

# A CLOSERLOOK

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BY YOSHI KRAUSZ

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Jordan's Dangerous Changes

**DR. OFIR WINTER, SENIOR  
RESEARCHER AT THE INSTITUTE  
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES  
(INSS), TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY**



**Has there been a change in the practical relations between Jordan and Israel since October 7? There has been a lot of negative rhetoric from the Jordanian government, but has anything changed practically?**

The Jordanian royal family has not yielded to calls from Islamist and other factions in the kingdom to cancel the peace agreement and sever cooperation with Israel. However, it has taken more modest steps to appease public sentiment: In November 2023, Jordan recalled its ambassador to Israel for consultations and announced the suspension of the “Prosperity Green – Prosperity Blue” projects for water-for-electricity exchange, which the two countries were supposed to sign in November 2023 under UAE sponsorship at the COP-28 in Dubai. Beyond this, there has been a 16% decrease in trade between the countries in the first six months of 2024, as well as a reduction in tourist traffic from Israel to Jordan.

**Will the recent elections in Jordan, in which Islamists won many races, have a negative effect on Israel?**

The victory of the Islamic Action Front is not good news for Israel-Jordan relations. Many in the kingdom interpret the election results as a protest vote by the

Jordanian public against the regime’s peace policy and as an expression of support for the violent resistance approach of Hamas. The strengthening of Islamists in parliament is expected to increase the existing public pressure on the government to cancel peace and normalization with Israel and reduce the already limited space for the king’s maneuverability in Jordan’s relations with Israel. Jordanian companies, private citizens and perhaps even security officers may now be more wary than before of promoting cooperation—particularly overt cooperation—with Israel that contradicts the stance of a significant part of the Jordanian public opinion.

**Is the Jordanian government in danger from its citizens because of the war? How is the monarchy maintaining control?**

The Jordanian government is trying to navigate between public pressure to show greater solidarity with the Palestinians and the country’s strategic interest in preserving relations with Israel. This is manifested in adopting a more hostile rhetorical line toward Israel alongside symbolic protest measures, while maintaining strategic cooperation in the areas of security, economy and resources. Thanks to the peace agreement, Amman enjoys annual American aid of \$1.45 billion, a water supply of 100 million cubic

meters per year from Israel, and Israeli natural gas responsible for about 80% of the kingdom’s energy consumption. The problem is that the hostile rhetorical line adopted by the palace toward Israel does not immunize the royal family from criticism; rather, it legitimizes the demands of Islamist forces to harm relations with Israel and, in the long run, deepens the gap between palace policy and prevailing public opinion.

**Is there anything else about this current situation that you think is important for people to understand?**

Since October 7 and the beginning of the war in Gaza, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan has sought to capitalize on the situation to strengthen its influence, which had been declining both in the kingdom and in other countries in the region. The election results—which led to an unprecedented strengthening of Islamist representation in parliament—indicate that they were successful. This also sends a troubling message to other countries in the region that fear the revival of the Islamist project in the wake of the war, after a decade of decline. ●

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