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Political System in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan **By Zaid Asfour**

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Jordan at a Glance:

Jordan is located in the heart of the Middle East, Northwest of Saudi Arabia, South of Syria, Southwest of Iraq, and East of Palestine. Jordan has access to the Red Sea via the port city of Aqaba.

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Some basic statistics about Jordan are provided here:

Area: 88,778 Km²

In 2005:

Population: 5.473 Million

Population Growth Rate: 2.3%

Population Median Age: 20.1

In 2004:

GDP (Gross Domestic Product) at current prices: \$11.5447 Billion

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Jordan has an amazingly historic, cultural and archaeological patrimony, and many natural wonders that are known worldwide.

Due to its diverse geological nature, visitors can climb the proud mountains of Ajloun, hike at the Rose City of Petra, ride Arabian horses in Wadi Rum, sunbathe in the lowest point on earth - the Dead Sea and dive in the crystalline Red Sea waters of Aqaba.

The major source of attraction lies in the hospitality of Jordan's people. Visitors to Jordan are constantly greeted with a warm smile and a genuine welcome.

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History Overview: Politics in Jordan

The roots of political life in Jordan which was known by East Jordan before go back to the Othman rule; In 1908 East Jordan was presented by a deputy in *Maboothan Council* within Syria Governorate.

After the end of Othman rule East Jordan was part of the Syrian Country by which prince *Faisal Bin Al-Hussein* declared. In 1919 and 1920 Jordan participated in the General Conferences held by the prince to study the independence and constitution of the country. However this failed because of Sykes-Pico agreement between England and France which put Syria under French administration and East Jordan under English administration.

England divided East Jordan to three local governments. However, when prince *Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein* arrived to Jordan an agreement was made with England and he declared the Principality of East Jordan and all the local governments merged into one government in 11th of April 1921.

Five legislative councils were directly elected by the people from 1929 to 1947. In 1946 the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was declared and a new constitution was set in 1947 and a new parliament (house of deputies) was elected. There have been 14 parliaments from 1947 up until present day.

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Present Political System:

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. There are three constitutional authorities:

1. Executive
2. Legislative
3. Judicial

His Majesty the King is the head of state and he is the head of the three authorities. Moreover he is the chief commander of the Jordanian Army.

The government represents the executive authority.

The parliament (in Jordan: National Assembly) represents the legislative authority.

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Legislative Authority:

The National Assembly is formed by two houses:

1. The Chamber of Deputies: The 110 members of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) are elected by universal vote (one person, one vote) for a four-year term. There are quotas for minorities and women.
2. The Senate: The Senate (upper house) has one-half of the number of the members in the lower house (55 members) and they are chosen by the King from among former ministers and government, retired high-ranking officers of the army and other prominent persons.

The King summons the National Assembly to its ordinary session on the 1st of November each year. Laws pass by the lower house followed by the upper house and finally by the King. Decisions are taken by majority of votes for each house. The quorum (i.e. the number of people required to be present before a meeting can be conducted) is 2/3 of the total number of members in each house. In case of rejection of a law by one house, a joint session of both houses is held. The decision is then made by a 2/3 majority.

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Executive Authority:

The executive authority is formed by the council of ministers and led by a prime minister who is appointed by the king. The ministers are selected by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the King.

The cabinet is responsible to the Chamber of Deputies on matters of general policy and can be forced to resign by a two-thirds vote of “no confidence” by that body.

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Ministry of Political Development:

The Ministry of Political Development is a modernization process which will nurture public stability and social harmony through developing the laws regulating public affairs that will motivate public participation.

Vision:

Promote the concept of political development in which all society sectors and its political forces participate; as it is characterized by integrity, accountability and transparency, rule of law, justice and equality, effective and actual participation of the Jordanian women and Jordanian youth and activation and investment of their capabilities in all aspects of life.

Mission:

Enhance the foundations of political development through a framework of partnerships.

Aims:

- Increase participation in public life.
 - Promote democracy through the principles of justice, equality and rule of law.
 - Promote the principals of human rights as an indisputable national value.
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Objectives:

- Ensuring the principle of separation among the three constitutional authorities.
 - Enhance values of loyalty and citizenship.
 - Maintain political Stability and national security.
 - Create a vibrant political environment for a participative active civil society.
 - Adopting the principles of good governance, transparency and accountability.
 - Deepen the foundations of political upbringing and national and civic education.
 - Propose legislative amendments related to political development.
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Strategic Objectives:

- Legislative.
 - Projects and initiatives: Youth Parliament.
 - Awareness: The ministry conducts seminars and workshops in universities, organizations...
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Thank You!

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