

Abdellateef AL-WESHAH

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

## **Jordan Diplomacy Towards Syria and the 2011 Syrian Crisis (2011–2013)**

### **Introduction**

Throughout history, the relations between Jordan and Syria have been marked by varying degrees of mutual hostility and even violence. The 2011 uprising in Syria has affected and continues to affect the Jordanian Syrian relation. In one hand Jordan does not have the military strength or the political capital to show its ‘muscles’ like Turkey but on the other hand, Jordan is a vital country considering the border comes under fire more than others, because of its vicinity to the conflict. Although separate entities, by sharing 400 kilometers of border, Syria project many effects on Jordan: this blurs the clear division between foreign and domestic policy that Jordan adopts.

Since the uprising in Syria, Jordan has taken a neutral side in this matter, and tried to remain diplomatic, and distance itself as much as possible of what is going on in Syria considering it an internal affair, Jordan did not evict the Syrian ambassador unlike many Arab states that did so, despite the indirect threats every now and then to expand and move the conflict to the Jordanian territories.

Jordan maintained a neutral position since the uprising considering it a Syrian internal affair that it should not interfere in it.

Syria is Jordan’s gate of import from Europe, and a vital water resource, which Jordan has a serious lack of.

It is in Jordan’s best interest to end the Syrian crisis peacefully, and it does not matter to it if Al Assad regime’s takes over control, or a peaceful transition of the regime, although Jordan is leaning towards the first solution, as the new regime mean a new era of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In order to understand the Jordanian diplomacy towards Syria, one must realize the different proximities that controls this diplomacy whether internal or external and to be aware of the historical background of Syrian

– Jordanian relations. This research paper aims to examine these proximities to understand the diplomacy Jordan adopted yet and to which extent it might affects Jordan future diplomacy towards Syria.

Jordan has taken in Syrian refugees since the beginning of the uprising in Daraa, in southern Syria, where the crisis started by clashes between the Syrian protesters and the regime's forces in March 2011, the city is barely six kilometers from the Jordanian border, and it shares familial and tribal links with the neighboring Jordanian Houran region.

The refugees issue Jordan's strife between selflessness, and State interests the refugees in Jordan topped 200,000 by the end of 2012 along with an estimated number of 80,000 refugees living illegally in the kingdom, the Jordanian government halted rents for those who bypassed checkpoints. Jordan's cautious approach is due to a rooted sense of distrust. The waves of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and 1967 taught the country that a 'temporary' solution might in fact turn out a permanent one. Nevertheless Jordan opted for an 'open border' policy contrary as a humanitarian role toward the crisis, like it did with the Iraqi refugees after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Liuni, 2012).

Most of Syrian refugees' problems in Jordan are the loss of education except in refugees' camps where there are schools for children for basic learning, but those who fled Syria without proofs of their certificates or their educational backgrounds are facing a hard time enrolling in Jordan educational institutes.

With the number of refugees increase every day in Jordan, refugees living in camps face difficult situation as they have exceeded the Jordanian government and the international organizations abilities to ensure full medical services for all refugees (El-Khatib, 2013). Outside the camps face different, and could be more difficult challenges, especially those who live illegally in the kingdom, as they have to pay cash for medical services.

Most Syrian refugees cannot work legally, despite the fact that many of them are actually working in labor jobs like construction or on farms, as the employers give them less money than Jordanians, but those refugees have to adapt and live in fear of getting caught by police, just like many Egyptians who work in Jordan without permits (Laub, Daragh-meh, 2013).

This research paper is devoted to examine the Jordanian-Syrian bilateral relations, and Jordan diplomatic position towards the Syrian uprising of 2011, from the beginning until the end of 2013, and the importance of

Syria's stabilization to Jordan, considering it one of the most vital countries in the region for Jordan in the economical, social, and most importantly the geographical side, and to examine the ability of Jordan to continue its humanitarian role toward the crisis, and most importantly how far can this poor-resourced country take the situation of refugees if the violence in Syria continues.

