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# Middle East Brief

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## Is the Jordanian Monarchy in Danger?

Dr. Asher Susser

The Jordanian monarchy is going through one of its most difficult periods ever. The present crisis is certainly the most trying phase of King Abdullah's reign, which began fourteen years ago upon the death of his father, King Hussein, in February 1999. But one should not rush with predictions of doom and gloom with respect to the Hashemites in Jordan. Too many have done so for decades past, only to be proven wrong time and again.

This Brief argues that the situation in Jordan, though tenuous, remains manageable, at least for the time being. The Arab Spring has emboldened the opposition by eroding the deterrent effect of the notorious "fear of government" (*haybat al-sulta*) in the Arab world in general and in Jordan in particular. For over two years, Jordan has experienced almost weekly demonstrations, led primarily by the Muslim Brethren but also by other less substantial opponents of the regime. They demand political reform and decry the pervasive corruption in the country, which they argue is the major cause for the depletion of the state's resources and the steadily declining living standards of the masses. At the same time, while the demonstrations continuing for more than two years reflects the perseverance of the opposition and the depth of popular disaffection, it also indicates the staying power of the regime and the relative ineffectiveness of its fractious rivals.

Three constants have contributed to the extraordinary stability and longevity of the Jordanian monarchy. First, Jordan is not a one-man show. Over the years, a staunchly loyal and cohesive East Banker<sup>1</sup> Jordanian political elite has developed. Jordan is their political patrimony; they have no other, and they will fight to defend it against all comers. In addition, the monarchy as well as the East Banker elite are buttressed by a loyal and professional

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security establishment, which is far more powerful than any coalition of potential domestic opponents. And finally, owing to the kingdom's geopolitical centrality, the regime and the state have been constantly supported by an array of external allies, for whom the kingdom's destabilization would be a nightmare. Those regional and international powers have always been willing to assist in bailing out the regime in times of need.

The Arab monarchies, for the most part, are wealthy oil-producing states. Though Jordan is not one, the others who are—Saudi Arabia in particular—have a vested interest in the Hashemites' survival. The fall of a neighboring monarchy would alarm them, especially in the midst of the revolutionary fervor inspired by the Arab Spring. Great powers, like Britain in the past and the United States today, have a similar interest in Jordanian stability, as does Israel across the river. Consequently, of all the states in the Fertile Crescent established in the early 1920s, the Jordanian monarchy is the only regime that still remains in power.

## The Monarchs' Trade Union<sup>2</sup>

Monarchies in the Arab world have fared better than their republican counterparts amidst the vicissitudes of the so-called Arab Spring. Some observers have argued that the strength of the monarchies lies in their wealth; while that is probably true for most of them, it is obviously not so in the case of Jordan. Others have noted that the authority of royal families, including Jordan's, stems from their integral role in the nation-building and state formation processes of their respective countries.<sup>3</sup>

One of the more salient explanations for the stability of the monarchies—especially in countries that have very strong tribal traditions, like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states—is the deep-rootedness of the dynastic principle itself. Hereditary succession has been an accepted, long-established practice for centuries in many parts of the Middle East, from the nomadic tribes to the Muslim caliphates and the Ottoman Sultanate.<sup>4</sup> As for the Hashemites, their dynastic legitimacy is reinforced by their being regarded as descendants of the Prophet.

These, needless to say, are assets with regard to legitimacy; but they do not guarantee immunity. After all, monarchies, including the Hashemites in Iraq, were overthrown in rapid succession in the Middle East of the 1950s and 1960s. But the military regimes that replaced them have generally been dismal failures. The ruling officers, lacking the ancestral authority of the monarchs, based their legitimacy on the promised attainment of power, prestige, and prosperity. They never delivered, and were subsequently faced in the Arab Spring with rebellions on the part of their disillusioned peoples.

