religious Affairs to repair and restore Jerusalem's Islamic holy sites, seen as underlining the Hashemite custodianship.⁸⁴ During the December 2017 Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting, Saudi Arabia refrained from affirming Jordan's caretaker role, emphasising collective Islamic responsibility for protecting holy sites. Riyadh allocated US\$ 150 million to support Jerusalem's Islamic properties.⁸⁵ In the backdrop of the January 2020 Deal of the Century and the secret meeting between Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman in November 2020, Jordan was concerned that Israel, backed by the US, could offer Saudi Arabia some form of representation in the Waqf Council as part

⁸² "Jordan Gives Palestinians Larger Role In Running Temple Mount", *The Times of Israel*, 19 February 2019, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordan-gives-palestinians-larger-role-in-running-temple-mount/> (accessed on 28 June 2025).

⁸³ "Jerusalem Is Palestinian, Custodianship Is Hashemite, Safadi Tells Arab Peers", *The Jordan Times*, 22 April 2019, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jerusalem-palestinian-custodianship-hashemite-safadi-tells-arab-peers> (accessed on 24 June 2025).

⁸⁴ Lamis Andoni, "Saudi-Jordanian Feud Heightens", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 29 May 1992, at <https://www.csmonitor.com/1992/0529/29061.html> (accessed on 28 July 2025).

⁸⁵ Adnan Abu Amer, "The Scramble For Jerusalem", *Al Jazeera*, 11 May 2019, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/5/11/the-scramble-for-jerusalem> (accessed on 11 May 2019); Michael Sharnoff, "Arab Challenges To Jordan's Custodianship Of Holy Sites In Jerusalem", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 47 (3), May 2024, pp. 68-70.

of the normalisation deal.⁸⁶ Notably, Israeli Labour Party leader Issac Herzog in January 2018 had suggested assigning a role to Saudi Arabia due to its central role in the Muslim world and experience of managing Mecca and Medina's custodianship.⁸⁷

Jordan is also concerned about Türkiye and Morocco's overtures towards the Al-Aqsa Mosque based on their historical connections under the Ottoman and Alaouite dynasties. In the 1975 OIC summit, the Moroccan king was chosen to head the newly established Jerusalem Committee. Morocco has provided funds for the compound's upkeep. Vying for a leadership role in the Islamic world, Türkiye has also taken measures to exert its influence in Jerusalem and Palestinian affairs by encouraging religious tourism to Al-Aqsa mosque, funding charities, renovating historical sites and providing Palestinian access to Ottoman archives that document land ownership to safeguard against Israeli land expropriation.⁸⁸

The Hashemite monarchy faces criticism from Palestinians and Jordanians about its passive role and actions limited to diplomatic protest. Moreover, Jordan fears that Arab normalisation could marginalise not only the Palestinian cause but also its control of Jerusalem's holy sites.⁸⁹ Jordan has, therefore, maintained its influence over the Palestinian issue by advocating a two-state solution. It views any contestations at Jerusalem's holy sites as damaging to the Hashemite authority, and has assertively sought to preserve the custodianship of Jerusalem's holy sites. The subsequent chapter will evaluate Jordan's relations with Israel before and after the peace treaty, and identify the key bilateral issues in terms of domestic opposition and national interests. It will also analyse the areas of cooperation between Jordan and Israel until the 2023 Israel-Hamas conflict.

⁸⁶ Khaled Abu Toameh, "Jordan Fears Losing Control Over Muslim Sites In Jerusalem", *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 December 2020, at <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/jordan-fears-losing-control-over-muslim-sites-in-jerusalem-651125> (accessed on 27 June 2025).

⁸⁷ "Issac Herzog Says He Sees Saudi Arabia Role At Jerusalem Holy Sites", *The Times of Israel*, 11 January 2018, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/isaac-herzog-says-he-sees-saudi-arabia-role-at-jerusalem-holy-sites/> (accessed on 29 June 2025).

⁸⁸ Adnan Abu Amer, 2019.

⁸⁹ Michael Sharnoff, 2024, pp. 71-72.

4 MANAGING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

The Hashemite family opposed the 1917 Balfour Declaration, but viewed Jews as People of the Book seeking peaceful coexistence, reflected in the 3 January 1919 Faisal–Weizmann agreement.⁹⁰ King Abdullah, drawing from the Ottoman Empire's millet system, i.e. administrative structure granting ethno-religious communities a degree of autonomy in matters of personal status and communal government, hoped to accommodate the Jews by providing autonomous status.⁹¹ Abdullah, recognising mutual dependency, interacted with Moshe Sharett, Elias Sasson, Herbert Samuel, Emmanuel Newman, Fredrick Kisch, Lord Rothschild, and, in 1922, he offered Chaim Weizman, (Israel's first President between 1949-1952), his support for the Balfour Declaration in exchange for Zionist recognition of his rule in Palestine.⁹² Abdullah, in ever-changing formats, envisioned a 'Semitic kingdom' of Palestine and Transjordan with Jews and Arabs as equal citizens with checks on Jewish immigration to preserve Arab-Islamic dominance.⁹³ The Zionists, while rejecting autonomy, valued ties with Hashemites to counter Palestinian and Arab opposition, consolidate their

⁹⁰ The 1919 Faisal–Weizmann agreement called for cooperation between Arab and Jewish leaders in the region, joint efforts to develop Palestine, the formation of an Arab state, Jewish immigration and settlement, the protection of Arab land rights, and religious freedom. The agreement eventually failed; nevertheless, it reflected key trends in thinking, expectations, and strategies of the Hashemites and Zionists. For more, "Faisal–Weizmann agreement/ Non-UN document", UN, 3 January 1919, at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-207006/> (accessed on 17 May 2025).

⁹¹ Avi Shlaim, 1988, pp. 40-41; 46.

⁹² Joseph Nevo, *King Abdallah and Palestine: A Territorial Ambition*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1996, pp. 13-15.

⁹³ Avi Shlaim, 1988, pp. 42-43.

foothold in Palestine, boost economic interests and potentially spread Jewish settlements east of the Jordan River.⁹⁴

Abdullah considered Jewish-owned firms an asset offering technical skills, international networks, and financial resources, granting concessions to Pinhas Rutenberg's hydroelectricity power plant (1927) and A.M. Novomeysky's Palestine Potash Company (1929).⁹⁵ By the early 1930s, cooperation expanded to intelligence exchanges over shared concerns such as regional political weakness, isolation, and opposition to Palestinian national aspirations, especially under Haj Amin Al-Husseini. The engagement remained limited to the King, top officials, and influential Bedouin chiefs, with public hostility and Abdullah's dislike of Zionist collectivism impeding concrete political action.⁹⁶

Transjordan and the Jewish Agency's relations were strained after the November 1947 partition plan, causing Arab-Jewish paramilitary clashes, including the 9 April 1948 Deir Yassin massacre and large-scale displacement. Transjordan, under pressure from Arab governments and Palestinians, joined the 1948 Arab-Israel war to eventually control the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Jordan's engagement with Israel after the 1949 armistice agreement was disrupted due to border clashes and retaliatory strikes, infiltration, impasse over refugee repatriation, domestic pressures, demand for Arab control in Jaffa, Lydda, Ramle and the corridor connecting to Gaza, and Israel's Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's reluctance to provide territorial concessions.⁹⁷

While Abdullah saw Israel as a partner to hinder the establishment of a Palestinian state, Hussein viewed the Jewish state as a key to preserving his throne.⁹⁸ The 1956 Suez crisis led to a surge in Egyptian President Abdel

⁹⁴ Joseph Nevo, 1996, pp. 13-16.

⁹⁵ Eugene L. Rogan, June 2012, p. 109; Avi Shlaim, 1988, p. 44.

⁹⁶ Avraham Sela, 1992, pp. 631-632; Avi Shlaim, 1988, pp. 41, 48, 50-51.

⁹⁷ Lawrence Tal, 2002, pp. 26-27.

⁹⁸ Ronen Yitzhak, "From Cooperation To Normalisation? Jordan-Israel Relations Since 1967", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44 (4), 2017, p. 562.

Gamal Nasser's domestic and regional popularity, posing a threat to the Hashemite state.⁹⁹ Despite non-recognition, Israel saw Hussein as a bulwark against Nasserism and considered an independent Jordan necessary for Israeli interests and the region's security. Hussein responded to the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) between Egypt and Syria on 1 February 1958 by announcing the Hashemite Arab Federation with Iraq on 14 February 1958.¹⁰⁰ The political suppression of anti-Nasserite voices led to a plot to assassinate Hussein, which was uncovered by Israeli intelligence agents, who passed the information to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) station in Amman. Moreover, in the aftermath of Prime Minister Hazza Al-Majali's assassination on 29 August 1960 by Syrian intelligence agents and planned retaliatory military action, King's Special Envoy, Amin Jamia'n, met with Israeli Chief of Military Intelligence, Chaim Herzog, securing a guarantee of non-intervention.¹⁰¹ The exchanges reflected the recognition of shared interests between Jordan and Israel.

By the early 1960s, Jordan and Israel opened high-level diplomatic channels to coordinate policy against Nasser's Egypt, leading to Hussein's first secret meeting with Israeli officials in London on 24 September 1963. Hussein called "to develop in a suitably discreet manner areas of cooperation leading toward a permanent settlement".¹⁰² The secret talks continued in several locations for years, focusing on Israeli assistance to secure additional

⁹⁹ Zeid Raad, "A Nightmare Avoided: Jordan And Suez 1956", *Israel Affairs*, 1 (2), 2007, pp. 298-299.

¹⁰⁰ The short-lived federation was dissolved after the military coup in Iraq, toppling King Faisal II on 14 July 1958 that endangered the Jordanian monarchy. For more, Elizabeth Bishop, "Steadfast And Rejectionist Front Of Arab States: Iraq's 14 July 1958 Coup And The Unraveling Of The Arab Union", *Algerian Scientific Journal Platform*, 9 (2) 2024, pp. 31-32, at <https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/246954> (accessed on 19 May 2025).

¹⁰¹ Ronen Yitzhak, 2017, p. 562.

¹⁰² Moshe Zak, "Thirty Years Of Clandestine Meetings", *Middle East Quarterly*, 2 (2), 1995, at <https://www.meforum.org/middle-east-quarterly/thirty-years-of-clandestine-meetings> (accessed on 12 May 2025).

US aid and weapons, facilitating intelligence cooperation in border control and counter-terrorism, West Bank's administrative and commercial arrangements post-1967 war, land exchanges, understanding on water sharing and boosting confidence-building measures. Hussein's engagement with Israel was driven by his pragmatic approach to politics, ensuring the Hashemite monarchy's survival and state stability, fear of Israel's military capabilities and leveraging the informal ties to act as a counterweight against Egypt, Iraq, and Syria.¹⁰³

Israel's help was crucial during Jordan's actions against PLO in 1970, which is also known as the Black September incident. Hashemite identity faced a severe challenge after PLO's shift in area of operations to the East Bank after the 1967 war, managing to build a state within a state, facilitating medical, educational and administrative functions, conducting guerrilla raids, instigating Israeli retaliation, destroying border towns, civilian infrastructure and slowing development projects and the economy.¹⁰⁴ The Hashemite state, not only found it difficult to 'Jordanise' the Palestinians, but now faced the risk of being 'Palestinised'.¹⁰⁵

On 19 and 20 September 1970, Syrian troops and Syria-based Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) crossed into Jordanian territory, empowering Palestinian fighters to carve a 'liberated area' in Irbid.¹⁰⁶ Israel's military pressure by moving troops close to Jordanian borders and flying Phantom jets over Syrian armoured forces energised Jordanian troops to take

¹⁰³ Elie Podeh, "To Unite Or Not To Unite: That Is Not The Question: The 1963 Tripartite Unity Talks Reassessed", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 39 (1), 2003, p. 157; Lawrence Tal, 2002, pp. 95-96; Moshe Zak, 1995.

¹⁰⁴ Ziv Rubinovitz, 2010, pp. 689.

¹⁰⁵ Ilan Pappe, 2013, p. 70.

¹⁰⁶ Popular Liberation Front for Palestine (PFLP) hijacked and blew up two international aircrafts in Jordanian territory on 6 September 1970. In response, Hussein, on 16 September 1970, declared martial law, appointed an all-military government and deployed forces in Palestinian-controlled areas, triggering Syria's reaction. For more, Ilan Pappe, 2013, pp. 73-74, Ziv Rubinovitz, 2010, pp. 692-93; Karol Sorby Jr., 2022, pp. 236-237.

forceful action against Syrian tanks using air force, restraining Damascus to avoid sending its air force, eventually leading to troop withdrawal on 23 September 1970.¹⁰⁷ The Black September incident killed around 3,000 armed and civilian Palestinians, led to the destruction of several refugee camps by artillery fire and forced the PLO to sign an agreement on 27 September 1970 in Cairo, enabling its evacuation from the kingdom.¹⁰⁸ The developments in 1970-1971 changed the course of state-building, reinvigorating debate over national identity in the midst of hostility towards the PLO, and the presence of Palestinians in the process of becoming the majority.¹⁰⁹

Hussein, conscious of Israel's military strength, especially air power, opted for a defensive strategy and policy of non-intervention during Egypt and Syria's 1973 October war against Israel to break the political deadlock and recover the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights respectively.¹¹⁰ Notably, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir dismissed Hussein's warnings based on intelligence assessment and lack of concrete information. Hussein rejected Arab requests, including opening a third front, allowing PLO fighters to launch attacks from Jordanian territory, transit of Saudi troops heading to Syria and assisting Iraqi forces in their movement to the northern front.

¹⁰⁷ Israeli policymakers were divided between militarily supporting Hussein, viewing him as a promising peace partner, or allowing the fall of the Hashemite regime, facilitating a Palestinian state in Jordan, and reducing pressure on Israel to find a solution regarding the West Bank. Israel's planned air strikes and possible ground operation did not fructify due to differences in battle plans. The US and Jordan opted for Israeli military action in Syria, and Israel wanted to limit the battleground to Jordanian territory to avoid regional conflict, attacking Syria, and avoiding Soviet antagonism. For more, Ziv Rubinovitz, 2010, pp. 694, 697-698.

