

## A History of Jordan

*Second Edition*

Since the publication of the first edition, substantial changes have occurred in the political landscape of Jordan and the Middle East. King Abdullah II has cemented his rule amidst an onslaught of threats which have faced his kingdom since he succeeded his father in 1999. The Syrian civil war has fundamentally shifted the political context of its neighbouring countries, with Jordan experiencing a huge population explosion as people moved across the border from Syria. This second edition of Robins' accessible and succinct survey of Jordanian political history is an account of a century of events within a country whose fortunes are closely identified with its heads of state. Beginning in the early 1920s in the mandate years, and now benefiting from new material on the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, attempts at democratisation, the collapse of the economy, the Jordan Spring and refugee crisis, this new edition featuring original research brings Jordan's political history into the twenty-first century.

**Philip Robins** is Professor of Middle East Politics and Faculty Fellow at St Antony's College, University of Oxford. He was a founding member of the Middle East Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, and a Visiting Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Bosphorus University, Istanbul. A specialist on the modern Middle East, he is the author of *The Middle East: A Beginners' Guide* (2nd edition 2016), *The Role, Position and Agency of Cusp States in International Relations* (2014) and the recent monograph *Middle East Drugs Bazaar: Production, Prevention and Consumption* (2017).

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Philip Robins  
University of Oxford



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*For my daughter Isabel*

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1867 Ottoman control is reimposed upon the lands of Transjordan
- 1906 The Hijaz Railway reaches Amman
- 1920 April: The San Remo conference establishes the mandate system, of which Transjordan is to be part  
 August: British High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel announces the creation of autonomous administrations in Transjordan  
 November: the future ruler, Amir Abdullah bin Hussein, arrives in Maan in the south
- 1921 Cairo conference under Churchill gives Abdullah jurisdiction over Transjordan
- 1923 September: The Adwan ‘revolt’
- 1924 August: Abdullah accepts the Ultimatum on British administrative supervision  
 October: Hijaz falls to the Saudis
- 1925 November (2nd): Hadda Agreement signed with the Saudis
- 1925–7 Druze Rebellion in southern Syria
- 1928 February: Agreement signed between Britain and Abdullah recognises the Amir as head of Transjordan  
 April: Organic Law, effectively a constitution, passed, establishing a Legislative Council  
 July: First meeting of the oppositionist Transjordan National Congress
- 1930 November: Major John Glubb establishes the Desert Patrol
- 1933 March: Legislative Council passes a consolidated land tax
- 1936–9 Revolt by the Arab population in Palestine
- 1939 Glubb replaces Peake as commander of the Arab Legion  
 Alec Kirkbride replaces Cox as British Resident



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- 1941 Middle East Supply Centre established  
 April: Rashid Ali al-Kailani coup in Iraq; Arab Legion participates in its suppression
- 1945 Arab League established, with Transjordan as a founding member
- 1946 May (25th): Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan proclaimed  
 August: Secret meetings begin between Abdullah and the Jewish Agency
- 1947 November (29th): UN General Assembly passes partition plan
- 1948 March (15th): Anglo-Jordanian treaty signed  
 May: Britain terminates Palestine mandate  
 May–June: First phase of the war: Jordan holds Arab Jerusalem  
 July: Second phase of the war: Jordan forfeits Lydda and Ramie  
 October–January (1949): Third phase of the war: Israel attacks Egypt rather than Jordan  
 October: First National Palestine Congress convened in Amman prepares the way for annexation  
 December: Jericho Congress opts for unity of the West Bank with Jordan
- 1949 April (3rd): Israeli–Jordanian armistice concluded
- 1950 April (25th): Jordanian parliament passes unification resolution
- 1951 July (20th): King Abdullah assassinated in Jerusalem  
 September (6th): Prince Talal proclaimed King
- 1952 January (1st): New, liberal constitution ratified  
 July (23rd): Nasser leads Free Officers' coup in Egypt  
 August (11th): King Talal abdicates on the grounds of ill-health
- 1953 May (2nd): King Hussein formally accedes
- 1954 October (16th): General election subject to gross interference
- 1955 New municipal law adopted  
 December: After sustained rioting, Jordan decides not to join Baghdad Pact
- 1956 March (1st): Glubb Pasha dismissed as head of the Arab Legion  
 July–November: The Suez Crisis  
 October: General election results in largely radical parliament; leader of National Socialists, Sulaiman Nabulsi, invited to form government
- 1957 January (19th): Arab Solidarity Agreement struck, whereby Arab states would replace Britain as Jordan's paymaster