The monarchs never promised their peoples messianic deliverance on a Nasserist or Ba'athi model. Rather, from Hussein in his early years to Abdullah at present, the Hashemites have offered nothing more ambitious than "securing a better life for all Jordanians (*ta'min hayat afdal li-jami' al-Urdunniyyin*).” But by comparison with other regimes in the neighborhood they have actually delivered, as attested to daily by the hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have been seeking refuge in the Jordanian haven. King Abdullah never misses an opportunity to remind his people of the blessings of Jordan's stability—which they should be eager to preserve, he observes, if they hope to avoid the catastrophes suffered by their fellow Arabs. He

is “fully confident” that Jordanians are “enlightened enough to realize what stability and security” mean for “their future and the future of their children.”<sup>5</sup>

## “It’s the Economy, Stupid”

That all being said, Jordan’s present difficulties should not be underestimated. Their origins are in the rumblings of economic discontent that began in Hussein’s time, long before the Arab Spring. As Abdullah observed, in an October 2011 interview in the *Washington Post*, “[t]he Arab Spring didn’t start because of politics; it started because of economics—poverty and unemployment. . . . if people are going to get back on the streets, it is because of economic challenges, not political.”<sup>6</sup>

The complaints of corruption on the part of the regime’s opposition are undoubtedly justified. But the real problems regarding Jordan’s economy are structural. The economy has been in serious trouble since the late 1980s and was never particularly strong, with a population growth that was too rapid for a cash-strapped and resource-barren economy. Recent price increases for food and fuel have made matters considerably worse for the average Jordanian. The most aggressive riots in Jordan, not only since the advent of the Arab Spring but since the beginning of Abdullah’s reign, took place in mid-November 2012.

The government was pressed by the International Monetary Fund to make a much-delayed decision to slash subsidies for various oil derivatives, in exchange for aid for Jordan’s ailing economy.<sup>7</sup> The cutback led to sharp increases in the prices of gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, and cooking gas. But as the government explained, the lifting of the subsidies was absolutely essential to keep the country running. To be able to pay salaries and pensions, to finance energy and food imports, and to maintain a reasonable level of social services, the authorities had no choice but to “replenish a depleted coffer.” But “the firm belief of most Jordanians [was] that mismanagement and corruption [were] mainly responsible for bankrupting the country,” and that therefore “looted money” should be recovered first, before the regime dug into “poor people’s pockets.”<sup>8</sup> Spontaneous riots and demonstrations and clashes with the security forces rocked the country for four days in Amman and other towns, with repeated instances of violence, arson, and vandalism against state property and banks. There were a number of fatalities on both sides, and dozens of police officers and protesters were injured before quiet was restored.<sup>9</sup>

Jordan’s economic woes have had serious political ramifications. For decades, regime stability rested on an

unwritten social contract between the monarchy and the East Bankers, according to which the regime has enjoyed the unswerving loyalty of East Bankers in exchange for jobs and salaries and other forms of government largesse. Since the “Black September” civil war of 1970 between the Jordanian armed forces and the PLO, there has been an institutionalized functional cleavage between original East Banker Jordanians and their less trusted compatriots of Palestinian extraction: A process of Jordanization (*ardanna*) was initiated in the early 1970s whereby Palestinians were systematically removed from positions of influence in the government bureaucracy and the security establishment. Ever since, East Bankers have held the bulk of government jobs and almost exclusively run the security services and the military, while Palestinians dominate the country’s private sector. Tensions between Palestinians and original Jordanians are high, as the former resent their exclusion from positions of political influence while the latter resent Palestinian affluence, which they increasingly feel has been gained unfairly at their expense.

As of the late 1980s, when Jordan sank into deep economic crisis, it has been urged by the IMF and the World Bank to engage in neoliberal economic reforms—including the extensive privatization of state enterprises—designed to reduce government spending. These measures have mainly hurt the loyalist East Banker constituency—who, having lost government jobs, are forced into the swelling ranks of the unemployed and are generally in receipt of ever-decreasing government support. At the same time, the privatization of state enterprises has tended to further enrich Palestinian entrepreneurs, generating a sense among East Bankers that the regime is not holding up its end of their historical bargain. In recent years, condemnation of the King has regularly been heard from within the inner sanctums of the East Banker elite.