¹⁰⁸ Karol Sorby Jr., 2022, p. 238; Ilan Pappe, 2013, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰⁹ PLO settled in South Lebanon by November 1971 and intensified its verbal and diplomatic attacks against Hussein. During the eighth PNC declaration in April 1974, Jordan was recognised as part of Palestine. For more, Karol Sorby Jr., 2022, p. 239.

¹¹⁰ Chris Beverelli, "The Importance Of The Tactical Level: The Arab-Israeli War Of 1973", The Strategic Bridge, 19 November 2019, at <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2019/11/19/the-importance-of-thetactical-level-the-arab-israeli-war-of-1973level-the-arab-israeli-war-of-1973> (accessed on 15 June 2025).

Jordan, after non-participation in the first phase (6-12 October) and proposing a ceasefire, joined Syrian and Iraqi forces, sent troops and a tank brigade to the Syrian section of the Golan Heights during the second phase (13-24 October) under regional and domestic pressure.¹¹¹

Hussein maintained regular communication, specifying the reasoning and intentions to Israel, focusing on damage limitation. Israel sought to avoid threatening the monarchy, a tacit ally against Palestinian fighters and Egypt-Syria's radical stance. Meir, while rejecting a blanket guarantee of IDF non-engagement, assured Israel had no intent to fight Jordan if its forces stayed off the battlefield, avoided heavy engagement or joined existing deployments in Syria. Jordan's limited action allowed it to maintain quiet ties with Israel, remained unaffected by the war, barring a few tank losses and avoided antagonising the domestic audience and the Arab world.¹¹²

After the 1979 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, Jordan adopted a moderate attitude and did not want to penalise Egypt harshly, trigger President Anwar Sadat's removal, or completely sever relations. During the 1980s, Jordan gradually sought reconciliation with Egypt, ending the economic boycott on 26 December 1983, reopening diplomatic ties on 25 September 1984, and helping Cairo repair relations with the Arab world.¹¹³ Jordan also initiated measures for peace with Israel while remaining cautious about its autonomy plans.¹¹⁴ The 1987 Shimon Peres-Hussein 10-point agreement outlining a potential path for a peace process

¹¹¹ David Rodman, 2012, pp. 91-96

¹¹² Karol Sorby Jr., 2022, pp. 247-248; Nigel Ashton, 2017, pp.624-625; David Rodman, 2012, pp. 95-96.

¹¹³ Hosni Mubarak visited Amman on 9 October 1984, and King Hussein visited Cairo on 2 December 1984. For more, Judith Miller, "King Hussein Visits Egypt, Sealing Reconciliation", *The New York Times*, 2 December 1984, at <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/02/world/king-hussein-visits-egypt-sealing-reconciliation.html>; Boutros-Boutros Ghali, "The Foreign Policy Of Egypt In The Post-Sadat Era", *Foreign Affairs*, 60 (4), 1982, pp. 769-788; Avraham Sela, 1992, pp. 623-688.

¹¹⁴ Ilan Pappe, 2013, p. 79.

and Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, however, broke down due to opposition within Israel's unity government.¹¹⁵

The 1991 Madrid Peace Conference; 1993 Oslo Accords; 14 September 1993 Common Agenda for negotiations between Jordanian Ambassador to the US, Faiz Tarawneh and Elyakim Rubinstein from Israeli embassy; and 25 July 1994 Washington Declaration laid the ground for the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, signed on 26 October 1994.¹¹⁶ The treaty transformed the fundamental security issues for both states. Amman viewed the peace treaty as a tool to secure Israel's recognition of its sovereignty, disavowal of the 'Jordan is Palestine' notion and possible transfer of West Bank Palestinians and repair ties with the US, which wrote off US\$ 702 million as appreciation for entering the peace treaty.¹¹⁷ Jordanian government's media campaign emphasised peace with Israel as a strategic option highlighting potential benefits such as economic dividends through new investments, job creation and tourism, regaining rights to land and water and security guarantee.¹¹⁸ Jordan positioned itself at the centre of Washington DC's 'New Middle East' vision and Israel's diplomatic and economic connection to the Arab world.¹¹⁹ Israel, viewing a pro-

¹¹⁵ Amanda Borschel-Dan, "Missed Opportunity? The 1987 Peres-Hussein Peace Deal That Wasn't", *The Times of Israel*, 30 September 2016, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/missed-opportunity-the-1987-peres-hussein-peace-deal-that-wasn/> (accessed on 24 May 2025).

¹¹⁶ "Treaty Of Peace Between The State Of Israel And The Hashemite Kingdom Of Jordan", UN, 1994, at <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/05/il20jo941026peacetreatyisraeljordan.pdf> (accessed on 31 May 2025).

¹¹⁷ "US Pledges To Wrote Off Jordan Debt", UPI, 21 March 1995, at <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1995/03/21/US-pledges-to-write-off-Jordan-debt/7354795762000/> (accessed on 17 May 2025).

¹¹⁸ David Schenker, "Jordan's New Election Law: New Tactics, Old Strategy?", The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 26 July 2001, at <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/jordans-new-election-law-new-tactics-old-strategy> (accessed on 23 May 2025).

¹¹⁹ Russell E. Lucas, 2004, pp. 94-95.

West Jordan providing a credible buffer against hostile states, formalised the preservation and stability of the Hashemite monarchy as a vital component of the Jewish state's own national security.¹²⁰

However, after 31 years of formal ties, the diplomatic bonhomie did not nurture a full-scale normalisation and there is a lack of cooperative institutions, confidence-building measures, people-to-people engagement on non-security issues due to domestic opposition and concerns over national interests. Jordan developed a structured and defined framework for its relations with Israel, directing the scope and depth of its engagement to enable US political, economic and military support while preserving its role within Arab and Islamic groupings.¹²¹

4.1. KEY ISSUES AFTER 1994 PEACE TREATY

4.1.1. Domestic Opposition

The peace treaty remained unpopular within Jordan, seen as the King's peace, which did not permeate to the societal level due to differences over fundamental issues such as the scope of Palestinian statehood and refugees. Domestic criticism centred on implicit acceptance of existing refugee settlements in Jordan and the lease of Al-Baqura and Al-Ghamr or Naharayim and Zofar in Hebrew to Israel, seen as undermining sovereignty and restrictions on political liberties to silence criticism regarding the peace treaty and lack of promised economic dividends.¹²²

¹²⁰ Lori Plotkin Boghardt, "Jordan-Israel Peace: Taking Stock, 1994-1997", The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus 32, 1 May 1997, at <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/jordan-israel-peace-taking-stock-1994-1997> (accessed on 23 May 2025); JISS 2019.

¹²¹ Amnon Aran & Rami Ginat, "Revisiting Egyptian Foreign Policy Towards Israel Under Mubarak: From Cold Peace To Strategic Peace", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37 (4), 2014, pp. 2-3.

¹²² Due to difficulty in settling the refugee issue on a bilateral level, Jordan and Israel, under Article 8, agreed to resolve it on a multilateral level involving Egypt and the Palestinians. Jordanian public pressure led to the cancellation of the lease renewal in 2019. For more, Russell E. Lucas, 2004, p. 96.

The ideological opponents, i.e. Islamists, Arab nationalists and leftists, questioned the peace treaty, but only a few politicians rejected peace in all forms. Islamists opposed the peace treaty on ideological and religious grounds, framing normalisation as a tool for Israeli hegemony. Arab nationalists and leftists, though open to the concept of peace, saw post-Madrid conference agreements as biased and harmful to Palestinian rights, Arab unity, and nationhood. The non-ideological Jordanians doubted Israel's sincerity in the peace process. Islamic Action Front (IAF) and seven left-wing and Arab nationalist parties formed the Popular Arab Jordanian Committee for Resisting Submission and Normalisation on 15 May 1994. For opposition groups with distinct ideologies, rejecting the peace treaty was a cohesive factor to assert on the socio-political level. Professional associations joined the anti-normalisation committee, disciplining members using boycotts, blacklists, public conferences, and demonstrations to prohibit engagement with Israeli firms.¹²³

The initial optimism regarding the peace treaty and normalisation in Jordanian media dissipated after the lack of immediate economic benefit and Israeli actions during Netanyahu's tenure between 1996 and 1999.¹²⁴ A clear gap persisted between Jordanian and Israeli perceptions of the peace treaty. Israelis viewed the peace treaty as long overdue, considering all major friction points as resolved. Most Jordanians saw Israel as expansionist and sought guarantees. While Jordanians see some benefits in the treaty, such as security coordination with Israel and closer ties with the US, normalisation continues to carry negative connotations in the media and public.¹²⁵ Jordanian textbooks largely omit the relevance of the peace treaty and justify the agreement as a reluctant move to curb Israel's 'greedy

¹²³ Janine A. Clark, "The Conditions Of Islamist Moderation: Unpacking Cross-Ideological Cooperation In Jordan", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38 (4), 2006, p. 543; Russell E. Lucas, 2004, p. 96.

¹²⁴ Mutayyam Al O'ran, "The First Decade Of The Jordanian-Israeli Peace-Building Experience: A Story Of Jordanian Challenges (1994-2003)", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 10 (4), 2006, pp. 87-88.

¹²⁵ Hassan A. Barari, 2019, p. 133.

aspirations' and reclaim 'stolen' territories.¹²⁶ Public attitudes are largely shaped by Jordan's large Palestinian population and widespread distrust of Israeli policies in the occupied territories, making the Palestinian cause an internal issue for the kingdom.

4.1.2. Jordan's National Interests

Jordan views Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian territories, neighbouring Arab states, and on Jordanian territory—as well as toward Jordanian citizens—to be counterproductive to bilateral ties affecting its national interests. The initial excitement over warm peace waned after Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination on 4 November 1995. Interim Prime Minister Shimon Peres prioritised the Syrian track, sidelined Jordan on the Palestinian track and launched Operation Grapes of Wrath in Lebanon between 11 and 27 April 1996, killing more than 100 civilians.¹²⁷ During the IDF's operation in Lebanon amid the anti-normalisation momentum, the Jordanian government sought to utilise its leverage with Israel to stop shelling. Hussein, on 18 April 1996, criticised Israel's "treacherous aggression and the criminal military operations." Jordanian parliament issued a statement calling Israeli actions as "true face of Zionism and Jewish state."¹²⁸

Domestically, Hussein's visit to Israel on 16 March 1997 to offer condolences after the killing of seven Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian soldier on 13 March was highly unpopular, viewed as denigrating the dignity of his office and the kingdom.¹²⁹ Jordan's distrust towards Israel

¹²⁶ Ohad Merlin, "Jordanian Textbooks Bash Peace, Propagate Antisemitism, Study Finds", *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 May 2025, at <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-854726> (accessed on 27 June 2025); Ofir Winter, "Are We On The Map? Israel In Jordanian Textbooks", The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), 17 (4), 2015, pp. 56-57.

¹²⁷ Hassan A. Barari, 2019, pp. 134-136.

¹²⁸ Russell E. Lucas, 2004, p. 97.

¹²⁹ Israeli politicians such as Foreign Minister David Levy and Education Minister Zevulun Hammer accused Hussein of incitement for his 9 March 1997 letter to Netanyahu complaining about settlement construction and sabotaging the peace process. For more, Russell E. Lucas, 2004, p. 98.

was further perpetuated after the attempted assassination of Hamas' Political Bureau head Khaled Meshal, a Jordanian citizen, on 25 September 1997, the same day when a senior civil-military Israeli delegation was holding a meeting with Hussein. Eventually, under pressure, Prime Minister Netanyahu sent Mossad chief Danny Yatom to Amman with an antidote to revive Meshal and release Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in exchange for two Mossad agents. Israel's assassination attempt was a clear violation of the peace treaty's security clause, which prevents either state from conducting hostile acts against the other.¹³⁰

In the post-2011 Arab Spring period, while security and energy cooperation intensified, sporadic incidents affected diplomatic ties, mobilising domestic criticism pushing for the suspension of the peace treaty. Diplomatic tensions erupted after Israeli guards killed a Jordanian judge trying to snatch a weapon at the Allenby border crossing on 10 March 2014.¹³¹ Moreover, Ziv Moyal, an Israeli Embassy security guard who killed two Jordanians on 23 July 2017 was transported to Israel under diplomatic protection, received a hero's welcome and met with Netanyahu and the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, Einat Schlein.¹³² Israel made efforts to repair relations, including sending Shin Bet chief, Nadav Argaman, to Amman, arranging a phone call between Netanyahu and Abdullah II,¹³³ withdrawing decision to install metal detectors at the entry of the Al-Aqsa Mosque

¹³⁰ Michael Crowley, "The Man Who Haunts Israel", *Time*, 29 July 2014, at <https://time.com/khaled-mashaal/> (accessed on 23 May 2025).

¹³¹ Daniel Estrin, "Israelis Shoot, Kill Jordanian Judge At Border", *Associated Press*, 11 March 2014, at <https://apnews.com/general-news-d589bd6100f14264a4b57b0f9a42c730> (accessed on 26 June 2025).

¹³² "Israeli Guard Kills 2 Jordanians In Amman Embassy Confrontation", *France 24*, 23 July 2017, at <https://www.france24.com/en/20170723-deadly-shooting-incident-israeli-embassy-jordan-palestinian-conflict> (accessed on 28 June 2025).