Jordanian citizens are provoked and feel threatened by the rising number of Syrian refugees, complaining that the Syrian are sucking up the kingdom's poor resources economically, socially, and of course employments, because employers would rather hire a Syrian than a Jordanian considering the Syrians cheap and easy labor.

### **Historical Background**

Jordan and Syria had strong ties and ancient roots in history as Jordan was the southern part of Syria, after the Arab Revolt in 1916, the Syrian Arab Kingdom was the first country to declare independence of the Ottoman Empire after the end of the First World War. The kingdom was ruled by prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein "son of Al Sharif Hussein Bin Ali, and brother of Prince Abdullah the first, the great grandfather of the current king of Jordan, King Abdullah II" between 1918–1920 and then as king after the Declaration of Independence on March 8, 1920. King Faisal was exiled on July 1920, and the kingdom was solved into republic, after three days of battle of Maysaloon and the occupation of the Syrian kingdom's capital. Syria remained under the French Mandate until along with Lebanon until its independence in 1930 (Al-Fawwaz, Al-Abdallat, Al-Afif., 2012).

The two countries fought together in 1948, 1967, and 1972 wars against Israel. The worst period of relations between the two countries was in 1970 during what is known as the "Black September", when Syria supported all resistance Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) guerillas against Israel occupation from Jordan lands and not from Syrian lands which formed an actual increase in resistance, and it expanded in main cities of Jordan, which formed internal concern and disturbance source for Jordan after several Israeli attack on the Jordanian cities and bearing Jordan responsibility of the guerillas within its lands, in order to protect its legitimate authority by taking control of the security situation, and recovering the stability in the country, and ending the stated of dual power in

Jordan. Jordanian forces managed to defeat the guerrillas and get them out of Jordan lands to Syria and Lebanon (Al-Fawwaz, Al-Abdallat, Al-Afif., 2012).

The Syrian government took a decision to close the Jordanian-Syrian border, which thickened the plot diplomatically between the two countries; Syria also closed its airspace in front of the Jordanian air navigation. This was followed by Syria's decision to mobilize troops on the border of Jordan, where armed clashes took place between the military forces of the two countries.

The deportation of the guerrillas to Syria disturbed the Syrian government, and put it in a hard situation, as it was Syria who called for freedom for the guerrillas' actions in Jordan, and when bases of the guerrillas increased on Jordanian territories. The Syrian government was afraid that the guerrillas' operations which were released from Syria might lead to a confrontation with Israel which Syria was not ready for at that time (Al-Fawwaz, Al-Abdallat, Al-Afif., 2012).

Jordan wanted to improve the relations with the Syrian government and to open the border again to the monument of transport of Jordan in the service of nationalism battle and because the closure of border with reaching settlement between government of Jordan and Palestinian resistance movement, leading to establishment of new bases for guerrillas on the Jordanian territories. Closing border went on about 489 days; Syria decided to re-open the border in 1973 to decrease the economic burdens in one hand and to face the Israeli enemy on the other hand (Brulliard, Warrick, 2012).

During the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, which was initiated by Syria and Egypt against Israel, Israel troops went deep into Syrian territories; Jordan sent part of its military troops to the Syrian front, which helped in improving the relation between the two countries (Al-Daajeh, 2012).

Jordan's relations with Syria also improved as Jordan became increasingly disenchanted with its relations with the United States. Since the early 1970s, Jordan had negotiated for the purchase of a US\$540 million air defense system from the United States to be financed by Saudi Arabia. When the United States Congress objected to the arms sale, King Hussein commented that relations with his one-time sponsor had reached "a sad crossroads." In 1976, with Syrian encouragement, he traveled to Moscow to sound out the Soviet Union on its willingness to provide a similar system. In the face of persuasive American and Saudi lobbying, King Hussein eventually opted to purchase the American Improved Hawk air defense system (Nasur, 2012).