## Cracks in the Loyalist Edifice

An unprecedented crack has appeared in the edifice of the traditionally loyalist elite and among the rank and file of the regime’s tribal base. That King Abdullah is married to a Palestinian does not make matters any easier—and that his mother is English; that he spent much of his life growing up abroad, where he also received his education; that he speaks a less than flawless Arabic, with a trace of an accent; that he lacks that instinctive intimacy with the tribes that characterized his father; and that he is said to feel more comfortable in the company of foreigners have all contributed to his being viewed by many East Bankers as an outsider. Many tribesmen, who still insist on their loyalty to the monarchy, “flaunt their preference” for the king’s half-brother, Hamza (born in 1980), as an alternative to Abdullah.<sup>10</sup>

The Arab Spring has given rise to a new group of locally based popular youth forces, located mainly in the provincial towns of the East Bank. Though they are referred to collectively as “*Hirak*” (or “movements”), they are really more an array of spontaneous groupings than an effectively organized countrywide network. It is the Muslim Brethren, with their mainly Palestinian base, that are the largest, best organized, and most consistent component of the opposition. Interestingly enough, in Jordan the opposition, Islamist and otherwise, for the most part has not called for the overthrow (*iskat*) of the regime but only for reform (*islah*) leading to the formation of a truly constitutional monarchy, which would shift the center of power from the palace to a fully representative Parliament.

The Muslim Brethren in Jordan have traditionally exercised relative restraint in their relationship with the monarchy—reflecting very different rules of engagement vis-à-vis the regime than those that have characterized the Muslim Brethren in countries like Syria and Egypt. In the heyday of revolutionary anti-monarchist Arabism, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Muslim Brethren and the Hashemites were actually allies against the secular, pro-Soviet radicals. The Brethren also stood by the regime in its major domestic crises in 1957 against the Nasserists and in the 1970 civil war against the PLO. The Hashemites, as previously noted, even enjoy a measure of Islamist legitimacy as descendants of the Prophet; and despite all of their differences the monarchy and the Brethren have no “blood account:” They have never engaged in violent conflict. And although the Brethren and the monarchy are definitely not on the same side of the fence these days, they are not mortal enemies, either.

There have been exceptional moments, however, when protesters have seemingly crossed the line between reform and revolution. In September 2011, by just hissing, demonstrators left people guessing whether their collective “*iss*” was for “*iss...lah*” (reform) or “*iss...kat*” (overthrow).<sup>11</sup> More definitively, in the November 2012 price-hike protests, the violence and vandalism were accompanied by angry chants explicitly calling for the overthrow of the monarchy.<sup>12</sup> These, however, were the exceptions that seemed to prove the rule.

## Abdullah’s Reforms

As far as the opposition is concerned Abdullah’s reforms are just window dressing. On the surface they appear impressive: 42 amendments to the constitution,<sup>13</sup> a new election law, and a commitment by the King to appoint prime ministers only in consultation with the elected

Parliament. In practice, however, these have meant very little. The constitutional amendments were rather minor and made no changes to the all-important section dealing with the King’s prerogatives. According to the new election law, the number of seats in Parliament was increased from 120 to 150, of which the allotted women’s quota was increased from 12 to 15. Of those 150 seats, 27 (18 percent) were to be elected on the new basis of countrywide party lists, and the rest in accordance with the existing one-person-one-vote system whereby the candidates who received the most votes within the various constituencies were elected.

This was all a far cry from the demands of the opposition. They sought a far greater shift of authority from the monarchy to the Chamber of Deputies (the elected lower house of Parliament) and called for the selection of the prime minister not by royal appointment but by the Chamber, from the ranks of the majority party or coalition of parties in the Chamber. They also called for the direct election of the upper house, the Senate, which is now appointed by the King.