¹³³ "Jordan FM: Hero's Welcome In Israel For Guard Who Killed Two 'A Disgrace'", *The Times of Israel*, 27 July 2017, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordan-fm-heros-welcome-in-israel-for-guard-who-killed-two-a-disgrace/> (accessed on 27 June 2025).

compound,¹³⁴ providing US\$ 5 million to the victims' families and replacing the envoy led to re-establishing diplomatic relations in February 2018.¹³⁵

After Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announced shifting the US embassy in December 2017, domestic pressure on the King heightened, including petitions to cancel the peace treaty's first annex, forming a parliamentary committee to review the 1994 agreement and demonstrations reasserting Jordanian sovereignty over the two leased areas, i.e. Al-Baqura and Al-Ghamr. Abdullah II, on 21 October 2018, terminated the peace treaty annexes on both areas that allowed Israel to lease for farming for 25 years, boosting the King's popularity. It was framed as a diplomatic win for Jordan, proving that the peace treaty, despite its faults, managed to return land.¹³⁶

The diplomatic ties remained tense after the cancellation of the lease. Israel's detention of two Jordanian citizens, Heba Al-Labadi and Abdul Rahman Miri, further created friction leading to Jordan recalling its ambassador, Ghassan Majali, on 30 October 2019, who was reinstated in November 2019 only after securing the release of the two Jordanians.¹³⁷ Miri claimed that the detention was carried out as a bargaining chip to continue the

¹³⁴ Isabel Kershner, "Mosque Crisis And Jordan Attack Raise Fears Of Escalating Violence In Israel," *The New York Times*, 23 July 2017, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/23/world/middleeast/israel-aqsa-mosque-metal-detectors-palestinian.html> (accessed on 23 June 2025).

¹³⁵ Grace Wermenbol, "Challenging The Cold Peace: Jordan's Cancellation Of The Land Lease", Middle East Institute, 31 October 2018, at <https://www.mei.edu/publications/challenging-cold-peace-jordans-cancellation-land-lease> (accessed on 39 June 2025); "Israel To Replace Jordanian Envoy In Effort To Mend Ties – Report", *The Times of Israel*, 29 November 2017, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-replace-jordanian-envoy-in-effort-to-mend-ties-report/> (accessed on 29 June 2025).

¹³⁶ Daoud Kuttab, "How Jordan Reclaimed Two Fertile Enclaves From Israel", *Arab News*, 12 November 2019, at <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1582786/middle-east> (accessed on 30 June 2025).

¹³⁷ Adam Rasgon, "Jordanian Ambassador Returns To Tel Aviv After Spat Over Jailed Nationals", *The Times of Israel*, 25 November 2019, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordanian-ambassador-returns-to-tel-aviv-after-spat-over-jailed-nationals/> (accessed on 29 June 2025).

lease of the two Jordanian enclaves.¹³⁸ These issues affecting Jordanian territory and citizens have dented the scope of engagement, and normalisation remains widely unpopular within Jordan. At the same time, Jordan has benefited from the peace treaty in strengthening cooperation in security, trade, water, and energy spheres.

4.2. AREAS OF COOPERATION

The 1994 peace treaty has enabled regular cooperation between Jordanian and Israeli militaries at tactical and senior levels, enabling both sides to ensure a relatively stable border with limited troops.¹³⁹ Israel has a strategic interest in the safety, security, stability and prosperity of Jordan. After the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Jordan maintained behind-the-scenes talks, sharing concerns over the IDF's actions in the West Bank, the possibility of a Palestinian influx, and close engagement among Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), and Salafist groups, which attempted to radicalise and conduct violent actions within the kingdom.¹⁴⁰ Jordanian intelligence collaborated with Mossad, CIA, and other Western intelligence agencies to spot Al-Qaeda leader, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi leading to his assassination by US Special Operations Forces on 7 June 2006.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ “Jordanian Detained By Israel Says He Was Used As ‘Bargaining Chip’ For Jordan Valley Lands”, *The New Arab*, 9 November 2019, at <https://www.newarab.com/news/jordanian-detainee-used-israels-bargaining-chip> (accessed on 26 June 2025).

¹³⁹ Jordan has deployed two military commands, i.e. central and southern, headed by a general each. Israel has also deployed a limited troops, i.e. one and a half brigades, at the Jordanian border. For more, Jonathan Schanzer, “Neither Here Nor There”, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 8 December 2022, at <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2022/12/08/neither-here-nor-there-jordan-and-the-abraham-accords/> (accessed on 27 June 2025).

¹⁴⁰ Ronen Yitzhak, 2017, p. 571.

¹⁴¹ Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi was responsible for the 9 November 2005 bombings in Amman killing 57 people. For more, Michael Slackman & Suha Ma’Ayeh, “Attacks At U.S.-Based Hotels In Amman Were Minutes Apart”, *The New York Times*, 9 November 2005, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/09/international/middleeast/attacks-at-usbased-hotels-in-amman-were-minutes.html> (accessed on 31 May 2025); “Statement By The President On Death Of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi”, The White House, 8 June 2006, at <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060608.html> (accessed on 29 May 2025).

Jordan, against the background of Iraq's collapse, shared concerns with Israel regarding the dangers posed by Iran's so-called 'Shia Crescent,' consisting of its non-state allies and the nuclear programme.¹⁴² The Gulf States perceived closer alignment with Israel as a means to counterbalance the Iranian threat while simultaneously leveraging Israeli influence in Washington DC. Jordan, by the mid-2000s, played a key role in facilitating Israel's secret military and intelligence cooperation with Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Saudi Arabia, and hosted meetings of Israeli leaders with counterparts from the Gulf States.¹⁴³

During the 2011 Arab Spring protests, Israel was concerned about the public demonstrations within Jordan demanding political reforms and their potential to topple the Hashemite monarchy and be replaced by an Islamist or Arab nationalist regime that could cancel the peace treaty. From Israel's perspective, the stability of the Hashemite monarchy was a bulwark against these radical forces. Israel supported measures to strengthen the Hashemite monarchy on military, political, economic and strategic levels, including incorporating Jordan in exploratory talks with the Palestinians.¹⁴⁴ Jordanian representatives such as Abdullah II and General Intelligence Director General Muhammad Raqqad were involved in talks between Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Prime Minister Netanyahu with PA President Mahmoud Abbas between 2010 and 2012.¹⁴⁵ In December 2012, Netanyahu, during his secret trip to Amman, hinted at the possibility of a

¹⁴² JISS, 2019.

¹⁴³ "King Discusses Regional Issues With Ambassador", Wikileaks, 16 February 2005, at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05MANAMA230_a.html (accessed on 29 May 2025); "Israel's Relations With The Gulf States Focus On Iran, Perception Of Israeli Influence In Washington", Wikileaks, 19 March 2009, at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09TELAVIV654_a.html (accessed on 29 May 2025).

¹⁴⁴ Nuri Yesilyurt, "Jordan And The Arab Spring: Challenges And Opportunities", *Perceptions*, XIX (4), 2014, pp. 180-182, at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/815777> (accessed on 31 May 2025).

¹⁴⁵ Ronen Yitzhak, 2017, pp. 571-572.

Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, besides discussions on the situation in Syria.¹⁴⁶ The talks, despite failing, reflected Israel's interest in keeping Jordan involved in the Israel-Palestine dynamics.

Israel has been active in Washington DC and other Western capitals in advocating on behalf of Jordan's military capacity, social stability and economic prosperity.¹⁴⁷ Israeli officials talking to European powers called the stability of the status quo in Jordan a red line. Israel's emphasis on Jordan's critical role in the former's security was vital for an increase in foreign aid from the US. The Economic Support Fund for Jordan increased: US\$ 362 million in 2011, US\$ 460 million in 2012, US\$ 564.4 million in 2013 and US\$ 700 million in 2014. The US also provided US\$ 2.25 billion in loan guarantees in 2013 and 2014 and another US\$ 388 million for catering to the needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan.¹⁴⁸ Crucially, the peace treaty enabled Jordan to develop close security cooperation with the US.

In 1996, the kingdom was designated a major non-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ally, allowing participation in cooperative research and development, priority delivery for Excess Defence Articles and training. Between 2015 and 2024, Jordan received US\$ 2.155 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), making it the third largest global recipient of FMF funds. Under the ongoing five year, Jordan is allocated US\$ 1.275 billion per year along with provision of US\$ 350 million of FMF per

¹⁴⁶ Israel's push for the said confederation was seen as the only solution to halt the Israeli state from becoming a bi-national state or a non democratic Jewish state. For more, Susan Hattis Rolef, "The Jordanian-Palestinian Confederation", *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 September 2018, at <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/the-jordanian-palestinian-confederation-566971> (accessed on 23 June 2025).

¹⁴⁷ Yaakov Amidror & Eran Lerman, "Jordanian Security And Prosperity: An Essential Aspect Of Israeli Policy", Jewish Policy Center, 2016, at <https://jewishpolicycenter.org/2016/03/30/jordans-security-prosperity-an-essential-israeli-policy/> (accessed on 3 July 2025).

¹⁴⁸ Nuri Yesilyurt, 2014, pp. 180-182.

year.¹⁴⁹ In 2015, Jordanian and Israeli pilots were jointly trained in Red Flag air exercises in the US, and Israeli Air Force tankers helped refuel Jordanian F-16 aircraft.¹⁵⁰ The Jordanian air force secretly participated in the Blue Flag aerial exercise in Israel for years, which was photographed in October 2021.¹⁵¹

During the Syrian civil war, Abdullah II, speaking to *The Atlantic* on 18 March 2013, admitted to a very strong relationship with Netanyahu.¹⁵² Israel offered military and intelligence support and operational plans to stall terror plots. Both states shared concerns over Iran's and Hezbollah's presence in Syria.¹⁵³ Israel conducted drone surveillance to patrol the Jordanian-Syrian border, helped interrogate Syrian Prisoners of War (POWs), screened Syrian refugees to prevent spy and intelligence networks, and built a security strip in southern Syria near the Jordan-Israeli border to

¹⁴⁹ Jordan and the US signed Status of Forces Agreement in 1996, Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement in 2006 and Defense Cooperation Agreement in 2021. The US authorised permanent export of over US\$ 697 million in defence items such as aircraft, fire control, night vision and military electronics. Jordanian Armed Forces received US\$ 327 million since 2018 under Section 333 authority to build capacity through training and equipment. The US has been spending US\$ 234 million since 2009 to support the Jordan Border Security Program, building integrated border security surveillance and detection. Between 2015 and 2024, the Department of State provided US\$ 21.33 million, training over 6000 JAF members under International Military Education and Training (IMET). The US fast-tracks access to equipment, including F-16 aircraft parts, UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, precision guided munitions, night vision devices, and small arms, to respond to transnational threats and participation in coalition operations. For more, “US Security Cooperation With Jordan”, US Department of State, 20 January 2025, at <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-jordan/> (accessed on 2 July 2025).

¹⁵⁰ Jonathan Schanzer, 2022.

¹⁵¹ Judah Ari Gross, “German Photographer Spills The Beans: Jordan Flew In IDF Aerial Drill”, *The Times of Israel*, 29 October 2021, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/german-photographer-spills-the-beans-jordan-flew-in-idf-aerial-drill/> (accessed on 21 June 2025).

¹⁵² Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Modern King In The Arab Spring”, *The Atlantic*, April 2013, at <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/monarch-in-the-middle/309270/> (accessed on 29 May 2025).

¹⁵³ JISS, 2019.

prevent infiltration into Jordanian territory.¹⁵⁴ Israel in 2014 assured Jordan of help by all means in case of Islamic State (IS) attacks on the kingdom.¹⁵⁵ Israel built a ground barrier, a smart and early warning fence on Jordan-Iraq and Jordan-Syria borders, provided satellite images and alerts regarding possible IS activities and training to Jordanian pilots.¹⁵⁶ In 2015, Israel decommissioned 16 Cobra helicopters and provided them to Jordan free of charge.¹⁵⁷ Both states closely coordinated on deconfliction with Russian forces in Syria in 2016.¹⁵⁸

Therefore, Jordan's peace treaty with Israel helped the kingdom to consolidate its geostrategic, political, and economic stability. The US provided foreign debt relief and restructuring arrangements valued at over US\$ 3 billion to restore Jordan's financial credibility following the 1989-1990 economic crisis and the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Jordan's location is crucial, serving as a transit for Israeli exports to ship goods to states that do not have direct business ties due to the Arab boycott.¹⁵⁹ The peace treaty and the austere economic restructuring programme benefitted Jordan to attract in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that increased more than 14 times to US\$ 43 million between 1994 and 1995. The bilateral trade has increased from US\$ 18 million in June 1996 to US\$ 317 million in 2024-2025.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Ronen Yitzhak, 2017, pp. 572-573.

¹⁵⁵ Nuri Yesilyurt, 2014, p. 182.

¹⁵⁶ Ronen Yitzhak, 2017, pp. 572-573.

¹⁵⁷ "Israel Gives Jordan Helicopters For Border Security—U.S. Source", *Reuters*, 23 July 2015, at <https://www.reuters.com/article/markets/israel-gives-jordan-helicopters-for-border-security-us-source-idUSL8N0ZO151/> (accessed on 31 May 2025).

¹⁵⁸ JISS, 2019.

¹⁵⁹ "Israeli-Jordanian Trade: In-Depth Analysis", Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 17 October 2018, at <https://institute.global/insights/geopolitics-and-security/israeli-jordanian-trade-depth-analysis> (accessed on 20 June 2025).

¹⁶⁰ Lori Plotkin Boghardt, 1997; "Israel Exports To Jordan", Trading Economics, 2025, at <https://tradingeconomics.com/israel/exports/jordan> (accessed on 25 August 2025); "Israel Imports from Jordan", Trading Economics, 2025, at <https://tradingeconomics.com/israel/imports/jordan> (accessed on 25 August 2025).