In 1980s Syria accused Jordan of harboring members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who had escaped from Syria. This charge led to new tension between the two countries in December 1980, with military forces of both sides deployed along the border. As a counterweight to Syria, Jordan improved its relations with Iraq, and became one of its primary suppliers. In 1981, Jordan accused Syria of being behind the kidnapping of a Jordanian military officer in Beirut, and charged Riffat Al-Assad, former president Hafiz Al-Assad's brother, with masterminding a plot to assassinate the Jordanian prime minister. By the mid-1980s, rapprochement efforts were again underway (Nasur, 2012).

After the 1991 Gulf War relations between Jordan and Syria improved. When King Hussein died in 1999, Jordan and Syria never really reconciled. However, the Jordanian-Syrian rapprochement may have begun when the former president Hafiz Al-Assad participated in the late king Hussein's funeral on February 1999, Two months later that year the newly appointed king of Jordan, king Hussein's elder son, king Abdullah II said that Jordan's relations with Syria is proceeding for the better (Al-Daa'jeh, 2012).

To strengthen the ties between the two states, in April 1999 the king Abdullah II visited Syria to discuss with Syrian president the bilateral relations between the two countries and the ways to strengthen those relations as well as regional developments. The two leaders agreed on the importance of maintaining close cooperation between their countries in all fields.

President Hafiz Al-Assad passed away in 2000 passing power to his son Bashar Al-Assad and despite what seemed a blur in the relations between Jordan and Syria, with both countries under new leaderships, the rapprochement between them was fully underway.

There are three main factors that should be taken under consideration regarding the Jordanian-Syrian bilateral relations.

### 1. The Geographical Factor

The Jordanian-Syrian boundary is 233 miles in length and is delimited. Beginning in the Yarmuk River (Nahr al-Yarmuk) above Al-Hammah, the boundary follows eastward primarily in the river and its tributaries, Wadi Zayzun and Wadi Maydan, a distance of about 24 miles where it leaves the river. The boundary then trends southeastward a distance of about 80 miles

to a point 1.99 miles (3 kilometers, 200 meters) north of the summit of Tall Rimah (Tall Rumah) at which point the boundary turns northeastward in a straight line for a distance of about 129 miles to the Iraqi tripoint at approximately 33° 22' 29" North Latitude and 38° 47' 33" East Longitude (Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 1969, p. 2).

The geographical boundary has always played a major role in shaping Jordan diplomacy towards Syria, as it is essentially artificial, and a result of a division of British and French spheres of influence following Allied defeat of Ottoman Turkey in World War I. The delineation was later confirmed by the League of Nations. There are no active disputes between Jordan and Syria regarding the specific alignment of the boundary. Grazing and watering practice traditionally conducted by tribes crossing the boundary remain undisturbed.

The geographical proximity plays a great role in making Jordan the country with the largest refugees number since the uprising started in Daraa, and because many Jordanian people bear strong social relations with the Syrian people, especially those living in southern Syria (Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 1969, p. 2).

In addition, many Jordanian people bear strong social relations with the Syrian people, especially those living in southern Syria. Most northern Jordanian families have cousins and relatives in Syria, and *vice versa*. Jordan is considered an essential part of the Levant as it is a natural, geographic extension of Syrian terrain. This was born of a network of relations and complicated overlapping between the two countries. In the event of a threat, Syria is an essential component of Jordanian defense, and *vice versa* (Al-Daajeh, 2012).

Most northern Jordanian families have cousins and relatives in Syria, and *vice versa*. For example, the Al-Zoubai and Al-Shari'a families are very large and found split between northern Jordan and southern Syria (Al-Daajeh, 2012).

## 2. The Economical Factor

As Al-Khori points out in his article economic links between Jordan and Syria are extensive. It could be the most important proximity as Jordan almost has no door for imports except in Al-Aqaba port (A far port city in southern Jordan) and it has no use for Jordan when it comes for importing goods from Syria and European countries. Despite some

political differences during the 1980s and the 1990s between the two countries, nobody can deny the importance of the Syrian border to Jordan, and how important to Jordan to keep this border under the control of the Syrian regime. However, with the new leadership in both countries, a rapprochement came about at various levels, including the economic one. The more relaxed ties began to bear fruit in mid-1999, after king Abdullah II came in rule and the two countries signed several economic agreements, including a major tariff cut to spur merchandise trade (Al-Khoury, 2001).