The Islamists, in particular, demanded a radically different election law—including, above all, the abolition of the one-person-one-vote system, which was deliberately designed to hurt their chances at the polls. Allowing the voters to vote for only one of the candidates in multi-representative constituencies turned the elections into a much more clannish and tribal affair, at the expense of ideological parties like the Muslim Brethren. The Brethren could be expected to win far more seats if voters could vote for the number of representatives that each constituency sent to Parliament. If voters could vote for that number of candidates and not only for the one candidate they most preferred, they would be able to vote both for the one who represented their particular clan or tribe and for a number of others who might reflect their ideological preferences.

In their quest for a more representative Parliament, the Brethren also demanded reform of the current gerrymandered seat distribution. The division of seats between districts now penalizes urban Palestinians, who are underrepresented, at the expense of provincial and rural East Bankers, especially southerners, who are grossly overrepresented.<sup>14</sup> This favors the traditional stalwarts of the regime and discriminates against the Islamists’ political base. The Brethren also demand that half, not just 18 percent, of the seats be elected proportionately on the basis of countrywide lists, which would favor them as not only the most organized, but the only really countrywide, political party.

Abdullah offers an incremental approach to reform: His son, he observes, will inherit a different kingdom. The path toward “deepening our democracy,” according to Abdullah, “lies in moving toward parliamentary government, where the majority coalition in Parliament forms the Government.” But reform has to be an “evolutionary transformation . . . [that would] avoid jumping into the abyss.” Gradually more authority would shift from the monarchy to a multi-party Parliament—but that would require the development of “a mature political party system” with parties from the Left, Right, and Center that would compete with the Islamists. Following elections, parliamentary blocs and groupings with varying platforms would emerge, and, encouraged by the monarchy, they would eventually evolve into political parties. Such progress would “require several parliamentary cycles to develop and mature,” Abdullah maintained. The population, after all, had no tradition of party politics, and 90 percent of the people, he noted, rejected the idea of joining parties.<sup>15</sup>

The King’s vision, however, is not free of internal contradiction. It is difficult to see how parties could really develop in conjunction with an election law that was designed from the outset to stifle party politics. Abdullah may be genuine about his desire for a form of guided party politics, but he also has to contend with the real world—and he obviously does not have the slightest intention of paving the way for Islamist control by reforming the Hashemites out of power. The Muslim Brethren’s ostensible restraint notwithstanding, the King is convinced that the reforms they demand are designed in the long run to deny the monarchy any real authority and, eventually, to oust the Hashemites altogether.<sup>16</sup>

In Abdullah’s mind, the monarchy should continue to play a crucial role in the Jordanian body politic. In his vision for Jordan’s future, the monarchy would always remain “the symbol of national unity and the voice of all Jordanians” in defense of their core values. It would “continue to serve as guarantor of the constitution, as a safety valve of last resort” to settle disputes. The monarchy would also “continue to ensure that the army, security forces, judiciary and public religious authorities remain neutral, independent, professional, and apolitical”—and it would “continue to play a role in vital strategic issues of foreign policy and national security.”<sup>17</sup>

Abdullah’s reforms, therefore, came nowhere near the substantive change that would undercut the prerogatives of the monarchy or give the Islamists a chance of winning elections—as they might if their demands were met. Moreover, in some spheres, instead of progressive reform, there were regressive efforts to control freedom of

expression. In September 2012, an amendment to the Press and Publications Law was passed in what was described as a “draconian” effort to gag websites critical of government excesses.<sup>18</sup> Like his father before him, Abdullah spoke of the need to protect “responsible press freedoms”<sup>19</sup>—which were nothing more than code words for state supervision of the media.

The Muslim Brethren refused to play by the existing rules, however, and decided, not for the first time, to boycott the general elections that were held on January 23, 2013. Without the Brethren’s participation and given the present election law, the results were a foregone conclusion: the election of a predominantly loyalist and tribal Chamber that was no different than its predecessors.<sup>20</sup> In accordance with his prior commitment, Abdullah did indeed consult with members of the newly elected Chamber of Deputies on the selection of a new prime minister. But considering the Chamber’s composition, the consultations produced the rather unimaginative reappointment of the incumbent, Abdallah al-Nusur.