The peace treaty led to the operationalisation of the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ), which allowed manufactured goods with 11.7 per cent from Jordan, 8 per cent from Israel, and the remaining 15.3 per cent from any combination of input from Jordanian QIZ, Israel, and the Palestinian territories, with duty-free access to US markets.¹⁶¹ The QIZ was established to encourage peace in the region based on economic cooperation, promoting FDI, boosting Jordanian exports to the US, Israeli access to low-cost Jordanian labour, and Jordanian access to Israeli advanced technology. The 1994 peace treaty and the QIZ agreement's success facilitated the Jordan-US free trade agreement on 24 October 2000, becoming the fourth state after Canada, Mexico and Israel. US goods exports to Jordan reached around US\$ 2 billion in 2024.¹⁶²

Since the peace treaty, Jordan has received 50 million cubic metres (mcm) of water per year from Israel, which has mainly remained uninterrupted despite diplomatic tensions.¹⁶³ In the energy sphere, Jordan, on 19 February 2014, signed a deal to receive US\$ 500 million worth of gas from Israel.¹⁶⁴ Jordan's National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) on 26 September 2016 signed US\$ 10 billion deal with Nobel Energy to purchase 45 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas for 15 years, which became operational in 2020.¹⁶⁵ On 22 November 2021, Jordan and Israel signed a declaration

¹⁶¹ “Qualified Industrial Zones – Jordan”, International Trade Administration, 2025, at <https://www.trade.gov/qiz-jordan> (accessed on 15 June 2025).

¹⁶² “Jordan Free Trade Agreement”, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2025, at <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/jordan-fta> (accessed on 17 June 2025).

¹⁶³ Edmund Ratka & Michael Rimmel, “Israel-Jordanian Water Management Relations”, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 14 April 2025, at <https://www.kas.de/en/web/auslandsinformationen/artikel/detail/-/content/israeli-jordanian-water-management-relations> (accessed on 23 August 2025).

¹⁶⁴ “Israel-Jordan Sign \$500 Million Natural Gas Deal”, *The Times of Israel*, 19 February 2014, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-jordan-sign-500-million-natural-gas-deal/> (accessed on 26 August 2025).

¹⁶⁵ “NEPCO Begins Gas Pumping Trial Run From Noble Energy”, *The Jordan Times*, 3 January 2020, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/nepco-begins-gas-pumping-trial-run-noble-energy> (accessed on 27 August 2025).

of intent for water for energy deal that entails building 600 megawatts of solar generating capacity in the kingdom, exported to Israel in exchange for Israel providing Jordan with 200 mcm of desalinated water.¹⁶⁶ Jordan and Israel are members of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, established in 2019, including PA, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. It was founded in 2020 to boost regional cooperation, develop a competitive gas market, and ensure energy security.¹⁶⁷

Since Jordan's normalisation with Israel, despite the ups and downs, the engagement between both sides has intensified ensuring a relatively stable border, extensive security cooperation, and steady trade and energy ties. The stable bilateral relations have, however, reached an inflection point following the Israel-Hamas war. Chapter Five would examine Jordan's role in the ongoing Israel-Hamas war and identify its key concerns.

¹⁶⁶ “Israel, Jordan Sign Huge UAE-Brokered Deal To Swap Solar Energy And Water”, *The Times of Israel*, 22 November 2021, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-jordan-sign-uae-brokered-deal-to-swap-solar-energy-and-water/> (accessed on 28 August 2025).

¹⁶⁷ “Overview”, East Mediterranean Gas Forum, 2025, at <https://emgf.org/Home.aspx> (accessed on 26 August 2025).

5 JORDAN AND ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

5.1. POSITION ON HAMAS

The Islamic Resistance Movement or *Harakat Al-Muqawam Al-Islamiyya* (Hamas) emerged as an outlet for MB members to participate in the 1987 Intifada, without compromising the MB's ideology, which was reluctant towards organised resistance and Jihad until the complete Islamic transformation of Palestinian society.¹⁶⁸ Hamas' strategic focus differed from MB in terms of priority to the Palestinian issue and Jihad rather than transforming society. According to Article 14 of the Hamas Covenant, released on 18 August 1988, the liberation of Palestine is bound to three circles, i.e., the Palestinian circle, the Arab circle and the Islamic circle.¹⁶⁹ Hamas differed from PLO by prioritising the creation of an Islamic state, use of violence, as well as Israel's elimination and refusal to co-exist until the 2017 Charter amendment.¹⁷⁰ Article 13, claiming peace initiatives as a waste of time, called for armed Jihad as the only solution to the Palestinian question.¹⁷¹ Hamas branches were opened in the West Bank and Gaza, and by 1991, the Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades was formed as the military wing, targeting Israeli forces and civilians.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Ziad Abu-Amr, "Hamas: A Historical And Political Background", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22 (4), 1993, pp. 5-8.

¹⁶⁹ Muhammad Maqdsi, "Charter Of The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) Of Palestine", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22 (4), 1993.

¹⁷⁰ Zena Al Tahhan, "Hamas And Fatah: How Are The Two Groups Different?" *Al Jazeera*, 12 October 2017, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/10/12/hamas-and-fatah-how-are-the-twogroups-different> (accessed on 23 May 2025).

¹⁷¹ Muhammad Maqdsi, 1993.

¹⁷² Ziad Abu-Amr, 1993, pp. 5-8.

Hussein initially saw Hamas as a counterweight to Arafat's Fatah movement and a tool to exert influence in the West Bank. The group was allowed to establish an office in Amman in 1991, operated by political bureau members, including Khaled Meshal and Ibrahim Ghosheh. The interest-driven ties faced pressure due to Hamas' opposition to 1993 Oslo Accords and 1994 peace treaty.¹⁷³ Hamas' calls for Israel's destruction, anti-PA statements, violent actions to sabotage the peace process and criticisms from the PA, Israeli and US governments disrupted Jordan's engagement with the group.¹⁷⁴ Abdullah II, succeeding Hussein in February 1999, saw Hamas as the primary disrupter of final status negotiations between Israel and the PA and Jordan's relationship with the PA, Israel, the US and the European Union (EU).¹⁷⁵ Abdullah II, blaming Hamas for using Jordanian territory for illegitimate purposes, barred the group's political activity, closed its offices and exiled four top officials, i.e. Khaled Meshal, Ibrahim Ghosheh, Sami Khater and Izzat Rasheq in August 1999.¹⁷⁶

Jordan, after Hamas' Gaza takeover in June 2007, tried to moderate the group's position toward a two-state solution and prioritised emboldening the Ramallah-based Fatah government.¹⁷⁷ The Jordanian government, in the background of the Arab Spring, temporarily softened their attitude towards Hamas, allowing Khaled Meshal to visit Amman on two occasions in January and July 2012. Jordan intended to prohibit Hamas from fomenting any pro-reform demonstrations that could ignite a broader

¹⁷³ Frode Lovlie "Explaining Hamas's Changing Electoral Strategy, 1996-2006", *Government and Opposition*, 48 (4), 2013, 570-593.

¹⁷⁴ Hillel Frisch, 2019, pp. 312-313.

¹⁷⁵ P. R. Kumaraswamy, "The Jordan-Hamas Divorce", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, 3 (8), 2001, at <https://www.mafhoum.com/press2/60P2.htm> (accessed on 31 May 2025).

¹⁷⁶ Abdullah II reintroduced the prohibition to allow Jordanian citizens to work for a non-Jordanian organisation from Jordanian Territory. For more, P.R. Kumaraswamy, 2001.

¹⁷⁷ Anne Bauer, 2022, p. 7.

movement challenging the Hashemite state.¹⁷⁸ Jordan nevertheless remained largely sceptical of Hamas' goals and activities.

Hamas views the current arrangements of custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound as insufficient and seeks a broader, more inclusive approach under Palestinian sovereignty that excludes Israeli involvement. It essentially implies the inclusion of Hamas supporters in the Waqf Council.¹⁷⁹ Hamas' 2017 amendment to the Charter agreed to co-existence with Israel, leading to deliberations among Jordanian policy makers to reopen channels with the group to build leverage and advance the kingdom's national interests.¹⁸⁰ Despite Hamas' overtures for rapprochement, Jordan remained circumspect about re-establishing formal ties, primarily due to its close ties with IAF facilitating the group's meddling in the kingdom's internal affairs, creating fissures between citizens of Jordanian and Palestinian origin, ability to stir mass uprising undermining the Jordanian State and the PA, mobilise Palestinians over the Al-Aqsa Mosque issue and carry out violence against Israel from Jordanian territory.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Elhanan Miller, "13 Years After King Booted It Out, Hamas Leader Says His Group Has Reconciled With Jordan", *The Times of Israel*, 9 July 2012, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordan-has-reconciled-with-hamas-khaled-mashaal-says/> (accessed on 24 May 2025).

¹⁷⁹ "Hamas Reiterates Palestinian Sovereignty Over Al-Quds", *International Quran News Agency*, 9 May 2022, at <https://iqna.ir/en/news/3478836/hamas-reiterates-palestinian-sovereignty-over-al-quds/> (accessed on 22 July 2025).

¹⁸⁰ In May 2017, Hamas' Charter was amended to firstly accept the Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, implying recognition of Israel's existence; secondly, distinguish between Jews or Judaism and Zionism; and thirdly, skip reference to MB as its parent organisation. For more, "Doctrine Of Hamas", Wilson Center, 20 October 2023, at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/doctrine-hamas> (accessed on 19 May 2025).

¹⁸¹ Jordan was cautious about Hamas' incitement to carry out mass protests in Jerusalem after the installation of metal detectors by Israel in July 2017. Jordan cooperated with PA in May 2022 to prevent Hamas from capitalising on the conflict and taking control of Al-Aqsa Mosque by removing Hamas banners and preventing worshippers from bringing fireworks. For more, Khaled Abu Toameh, "PA, Jordan In Bid To Prevent Hamas Takeover Of Temple Mount", *The Jerusalem Post*, 5 May 2022, at <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-705979> (accessed on 29 June 2025); Hillel Frisch, 2019, pp. 321-322.

5.2. ROLE IN ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The 7 October 2023 Hamas attack and Israel's ground operations in the Gaza Strip introduced new complexities into Jordan's fragile domestic environment and national interests. Jordan's key priority after the IDF's strikes on 13 October and full-scale ground operations on 27 October 2023 was to preserve the peace treaty and strategic partnership with Israel while displaying commitment to the Palestinian cause. Abdullah II repeatedly condemned the 7 October 2023 attacks and kidnapping of Israelis, calling it unacceptable to any Muslim.¹⁸² The King speaking at the Cairo Summit for Peace on 21 October 2023 emphasised the need for an immediate end to the war, uninterrupted humanitarian aid and rejection of forced or internal displacement of the Palestinians, calling it a war crime and a red line.¹⁸³ Jordan's keywords regarding the path to regional peace include immediate ceasefire, universality of human rights, and non-viability of security as a zero-sum game, justice with accountability, providing humanitarian aid and avoiding extreme voices from all sides.¹⁸⁴

Queen Rania has been a vocal critic of Israel's war, calling starvation a weapon of war and collective punishment and displacement as war crimes. Rania, during an interview with *MSNBC* in May 2024, remarked on the

¹⁸² “Jordan King Says 7 October Attack Unacceptable To Muslims, Calls For ‘Lasting Ceasefire”, *The Times of Israel*, 13 February 2024, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordan-king-calls-for-lasting-ceasefire-says-oct-7-attack-unacceptable-to-muslims/> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

¹⁸³ “At The Cairo Summit For Peace”, Royal Hashemite Court, 21 October 2023, at <https://kingabdullah.jo/en/speeches/cairo-summit-peace> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

¹⁸⁴ “Jordan’s Queen Rania Offers Path To Peace In Middle East”, *ABC News*, 25 September 2024, at <https://abcnews.go.com/International/jordans-queen-rania-offers-path-peace-middle-east/story?id=113955743> (accessed on 25 July 2025); “General Debate, General Assembly”, UN, 24 September 2024, at <https://gadebate.un.org/en/79/jordan#:~:text=King%20Abdullah%20II%20urged%20world,day%20is%20beyond%20any%20justification%E2%80%9D> (accessed on 24 July 2025).

IDF's conduct as genocide.¹⁸⁵ Crown Prince Hussein has proactively highlighted the situation in Gaza, including meeting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in February 2025 and supervising aid convoys to Gaza through the Rafah crossing.¹⁸⁶

5.2.1. Political and Diplomatic Efforts

Jordan is heavily invested diplomatically in efforts to end the conflict, contain any spill over, and press for a political process centred on a two-state solution. Abdullah II conducted an active diplomatic campaign, and during the war's first year, he visited around 30 states and engaged with 180 foreign leaders to highlight the risks to regional instability and build pressure on Israel to agree to a ceasefire. Jordanian media glorified Abdullah II's role in pushing international efforts for a ceasefire.

To coordinate efforts, the King met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on 19 October 2023 pressing for a ceasefire and peace talks.¹⁸⁷ Jordan's proposal on 23 October 2023 in the UNGA calling for an immediate and sustained humanitarian truce was adopted with 120 votes in favour.¹⁸⁸ Jordan, to protest against Gaza's humanitarian situation, recalled

¹⁸⁵ “Queen Rania Urges International Community To Pressure Israel To End Gaza War And To Support A Just Solution To Palestinian-Israeli Conflict”, Royal Hashemite Court, 3 May 2024, at <https://www.queenrania.jo/en/media/queen-rania-urges-international-community-pressure-israel-end-gaza-war-and-support-just> (accessed on 14 July 2025).

¹⁸⁶ “Crown Prince Supervises Preparation Of Aid Plane For Gaza”, Royal Hashemite Court, 20 October 2023, at <https://rhc.jo/en/news/crown-prince-supervises-preparation-aid-plane-gaza> (accessed on 5 August 2025).

¹⁸⁷ “President El-Sisi Meets Jordan's King His Majesty King Abdullah II”, Egypt Presidency, 19 October 2023, at <https://www.presidency.eg/en/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D9%82%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9/19102023-2/> (accessed on 23 June 2025).

