

# Jordan

## *Ethnicity in Jordan*

### *Group selection*

Three main ethnic groups are politically relevant in Jordan: **Palestinian Arabs**, **Transjordanians (Jordanian Arabs)** and finally **Christians**, who comprise only a small percentage of the population. Estimates on the percentage of Palestinians among the Jordanian population differ widely because a significant number of Palestinians hold Jordanian citizenship. UNRWA's <sup>(2300)</sup> identified 1.9 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, which would only make up 30 Percent of the total Jordanian population compared to total population figures <sup>(2301)</sup>. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) <sup>(2302)</sup>, the number of Palestinians in Jordan ranges from 50 to 70 Percent. For our case, we rely on Fearon's (2003) number which is in line with the majority of the data estimates: 50% for the Palestinian Arabs and 40% for the Transjordanians. For the relative population share comprised by Christians, we rely on the Bertelsmann Stiftung Index <sup>(2303)</sup>, which indicates 6%.

<sup>2300</sup> [UNRWA, 2009]

<sup>2301</sup> [Central Intelligence Agency, 2008]

<sup>2302</sup> [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009]

<sup>2303</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008]

### *Power relations*

#### *Palestinian Arabs*

In the early 1920s, the semi-autonomous region of Transjordan was demarcated from Palestine. The area gained independence in 1946 and became The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan <sup>(2304)</sup>. At the time, the Jordanian population comprised a large share of Palestinians who had previously lived on the territory. Subsequently, they were marginalized and denied full participation in the social, economic, and political life <sup>(2305, 52)</sup>. The Jordanian society is described as "largely divided between Transjordanians or "East Bankers" (those whose families lived east of the Jordan River after World War I) and Palestinians (those whose families lived west of the Jordan River)" <sup>(2306)</sup>, with the first group holding political power. Since 1988, the Jordanian government, in violation of Jordan's Nationality law of 1954, has been arbitrarily and without notice withdrawing Jordanian nationality from its citizens of Palestinian origin, making them stateless <sup>(2307)</sup>. For existential reasons, most of the Jordanian Palestinians emphasize their loyalty to the Jordanian state while at the same time demanding equal rights to political participation. However, as nationalist elites question this propagated loyalty due to the conflictual Jordanian-Palestinian past, Jordanian Palestinians suffer

<sup>2304</sup> [Central Intelligence Agency, 2008]

<sup>2305</sup> [Nasser, 2005]

<sup>2306</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

<sup>2307</sup> [Human Rights Watch, 2010]

from “concrete political discrimination” (2308, 303). Based on these assessments, the Palestinian Arabs are coded as “discriminated”.

2308 [Perthes, 2002]

Up to 2017, tensions between Jordanian Arabs and Arabs of Palestinian origin remained salient. Citizens of Palestinian origin were under-represented in parliament and in senior positions of the government and the military, and were disadvantaged in regard to admissions to public universities. In addition, legal and societal discrimination against persons of Palestinian origin was still widespread (2309).

2309 [US Department of State, 2016]

### *Transjordanians (Jordanian Arabs)*

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is named after its royal elite, who belongs to this group. Jordan consists of two culturally imminent, but still separate Arab Peoples: on the one hand, of the Palestinians who developed an urban culture even before the founding of Israel and Jordan, and on the other hand of the Transjordanians, first and foremost defined through their tribal character and distinct by their Bedouin origin and traditions. During the establishment of the current kingdom prominent Palestinians played a political role, however, this does not mean that they were granted the same political rights (2310, 303). The key positions in the public administration and the security apparatus were occupied by Transjordanians. Especially since the beginning of the 1970s, King Hussein made use of the tribal culture, as he exclusively recruited tribal kins and loyals to form crucial elite troops. Further, he allowed far-reaching practices of tribal nepotism in the public sector (2311, 303). Based on these assessments, the Transjordanians are coded as holding monopoly power.

2310 [Perthes, 2002]

2311 [Perthes, 2002]

Up to 2017, the influence of the parliament was very limited. Elections for mayors and municipal councils took place in January 2013 and elections for the lower house of parliament took place on September 20, 2016. However, the legislative and executive powers were still concentrated in the hands of King Abdullah II, who ruled the state since his ascension to the throne in 1999 (2312).

