

Libyan (67)
 Uddrag af US-state departement rapport for 2001 vedr. Jordan, 25.11.

the Antioch Orthodox Patriarchate, the Government closed an Arab Orthodox church in Amman that was aligned with the Antioch Patriarch in Damascus, Syria. The Government closed the church following a request from the local Orthodox hierarchy to enforce a 1958 law that grants the Jerusalem Patriarchate authority over all Orthodox churches in the country. The church reopened in December 2000 with permission from the Government, but was closed again a week later based largely on pressure from the Orthodox hierarchy. The Government stated that the church was free to open under a different name that would not imply affiliation with the Orthodox Church. The church remained closed at year's end.

Non-Jordanian Christian missionaries operate in the country but are subject to restrictions. Christian missionaries may not proselytize Muslims. During the year, U.S.-affiliated Christian mission groups in the country continued to complain of bureaucratic difficulties, including refusal by the Government to renew residence permits.

In February 2000, the governor of Amman municipality closed the office of Life Agape--an organization associated with the Baptists Church--after the director refused to sign a letter stating that he would not "deal with Muslims." The office remained closed at year's end.

In April and September 1999, a foreign employee of a small language school in Amman applied for a residence permit from the Ministry of Interior. His application was denied, reportedly because government officials believed that he had been attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity. He reapplied in April 2000, and was awaiting a response from the Government at year's end.

In December 1999, the municipality of Amman closed the Roy and Dora Whitman Academy--a small, nonprofit school founded by U.S.-affiliated missionaries in Amman--because it was not registered with the Ministry of Education. The board of the academy had initiated the process of registering the school in 1997. After being contacted by embassies representing a number of countries, the Ministry of Education assisted the school in properly fulfilling registration requirements. In April 2000, the school received registration and once again began teaching students. In July 2000, the Ministry of Labor issued work permits to two faculty members at the school.

In February the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS), a Christian training school for pastors and missionaries, submitted a new application for registration as a university to the Ministry of Education. JETS had applied to the Ministry's Council of Higher Education (CHE) twice before, once in May 1999 and again in January 2000; neither application was successful. At the request of the CHE, the most recent application contained a proposal for an expanded curriculum and a new name without the word "evangelical"--Jordan Minara University. From August 1998 until year's end, students and faculty of JETS experienced difficulties in obtaining and renewing residence permits. The school's application still was pending at year's end, and the Ministry's failure to issue visas had affected 24 of 140 students (and their families), and 4 staff members at the school. In 1998 and 1999, some noncitizen Arab Muslim students were deported and asked to leave the country as a result of their association with JETS.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The law provides for the right of citizens to travel freely abroad and within the country except in designated military areas; however, there are some restrictions on freedom of movement. The law requires that all women, including foreign women married to citizens, obtain written permission from a male guardian--usually their father or husband--to apply for a Jordanian passport. During the year, there were several cases in which mothers reportedly were prevented from departing with their children because authorities enforced requests from fathers to prevent their children from leaving the country.

The GID sometimes withholds passports from citizens on security grounds. Local governors have the authority to invoke the Preventing Crimes Law, which allows them to place citizens under house arrest for up to a year without formally charging them (see Section 1.d.). House arrest may involve requiring persons to report daily to local police station and the imposition of a curfew. Persons who violate the terms of their house arrest may be imprisoned for up to 14 days.

Jordanians with full citizenship receive passports that are valid for 5 years. Most Palestinians living in Jordan are citizens and receive passports that are valid for 5 years. However, the Government estimates that there are 150,000 Palestinian residents who are refugees or children of refugees who arrived from Gaza after 1967 and do not qualify for citizenship. They receive 2-year passports valid for travel only. In the period following the country's administrative and legal disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, Palestinians residing in the West Bank received 2-year passports valid for travel only, instead of 5-year Jordanian passports. In 1995 King Hussein announced that West Bank residents without other travel documentation again would be eligible to receive 5-year passports. However, the Government has emphasized that these passports are for travel only and do not connote citizenship, which may be proven only by presenting one's "national number," a civil registration number accorded at birth or upon naturalization to persons holding citizenship. The national number is recorded on national identity cards and in family registration books, which are issued only to citizens.

During the year, there were allegations that the Government did not consistently apply citizenship laws. The Jordanian Society for Citizens' Rights (JSCR) reported 52 complaints from persons or families claiming that the Government denied their right to citizenship. All 52 complainants disputed the Government's claim that they were ineligible for citizenship under the regulations, and many filed appeals with the Ministry of the Interior. The Government had not recognized officially the citizenship of any of the complainants by year's end.