¹⁸⁸ “UN General Assembly Adopts Gaza Resolution Calling For Immediate And Sustained ‘Humanitarian Truce’”, UN, 26 October 2023, at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142847> (accessed on 10 July 2025).

its ambassador to Israel, Rasan Al-Majali, on 1 November 2023 and asked the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, Rogel Rachman, not to return to Amman.¹⁸⁹ Abdullah II hosted Sisi and Mahmoud Abbas on 11 January 2024 to coordinate their joint position, enabling the redevelopment and return of people to their homes and rejecting Israel's plan to displace and reoccupy Gaza.¹⁹⁰

The King met with then US President Joe Biden on 12 February 2024 and 6 May 2024, focusing on ceasefire, flow of humanitarian aid, concerns over Palestinian displacement from Gaza and West Bank, expansion of illegal settlements, provocations by settlers in West Bank and Jerusalem's holy sites.¹⁹¹ In January 2024, Ayman Safadi announced backing South Africa's submission, accusing Israel of committing genocide in Gaza at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Jordan offered to present evidence and pleadings in support of South Africa's case.¹⁹² Jordan hosted "Call for Action: Urgent Humanitarian Response for Gaza" on 11 June 2024, co-organised with Egypt and the UN, to address the humanitarian situation, condemning attacks on UN staff, rejecting forcible transfer, lasting peace

¹⁸⁹ Lazar Berman, "Jordan Recalls Ambassador From Israel To Protest Carnage In War With Hamas", *The Times of Israel*, 1 November 2023, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordan-recalls-ambassador-from-israel-to-protest-carnage-in-war-with-hamas/> (accessed on 14 July 2025).

¹⁹⁰ Suleiman Al-Khalidi & Ahmed Mohamed Hassan, "Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian Summit Restates Opposition To Displacement Of Population From Gaza", *The Arab Weekly*, 11 January 2024, at <https://thearabweekly.com/egyptian-jordanian-palestinian-summit-restates-opposition-displacement-population-gaza> (accessed on 13 July 2025).

¹⁹¹ "King Meets US President, Urges End To War On Gaza", Royal Hashemite Court, 12 February 2024, at <https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/king-meets-us-president-urges-end-war-gaza> (accessed on 12 July 2025); Nandita Bose & Steve Holland, "Jordan's King Abdullah Presses Biden To Avert Israel Offensive In Rafah", *Reuters*, 7 May 2024, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/biden-meets-jordans-king-abdullah-gaza-ceasefire-hopes-dim-2024-05-06/> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

¹⁹² "Jordan Backs South Africa ICJ Genocide File Against Israel Over Gaza Atrocities", *The New Arab*, 5 January 2024, at <https://www.newarab.com/news/jordan-backs-south-africa-icj-genocide-file-against-israel> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

based on the 1967 lines, calling for an immediate ceasefire and ending the Rafah operation.¹⁹³ In mid-2024, Jordan withdrew from the UAE-brokered deal supplying solar energy to Israel in exchange for desalinated water.¹⁹⁴ Jordan appealed for a weapons embargo on Israel in September and October 2024.¹⁹⁵

5.2.2. Gaza Reconstruction

Jordan backed Egypt's US\$ 53 billion Gaza Reconstruction Plan in March 2025 and joined the Madrid Group meeting on 25 May 2025 for the Implementation of the Two States Solution meeting of European and Arab nations to stop the war, initiate the reconstruction process and restart the peace process.¹⁹⁶ Jordan, along with all Arab League states, joined the Saudi-French-led "New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question and the Implementation of the Two-State solution" on 28-30 July 2025, condemning the 7 October attack and Israel's war in Gaza. The declaration called for disarming Hamas and an independent demilitarised Palestine under the PA.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ "Call For Action: Urgent Humanitarian Response For Gaza" Statement By Co-Chairs King Abdullah II Of Jordan, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi Of Egypt, UN Secretary-General Antony Guterres", UN, 11 June 2024, at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/statement-by-co-chairs-urgent-humanitarian-response-for-gaza-11jun24/> (accessed on 21 May 2025).

¹⁹⁴ Sue Surkes, "Amman Says It Is Pulling Out Of Jordan-UAE-Israel Energy And Water Deal", *The Times of Israel*, 16 November 2023, at https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/amman-says-it-is-pulling-out-of-jordan-uae-israel-energy-and-water-deal/ (accessed on 12 July 2025).

¹⁹⁵ "Jordan Joins Calls For Weapons Embargo On Israel As War Intensifies", *The New Arab*, 13 October 2024, at <https://www.newarab.com/news/jordan-joins-calls-arms-embargo-israel-war-intensifies> (accessed on 16 July 2025).

¹⁹⁶ "Madrid Group Meeting Condemns Israeli Violations In Gaza, Calls For 'Unconditional' Opening Of Border Crossings", *The Jordan Times*, 26 May 2025, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/madrid-group-meeting-condemns-israeli-violations-in-gaza-calls-for-unconditional-opening-of-border-crossings> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

¹⁹⁷ "In 1st, Entire Arab League Condemns 7 October, Urges Hamas To Disarm, At 2-State Confab", *The Times of Israel*, 30 July 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-1st-entire-arab-league-condemns-oct-7-urges-hamas-to-disarm-at-2-state-solution-confab/> (accessed on 2 August 2025).

5.2.3. Humanitarian Assistance

Jordan was one of the first states to conduct airlift missions since the beginning of the war, transferring sick and injured Palestinians to the kingdom for medical treatment. Jordan opened a second field hospital in Khan Younis in November 2023 to provide medical and humanitarian services in the war-affected Gaza Strip.¹⁹⁸ Abdullah II launched “Restoring Hope” initiative in September 2024, providing prosthetic limbs to Palestinians. Since October 2023, Jordan has coordinated with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Central Kitchen, sending over 181 land convoys with 7,932 aid trucks and 421 air drops into Gaza.¹⁹⁹ Since the 7 October 2023 attack, Jordan has provided US\$ 335 million to Gaza. JHCO since its formation in 1990 has provided around US\$ 556 million in aid to the Palestinian territories including US\$ 128.2 million for the West Bank and Jerusalem, and US\$ 427.7 million for Gaza until August 2025.²⁰⁰

5.3. JORDAN'S CONCERNS

The three prime goals of the current Israeli State are firstly, preserving Jewish identity and statehood; secondly, maintaining the democratic political system; and thirdly, upholding the territorial extent by continuing the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.²⁰¹ The Jewish

¹⁹⁸ “Jordanian Field Hospital In Southern Gaza Begins Operations”, *The Jordan Times*, 21 April 2025, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanian-field-hospital-southern-gaza-begins-operations> (accessed on 20 July 2025).

¹⁹⁹ “Jordan Sends 38 Aid Trucks To Gaza, Delivers Humanitarian Airdrops With Several Countries”, *Arab News*, 4 August 2025, at <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2610622/middle-east> (accessed on 5 August 2025).

²⁰⁰ “Jordan's Total Aid To Gaza Exceeds \$427.7 Million, Says Charity Official”, *Roya News*, 5 August 2025, at <https://en.royanews.tv/news/61912> (accessed on 6 August 2025).

²⁰¹ Sergio DellaPergola, “Israel's Existential Predicament: Population, Territory, And Identity”, *Current History*, 109 (731), 2010, pp. 383-385, at doi: 10.1525/curh.2010.109.731.383 (accessed on 12 June 2021).

population in Israel was around 7.427 million in May 2024.²⁰² The Arab population in Israeli proper is around 2.089 million, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip are around 5.289 million, totalling 7.37 million in 2024.²⁰³ While the fertility rate among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza has decreased over the years, it remains comparatively higher at 3.3 births per woman as compared to 2.9 births per woman in Israel.²⁰⁴

The term “Second Nakba” has been normalised by several Israeli political figures, accepting the 1947-48 expulsion of Palestinians as part of Israel’s nationalist struggle. This discourse underscores anxieties over demographic changes and a desire to preserve Israeli and Jewish political and economic dominance in the occupied territories.²⁰⁵ Therefore, the prospect of reoccupying the Gaza Strip and thinning the Palestinian population, including in the West Bank, through mass transfer of Palestinians to Jordan and Egypt, is viewed as a key measure to ensure a Jewish majority.

The Netanyahu government has leveraged the Gaza war to bolster domestic and international legitimacy by advancing the displacement option. In December 2023, Netanyahu alluded to implementing a policy of ‘voluntary migration,’ framing the primary challenge as securing third-party states

²⁰² “Israel At 76: A Statistical Glimpse”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13 May 2024, at <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/israel-at-76-a-statistical-glimpse-13-may-2024> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

²⁰³ “Population, Total – West Bank And Gaza”, World Bank, 2025, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PS> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

²⁰⁴ “Fertility Rate, Total (Births Per Woman) - West Bank And Gaza”, World Bank, 2025, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=PS> (accessed on 12 July 2025); “Fertility Rate, Total (Births Per Woman) - Israel”, World Bank, 2025, at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=IL> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

²⁰⁵ Jonathan Cook, “Israel Calls The Nakba A Lie. So Why Do Its Leaders Threaten A Second One?” *Middle East Eye*, 14 June 2022, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-palestine-nakba-leaders-call-lie-threaten-second-why> (accessed on 21 May 2025).

willing to absorb the Palestinian population.²⁰⁶ Biden, while providing substantial military support to Israel, focused on five principles: no forcible displacement; no reoccupation; no siege or blockade; no reduction in territory; and no use of the Gaza Strip as a platform for terrorism. He called for reuniting the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under a single governance structure, ultimately under a revitalised PA.²⁰⁷

The Netanyahu government's pursuit of the displacement option gained significant momentum after Donald Trump's second term in January 2025. Trump, meeting with Netanyahu on 4 February 2025, pressed for a new approach to Gaza's future, proposing that the US 'take over' and 'own' the Gaza Strip. Trump proposed long-term control, expelling 2.1 million Palestinians to Egypt and Jordan and transforming the enclave into a Riviera. Netanyahu's meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on 17 February 2025 signalled that he was moving ahead with Trump's proposal, calling it "the only viable plan to enable a different future" for the region.²⁰⁸

The US and Israel rejected Egypt's US\$ 53 billion reconstruction plan without displacing Palestinians on 4 March 2025, citing Hamas' continued presence in Gaza and failure to address ground realities.²⁰⁹ On 8 July 2025,

²⁰⁶ Ahmed Asmer, "Netanyahu Pushes For 'Voluntary Migration' For Palestinians In Gaza: Israeli Media", *Anadolu Ajansi*, 26 December 2023, at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/netanyahu-pushes-for-voluntary-migration-for-palestinians-in-gaza-israeli-media/3092389> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

²⁰⁷ Anthony Blinken, "The Biden Administration's Vision For Postwar Gaza", *Atlantic Council*, 14 January 2025, at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-biden-administrations-vision-for-postwar-gaza/> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

²⁰⁸ Matthew Lee & Natale Melzer, "Netanyahu Signals He's Transferring Palestinians From Gaza", *Financial Review*, 17 February 2025, at <https://www.afr.com/world/middle-east/netanyahu-signals-he-s-transferring-palestinians-from-gaza-20250217-p5lclw> (accessed on 28 February 2025).

²⁰⁹ US\$ 3 billion for six months to remove rubble and unexploded ordnance; US\$ 20 billion for two years to rebuild housing and utilities; and US\$ 30 billion to build airport, two seaports and an industrial zone. For more, David Gritten, "US And Israel Reject Arab Alternative To Trump's Gaza Plan", *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News*, 5 March 2025, at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn7vd4pnxx3o> (accessed on 20 July 2025).

Netanyahu and Trump repeated their plans to transfer Palestinians, vowing to work with other states to offer Palestinians a ‘better future’.²¹⁰ On 9 July 2025, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz proposed a ‘humanitarian city,’ eventually accommodating the entire 2.1 million population of Gaza, with movement restricted beyond the designated zone and ‘voluntary’ emigration presented as the sole alternative.²¹¹

Trump’s Gaza proposal, combined with the January 2020 Deal of the Century, has energised Israeli authorities to pursue West Bank annexation plans increasing settlements, legalising illegal outposts, declaring vast parts including the Jordan Valley, as State lands, denying Palestinian private ownership and usage rights and authorising home demolitions displacing around 1,119 Palestinians in 2025.²¹² On 23 July 2025, Knesset approved a non-binding motion (71 for, 13 against) affirming West Bank as part of Israel and urging sovereignty over Jewish settlements.²¹³ On 11 September 2025, Netanyahu declaring that “there will be no Palestinian state,” signed the E1 Settlement project, to build 3,412 homes that would permanently cut off the geographical and territorial contiguity between East Jerusalem and West Bank and sever access between the northern and southern West

²¹⁰ “Netanyahu, Trump Discuss Forced Transfer Of Palestinians Out Of Gaza”, *Al Jazeera*, 8 July 2025, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/8/netanyahu-trump-discuss-forced-transfer-of-palestinians-out-of-gaza> (accessed on 26 July 2025).

²¹¹ Shannon Bosch, “Israel’s Rafah Camp – ‘Humanitarian City’ Or Crime Against Humanity?” *The Conversation*, 9 July 2025, at <https://theconversation.com/israels-rafah-camp-humanitarian-city-or-crime-against-humanity-260809> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

²¹² Mat Nashed, “Experts Say Israel’s West Bank Demolitions Aim To Drive Palestinians Away”, *Al Jazeera*, 3 August 2025, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/8/3/experts-say-israels-west-bank-demolitions-aim-to-drive-palestinians-away#:~:text=Demolitions%20and%20displacement,rights%20researcher%20with%20AI%2DHaq> (accessed on 4 August 2025).

²¹³ Sam Sokol, “Knesset Votes 71-13 For Non-Binding Motion Calling To Annex West Bank”, *The Times of Israel*, 23 July 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-votes-71-13-for-non-binding-motion-calling-to-annex-west-bank/> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

Bank.²¹⁴ These measures seek to undermine two-state solution, fragment Palestinian townships into enclaves surrounded by Israel from all sides with provisions for self-rule falling short of full statehood.²¹⁵ It could activate the Jordanian option through a systematic process of legal and illegal encroachment of Palestinian homes and farms, home demolitions, settlement expansion, settler attacks and IDF raids, initiating displacement and turning Jordan into a Palestinian state.