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- January: Eisenhower Doctrine against Communism unveiled  
 March (14th): Anglo-Jordanian treaty abrogated  
 April: Following reports of army unrest, the King sacks the Nabulsi government and faces down the disturbances at the Zarqa army camp  
 Martial law follows the convening of the ‘Patriotic Congress’, an attempt to rally the opposition
- 1958 February (1st): Egypt and Syria unite to form the United Arab Republic  
 February (14th): Iraq and Jordan respond by establishing the Arab Federation  
 July (14th): Revolution in Baghdad brings down the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq  
 Hussein invites in British troops to stabilise Jordan
- 1960 August (29th): Prime Minister Hazza al-Majali assassinated by Syrian agents
- 1962 January: First premiership of technocratic, reformist Wasfi al-Tall  
 September: Start of Yemeni civil war
- 1963 February and March: Nationalist revolutions in Baghdad and Damascus respectively
- 1964 January: First Arab summit creates the Palestine liberation movement  
 September: Arab summit establishes unified Arab military command
- 1966 November (13th): Israel undertakes devastating raid on Samu
- 1967 May (30th): King Hussein flies to Cairo; signs Joint Defence Agreement with Egypt  
 June (5th–10th): Six Day War results in devastation of Jordanian military; loss of the West Bank  
 August–September: Khartoum Arab summit adopts peaceful strategy for rectifying Arab–Israeli problems  
 November (22nd): UN Security Council adopts Resolution 242, based on principle of land for peace
- 1968 March (21st): Jordanian and Palestinian fighters face down the Israeli army at the battle of Karamah
- 1970 September: PFLP’s Dawson’s Field hijackings precipitate Jordanian–Palestinian clashes  
 ‘Black September’ defeat for Palestinian guerrillas in a civil war
- 1971 July: Remainder of Palestinian guerrillas driven out of Jordan  
 The Allon Plan symbolises Israel’s preference for the ‘Jordanian option’ with regard to the future of the West Bank

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- 1972 March (15th): Hussein unveils his United Arab Kingdom vision for East Bank–West Bank relations
- 1973 September: Jordan warns Israel of imminent Arab attack  
 October: Jordan participates belatedly in October War (6th–26th) on the Syrian front
- 1974 Army unrest over food prices results in establishment of the ministry of supply  
 October: Rabat Arab summit recognises the PLO as representative of the Palestinians, at Jordan's expense  
 November: Parliament suspended in light of Rabat resolution
- 1976 Arafat and Hussein meet at Cairo Arab summit, marking the start of a post-civil war, post-Rabat thaw
- 1977 PLO body reverses policy on regime change in Amman
- 1978 April: National Consultative Council established while parliament in abeyance  
 September (17th): Camp David accords signed, envisaging role for Jordan  
 November: Baghdad Arab summit pledges \$1.25 billion a year to Jordan in return for steadfastness
- 1979 December: Sharif Abdul Hamid Sharaf appointed Prime Minister
- 1982 June: Israeli invasion of Lebanon  
 September (1st): Reagan peace plan is unveiled
- 1983 Jordanian Central Bank provides revolving credit line to maintain trade with Iraq  
 March: Parliament restored; Islamist successes in by-elections
- 1984 November: PLO's national council meets in Amman
- 1985 February (11th): Peace process coordinating agreement forged with PLO
- 1986 February: Peace process agreement collapses in recrimination  
 August: Jordan unveils stillborn development plan for the West Bank
- 1987 April: King Hussein and Shimon Peres conclude London Agreement on peace process  
 December: First *intifada* begins in Palestinian territories
- 1988 July (31st): King Hussein cuts administrative and legal ties with the West Bank
- 1989 February: Jordan is a founder member of four-state Arab Cooperation Council  
 February: Jordan's foreign debt default becomes public  
 April: Jordanian government begins to implement IMF programme  
 April: Riots break out in Maan, spreading to a number of towns

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- November (8th): Jordan holds free and fair elections; Islamists the winners
- 1990 August (2nd): Iraq invades Kuwait; King Hussein embarks on controversial ‘mediatory’ role
- 1991 January: Muslim Brotherhood join coalition government  
 June: National Charter adopted  
 October: Jordan takes part in Arab–Israeli peace summit in Madrid
- 1993 November: Jordan holds its first multi-party election since 1956
- 1994 June (28th): future Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah born  
 October (26th): Israel and Jordan sign peace treaty
- 1995 August: King Hussein initially supports Saddam Hussein’s defecting sons-in-law  
 October: Jordan hosts second of four regional economic conferences as part of its effort at normalisation
- 1996 King Hussein attends the ad hoc, US-led Anti-Terrorism World Summit convened in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt
- 1997–2003 Size of Chamber of Deputies (lower, elected house of parliament) expanded from 80 to 110, though 1997 election boycotted by IAF
- 1997 September: Israeli agents bungle assassination of Hamas leader in Amman
- 1999 January: Month of high drama ends with King Hussein changing the succession from his brother Hasan to his eldest son Abdullah  
 February (7th): King Hussein dies; King Abdullah II succeeds; Hussein’s second-youngest son, Hamzah, declared Crown Prince
- 1999–2000 Conservative Rawabdah serves as the new King’s first Prime Minister, March 1999–June 2000; his most notable policy is to crack down on the Hamas political organisation in the kingdom, expelling their leading figures based in Jordan
- June 2000–  
 June 2003 Businessman Ali Abu Ragheb serves as neo-liberal Prime Minister, thereby driving a volte-face in economic policy
- 2000 September: Israeli leader Ariel Sharon precipitately visits Temple Mount in Jerusalem, sparking the second Palestinian *intifada*
- 2001–8 King Abdullah visits President Putin in Moscow on ten occasions, the two leaders having come to power within nine months of one another
- 2003 March–April: A US-dominated coalition precipitates regime change in Baghdad through war
- 2004 November: Long-term Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat dies of an unclear illness in Ramallah, West Bank