Nusur is a veteran establishment politician and a former deputy premier. He is reputed to be a “moderate reformist,” and had originally been appointed to the premiership by the King in mid-October 2012. He had been critical of the election law before becoming prime minister,<sup>21</sup> but once in power he diligently went along with it. Moreover, it was he who had made and implemented the unpopular decision on the subsidies in November 2012. Nusur’s reappointment in March 2013, like the new Chamber, was just another stale facet of more of the same, and it immediately sparked protests throughout the country calling for his downfall.<sup>22</sup>

## The Fractious Opposition

The opposition in Jordan is determined and consistent, but far from united. The Muslim Brethren, with a strong Palestinian support base, are the major force, alongside the locally based East Banker HIRAK and the elitist National Front for Reform (*Al-Jabha al-Wataniyya lil-Islah*), led by former Prime Minister and Director of Domestic Intelligence (*Mukhabbarat*), Ahmad Ubaydat. Both the Islamists and the East Bankers call for greater democratization, but the East Bankers actually have a serious dilemma around this issue. While they want more influence in determining how wealth and power are distributed in the kingdom, they are hardly interested in a democratization process that would almost certainly empower the Islamists and the Palestinians at their expense.

## Conclusion: The Economy and the Monarchy

Therefore, although much of the East Banker old guard shares at least some of the criticism of the monarchy, the same old guard, as represented in the *Mukhabbarat*, is equally indisposed toward genuine reform, and actually serves as a brake on the King, who might otherwise have been more willing to speed up the process. Abdullah has often complained of “the existence of certain powers that deem reform a threat to their interests.”<sup>23</sup> While such statements are probably intended to deflect criticism directed at him, they also have the unintended consequence of detracting from Abdullah’s own image, as they suggest that he is not entirely in charge.

But at the same time, the demonstrations by the various branches of the opposition have been rather ineffective. Usually mobilizing no more than a few thousand protesters—often fewer—and on very rare occasions maybe as many as ten thousand, the protests have turned into what is beginning to look like a benign routine.

The Brethren’s decision to boycott the January 23 elections appears to have been counterproductive. Despite their efforts, voter turnout was good by Jordanian standards: (56.7 percent of registered voters),<sup>24</sup> and similar to the norm in other Arab states that have held elections in the wake of the Arab Spring. The Islamic Centrist Party (*al-Wasat al-Islami*)—moderate Islamists who were unaffiliated with the Brethren (and who were in the good graces of the regime)—ran and did well, garnering 17 seats.<sup>25</sup> Most political analysts concluded that the Brethren were now increasingly marginalized in Jordan.<sup>26</sup>

Events outside Jordan were having a mixed impact on the Brethren’s local stature. On the one hand, the prominence of radical Islamist forces in neighboring Syria was giving them “growing clout.”<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the questionable performance of the Muslim Brethren in power in Egypt was not doing the Brethren’s image in Jordan very much good.

The Arab Spring had initially emboldened the Jordanian opposition, but the outcomes of the revolutions in countries like Egypt and Libya, and especially the bloodbath in Syria, were horrifying to most Jordanians. More than four hundred thousand Syrians are currently seeking refuge in Jordan, as did about five hundred thousand Iraqis before them. Spokespersons for the regime could ask what Jordanians had to complain about in their oasis of stability—which, unlike some neighboring regimes, did not have a reputation for brutal repression. In over two years of demonstrations in Jordan, fewer than a handful of protesters have been killed by the security forces, under the strict orders of the King himself not to use excessive force.

The critical turning point in Jordan’s recent history was not the advent of the Arab Spring but the passing of King Hussein. Under the less capable King Abdullah the monarchy has lost prestige and popularity, as he has failed to re-create the monarchical presence of his father. But notwithstanding cracks in the edifice of the East Banker elite, the fractious opposition has yet to come up with a viable alternative. Even opponents tend to see “the Hashemite regime as the thing that holds [the country] all together.”<sup>28</sup> The situation, therefore, remains manageable. As long as the unswerving loyalty of the security establishment lasts, the capacity of the regime to continue muddling through will depend more on its ability to deal effectively with the economy than on any other single factor, including the pace of political reform.