Jordan is closely monitoring incidents of settler violence, viewing them as part of broader efforts to displace Palestinians. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there were more than 2600 settler violence incidents between 7 October 2023 and mid-2025.²¹⁶ Between January 2023 and July 2025, around 2,894 Palestinians in the West Bank were internally displaced due to settler attacks and harassment.²¹⁷ Israeli settlers and the IDF killed around 968 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 7 October 2023 and 16

²¹⁴ Jeremy Sharon, “E1 Settlement Project Widely Condemned, But Is It Fatal To Two-State Solution Idea?” *The Times of Israel*, 25 August 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/e1-settlement-project-widely-condemned-but-is-it-fatal-to-two-state-solution-idea/> (accessed on 27 August 2025); “There Will Be No Palestinian State: PM Signs Plan Cementing E1 Settlement Expansion”, *The Times of Israel*, 11 September 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/there-will-be-no-palestinian-state-pm-signs-plan-cementing-e1-settlement-expansion/> (accessed on 12 September 2025).

²¹⁵ Marwan Muasher, “Jordan’s Redline On Admitting Palestinians Is Unlikely To Change”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 21 November, 2023, at <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2023/11/jordans-redline-on-admitting-palestinians-is-unlikely-to-change?lang=en> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

²¹⁶ The highest number of settler attacks was reported in Nablus (411), followed by Ramallah (410) and Hebron (362). For more, “Mapping 1,800 Israeli Settler Attacks In The West Bank Since October 2023”, *Al Jazeera*, 22 January 2025, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/22/mapping-1800-israeli-settler-attacks-in-the-occupied-west-bank-since-october-7> (accessed on 26 July 2025).

²¹⁷ “West Bank: Israeli State-Backed Settler Violence Drives Mass Displacement Of Palestinian Communities”, Norwegian Refugee Council, 9 July 2025, at <https://www.nrc.no/news/2025/july/west-bank-israeli-state-backed-settler-violence-drives-mass-displacement-of-palestinian-communities> (accessed on 29 July 2025).

July 2025.²¹⁸ Jordan sees these measures as part of broader efforts to push West Bank Palestinians to Jordan. Abdullah II and key political figures in Jordan have addressed the Gaza war and the dangers from settler violence in bilateral and multilateral forums.

Jordan's security doctrine after its 1988 disengagement is firmly based on the two-state solution, and any alternative is unacceptable to the kingdom.²¹⁹ The displacement idea is viewed as an existential concern leading to the complete annexation of Gaza and later the West Bank, gravely impacting the resource-poor and socially restive kingdom. It fears any displacement from Gaza could set a dangerous precedent for similar actions in the West Bank. Jordan is concerned that the large inflow of Palestinians could change the demographic balance in favour of the Palestinians and turn the kingdom into a Palestinian state in accordance with the vision of the Israeli right. Jordan's decision to close its border to Palestinians is interpreted as both a nationalistic assertion of sovereignty and a strategic effort to obstruct perceived Israeli attempts to resolve its demographic concerns by transferring the Palestinian population from the occupied territories. For Palestinians, their continued presence despite ongoing hardship is regarded as a form of steadfast resistance.²²⁰

Jordanian leaders have reaffirmed their position with the slogan, "Jordan is for the Jordanians, and Palestine is for the Palestinians." Jordan has mentioned that any displacement move would be an act of war.²²¹ In

²¹⁸ "UNRWA Situation Report #180 On The Humanitarian Crisis In The Gaza Strip And The West Bank, Including East Jerusalem", UN, 18 July 2025, at <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/unrwa-situation-report-180-on-the-humanitarian-crisis-in-the-gaza-strip-and-the-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem/> (accessed on 28 July 2022).

²¹⁹ Ronen Yitzhak, "Jordan And The 7 October War: Between National Interests And Palestinian Solidarity", Moshe Dayan Center, 13 March 2025, at https://dayan.org/content/jordan-and-october-7th-war-between-national-interests-and-palestinian-solidarity#_edn1 (accessed on 1 July 2025).

²²⁰ Marwan Muasher, 2023.

²²¹ Peter Oborne & Richard Sanders, "Jordan Ready For War With Israel If Palestinians Are Expelled Into Its Territory", *Middle East Eye*, 4 February 2025, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-ready-war-israel-if-palestinians-expelled-into-its-territory> (accessed on 11 July 2025).

mid-August, amid Israeli expansionist rhetoric, it reintroduced compulsory military service after ending conscription in 1991, which is set to commence in 2026. The decision to apply mandatory conscription is aimed at carrying multiple strategic messages directed at different audiences. Domestically, it seeks to contain domestic unrest, display a shift from diplomatic protests to preparatory action, provide employment, prepare youth for labour market with practical experience, training and promote social cohesion. It is also aimed at signalling to the Western allies the gravity of current regional instability, while conveying to Israel that Jordan is prepared for all potential scenarios.²²² While Jordan cannot afford a war with Israel, it will be forced to close the border and boost their defences in case of attempts by West Bank Palestinians to cross into the kingdom.

5.4. DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Israel's war in Gaza intensified radicalisation among Jordanians, with a growing preference for armed resistance over negotiations to end the occupation of Palestinian territories.²²³ The PA is viewed as weak, corrupt, authoritarian, and acting as a subcontractor of Israel's occupation policy.²²⁴ On 8 September 2024, one retired Jordanian soldier opened fire at the King Hussein Bridge, killing three Israeli guards. On 18 October 2024, two Jordanian men infiltrated Jordan's border with the West Bank and opened fire on Israeli soldiers before being shot. Subsequently, Jordanian

²²² Shefa'a Qudah, "Why Jordan Is Bringing Back Military Conscription", *The New Arab*, 28 August 2025, at <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/why-jordan-bringing-back-military-conscription> (accessed on 5 September 2025).

²²³ Rana Husseini, "War On Gaza Drives Rise In Terrorism, Border Threats In Jordan", *The Jordan Times*, 15 January 2025, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/war-gaza-drives-rise-terrorism-border-threats-jordan> (accessed on 24 August 2025); Zaynab Khojji, "Jordan PM Says 'Carnage' In Gaza Could Radicalize An Entire Generation", *Arab News*, 16 January 2024, at <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2442811/middle-east> (accessed on 24 August 2025).

²²⁴ "The New Generation Of Palestinian Armed Groups: A Paper Tiger?" ICG, 17 April 2023, at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/new-generation-palestinian-armed> (accessed on 23 July 2025).

authorities arrested the relatives of the two deceased men.²²⁵ Jordanian security forces killed a gunman who opened fire on a police patrol near the Israeli embassy on 24 November 2024. Two IDF soldiers were killed in a shooting and stabbing attack near Allenby Bridge by a Jordanian transporting humanitarian aid to Gaza.²²⁶ The public frustration remained high due to Jordanian government's inability to stop the Gaza war and the security forces' suppression of anti-Israeli protests.²²⁷

Jordan is concerned about Hamas' rising popularity and strength in the West Bank and Jordanian territory. On 11 October 2023, Khaled Meshal announced, "Tribes of Jordan, sons of Jordan, brothers and sisters of Jordan... This is a moment of truth and the borders are close to you, you all know your responsibility."²²⁸ During the protests inside Jordan, the names of Hamas' military leaders, such as Mohammed Deif, Abu Obaida and Yahya Sinwar, were widely chanted, indicating a broader transformation in public opinion.²²⁹

²²⁵ Mohammad Ersan, "Jordan: Authorities Arrest Relatives Of Shootings Of Israeli Soldiers In Dead Sea Attack", *Middle East Eye*, 29 October 2024, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-authorities-arrest-shooters-israeli-soldiers-cross-border-attack> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

²²⁶ Emanuel Fabian & Nurit Yohanani, "Two Soldiers Killed By Knifeman Driving Gaza-Bound Aid Truck At West Bank-Jordan Crossing", *The Times of Israel*, 18 September 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-israelis-killed-by-knifeman-driving-gaza-bound-aid-truck-at-west-bank-jordan-crossing/> (accessed on 20 September 2025).

²²⁷ Mohammad Ersan, "Jordan Says Gunman In Shooting Near Israeli Embassy Has Criminal Record", *Middle East Eye*, 24 November 2024, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-gunman-shootout-israeli-embassy-criminal-record> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

²²⁸ "Former Hamas Chief Calls For Protests, Neighbours To Join War Against Israel", *Reuters*, 11 October 2023, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/former-hamas-chief-calls-protests-neighbours-join-war-against-israel-2023-10-11/> (accessed on 2 July 2025).

²²⁹ "Jordan's Former Foreign Minister Says Two-State Solution Is Over", *Middle East Eye*, 8 November 2024, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordans-former-foreign-minister-says-two-state-solution-over> (accessed on 11 July 2025); "Israeli Displacement Of Palestinians To Jordan Will Be Act Of War: Amman", *TRT*, 5 September 2024, at <https://trt.global/world/article/18204312> (accessed on 11 July 2025).

The political consolidation by Islamists has increased. In the September 2024 parliamentary elections, IAF secured 31 out of 138 seats, increasing its legislative presence by three times.²³⁰ IAF, with its growing influence and position in opposition rather than governing, could continue to channel anti-Israel sentiments without bearing responsibility and create public discontent against the government.²³¹ Jordan has accused MB of mobilising resources, collecting supplies, organising pro-Hamas daily demonstrations to destabilise the government. On 16 April 2025, Jordanian authorities arrested 16 people allegedly linked to MB for plotting attacks inside the kingdom involving rockets and drones.²³² Jordan, seeking to undermine MB's growing domestic appeal amidst the Gaza war, announced outlawing the group on 23 April 2025, declaring membership and promotion of its ideology illegal. While IAF has been permitted to operate, it has been subjected to office raids.²³³

The government is worried about Iran, MB, Hamas and Hezbollah's efforts to radicalise and recruit young Jordanians to propagate anti-Israeli, anti-West views and threaten the state's stability. Since the 7 October 2023 attack, Jordan has remained concerned about Iranian subversion and the activities of its allies, turning the Jordanian territory into a battlefield within Iran's multi-front strategy. In March 2025, Jordanian forces foiled an Iranian-

²³⁰ Jane Arraf, "In Jordan's Elections, Anger At Israel Over The Gaza War Fuels Islamist Gains", *National Public Radio (NPR)*, 12 September 2024, at <https://www.npr.org/2024/09/12/g-s1-22336/jordan-elections-islamists-israel-gaza-war> (accessed on 29 July 2025).

²³¹ Burcu Ozcelik, "Why Jordan's Role As A 'Buffer State' Is Being Tested", *Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)*, 26 November 2024, at <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/why-jordans-role-buffer-state-being-tested> (accessed on 28 July 2025).

²³² David Gritten, "Protests In Jordan Over Rocket And Drone Plots", *BBC News*, 16 April 2025, at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpwzywjwgvyo> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

²³³ Neil Quilliam, "Jordan's Ban On The Muslim Brotherhood Is No Surprise But Comes Against A Dangerous Backdrop", Chatham House, 2 May 2025, at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/05/jordans-ban-muslim-brotherhood-no-surprise-comes-against-dangerous-backdrop> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

linked plot to smuggle mines, explosives, AK-47s and rockets from militias in Syria to an MB cell tied to Hamas.²³⁴ Smuggling of rocket launchers and explosives has become recurrent. Hamas, on 15 May 2025, denied any plans to target Jordan, saying it only targets Israel.²³⁵ Earlier on 5 May 2025, Israeli forces intercepted four handguns. On 9 September 2024, firearms and magazines were seized at the Yitzhak Rabin crossing inside a vehicle crossing from Jordan into Israel.²³⁶ The government is directly engaging with MB to curb support for radical activities and has arrested a few members for possession of weapons.

Iran views Jordan as vulnerable, seeking to exploit the war to weaken the monarchy and expand influence. On Iranian social media, Jordan's role has been vilified for its 'complicity' against Iran.²³⁷ In response, Jordan urged reliance on official sources and tightened censorship, blocking 12 media websites in May 2025.²³⁸ The disconnect between the government's

²³⁴ Samia Nakhoul & Suleiman Al-Khalidi, "Jordan Foils Arms Plot As Kingdom Caught In Iran-Israel Shadow War", *Reuters*, 15 May 2024, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-foils-arms-plot-kingdom-caught-iran-israel-shadow-war-2024-05-15/> (accessed on 1 July 2025).

²³⁵ Elisha Ben Kimon, "IDF And Police Thwart Smuggling Attempt From Jordan", *Ynet News*, 5 May 2025, at <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/3x105174p> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

²³⁶ "74 Hand Guns Seized As Smuggling In Southern Israel Thwarted", *i24 News*, 9 September 2024, at <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/article-74-hands-guns-seized-as-smuggling-in-southern-israel-thwarted> (accessed on 28 July 2025).

²³⁷ Patrick Wintour, "Jordan Faces Difficult Act Amid Row Over Role In Downing Iranian Missiles", *The Guardian*, 15 April 2024, at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/15/jordan-difficult-balancing-act-row-downing-iranian-drones-israel#:%~:text=The%20stance%20is%20mirrored%20in,traitor%20wearing%20the%20Israeli%20flag> (accessed on 24 July 2025).