In both countries, economical weakness has been instrumental in spurring moves towards stronger regional and international ties. Jordan, in the second half of the 1990s, suffered from a weak economy and GDP growth barely averaged 3%. Trade between Jordan and Syria is small compared to either country's commerce with its lead. Jordan has welcomed trade or other economic overtures from neighboring and other countries, as a basic tenet of the IMF-led structural adjustment program, which is opening up the economy to outside business (Al-Khoury, 2001).

In his article *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Syrian Crisis*, Al-Daajeh agrees with Al-Khori considering Syria Jordan's economic most valued gateway to Europe because most European products enters Jordan through Turkey and then Syria, connecting Jordan's market to Syria through a network of land passages. Similarly, Jordan and Syria have a number of trade agreements and, consequently, the majority of goods consumed by Jordanians are from Syria. Likewise, Jordanian products for export are marketed and transported through Syria (Al-Daajeh, 2012).

### 3. The Water Factor

The water factor plays a great role in Jordan and Syria relations, unlike its southern neighbor, Jordan have always suffered from shortage of water resources, because much of Jordan River flow are diverted by Israel and much of Yarmouk River are diverted by Syria, which leaves Jordan with a small share of the two rivers.

Just a few hundred of meters separate the arid terrain in northern Jordan and Syria's fertile fields stretching across the border between the two countries. Jordan made many agreements with Syria regarding Syria's providing Jordan with its needs of water supplies.

The largest projects to supply Jordan with water were a joint Jordanian Syrian endeavor to build a 100-meter-high dam on the Yarmouk River. The project, which had been contemplated since the 1950s but had foundered repeatedly because of political disputes (Al-Shami, 2013).

In 1953 Jordan and Syria reached an agreement to share the waters of Yarmouk River as a part of a regional plan developed between the two countries, which was modified in 1975 and again later in 1987, but that those three agreements have not been preceded until today (Al-Shami, 2013).

In 1988 after the thaw in Jordanian-Syrian relations and appeared to be progressing in early 1989. Called the Maqarin Dam in previous development plans, it was renamed to Al-Wahdah Dam in order to reflect the political rapprochement that made construction feasible. Al-Wahdah which means "unity" in Arabic is where the dam took its name as Jordan and Syria decided to open a new page with unity between the two countries. The dam was to create a reservoir of 250 million cubic meters. The Jordanian estimate of the cost, which Jordan was to bear alone, was US\$397 million. Independent estimates placed the figure at more than US\$500 million. Building time was estimated at two years after the planned 1989 starting date, but new political problems threatened to stall construction. The United States attempted to mediate between Jordan and Israel, which feared the dam would limit its own potential water supply; Syria, however, refused to join any tripartite negotiations (Al-Fawwaz, Al-Abdallat, Al-Afif., 2012).

In the late 1990s, after the two countries reached a settlement followed a period of relative improvement in diplomatic relations. And Jordan was able to build a Al-Wahdah dam on the banks of the Yarmouk River, to supply Amman with 50 million cubic meters of water and pumping 30 million cubic meters of water for irrigation in the Jordan Valley, on the grounds that Damascus will stick to its commitments. Construction of the dam was funded by a loan from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. After the cost amounted to \$ 95 million construction of the dam work was completed in 2006, and reached a capacity of 110 million cubic meters (Al-Shami, 2013).

It is feared that Syrians taking shelter in Jordan in particular might face a major problem regarding water, especially in the forthcoming summer months. In terms of the amount of water there is *per capita* in the Middle East and in the world, Jordan and Palestine are two of the poorest countries. Along with the dry spell prevailing in the area for the last decade,



water shortages have become worse in Jordan and agricultural activities have also been negatively affected in the country.

