

**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. The UNRWA (<sup>2688</sup>) identified 1.9 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, which would make up 30 Percent of the total Jordanian population compared to total population figures (<sup>2689</sup>). According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (<sup>2690</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>2691</sup>), which indicates 6%.

<sup>2688</sup> [UNRWA, 2009]

<sup>2689</sup> [Central Intelligence Agency, 2008]

<sup>2690</sup> [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009]

<sup>2691</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>2692</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>2693</sup>, 52). 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>2694</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>2695</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 participate in politics. However, nationalist elites question this propagated loyalty due to the tense Jordanian-Palestinian past, which leads to “concrete political

<sup>2692</sup> [Central Intelligence Agency, 2008]

<sup>2693</sup> [Nasser, 2005]

<sup>2694</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

<sup>2695</sup> [Human Rights Watch, 2010]

discrimination” of Jordanian Palestinians (<sup>2696</sup>, 303). Based on this information, the Palestinian Arabs are coded as discriminated.

Legal and societal discrimination against persons of Palestinian origin persisted (<sup>2697</sup>). Moreover, they were disadvantaged with regard to admissions to public universities. Up to 2021, citizens of Palestinian origin were underrepresented in parliament and in senior positions of the government and the military (<sup>2698</sup>). While their coding as discriminated has been retained, their case is less clear than others. Despite their underrepresentation in public positions, the government does not specifically target Palestinians and they take a leading role in the country’s economy (<sup>2699</sup>).

<sup>2696</sup> [Perthes, 2002]

<sup>2697</sup> [US Department of State, 2016]

<sup>2698</sup> [US Department of State, 2019]

<sup>2699</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020]

### *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 (<sup>2700</sup>, 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 (<sup>2701</sup>, 303). Thus, the Transjordanians are coded as holding monopoly power.

<sup>2700</sup> [Perthes, 2002]

<sup>2701</sup> [Perthes, 2002]

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 concentrated in the hands of King Abdullah II, who ruled the state since his ascension to the throne in 1999 (<sup>2702</sup>, <sup>2703</sup>).

<sup>2702</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

<sup>2703</sup> [US Department of State, 2019]

### *Christians*

Although Article 2 of the Jordanian constitution stipulates Islam as the official state religion, the Christian community can exercise their faith freely and without intervention by the state (<sup>2704</sup>). The law reserves nine seats in the lower house of parliament for Christians. However, there is no evidence that they execute political power (<sup>2705</sup>, <sup>2706</sup>, <sup>2707</sup>). Therefore, they are coded as powerless.

<sup>2704</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008]

<sup>2705</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>2706</sup> [US Department of State, 2016]

<sup>2707</sup> [US Department of State, 2019]

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*Political status of ethnic groups in Jordan*

*From 1946 until 2021*

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

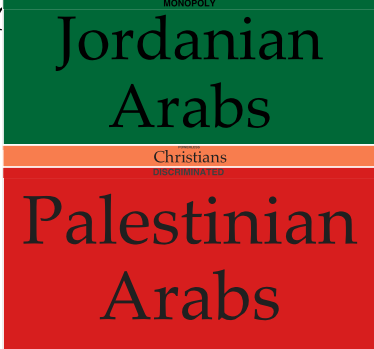


Figure 550: Political status of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1946-2021.

# Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Jordan

*From 1946 until 1946*

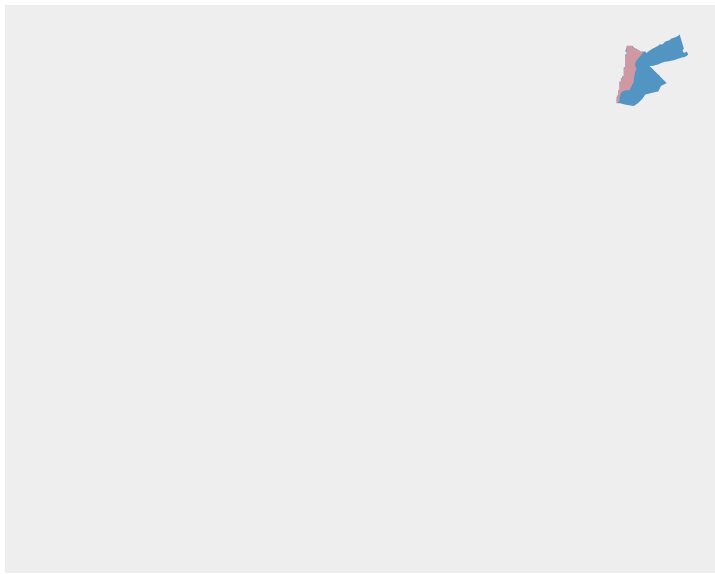


Figure 551: Map of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1946-1946.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■ Jordanian Arabs	89 208	Statewide
■ Palestinian Arabs	21 173	Regional & urban
■ Christians	0	Urban

Table 201: List of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1946-1946.

*From 1947 until 2021*

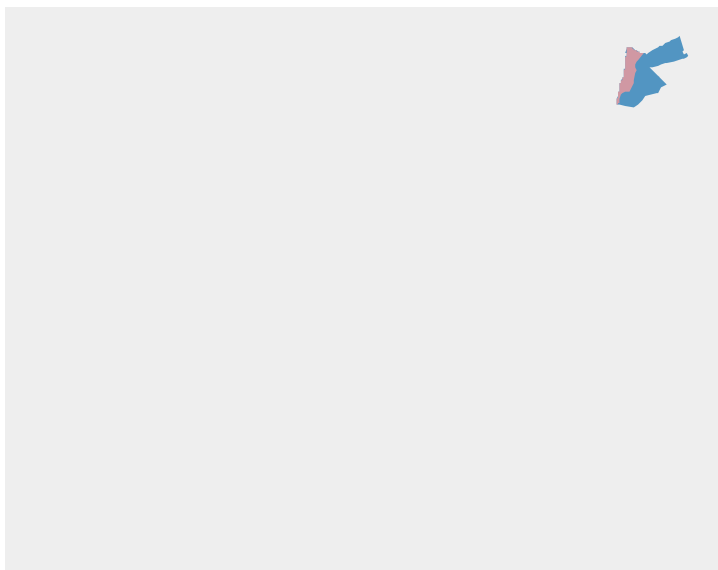


Figure 552: Map of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1947-2021.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Jordanian Arabs	89 208	Statewide
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Palestinian Arabs	21 173	Regional & urban
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Christians	0	Urban

Table 202: List of ethnic groups in Jordan during 1947-2021.



## *Conflicts in Jordan*

*Starting on 1948-04-14*

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