²³⁸ "Jordanian Air Force Intercepts Missiles And Drones Over National Airspace", *Jordan News Agency*, 13 June 2025, at https://www.petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=72398&lang=en&name=en_news&cat=en_news (accessed on 25 July 2025); "Jordan Bans 12 News Sites For 'Spreading Media Poison' Following Corruption Report", Committee to Protect Journalists, 16 May 2025, at <https://cpj.org/2025/05/jordan-bans-12-news-sites-for-spreading-media-poison-following-corruption-report/> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

position and public sentiments has widened after Jordanian forces downed Iranian missiles. Jordan's official position of equidistance shifted in favour of close collaboration with the US-led axis.²³⁹

Jordan also faced threats and warnings from Hezbollah and Iraq-based Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF). Kataib Hezbollah announced sending 12,000 fighters to join Jordanian fighters to fight for Palestine.²⁴⁰ Iran-aligned groups based in Iraq killed three US soldiers and injured more than 40 on 28 January 2024 in north-eastern Jordan.²⁴¹ Moreover, Houthi attacks on Israel have disrupted commercial shipping in the Red Sea, closed Bab El-Mandeb, and affected operations in Aqaba port. Container traffic fell by 23 per cent in 2024 since 2023, while Jordan's exports fell nearly 36 per cent in February 2024 compared to the previous year.²⁴² Houthis have violated Jordanian airspace on numerous occasions to attack Israeli territory.

In response to growing threats from Jordanian borders, Israel, on 18 May 2025, announced the construction of a high-tech security barrier covering 425 km from Hamat Gader in the north to Samar Sands, near Eilat in the south. The fence will be erected to halt weapons smuggling by Iran and

²³⁹ Aaron Magid, "Jordan Took Out Iranian Munitions Over Its Airspace. Now It Has Tensions With Its People And Iran", *Atlantic Council*, 18 April 2024, at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/jordan-israel-iran-retaliation-gaza/> (accessed on 3 July 2025).

²⁴⁰ "Iraq Rejects Violation Of Jordan's Sovereignty In Wake Of Kataib Hezbollah Threats", *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 3 April 2024, at <https://english.awsat.com/arab-world/4946716-iraq-rejects-violation-jordan%20%99s-sovereignty-wake-kataib-hezbollah-threats> (accessed on 4 July 2025).

²⁴¹ "3 US Service Members Killed, Others Injured In Jordan Following Drone Attack", US Department of Defense, 29 January 2024, at <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/article/3659809/3-us-service-members-killed-others-injured-in-jordan-following-drone-attack/> (accessed on 29 July 2025).

²⁴² David Schenker, "Iran Targets Jordan: The Kingdom Joins The Theocracy's List Of Enemies", The Caravan, Hoover Institution, 5 June 2024, at <https://www.hoover.org/research/iran-targets-jordan-kingdom-joins-theocracy-s-list-enemies> (accessed on 4 July 2025).

the illegal entry of African migrants via Jordan. Israel seeks to bolster its presence in the Jordan Valley and ensure Israeli sovereignty.²⁴³

5.5. COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL

The survival of the monarchy and state stability are the primary goals of the Hashemite Kingdom. In this context, the degradation of Hamas' military capabilities aligns with Jordan's strategic interest. In the West Bank, Hamas and new armed groups such as Lion's Den, Jenin Brigades, Tulkarm Brigades, Nablus Brigades, Balata Brigade, etc., are seeking to destabilise and replace the PA, directly impacting Jordanian security. Jordan, therefore, aims to ensure the survival of the PA through coordination with Israel and the US. Jordan is a critical transit base for the transfer of armoured vehicles and arms from the US for the PA's efforts at preventive security, National Security Services, policing and reclaiming West Bank areas in Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarm under Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other armed groups' control. Jordan, in coordination with the US Security Coordinator (USSC), has been training PA security forces to combat the Palestinian armed groups.²⁴⁴ Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC) have regularly hosted PA security officials since 2007.²⁴⁵

Jordanian security forces have blocked anti-peace treaty protests near the Israeli embassy, and anti-riot forces clashed with demonstrators and carried out arrests of political activists, journalists and trade union leaders on several

²⁴³ Stav Levaton, "Security Cabinet Approves Plan For High-Security Barrier Along Jordanian Border", *The Times of Israel*, 18 May 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/security-cabinet-approves-plan-for-high-tech-security-barrier-along-jordanian-border/> (accessed on 30 July 2025).

²⁴⁴ Seth J. Frantzman, "Palestinians Receive US-Made Vehicles, Weapons Through Jordan – Report", *The Jerusalem Post*, 12 September 2023, at <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-758615> (accessed on 1 July 2025).

²⁴⁵ "The Head Of Mission Meets With High Level Jordanian Security Actors", The European Union Mission for the Support of Palestinian Police and Rule of Law, 4 April 2018, at <https://eupolcoppss.eu/single-news/203/en> (accessed on 23 July 2025).

occasions in 2023 and 2024.²⁴⁶ The key demands of the protestors include revoking normalisation and annulling the peace treaty, terminating energy, water and trade deals with Israel and reviewing ties with the US. The government stated that while peaceful protests are permitted, any attempt to disrupt public order and marches to the border zone are prohibited.²⁴⁷

Military-level dialogue and security cooperation continued during Israel's Gaza campaign. Senior generals from Jordan and Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain held secret meetings with then IDF Chief of Staff, Herzl Halevi, in June 2024 in Manama to discuss regional security cooperation, especially in air and missile defences, intelligence sharing and early warning.²⁴⁸ In the aftermath of Bashar Al-Assad's downfall in Syria, Jordan's General Intelligence Department Chief, Ahmad Husni, and senior officials met with Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar and Military Intelligence Directorate Chief Maj. Gen. Shlomi Binder, on 15 December 2024 in Amman to share their mutual concerns, including weapons smuggling to the West Bank and discuss their contacts with *Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham* (HTS). Israel has also been careful to preserve the security understanding and maintain the monarchy's stability during this critical period.²⁴⁹

In October 2023, Jordan allowed the US to use its territory, creating an air bridge to transport Special Forces, ammunition, missiles, drones, vehicles,

²⁴⁶ “Jordanian Police Clash With Protesters Near Israeli Embassy”, *Reuters*, 18 October 2023, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordanian-police-clash-with-protesters-near-israeli-embassy-2023-10-18/> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

²⁴⁷ Suleiman Al-Khalidi, “Jordanians Protest Against Peace Treaty With Israel In Fresh Rallies”, *Reuters*, 29 March 2024, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordanians-protest-against-peace-treaty-with-israel-fresh-rallies-2024-03-29/> (accessed on 24 July 2025).

²⁴⁸ “IDF Chief Meets Senior Arab Officers In Bahrain To Discuss Security Cooperation”, *i24 News*, 13 June 2024, at <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/arts-idf-chief-meets-senior-arab-officers-in-bahrain-to-discuss-security-cooperation> (accessed on 4 July 2025).

²⁴⁹ “Israelis And Jordanians Said To Meet Secretly Amid Worries Over Rebel Surge In Syria”, *The Times of Israel*, 15 December 2024, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israelis-and-jordanians-said-to-meet-secretly-amid-worries-over-rebel-surge-in-syria/> (accessed on 3 July 2024).

and spare parts on 15 special aircraft to Israel. In April 2024, Jordan coordinated with the US and France to intercept rockets and drones targeting Israel and allowed Israeli fighter jets to enter Jordanian airspace to destroy Iranian missiles.²⁵⁰ Abdullah II, downplaying the connection with Israel, defended downing Iranian missiles and drones as an act of self-defence and a matter of sovereignty.²⁵¹

Jordan's cooperation with Israel has continued throughout the war in spheres such as renewing the bilateral water supply agreement, opening border crossings for the movement of people and vehicles, and supplying agricultural produce. Jordan-Israel bilateral trade has remained undisturbed, increasing from US\$ 227.8 million in 2023 to US\$ 317.2 million in 2024. Israel's natural gas exports to Jordan have continued throughout the war, and in fact, Israel's gas supply to Jordan and Egypt surged by 13.4 per cent in 2024.²⁵²

During the 12-day Israel-Iran war, the gas flow was interrupted, sparking discussions within Jordan about energy sustainability, cancellation of the gas agreement with Israel, viewing the interruption as a clause for annulment and seeking out an alternate channel, particularly Egypt. The critics of the gas deal argue that the agreement exposes national sovereignty to political blackmail, provides US\$ 10 billion of public money to the Israeli economy

²⁵⁰ “Iran Closely Monitoring Jordan’s Movements”, *Mehr News Agency*, 14 April 2024, at <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/213829/Iran-closely-monitoring-Jordan-s-movements> (28 June 2025).

²⁵¹ Samia Nakhoul and Suleiman Al-Khalidi, “Jordan Foils Arms Plot As Kingdom Caught In Iran-Israel Shadow War”, *Reuters*, 15 May 2024, at <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/jordan-foils-arms-plot-kingdom-caught-iran-israel-shadow-war-2024-05-15/> (accessed on 1 July 2025); “Jordan FM Summons Iranian Ambassador To Protest Interference In Its Affairs”, *Al Arabiya*, 14 April 2025, at <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/04/14/jordan-fm-summons-iranian-ambassador-to-protest-interference-in-its-affairs> (accessed on 14 April 2024).

²⁵² Steven Scheer, “Israeli Natural Gas Exports To Egypt And Jordan Up 13.4% In 2024”, *Reuters*, 6 March 2025, at <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/israeli-natural-gas-exports-egypt-jordan-up-134-2024-2025-03-05/> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

and deprives the kingdom the opportunity to invest in sustainable home-grown energy alternatives.²⁵³ On 3 March 2024, Jordan asked Israel for a one-year extension in water supply. Israel to renew gas supply to Jordan demanded reducing anti-Israel sentiments, restoring bilateral relations, including the return of ambassadors.²⁵⁴ US pressure and Jordan's security coordination in intercepting strikes contributed to Israel's decision to renew the water-sharing agreement on 19 May 2024. Jordan remains heavily dependent on water supply from Israel to fulfil the needs of its population and agricultural production.²⁵⁵

Despite the war, Jordan values the peace treaty with Israel and resisted any effort to cancel it. While there have been calls by several Jordanian parliamentarians to review or annul the peace treaty with Israel, there have been no formal moves to cancel the peace treaty. Jordan views the cancellation of the treaty counter-productive, allowing Israel a pretext to exclude Jordan's stakes in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, lose all diplomatic leverage to prevent the formal annexation of the West Bank and initiate displacement measures.²⁵⁶ Moreover, Jordan does not want to

²⁵³ Mohammad Ersan, "Jordan Urged To Cancel Israel Gas Deal After Supply Halted Amid Iran War", *Middle East Eye*, 21 June 2025, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-urged-cancel-israel-gas-deal-after-supply-halted-amid-iran-war> (accessed on 21 July 2025).

²⁵⁴ "Jordan Seeks Water Deal Extension With Israel Amid War On Gaza", *Jordan News*, 5 March 2024, at <https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Jordan-seeks-water-deal-extension-with-Israel-amid-war-on-Gaza-34639> (accessed on 28 May 2025).

²⁵⁵ Edmund Ratka & Michael Rimmel, "Israeli-Jordanian Water Management Relations", Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 14 April 2025, at <https://www.kas.de/en/web/auslandsinformationen/artikel/detail/-/content/israeli-jordanian-water-management-relations> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

²⁵⁶ Abdulaziz Kilani, "The Implications Of The Gaza-Israel War For US-Jordanian Ties", New Lines Institute, 6 June 2024, at <https://newlinesinstitute.org/state-resilience-fragility/the-implications-of-the-gaza-israel-war-for-u-s-jordanian-ties/> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

jeopardise the annual aid from the US amounting to US\$ 1.5 billion per year.²⁵⁷

5.6. US: KEY DETERMINANT

As the first Arab leader to meet President Trump in his second term on 11 February 2025, Abdullah II emphasised Jordan's stability, the protection of its population, rejection of Palestinian displacement, the urgency of sustained humanitarian aid, and the deteriorating conditions in the West Bank.²⁵⁸ Jordanian Prime Minister on 12 February 2025 affirmed the kingdom's position, i.e. no settlement, no displacement, and no solutions at Jordan's expense.²⁵⁹

Jordan remains frustrated with the US that seeks to support the kingdom's national defence while pursuing policies that run contrary to its security interests such as failure to implement Israel-Hamas ceasefire until 29 September 2025, and prevent regional escalation, non-appreciation of Jordan's existential threat, aid cuts to PA and United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), US Agency for International Development (USAID) fund cuts affecting 35,000 jobs, imposition of 20 per cent tariff, failure to provide sufficient aid in Gaza and vetoing vote on Palestinian statehood in the UN.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Curtis Ryan, "The Impact Of The Gaza War On Jordan's Domestic And International Politics", Project on Middle East Political Science, 2024, at <https://pomeps.org/the-impact-of-the-gaza-war-on-jordans-domestic-and-international-politics> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

²⁵⁸ "King Abdullah II Reaffirms Jordan's Opposition To Palestinian Displacement", *Middle East Eye*, 11 February 2025, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/live-blog/live-blog-update/king-abdullah-ii-reaffirms-jordans-opposition-palestinian-displacement?nid=417957&topic=Israel%2527s%2520war%2520on%2520Gaza&fid=542234> (accessed on 13 July 2025).

²⁵⁹ "Jordan: No Settlement, No Displacement, No Solutions At Our Expense", *Palestine Chronicle*, 12 February 2025, at <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/jordan-no-settlement-no-displacement-no-solutions-at-our-expense/> (accessed on 10 July 2025).

²⁶⁰ Justin Salhani, "Tightrope: Jordan's Balancing Act Between Iran And Israel", *Al Jazeera*, 21 April 2024, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/21/tightrope-jordans-balancing-act-between-iran-and-israel> (accessed on 27 July 2025).

Jordanian State and its citizens worry that Israel and the US will pressure the country to accept another large wave of Palestinian refugees and solve the Palestinian issue at Jordan's expense. Jordan's limited regional leverage and power imbalance in contrast to Israel's military superiority poses a significant burden in its diplomatic and political manoeuvring. Before his meeting with Abdullah II, Trump stated the possibility of withholding aid to Jordan and Egypt in case of their rejection. Jordan's high dependence on the US makes it vulnerable to geopolitical pressure.