The existing water problem has become even more evident upon the arrival of refugees in the country. Jordan has been meeting its water needs from ground waters for many years due to the lack of surface waters. According to the British aid organization Oxfam, the population has increased as a result of the immigration from Syria. This situation has led to some wells drying up. According to another report published by Oxfam, 65 percent of water transported to Mafraq province is lost through the pipelines and as a result of people illegally tapping into the pipelines. Furthermore, it is mentioned in the reports that there are also problems in terms of the quality of water. The quality problem leads to water-related diseases and an additional cost for its filtration. Those who live in refugee camps cannot afford the cost of water filtration. As a general solution, chlorine is added to waters in tankers, which the World Health Organization (WHO) permits, but the fact is that that water can create other hygiene problems if it is kept in old tankers and not consumed within a short time of period (Maden, 2013).

### **Jordanian Diplomacy towards the 2011 Syrian Crisis**

Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, Jordan has taken a moderate neutral position, and maintained that position according to constant statements of the Jordanian ministry of foreign affairs, on the Syrian crisis for neither supporting the regime nor the armed revolution, considering it a Syrian interior affair that it has no role in it except the humanitarian role of sheltering the Syrian refugees fleeing out to Jordan.

Except for the military fire exchange between the two countries' forces that happens every now and then on the border, which the Jordanian military claims that they are only for providing secure converge for the refugees chased by the Syrian military, no actual clashes took place between the two countries' military troops.

In 2012, relations became somewhat strained due to the uprising in Syria, when Syrian people infected with the spirit of freedom large scale protests in Syria began on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Citizens took to the streets to protest the lack of political freedom, government corruption, and the continued existence of the emergency law. Al-Assad's regime arrested protestors in the streets on charges ranging from sedition to treason (Al-Daajeh, 2012).

Protests continued in the following weeks, spreading to more cities with participants numbering in the thousands. The Syrian government has gone so far as to send the military into cities of known protestors, and there were many reports of Jordanian forces clashing with Syrian forces as they fired upon refugees attempting to enter Jordan (Al-Daajeh, 2012).

The 2011 Syrian crisis is considered a main security challenge for the development of the Jordanian internal situation, under the refuge of large numbers of Syrians to Jordan; following the living conditions and difficulties caused by the civil war in Syria.

Jordan is one of the most affected countries in the region by the events in Syria with the humanitarian role it plays, because of the geographical proximity which makes it difficult for Jordan to close its border in front of the daily growing number of refugees, but if the Syrian situation continues in this way without any actual resolutions I think there will be no choice for Jordan except for stop or limit the number of refugees on its territories as a reflection of their social and economical burdens before the situation becomes a permanent problem to Jordan.

However, Jordan must control the flow of refugees entering the country, to avoid a humanitarian crisis, and to stop building refugee camps in the country as its limited resources, even if economically assisted by NGOs and foreign countries financial aid, at some point will not be able deal with the situation, and advocate for a peaceful solution, and remain oppose to any foreign military intervention against Syria to be carried out from its territories.

With the increasing violence in Syria, particularly on the Syrian regime's side, and at the cost of civilian lives, in addition to the increasing activity of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) throughout the country, resulting in a loss of government control, the risks that Jordan faces, particularly at its northern border, have become apparent.

The number of Syrian refugees entering Jordan because of the crisis has reached a high level by the end of 2012, a level which the Jordanian economy could not tolerate on its own except for the international humanitarian organizations struggling to provide support. Even with NGOs working in refugee camps, and the financial aid assistance and support Jordan keeps receiving from foreign countries' governments, sooner or later Jordan will not be able to host one more refugee (Liuni, 2012).

The number of Palestinian refugees in Syria is approximately 800,000, and Syrian government are attempting to send them to Jordan, creating a moral, humanitarian, and thus grave political crisis in Jordan. If consid-

ered refugees, Palestinians entering Jordan create a larger problem because of the following legal rights and privileges granted to them under this status: the right to remain in the place of refuge if they so desire and the right to resettle in the host country, where the burden is on the state to provide them a legal status, in addition to other rights.

