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Parliamentary elections were meant to follow swiftly after King Abdullah II dissolved Parliament just half way through its four-year term in late 2009, but the polls were delayed by the drafting of a new electoral law. Passed in May 2010, the law is not uncontroversial. Critics note that it increases seats in less populated rural areas that are mostly home to Bedouin and tribes loyal to the king, while decreasing representation in Jordan's urban centres, which are dominated by its large Palestinian refugee community.

The controversy resulted in a boycott of the election by the country's main opposition group, the Islamic Action Front. Notwithstanding this, elections were held in November 2010, with pro-loyalist and tribal-linked candidates filling the majority of the 120 seats. Twelve of these are reserved for women, nine for Christians and three for Circassians, an ethnic group who number between 20,000 and 80,000 people in Jordan.

UNRWA has around 1.9 million Palestinians registered as refugees, and operates 10 long-established refugee camps across Jordan. While most Palestinians in the country are granted full citizenship, around 132,000 refugees from the Gaza Strip are provided only with temporary Jordanian passports and thus have limited access to citizenship rights, including employment, health and education. UNRWA names them among Jordan's 'most vulnerable' people, stating that rates of illiteracy are high, and they suffer from extreme poverty.

Religious minorities in Jordan include Christians, and small numbers of Bahá'ís, Druze and Shi'a Muslims. The IRFR 2010 states that Muslim-Christian relations are generally good, but followers of unrecognized religions and Muslims who convert to other religions face 'societal discrimination and the threat of mental and physical abuse'. The report notes that Bahá'ís in particular face ongoing official discrimination. On official ID cards, their religion can be registered with a dash, a blank space or as Muslim. According to the report, this has implications for the validity of marriages. Since Jordan applies Sharia law, a woman registered as Muslim cannot marry a non-Muslim man. Furthermore, children of non-Muslim fathers and Bahá'í mothers registered inaccurately as Muslim are considered illegitimate under Islamic law, and are not issued birth certificates. Without these documents, they cannot receive citizenship or register for school, the report said.

While the government of Jordan estimates that around 450,000-500,000 Iraqis live in Jordan, only around 31,000 were registered with the UNHCR at the end of July 2010. The IRFR 2010 states that around 61 per cent of Iraqi refugees in Jordan are Sunni Muslim, 25 percent Shi'a Muslim, 11 per cent Christian, and 3 per cent belong to other religious groups, including Sabeen Mandaeans. Following the October 2010 attack on Our Lady of Salvation Syriac Catholic Church in Baghdad (see Iraq section), the UNHCR office in Jordan reported an increase of Iraqi Christians registering with them in the second half of 2010.

The IRFR 2010 said that Iraqi Sabeen Mandaean in Jordan continue to report 'extreme societal discrimination and pressure to convert to Islam in the form of harassment and physical threats'. As a result, they find it difficult to attend schools and perform religious rites in Jordan, though the police have provided limited protection for them to perform baptism rituals.

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