Jordan in the near future could recalibrate the nature of engagement with the US and Israel and hedge its bets. To ensure state and economic stability, Jordan has to procure funding from other foreign powers to replenish the aid cut from the US. It currently hosts around 3,000 US troops. Due to Trump's intention to pull out troops from Syria and Iraq, there have been questions about the utility of troops in Jordan. The reduction or withdrawal of US troops could alter Jordan-Israel dynamics, allowing the IDF to intervene inside Jordanian territory to counter perceived security threats.²⁶¹ For now, Jordan and Egypt's security cooperation with Israel remains a key leverage for both Arab states to reject US pressure to accept the Palestinians.²⁶²

5.7. DONALD TRUMP'S 20-POINT PLAN

Jordan endorsed Donald Trump's 20-point plan announced on 29 September 2025, commending his leadership and efforts to end Gaza war. Jordanian Foreign Minister alongside counterparts from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Türkiye, Pakistan, and Indonesia issued a joint

²⁶¹ Justin Salhani, "As Jordan's King Abdullah Meets Trump, Can He Resist US Pressure On Gaza?" *Al Jazeera*, 11 February 2025, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/11/as-jordans-king-abdullah-meets-trump-can-he-resist-us-pressure-on-gaza> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

²⁶² Yasmine El-Sabawi, "Jordan's King Abdullah Avoids Contradicting Trump's Claim To Authority Over Gaza", *Middle East Eye*, 11 February 2025, at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-king-abdullah-avoids-contradicting-trump-claim-authority-gaza> (accessed on 12 July 2025).

statement highlighting the importance of partnership with the US for regional peace. They reiterated their willingness to constructively engage with Washington towards a comprehensive deal to end the war enabling open humanitarian corridor and unrestricted delivery of sufficient aid, preventing displacement, securing hostage release, and ensuring a security mechanism guaranteeing security of all sides, achieving full Israeli withdrawal, advancing reconstruction and creating a credible path to a two-state solution fully integrating Gaza with West Bank.²⁶³

Jordan has appreciated the peace plan for nullifying the relocation option in Gaza alluded by Trump and Israeli leaders.²⁶⁴ According to point no. 12 of the Plan, “No one will be forced to leave Gaza and those who wish to leave will be free to do so and free to return. We will encourage people to stay and offer them the opportunity to build a better Gaza.” The plan, therefore dismissed Israel’s occupation or annexation and envisions full IDF withdrawal. Jordan has prioritised Hamas’ disarmament and an independent demilitarised Palestine under PA. Jordan and Egypt, in preparation for a potential PA governance and security control in post-conflict Gaza, intensified training of Palestinian police officers and increased recruitment since April 2025. Safadi noted that additional training would be facilitated as part of a broader plan for Gaza’s future based on a humanitarian response, early recovery and reconstruction, governance, security and a political horizon.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ “Jordan, Arab, Islamic Countries Welcome Trump’s Gaza Plan”, *The Jordan Times*, 30 September 2025, at <https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-arab-islamic-countries-welcome-trumps-gaza-plan> (accessed on 4 December 2025).

²⁶⁴ Omar H. Rahman, “Survival Is Paramount As Decision Looms On Trump’s Gaza Proposal”, *Middle East Council*, 1 October 2025, at https://mecouncil.org/blog_posts/halting-the-gaza-genocide-is-the-palestinians-least-bad-option/ (accessed on 21 October 2025).

²⁶⁵ Lizzie Porter, “Jordan And Egypt Train Police And Security Forces For Duty In Gaza”, *The National*, 12 April 2025, at <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2025/04/11/jordan-and-egypt-training-police-and-security-forces-for-future-gaza-deployment/> (accessed on 25 July 2025).

On the subject of International Stabilisation Force (ISF) deployment and responsibilities, the position of Jordan and other Arab states differs from Israel, Hamas and the PA. Israel wants an ISF with enforcement powers to disarm Hamas and other factions while allowing the IDF broad operational freedom of action and overarching security responsibility to counter threats and prevent re-establishment of Hamas' military infrastructure.²⁶⁶ Though willing to cede civilian-security management to the technocratic committee, Hamas rejects ISF's enforcement powers, by tying disarmament to ending the occupation. The PA views UN Security Council (UNSC) mandated ISF as a mechanism to monitor the ceasefire, support Ramallah-based government's return to governance in Gaza, and assist in security, border protection and training with internal security handled solely by official Palestinian entities.

Arab states, including Jordan, favour an UNSC-mandated ISF as a peacekeeping force, limited to monitoring and supporting local Palestinian police trained by Jordanian and Egyptian forces. While reluctant to deploy troops on the ground, moderate Arab states are prepared to assist, train, and provide funding. King Abdullah II stressed that Jordan would only participate in peacekeeping rather than peace-enforcing role, adding that Jordanian forces will not enter Gaza because the kingdom is “too close politically” to the conflict. He noted that, “If we’re running around Gaza on patrol with weapons, that’s not a situation that any country would like to get involved in”.²⁶⁷ Amid violent competition among Palestinian factions,

²⁶⁶ Udi Dekel & Noy Shalev, “Israel’s Demands For The Demilitarization Of The Gaza Strip And The Operating Principles Of The International Stabilization Force”, INSS, Insight No. 2057, 9 November 2025, at <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/isf/> (accessed on 24 November 2025).

²⁶⁷ Aysu Bicer, “Jordan’s King Warns Countries Will Reject ‘Peace Enforcement’ Role In Gaza Under Trump Plan”, *Anadolu Ajansi*, 28 October 2025, at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/jordan-s-king-warns-countries-will-reject-peace-enforcement-role-in-gaza-under-trump-plan/3728340> (accessed on 5 December 2025); Lazar Berman, “Jordan’s King Says International Forces In Gaza Should ‘Keep,’ But Not ‘Enforce,’ Peace”, *The Times of Israel*, 28 October 2025, at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jordans-king-says-international-forces-in-gaza-should-keep-but-not-enforce-peace/> (accessed on 4 December 2025).

the deployment of troops from Arab and Islamic states could expose them to crossfire or direct confrontation.²⁶⁸

Moreover, the deployment of peacekeepers from Arab states could intensify frictions with the IDF by constraining its operational freedom, while any casualties inflicted on Arab personnel by the IDF, whether accidental or otherwise, could further escalate tensions and undermine the effective functioning of the ISF.²⁶⁹ The lack of cooperation between Hamas and PA and hesitation of Jordan, other Arab states and the international community to intervene directly in Gaza could affect its long-term stabilisation.²⁷⁰

Lastly, despite Trump's 20-point plan, Israel's continued military operations in Gaza, killing around 430 Palestinians between 10 October 2025 and 5 January 2026,²⁷¹ allow it to indefinitely retain control over substantial chunk of Gaza's territory divided by the Yellow Line. Netanyahu's protracted Phase II negotiations, the escalation of violence by IDF troops and settlers alongside settlement expansion in the West Bank, and Israel's persistent rejection of Palestinian statehood is likely to keep Amman actively engaged

²⁶⁸ Hassaan Bokhari, "The Grand Betrayal Of Palestine", *Middle East Monitor*, 1 October 2025, at <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20251001-the-grand-betrayal-of-palestine/> (accessed on 10 October 2025).

²⁶⁹ Lazar Berman, "Gaza Deal Is Stunning Achievement For Trump, And For Netanyahu – Provided It Holds", *The Times of Israel*, 9 October 2025, at https://www.timesofisrael.com/a-stunning-achievement-for-trump-and-for-netanyahu-a-huge-provided-it-holds/?utm_source=The+Daily+Edition&utm_campaign=daily-edition-2025-10-09&utm_medium=email (accessed on 18 October 2025).

²⁷⁰ Udi Dekel & Noy Shalev, "Israel's Demands For The Demilitarization Of The Gaza Strip And The Operating Principles Of The International Stabilization Force", INSS, Insight No. 2057, 9 November 2025, at <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/isf/> (accessed on 24 November 2025).

²⁷¹ "Toll From Israeli Aggression On Gaza Rises To 71,388", *Qatar News Agency*, 5 January 2026, at <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=death-toll-from-israeli-aggression-on-gaza-rises-to-71388&date=5/01/2026#:~:text=General,Arab%20Affairs> (accessed on 5 January 2026).

and potentially cause friction in Jordan–Israel relations. In case of implementation of Phase II of the Trump plan, Jordan's cooperation with Israel could intensify in security issues and the post-war governance mechanism.

6 CONCLUSION

Jordan's national interest is closely tied to the Israel-Palestine issue because of its shared borders with Israel and West Bank, preserving the demographic balance and custodianship of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. For Jordan, the Israel-Palestine conflict is both a foreign policy issue and a domestic concern, and its security and national interests are directly linked to the resolution of the Palestinian issue. While maintaining its influence over any settlement of the Palestinian issue, Jordan has prioritised a two-state solution as essential to safeguarding its sovereignty and stability. Its foreign policy is shaped by internal fragility, external dependence, and hostile regional environment. Despite geographic, military, and economic constraints, the kingdom has pursued a proactive foreign policy by preserving state control, adapting to shifting global power structures, regional security threats, and inter-Arab rivalries. The monarchy's survival imperative shapes and necessitates its foreign policy decision-making.

The Palestinian issue is central to Jordan's domestic politics, demography, security, and foreign policy. King Abdullah, after gaining control over West Bank, including East Jerusalem post-1948 Arab-Israel war, took formal measures to enforce integration within the Jordanian state that continued under King Hussein. After loss of West Bank in 1967 war, Jordan continued to constitutionally define the territory as part of Hashemite kingdom and proposed confederation between Jordan and Palestinian state on West Bank and Gaza Strip under United Arab Kingdom. The emergence of PLO in 1960s and Arab League resolution to recognise PLO as legitimate representative of the Palestinian people diluted Jordan's right to re-establish its sovereignty. By the 1980s, it realised that entanglement in West Bank was counterproductive and announced disengagement in July 1988. After disengagement, Jordan continued to preserve its influence, primarily through advocacy of the two-state solution and the custodianship over Jerusalem's holy sites.

Jordan's relations with Israel reflects a long-standing pragmatism rooted in regime survival, geopolitical balancing, and regional stability. From Abdullah I's early interactions with the Zionist movement to Hussein's discreet diplomacy during the Cold War and post-1967 environment, the Hashemite strategy consistently prioritised security, territorial integrity, and protection from regional rivals. By viewing Jordan as a stabilising buffer, Israel reciprocated through intelligence coordination and advocacy in Western capitals. Despite formal peace since 1994, full-scale normalisation was hindered due to domestic opposition and Israel's conduct in Jordan, Palestinian territories, and neighbouring Arab states. Security, intelligence, and border coordination have been the most durable pillars of the peace treaty, reinforced by the US military and economic assistance. Cooperation expanded into trade, water, energy, and regional multilateral frameworks such as the East Mediterranean Gas Forum. These interactions strengthened Jordan's economic resilience and geopolitical relevance, despite periodic diplomatic tensions.

The Israel–Hamas war has placed unprecedented pressure on the kingdom to deftly navigate between its support for the Palestinian cause while preserving security cooperation with Israel and adhering to the long-standing US alliance. In terms of Jordan's role in the Israel–Hamas war, Amman invested political and diplomatic efforts to end the war, pushed for Gaza's reconstruction and provided humanitarian assistance. Israel's expansionist settlement policies, annexation measures, and pursuit of Palestinian displacement, bolstered by the US support under Trump, pose, what Jordan views as, an existential threat aimed at resolving Israel's demographic concerns at Jordan's expense. Israel's war in Gaza has fuelled radicalisation in Jordan, empowering Hamas and Islamist opposition groups while exposing the kingdom to Iran-led subversion, weapons smuggling, militant threats, and economic disruptions, thereby deepening public–government tensions and prompting heightened Israeli and Jordanian security measures along their shared border.

Despite IDF's actions in Gaza, Jordan has sustained extensive security, intelligence, economic, and energy cooperation with Israel, seeing coordination as essential for stabilising the West Bank, supporting the PA, protecting the monarchy, and safeguarding vital water, gas, and aid from the US. Jordan's relationship with the US has become strained because of

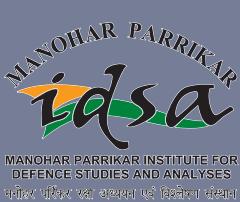
delaying Gaza ceasefire, cutting PA, UNRWA, and USAID funding; and undermining Jordan's security interests, prompting Amman to weigh hedging strategies even as it remains dependent on Washington for aid and security cooperation.

Jordan welcomed Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza, praising its nullification of forced displacement and endorsing US-led efforts to end the war, while emphasising Hamas' disarmament, PA-led governance, and a demilitarised, stable Gaza. Post-ceasefire, Jordan expects a humanitarian corridor, unrestricted aid, reconstruction, security guarantees, and a credible path to two-state solution integrating Gaza with the West Bank, while limiting its own role to peacekeeping, training, and supporting Palestinian forces rather than peace enforcement. Jordan remains apprehensive about participation in purely security-related approaches concerning the Gaza Strip. Israel's post-ceasefire actions, provocations in West Bank, and continued rejection of Palestinian statehood are likely to keep Amman actively engaged and generate friction in Jordan–Israel relations. If Phase II is implemented, however, bilateral cooperation may deepen on security and post-war governance.

Despite its limited resources and modest military capabilities, Jordan has long exercised outsized influence in West Asia through its central role in the Israel-Palestine conflict and its credibility as a security partner of the United States. The kingdom's strategic interests are deeply intertwined with developments in the West Bank and Gaza due to its geography, demographic sensitivities, and custodianship over Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. The Israel–Hamas war has intensified Amman's anxieties over potential displacement scenario and unilateral Israeli expansionist ambitions.

This paper examines the drivers of Jordan's foreign policy, its historical approach to the Palestinian question, its evolving engagement with Israel, and the kingdom's diplomatic and security posture during the said war and potential post-war dynamics.

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