The humanitarian situations in Syria transitioned on to 2013 with the number of international nations demanding immediate action increasing constantly. Reports from the United Nations High Commission for refugees, indicated that there were as many as 4,000,000 people in need of help within Syria, including 650,000 refugees, and two million internally displaced persons, negatively impacting on the political and economic situations in neighboring countries (United Nations High-Commission for Refugees, 2013). Among these countries, Jordan remains to be the most affected by the situation, with the country dedicating more funds to the accommodation of thousands of refugees. Looking at its 2013 response plan to the Syrian crisis, the Government of Jordan has articulated and reaffirmed its intention and willingness to open up its borders to all refugees from Syria.

Since the beginning of 2013, refugees from Syria are provided with a variety of humanitarian assistance including from community-based organizations, and local NGOs, in coordination with the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), which the Government of Jordan appointed to this role (United Nations High-Commission for Refugees, 2013).

The vast majority of Syrian refugees in Jordan does not live in camps but mixed in with local communities, and it is there that one can find signs that the patience of the Jordanian people is beginning to fray (Evans, 2013).

In April, 2013, Jordan accepted a slight changing in its initial stand on providing weaponry to Free Army fighters. The Jordanian government agreed to lead a covert operation of providing arms to the Free Army in Syria. The carefully organized covert involved Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, with other Western governments, such as America and France (Chulov, Black, 2013).

This change in Jordanian policy towards the crisis was a consequence of fears over the rising powers of terrorist groups linked to Al-Qaeda in Southern Syria which created an increasing global threat. With this strategy, Jordan aimed to end the civil war in Syria before it harms its economy or even boosts powerful terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda into its territory. However, Jordan remained careful on how to handle the situation and

avoid retaliation from the Syrian government. It ensures this by avoiding a straight forward bid to the Syrian leader Bashar Al-Assad, and supporting a push to overpower Al-Qaeda, or other terrorist groups linked to it, as its driving force (Chulov, Black, 2013).

With the use of chemical weapons, there have been increased calls for military action from the West, with France and The United States showing willingness to strike. The prospects of an American led intercession into Syria's civil unrest were based on assertions that President Bashar Al-Assad was responsible for use of chemical attacks against civilians in Damascus.

The Arab League and the U.K were in full support of this intervention that was however, opposed by China and Russia in the U.N. On 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2013, Jordan strongly condemned the idea of a military strike in Syria, saying that any attack on its neighbor will not be carried out from Jordanian territory (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013).

King Abdullah II said in early 2013 that Jordanian soil will not be used to launch an attack against its Syrian neighbor, but later that year there has been a slight change of Jordan's 'neutral' position towards the crisis when Jordan's Prime Minister, Abdullah Ensour, made a sort of a different statement saying that Jordan would support limited military strikes if it was confirmed that the Syrian Government used chemical weapons at that time (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013).

### **To what end can Jordan endure the Crisis' consequences?**

Despite the scarcity of financial, economical and natural resources of the country, and the economic crisis that Jordan is going through, Jordan is considered one of the most Arab countries that received refugees especially from Arab countries, beginning with the refuge of Palestinians in 1948 and the displacement in 1967, and then receiving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were in Kuwait during the first Gulf war, following refuge Iraqis after the American occupation of Iraq and now the Syrian refugees which their number is increasing day after day and is becoming an enormous pressure on the national economy of Jordan because of the high costs incurred by Jordan to provide a dignified life for refugees, health, education and drinking water.

Jordan has taken in millions of refugees over the years; Palestinians, Lebanese and Iraqis. Syrians now make up more than 10 percent of the

population in the country, which suffers from double-digit unemployment and a record budget deficit.

Some say Jordan cannot afford to take in more Syrians; others feel for the displaced (Laub, Daraghmeh, 2013).

