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# JORDAN

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## Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

**Population:** 5.7 million (2.5 million under 18)

**Government armed forces:** 100,500

**Compulsory recruitment age:** 18

**Voluntary recruitment age:** 18

**Voting age:** 18

**Optional Protocol:** ratified 23 May 2007

**Other treaties ratified (see glossary):**

CRC, GC AP I and II, ICC, ILO 138, ILO 182

***The presence of some under-18s continued to be noted in the armed forces, but they were reportedly not deployed. There were no reports of armed political groups recruiting children.***

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## Government

### National recruitment legislation and practice

The government decided in 2007 to reintroduce conscription, which had been suspended in 1999. Those first affected by the change were males aged over 18 and born after 1989, who would serve for a period of up to two years.<sup>1</sup> Conscription would be extended to females when the necessary trainers were available; young women would serve in universities and schools rather than in military facilities.<sup>2</sup> The government said that the aim of reintroducing universal conscription was to instil a sense of national pride and discipline in the country's youth and provide training to help them find employment.<sup>3</sup>

The revised conscription law was to rule out waivers for only sons or those who had brothers killed in service,<sup>4</sup> but they would be available for health reasons; deferrals were available for students.<sup>5</sup> In a separate move, the age for voluntary recruitment was raised to 18.<sup>6</sup>

### Military training and military schools

The Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) ran 21 institutions for military training, including the Royal Jordanian Military College in Amman.<sup>7</sup>

In 2007 the JAF set up a non-profit company in co-ordination with the Ministry of Labour to train unemployed youth to fill vacancies in the construction sector and elsewhere. This followed previous involvement in vocational training for over-16s.<sup>8</sup> In its first phase, the Jordan Company for Training and Recruitment (JCTR) would run a six-week military training program followed by vocational and on-the-job-training for 4,000 Jordanians between the ages of 18 and 35.<sup>9</sup> Trainees would receive a wage of 190–300 dinars

(approximately US\$269–424), and social and medical security benefits.<sup>10</sup>

### Child recruitment and deployment

In its third periodic report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, considered in March 2006, Jordan stated that its armed forces employed 21 individuals under the age of 18, all of whom were 17; this number comprised 17 serving in the military sector and four in the civil service sector. No under-18s could take part in military operations.<sup>11</sup>

In correspondence with the Child Soldiers Coalition, the government stated on 19 October 2007 that "Recruitment of persons under the age of 18 is suspended concerning military purposes and is only limited to vocational tasks ... All members of the armed forces who are participating in peace operations are over 23 years old."<sup>12</sup>

The Compulsory Military Service Act No. 23 of 1986 put the minimum age limit at 18; this would be retained in the 2007 amendments.<sup>13</sup> However, the issue of child recruitment was not mentioned in Jordan's draft Children's Act of 2004, which in 2007 was still awaiting parliamentary approval.<sup>14</sup> The Act was intended to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>15</sup>

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### Armed groups

A number of Palestinian political armed groups were represented in Jordan, including the Fatah-affiliated Badr Brigade, which was under the control of the JAF.<sup>16</sup> There were no reports that they recruited or trained under-18s.

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### Developments

There were 750,000 refugees from the Iraq conflict in Jordan, of whom the UN estimated that some 250,000 were of school age.<sup>17</sup> Of these, 40,000 were expected to enter the Jordanian school system in 2007.<sup>18</sup> There were no reports of the involvement of under-18s in cross-border insurgency in Iraq. Care International was running counselling programs for Iraqi refugees affected by the conflict in Iraq, including children, with funding from the UN refugee agency UNHCR.<sup>19</sup>

Jordan made efforts to promote awareness of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) in its security forces, including through training programs run for the Police Academy and members of the armed forces by the National Centre for Human Rights and Mizan.<sup>20</sup> IHL was also integrated into military training in January 2006.<sup>21</sup> The Jordan Institute of Diplomacy's Regional Human Security Centre organized a number of meetings on child soldiers, which resulted in recommendations for legal and

administrative measures on such issues as recruitment age.<sup>22</sup>

Jordan's National Plan of Action for Children, to run from 2004 to 2013, also mentioned the need for protection of children in armed conflict. It aimed to provide training in this regard for those working in the field of child rights.<sup>23</sup>

In July 2007 Jordan hosted the 27th International Arab Children Congress (ACC) on the subject of security and development, which included workshops on the impact of war and violence on children.<sup>24</sup>

## International standards

The government ratified the Optional Protocol in May 2007, five years after signing it.<sup>25</sup> Jordan's declaration was not yet available.

\* Titles of non-English language sources have been translated by the Coalition.

- 1 "18-year-olds to do three months' military service", *Jordan Times*, 15 March 2007. The exact timeframe was to be set by the cabinet, on the basis of advice from the designated minister and the head of the joint forces. Nifin Abd al-Hadi, "Service length fixed by cabinet", *Ad-Dustour*, June 2007.
- 2 Mu'adh Furaihat, "Deputies agree flag law", *Ammannet*, 10 June 2007.
- 3 Mohammad Ben Hussein, "Conscription law amendment approved", *Jordan Times*, 19 April 2007.
- 4 Jihad al-Munsi, "Draft flat law cancels exceptions", *al-Ghad*, 18 March 2007.
- 5 E-mail contact with the National Centre for Human Rights, 9 October 2007.
- 6 Third periodic report of Jordan to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc. CRC/C/JOR/3, 2 March 2006.
- 7 Jordanian Armed Forces website, [www.jaf.mil.jo](http://www.jaf.mil.jo).
- 8 Third periodic report, above note 6.
- 9 Harun al-Khitab, "Civilian requests welcomed in Maan for training in the armed forces", *al-Rai*, 1 October 2007, [www.alrai.com](http://www.alrai.com).
- 10 Khaled Neimat, "Army-run recruitment company launched", *Jordan Times*, 6 September 2007.
- 11 Third periodic report, above note 6.
- 12 Correspondence with Jordan mission to Geneva, 19 October 2007.
- 13 Mustafa al-Riyalat, "Representatives agree flag and reserve law", *ad-Dustour*, April 2007.
- 14 Contact with National Centre for Human Rights, above note 5.
- 15 "Parliament Approves CRC", *ad-Dustour*, 26 August 2006.
- 16 David Eshel, "The Jordanian Badr Brigade – can it save Abu Mazen's West Bank?", *Defense Update*, 2 October 2007, [www.defense-update.com](http://www.defense-update.com).
- 17 Linda Hindi, "US pledges \$30 million to support Iraqis' host countries", *Jordan Times*, 29 August 2007.

18 "Iraqi children join Jordanian peers at school", *Jordan Times*, 23 August 2007.

19 Linda Hindi, "Helping cure deep war wounds", *Jordan Times*, 29 August 2007.

20 Third periodic report, above note 6.

21 International Committee of the Red Cross, *Annual Report*, 2006, [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org).

22 Third periodic report, above note 6.

23 UNICEF, Jordanian National Plan of Action, [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

24 Hani Hazaimeh, "Children's congress to focus on security, development", *Jordan Times*, 26 June 2007.

25 Ratifications, [www2.ohchr.org](http://www2.ohchr.org).