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- 2005 January (30th): King Abdullah II speaks disapprovingly and in public about ‘the existence of a threatening Shia arc’ in the Middle East and the threat that this has posed to the region  
 November (9th): Multiple hotel bomb attacks in Amman kill fifty-seven people, the majority of victims at a wedding
- 2006 Israel and Jordan sign a gas deal worth \$10 billion, to operate over fifteen years  
 June (8th): Extremist Sunni Jihadi leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the original founder of ISIS from Zarqa in Jordan, killed in a US rocket attack  
 December (30th): Former Iraqi leader and Jordanian ally Saddam Hussein executed, having been captured by US forces
- 2009 July (2nd): Prince Hussein appointed Crown Prince
- 2010 November: Prime Minister promises to safeguard integrity of electoral process; however, the IAF still takes the decision to implement a second boycott of the lower house elections since the restoration of parliamentary life in 1989
- 2011 March: Youth Movement protests mark outbreak of Arab Spring in Jordan  
 October (24th): Awn Khasawneh, Jordanian international judge and avowed liberal, appointed as premier
- 2012–14 King publishes five discussion papers on liberal governance reform in Jordan
- 2012 April (26th): Khasawneh sacked for being too liberal
- 2012 Abdullah Nsour governs as an experienced, technocratic Prime Minister from October 2012 to June 2016
- 2013 Islamist current in the shape of the IAF boycotts Jordan’s third national election  
 July: An estimated 600,000 refugees from the Syrian civil war located in the Zaatari (and smaller) refugee camps in north Jordan, some 10 kilometres east of Mafraq
- 2015 February (3rd): Jordanian fighter pilot Moaz Kasasbeh burnt to death in a macabre execution by ISIS forces in Raqqa in retaliation for Jordan’s participation in the US-led coalition forces in Syria  
 New electoral law adopted, expanding the membership of the lower house to 150
- 2016 September (20th): Seats contested by women during the country’s most recent national election sees twenty women elected under the quota system, with three voted in without recourse to the quota  
 September (20th): The IAF decides to contest the national election after spurning the poll in 2013  
 September (22nd): Radical Transjordanian intellectual of Christian origin Nahed Hattar murdered by a militant promoting Islamist extremism in Amman

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- December: Largest home-grown terror attack in the kingdom for nearly a decade in Karak leaves thirteen dead and thirty-four wounded; Jordan has now established a counter-extremism unit
- 2018 June: More isolated terror attacks, notably in the strongly Christian towns of Fuheis and Karak; the King blames Kharijites (Muslim dissidents)

# MAPS

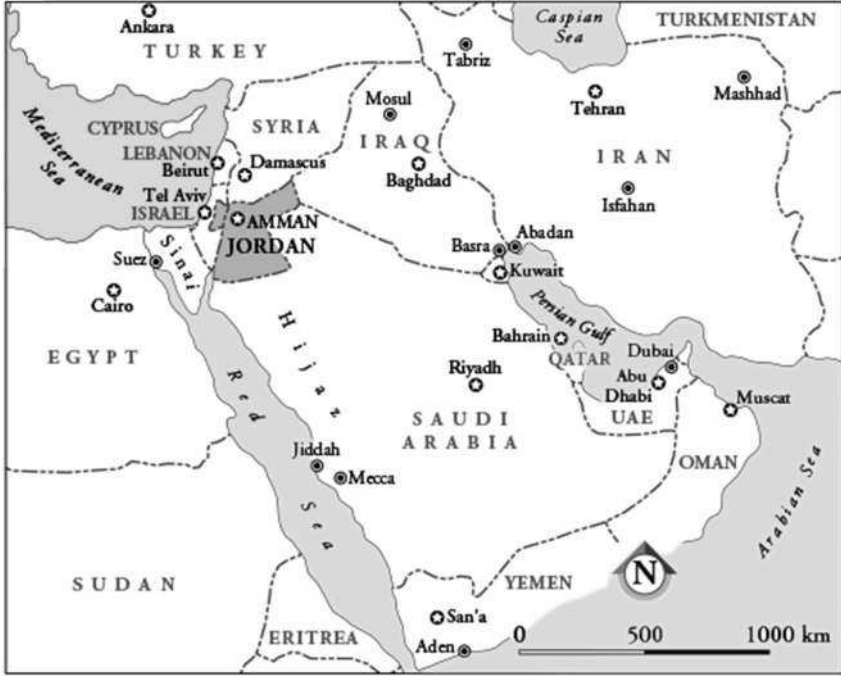


Map 1 Present-day Jordan





Map 2 Jordan and the West Bank (pre-1967)



Map 3 Jordan and the Middle East