Indeed, demonstrations in Jordan—like those against the skyrocketing prices of fuel in November 2012—have been more massive and aggressive when economic hardships have hurt most. The problem for the regime is that improving the material well-being of the people and providing for the influx of Syrian refugees are dependent on the goodwill and generosity of others, such as the IMF, the United States, the EU, Japan, the Saudis, and the other Gulf states, and they too are not as wealthy as they used to be. The Jordanians can never be quite sure whether the checks will always be large enough and whether they will arrive on time—before the impoverishment of the people overflows into uncontrollable expressions of despair. After all, it was mainly poverty, unemployment, and sheer hopelessness that set the region ablaze in the so-called Arab Spring, rather than an irrepressible urge for democracy and civil rights.

## Endnotes

- 1 “East Bankers” refers to original Jordanians from the East Bank of the Jordan River, as opposed to Palestinians from the West Bank.
- 2 This is a term adapted from one that originated in 1957, when the kingdoms of Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia buried the hatchet to forge an alliance against Gamal Abdel Nasser. In British diplomatic correspondence the alliance was referred to as the “Monarchistic Trade Union.” See Elie Podeh, *The Quest for Hegemony in the Arab World: The Struggle over the Baghdad Pact* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 231.
- 3 Lisa Anderson, “Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East,” *Political Science Quarterly* 106, no. 1 (1991), pp. 1–15, and “Dynasts and Nationalists: Why Monarchs Survive,” in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*, ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp. 53–69.