In July there were reports that immigration officials at the King Hussein/Allenby Bridge crossing with Israel confiscated the Jordanian passports belonging to Jordanians of Palestinian origin who were carrying both Jordanian and Palestinian Authority travel documents. The Government stated that such confiscations were consistent with laws that prohibit citizens of Arab League countries from holding passports of any other Arab League member. Human rights observers claimed that no such law exists, and that the policy against dual nationality is based on an informal agreement of Arab League countries.

Human rights activists reported that approximately 350 Jordanians of Palestinian origin remained outside the country at year's end, due to the Government's refusal to renew their passports at embassies overseas. The majority of such persons now live in Syria, Lebanon, and Libya as stateless persons. The Government offered no response to inquiries by diplomatic representatives or human rights observers.

The Constitution specifically prohibits the deportation of citizens. In June the Government permitted the return of Ibrahim Ghosheh, one of four HAMAS leaders allegedly expelled in 1999. Although initially refused entrance, Ghosheh was admitted in return for his pledge to cease his activities with HAMAS. The three other expelled HAMAS leaders remained outside the country at year's end (see Sections 1.d., 1.e., and 2.b.).

Former Member of Parliament Yaqoub Qarrash remained outside the country at year's end. He was refused entry at the border in January 2000, when he attempted to return from Saudi Arabia.

There is no law or statute that provides for the granting of refugee status or asylum. The Government generally cooperates with the office of the UNHCR. The UNHCR must resettle refugees in other countries. However, in April the Ministry of Interior signed a memorandum of understanding with the UNHCR concerning the status and treatment of refugees. Under the agreement, the Government admits asylum seekers, including those who have entered the country clandestinely, and respects the UNHCR's eligibility determinations under the refugee definitions set forth in the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The agreement provides protection against the forcible return of refugees from the country, and recognizes the legal definition of a refugee as set forth in the U.N. Convention. The UNHCR regularly trains law enforcement officials in international refugee law, including specialized courses for policewomen. The Government provides first asylum. According to UNHCR figures, 55,626 persons sought asylum through the UNHCR between October 1990 and 2000.

The Government estimates that over 300,000 Iraqis reside in the country. Since 1991 thousands of Iraqis have applied for refugee status and received legal and material assistance from the UNHCR. In addition to applications from Iraqis during the year, the UNHCR also received applications for refugee status from Sudanese, Russians of Chechen decent, Somali, and Eritrean asylum seekers.

For the 2000-2001 school year, the Government continued its policy of denying Iraqi children admittance to school unless such children are legal residents of the country or recognized as refugees by the UNHCR.

According to the Government, it deported eight Libyan nationals affiliated with "international terrorist organizations" in March 2000. The Government did not inform the UNHCR of the presence of the Libyans prior to their deportation from the country. The Libyan Government reportedly executed three of the eight Libyans upon their return to Libya (see Section 1.c.). There were no other cases in which the Government deported persons to a country where they feared persecution.

Almost 1.6 million Palestinian refugees are registered in Jordan with the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The UNRWA counts another 800,000 Palestinians as either displaced persons from the 1967 war, arrivals following the 1967 war, or returnees from the Gulf between 1990 and 1991.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

There are significant restrictions on citizens' right to change their government. Citizens may participate in the political system through their elected representatives in Parliament; however, the King has discretionary authority to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister, Cabinet, and upper house of Parliament, to dissolve Parliament, and to establish public policy. Appointments made by the King to high government posts do not require legislative approval. Executive power is vested in the King (or, in his absence, in the Regent), who exercises his power through his ministers in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

In both June and October, King Abdullah reordered his Cabinet, appointing new members and changing portfolios among serving ministers. Prior to the reordering, there were 29 ministers; at year's end there 26.

On June 16, the King dissolved Parliament and directed the Government to draft a new election law. Parliamentary elections had been scheduled to be held during the year; however, the King exercised his authority under the Constitution to postpone elections for up to 2 years, indicating that elections would be held no earlier than summer 2002. At year's end, the King had not announced a specific date for elections and the Parliament remained dissolved. According to the provisions of a temporary election law approved by the King on July 22, the Parliament is composed of a 40-member Senate, appointed by the King, and a popularly elected 104-member Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies previously had contained 80 members. The Parliament is empowered by the Constitution to initiate legislation, and it may approve, reject, and amend legislation proposed by the Cabinet. A group of 10 senators or deputies may submit draft bills for consideration; however, in practice legislation is initiated and drafted by the Cabinet of Ministers and submitted by the Government to the Parliament for its consideration. Opposition Members of Parliament have claimed