2312 [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

### *Christians*

Although article 2 of the Jordanian constitution stipulates Islam as the official state religion, the Christian community can exercise its faith freely and without intervention by the state (2313). The law reserves nine seats in the lower house of parliament for Christians. However, there is no evidence that they execute political power (2314). Therefore, they are coded as powerless.

2313 [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008]

2314 [US Department of State, 2013]

During the latest review, three Christian ministers served in the cabinet, however, due to the extensive power of the king, their coding remained powerless (2315).

2315 [US Department of State, 2016]

## *Bibliography*

- [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008] Bertelsmann Stiftung. (2008). Transformation Index BTI 2008. Jordan. Retrieved on 10.04.2018 from: <http://www.bti-project.org/de/berichte/laenderberichte/detail/itc/jor/ity/2008/itr/mena/>
- [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016] Bertelsmann Stiftung. (2016). Transformation Index BTI 2016. Jordan. Retrieved on 30.08.2017 from: <http://www.bti-project.org/de/berichte/laenderberichte/detail/itc/JOR/>
- [Central Intelligence Agency, 2008] Central Intelligence Agency. (2008). The World Factbook. Jordan. Retrieved from (date unknown): <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html>
- [Human Rights Watch, 2010] Human Rights Watch. (2010). Stateless again. Palestinian-origin Jordanians deprived of their nationality. Retrieved from (date unknown): <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/02/01/stateless-again-0>
- [Nasser, 2005] Nasser, R.M. (2005). Palestinian identity in Jordan and Israel. The necessary “Other” in the making of a nation. London: Routledge.
- [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2009). Retrieved from (date unknown): <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps>
- [Perthes, 2002] Perthes, V. (2002). Geheime Gärten. Die neue arabische Welt. München: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag.
- [UNRWA, 2009] UNRWA. (2009). Where we work. Jordan. Retrieved from (date unknown): <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>
- [US Department of State, 2013] US Department of State. (2013). Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013. Jordan. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Retrieved from (date unknown): <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm>

[US Department of State, 2016] US Department of State. (2016).  
Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016. Jordan.  
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Retrieved on  
30.08.17 from: [http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/  
humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dlid=265504](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dlid=265504)

## *Political status of ethnic groups in Jordan*

*From 1946 until 2017*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Palestinian Arabs	0.5	DISCRIMINATED
Jordanian Arabs	0.4	MONOPOLY
Christians	0.06	POWERLESS



Figure 477: Political status of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1946-2017.

## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Jordan*

*From 1946 until 2017*

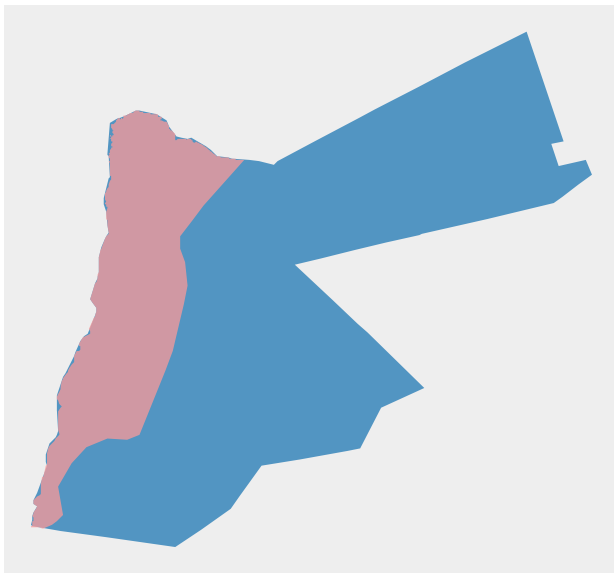


Figure 478: Map of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1946-2017.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■ Jordanian Arabs	89 209	Regional & urban
■ Palestinian Arabs	21 173	Regional & urban
■ Christians		Urban

Table 164: List of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1946-2017.

## *Conflicts in Jordan*

*Starting on 1948-04-14*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria	Government of Israel		1948-04-14			

*Starting on 1967-06-04*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Israel	Government of Jordan		1967-06-04			

*Starting on 2016-03-01*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Jordan	IS		2016-03-01			