- 4 Bernard Lewis, "Monarchy in the Middle East," in Kostiner, *Middle East Monarchies*, pp. 15–22.
- 5 King Abdullah, in interview with Ghassan Sharbil in *al-Hayat*, June 20, 2012.
- 6 Lally Weymouth, "Jordan's King Abdullah on Egypt, Syria and Israel," *Washington Post*, October 24, 2011. Abdullah's contention was borne out by more objective sources as well. According to a 2009 poll by the International Republican Institute, soaring living costs were the top concern for Jordanians, followed by unemployment. See Shadi Hamid and Courtney Freer, "How Stable is Jordan? Abdullah's Half-hearted Reforms and the Challenge of the Arab Spring" (Brookings Doha Center, Policy Briefing, November 2011), p. 2.
- 7 "Jordan and Its King: As Beleaguered as Ever," *The Economist*, October 13, 2012.
- 8 Hasan Abu Nimah, "Understanding the Seriousness of the Crisis," *Jordan Times*, November 13, 2012.
- 9 Taylor Luck, "Vandalism, Arrests as Fuel Riots Continue," *Jordan Times*, November 14, 2012; Jodi Rudoren and Ranya Kadri, "Protests over Gas Prices in Jordan Turn Deadly," *New York Times*, November 14, 2012; Talal Ghunaymat, "Salt Protests Lead to Injuring of Three Gendarmes," *al-Ghad*, November 15, 2012.
- 10 Nicolas Pelham, "Jordan Starts to Shake," *New York Review of Books*, December 8, 2011; David Kirkpatrick, "Jordan Protesters Dream of Shift to King's Brother," *New York Times*, November 21, 2012; and Jeffrey Goldberg, "Monarch in the Middle," *The Atlantic*, April 2013. Hamza is Hussein's eldest son from his marriage to Queen Nur and was Hussein's favorite to succeed him. Hamza was barely 19 when Hussein understood his life was coming to an end, however, leading him to appoint the 37-year-old Abdullah instead. Hussein instructed Abdullah to appoint Hamza as his Crown Prince; Abdullah initially did so, but subsequently changed his mind and rescinded Hamza's title in November 2004. He appointed his own eldest son, Hussein (born in 1994), as Crown Prince in July 2009.
- 11 Pelham, "Jordan Starts to Shake."
- 12 Nabil Ghayshan, "Where Are We Heading?" *al-Arab al-Yawm*, November 15, 2012; Joby Warrick and Taylor Luck, "Jordanian Protesters, Police Scuffle as Amman Demonstrations Continue," *Washington Post*, November 16, 2012; "Jordan Protesters Want Regime Reform, Reject Price Hike," *Daily Star*, November 30, 2012; and "Protest at Interior Ministry Demands Reform and Fight against Corruption," *al-Ra'y*, November 30, 2012.
- 13 "[Jordan Constitutional Amendments 2011](#)," *Jordanoholic.com*, August 15, 2011.\*
- 14 The governorates of Amman and Zarqa, predominantly Palestinian, constitute the kingdom's metropolitan center, and are home to 3,425,000 people, or 53.6 percent of the total Jordanian population. The southern governorates of Karak, Tafila, Ma'an, and Aqaba have a combined population of 600,000, or 9.4 percent of the total. (See Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook, 2012*, Table 2.2, p. 6.) Of the 150 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 27 are allocated to countrywide lists and 15 to the women's quota. The remaining 108 seats are elected in the constituencies of the various districts. Amman and Zarqa together have 36 seats—that is, one seat for every 95,000 people. The southern governorates together have 20 seats, which comes down to one seat for every 30,000 people—an overrepresentation of more than 3 to 1.
- 15 King Abdullah, in interviews with Ghassan Sharbil in *al-Hayat*, June 20, 2012, and jointly with Samir Hiyari and Samir Barhum in *al-Ra'y* and the *Jordan Times*, December 5, 2012; [King Abdullah, "Making Our Democratic System Work for All Jordanians" \(Discussion Papers, January 16, 2013\) \(Published on King Abdullah's official website\)](#).\*
- 16 Goldberg, "Monarch in the Middle."
- 17 [Interview with Jamal Halaby in the Associated Press, March 20, 2013. \(Published on King Abdullah's official website\)](#).\*
- 18 [Daoud Kuttab, "Jordanian Website Owners Reject Attempts to Gag Them," Huffington Post, September 27, 2012\\*](#); [David Fox and Katrina Sammour, "Disquiet on the Jordanian Front," Sada—Analysis on Arab Reform \(Carnegie Endowment for International Peace\), September 27, 2012](#).\*
- 19 Hiyari and Barhum, *al-Ra'y* and the *Jordan Times*, December 5, 2012. (See note 15.)
- 20 [Marwan Muasher, "Reform in Jordan: After the Vote" \(Carnegie Endowment for International Peace\), January 28, 2013](#).\*
- 21 Tamir Samadi, "Jordan: Choice of Nusr for PM Surprises Key Figures of the State and Leaderships of the Street," *al-Hayat*, October 11, 2012.
- 22 Taylor Luck, "Hundreds Protest PM's Economic Policies," *Jordan Times*, March 16, 2013.
- 23 King Abdullah, in interview with Ghassan Sharbil in *al-Hayat*, June 20, 2012. In his conversations with Jeffrey Goldberg (see "Monarch in the Middle"), Abdullah was surprisingly candid in blaming the *Mukhabbarat* for subverting his efforts for reform in collusion with other conservatives in the political elite.
- 24 But actually only about 39 percent of all eligible voters voted. Fewer than 2.3 million of the 3.3 million eligible voters (69 percent) registered to vote, and of these, fewer than 1.3 million (that is, 56.7 percent of registered voters) voted.
- 25 Rana F. Sweis, "In Jordan, Progress in Small Steps," *New York Times*, January 30, 2013.
- 26 Editorial in *al-Ra'y*, January 24, 2013; Mohammad Ghazal, "Elections Blow to Opposition—Columnists," *Jordan Times*, January 24, 2013; Sweis, "In Jordan, Progress in Small Steps"; Goldberg, "Monarch in the Middle."
- 27 [Nocalas Pelham, "Jordan's Syria Problem," NYR Blog, January 10, 2013](#).\*
- 28 Hamid and Freer, "How Stable is Jordan?" p. 4.

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