Despite all these enormous challenges and the lack of enough support from Arab countries and other countries to help Jordan advancement helping the Syrian refugees, Jordan on humanitarian and nationalist grounds still receives thousands of refugees on daily basis until Al-Zaatari camp had no room for this huge amount of human tide with the requirements of this increase of provide all that is needed from the refugees' daily life requirements, that the Jordanian government fails to provide it even to its own citizens especially the ones who lives in provinces and regions far from Amman (Hijazeen, 2012).

Now that the number of Syrians in Jordan exceeded one million, the plot thickens and makes Jordan's economical situation even worse that it is. Jordanians already have problems of poverty, unemployment and high prices, and a lot of them accuse the Syrians of stealing their jobs and making landlords raise the prices of rents in the real estate market.

This kind of situation is similar to what Jordan went through with Iraqi refugees in 2003, the prices of almost everything doubled, especially in the real estate market, but the Syrian situation is even worse, because the Iraqis came to Jordan more tourists than refugees, they had money, they raised the real estate market, made investments in Jordan, and controlled Amman's stock exchange market, which somehow flourished the kingdom's economic, but reflected negatively on the poor Jordanian citizens.

According to Hamada Abu Nejmeh, the undersecretary of the Ministry of Labor, the number of Syrians who have been involved in the Jordanian labor market had exceeded 160,000, and the vast majority of them do not carry work permits. He said that "a large number of Syrians have a very negative impact, especially that we are talking about labor intervention in Jordan without visa restrictions and procedures," adding, "We understand their need and their right to work, but it is unfortunate they are entering specialties deprives Jordanians of employment opportunities." (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, 2013).

Abu Nejmeh warned that the continuation of this situation on the long term will raise unemployment rates between Jordanians and adversely affect Jordanian projects in the field of employment.

On the national security side in Jordan, every now and then unfortunate events takes place inside Al-Zaatari camp, refugees make protests in the

camp over almost everything, when the electricity goes out or the water run out, some of them clashes with the police, while many other tries to escape the camp as they claim that the living conditions are unbearable inside the camp. Protests also takes place in front of the Syrian embassy in Amman, and usually clashes happens between those who is for Al-Assad's regime and those who are against it.

There are suspicions among Jordanians that some of the people who comes to Jordan as refugees are actually members of Hezbollah Lebanese party 'which is on Al-Assad's regime's side' and Syrian intelligence members, who aims to create such disturbances on purpose inside and outside the refugee camps in Jordan in order to create discord and confusion in Jordanian cities to drag it into the Syrian situation.

### **Conclusion**

The total cost of hosting the Syrian refugees in Jordan has exceeded 2 billion dollars, while the financial support from the organizations and countries to Jordan did not exceed 800 million dollars. Brigadier General Dr. Waddah Al-Hamoud, Director of the Department of the Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, declared on December the 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 that the total number of Syrian refugees in Jordan has reached 571,247 refugees. Al Hamoud added that Jordan can no longer take the pressure of the constant flow of the refugees, which is reflecting dangerously in the kingdom's poor resources, especially the infrastructure.

Jordan's preferred policy towards in Syria crisis has been one of caution. Its actions indicate that the country does not wish to provoke any form of retaliatory attacks from Assad, and is also fearful of the potential for collapse of the regime that could result in empowering of hostile forces such as Al-Qaeda. Publicly, the Government of Jordan has chosen to distant itself from the conflict in Syria, despite pressure from international allies to join the anti-Assad movement. In addition, to show its constant support and willingness to help, Jordan has continued to open its borders for refugees from Syria, although it is likely that this will strain its precarious finances and resources.

There are altogether over one million Syrian refugees in Jordan, according to Mohammad Al-Momani, Jordan's minister of state for media affairs.

That's a lot in a country of just over six million people. The strain on a country poor in resources has been enormous.

“Think of the water scarcity in Jordan and how much we are enduring, the pressure of providing water to the refugee camps,” said al-Momani. He listed off other problems: inflation, housing and employment.

“Economically, it’s affected us very much,” said a retired policeman in downtown Amman. “Many Syrians are taking the jobs of Jordanians.” (Evans, 2013).

