

Jordan National Day Special

Overcoming challenges to build a better future

DEMIYE HADDAD
AMBASSADOR OF JORDAN



Today, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan celebrates its 72nd Anniversary of Independence. It is with great honor and privilege that I take advantage of this glorious occasion to express on

behalf of Their Majesties King Abdullah II and Queen Rania Al Abdullah, the Royal family, the government and people of Jordan our utmost respect and heartfelt wishes to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and great and friendly people of Japan for continued peace, progress and prosperity.

Jordan is destined, like Japan, to face great natural and regional challenges, but addressing challenges and overcoming hardships while building a better future is the true measure of any thriving nation. Blessed by the strong and wise leadership

of His Majesty the King and the absolute resolve, unity and determination of all Jordanians, we were able to beat all odds and flourish as a nation of peace, moderation and tolerance, where human rights and liberties are strictly observed, where all our guests feel safe and welcomed, and where our investment in the most valuable resource (our citizens) enabled us to become a leading center of education, medicine and information and communications technology in our region and beyond.

Our eyes on the future are sharp and optimistic; a knowledge-based society equipped with cutting-edge training and investment in the technologies of the future, such as clean and renewable energy that will transform Jordan to an energy exporter in a decade or so. Other megaprojects include the Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance that will help save the Dead Sea from completely disappearing, desalination plants to produce much-needed fresh water to ease the chronic water shortage in Jordan and neighboring countries, as well as railway networks that will further connect our region and usher in stronger interregional cooperation.

Jordan plays an important role in the stability and security of the Middle East. Working closely with our partners, such as Japan, our efforts are focused on creating a better future for all. Jordan's role as a shining beacon of humanity can be seen by the sheer number of refugees received over the many past decades, the last of which are the 1.3 million Syrian refugees who have fled to Jordan since 2011, supported not only by the government, but also by the local communities where 90 percent of them currently live with care and dignity. In fact, more than 40 percent of those who live in Jordan today are considered by the international community to be refugees.

On this special day, we pay tribute to our true friend Japan that has supported us on our journey, providing much-needed assistance for our socioeconomic development. We also offer our sincere gratitude to the hundreds of Japanese experts and volunteers who have worked — and continue to work — in Jordan, demonstrating the true, honorable and magnificent fabric that Japanese are made of. We also welcome with appreciation the visit of Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was in Jordan earlier this month, accompanied by top business leaders who saw firsthand the unique opportunities we offer. Additionally, we appreciate the visit of Foreign Minister Taro Kono, who traveled to Jordan at the end of April. These visits and many others clearly reflect the strength of our bilateral ties. Japan's leadership in the region is acknowledged by all and was demonstrated last month when ministers from Japan, Jordan, Palestine and Israel gathered around one table for the first time in years to further advance Japan's peace-building efforts represented by the ongoing decade-old Corridor for Peace and Prosperity initiative, one clear example from many of the strength and importance of Japan's role in the Middle East.

Jordan is home to the 2,500-year-old city of Petra, entirely carved in rose red stone and a living testament of the ingenuity of

our ancestors, as well as the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth and a globally recognized natural wonder. I wish to invite you all to visit Jordan and enjoy our acclaimed Arabic hospitality.

I would like to thank The Japan Times for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts with its distinguished readers.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Al-Khazneh (The Treasury) is one of the temples in the ancient city of Petra in southern Jordan. The city was possibly built in the fifth century B.C.



(From left) Jordanian Crown Prince Hussein, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Jordanian King Abdullah II attend a ceremony in Amman on May 1. THE ROYAL HASHEMITE COURT ARCHIVE

Congratulations
to the People of
the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
on the 72nd Anniversary
of Their National Day

JAPAN-JORDAN ASSOCIATION

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 **Mitsubishi Corporation**