Jordan now urges a diplomatic solution to end the conflict in Syria and a peaceful transition of power in it. For Jordan, the greatest threat is not the Syrian army but the international community’s inaction on the Syrian turmoil. It is in Jordan’s best interest to forbid the Syrian regime from using its artillery in the direction of Jordanian territories, control its border with Syria to prevent terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda of growth in that area, as well as to avoid being used as a pad for any foreign military action against Syria.

The Jordanian government must take urgent steps towards the Syrian situation, like limiting the number of Syrian refugees like Turkey did or completely stop receiving more refugees, which will be the better solution before it is too late if it is not already is, otherwise very soon the Jordanian average citizen will not find a place for him in his own country.

### **Main Syrian Refugees Camps in Jordan**

- Al-Zaatari refugees camp in Al-Mafraq.
- Al Zaatari refugee camp is the first and the largest, “considered the second largest refugees camp in the world” (Evans, 2013) Syrian refugee camp in Jordan; it was opened in July, 2012 in Al Mafraq city (80 kilometers northern Amman).
- Since the opening of the camp, it was faced by many problems; the main one was the population fast growth of the Syrian refugees which exceeded 140,000 refugees after one year of the camp opening, while it was built for a maximum capacity of 60,000 refugees.
- According to the latest statistics by the end of 2013, the overall number of the donated pre-made houses (caravans) in the camp is amounted to approximately 3000 Caravans.
- In his latest statement, the director of Al-Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees Colonel Zaher Abu Shehab declared that the camp is still under the need of new caravans, as the camp continues to receive Syrian refugees every day.

- Al-Zaatari camp now has about 2000 caravans, whereas the number of tents is around 3000 tents, the camp currently needs approximately 4000 Caravans to get rid of tents permanently and replace them with caravans. The camp has no concrete buildings at all, except of some of the premises of international organizations that requires protection (Hijazeen, 2012).
- Syrians in the camp make protests to get out of it or to be deported back to Syria, clashes happens every now and then between the refugees and the Jordanian forces in the camp.
- Mrajib Al-Fhoud refugees camp in Al-Zarqa.
- The opening of Mrajib *Al-Fhoud camp* was after nine months of opening Al-Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees.
- The camp was built by financing of The United Arab Emirates, due the maximum number reach in Al-Zaatari camp, at a cost of 10 million dollars, and under the UAE Red Crescent administration, it is the second official camp for Syrian refugees in Jordan. The camp contains 770 caravans, the camp accommodated 25,000 Syrian refugees in 2013 (Al Islah News, 2013).
- The camp was built as a typical city on 250 acres to include four schools to accommodate 4000 Syrian students, and 14 kitchen, each with an area of 100 square meters, and there is also a shopping center, and a mosque with an area of 300 square meters, a water purification plant, and children playgrounds (Al Islah News, 2013).

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### **Jordańska dyplomacja wobec Syrii i kryzysu syryjskiego (2011–2013)**

#### **Streszczenie**

Relacje między Jordanią i Syrią na przestrzeni wieków naznaczone były różnym stopniem wzajemnej wrogości, czy nawet przemocy. Syryjskie powstanie z 2011 roku nie pozostaje bez wpływu na stosunki jordańsko-syryjskie. Jordania zajęła neutralną pozycję wobec wydarzeń w Syrii, traktując je jako wewnętrzną sprawę sąsiada, jednak – w przeciwieństwie do innych arabskich państw – nie zamknęła ambasady syryjskiej. Artykuł poświęcony jest relacjom jordańsko-syryjskim i stanowisku dyplomatycznemu Jordanii w latach 2011–2013 wobec syryjskiego powstania 2011 roku. Omawia również znaczenie stabilizacji sytuacji w Syrii dla Jordanii, jako że Syria jest jednym z większych państw regionu, w wymiarze ekonomicznym, społecznym i geograficznym oraz bada możliwości udzielania przez Jordanię pomocy humanitarnej uchodźcom syryjskim.