

Jordan national day

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AMBASSADOR OF JORDAN

Remarkable levels of investment help maintain stability, security

Today, as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan celebrates the 66th anniversary of its independence, I would like to take advantage of this glorious occasion to present on behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah II, the Royal family, and the government and people of Jordan our sincerest wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to the government and great people of Japan for continued peace, progress and prosperity.



Jordan celebrates this year's anniversary while Japan is rising strong from the ashes of last year's triple disaster and the tragedy of lost innocent lives and the sufferings of hundreds of thousands of survivors. The spirit of "kizuna" (bonds) has rarely had this powerful meaning the way it was felt by the nations, especially those who mobilized their best and shared their resources to help in lifting the burdens of this epic disaster. The Jordanian medical team who worked at evacuation centers near the crip-

pled nuclear reactors of Fukushima Prefecture left Japan feeling proud to have the opportunity to be there for our friends when they needed us. They will always cherish the respect and kindness they were wrapped with during their mission, something, they told me, felt like home.

The traditional barriers of race, belief, color and language were instantaneously overcome to reveal the true nature of humankind, and their deep-rooted love for peace, friendship and compassion that conquered all divisions and intolerances, bringing people from different parts of our globe around a unifying, simple yet divine cause, a brother helping a brother.

It's truly magnificent that Japan, while it was wounded and burdened under this heavy catastrophe, managed to bring the goodness out of people, which reflects beyond any doubt that Japan is a catalyst of friendship and peace in our world. Japan's continued efforts in helping other nations build a solid and sustainable future, and solidify the principles of peace, tolerance and cooperation, make Japan a true kizuna generator.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two friendly nations in 1954, our ties developed progressively and steadily, covering vast areas of mutual interest and understanding, such as justice, human rights, freedoms and democracy, and the right of every individual to have a better future, built on peace, harmony, equality and respect for each other's differences.

The almost annual Royal Visits to Japan, since H.M. the King assumed constitutional powers in 1999, reflect the uniqueness and importance we attach to our bilateral relations, and our steadfast commitment to see them grow further and stronger. They also show our deep appreciation for Japan's continued support and assistance to Jordan's socio-economic development policies. It is known that Japan's official development assistance (ODA) touched almost every Jordanian, and covered a wide variety of areas, such as economic, technical assistance, capacity building, cultural exchange, transfer of technology and knowhow, and Japanese experts and volunteers who work hand in hand with their fellow Jordanians to assist



Royal family: Jordan's King Abdullah II and Queen Rania with their children. EMBASSY OF JORDAN

in building a better future for our children.

Since the dawn of this millennium, Jordan achieved remarkable levels of advancement in every aspect of life. His Majesty's visions, leadership and personal

involvement are strongly guiding the reform process of Jordan. Now we find ourselves competing with many well-established economies in the world through the achievements and opportunities our economy is present-

ing, and the gateways we offer to the rest of our region. Jordan's unique stability and security continue despite what the region is going through these days. Average personal income of Jordanians almost tripled during the past 12 years, more universities and hospitals were built, while innovation and intellectual production reached unprecedented levels in Jordan's history. Our investment laws and regulations evolved rapidly and steadily to address foreign investors' needs and requirements. These and many other achievements resulted in foreign direct investment inflow reaching remarkable levels and covering almost every aspect of our economy, with plans in motion for additional foreign investments that will reach tenfold what we have today in the coming two decades.

Jordan imports almost 96 percent of its energy needs which, at today's prices, presents a huge challenge to our economic sustainability. Addressing this problem, Jordan started a very ambitious and vital endeavor aiming at generating our energy needs from renewable and green sources, with plans to transfer the

country into an energy exporter in a few decades. The process has also started to create one of the largest water projects in the world to produce fresh water that will help Jordan and neighboring countries, in addition to plans for a regional railway networks that will connect countries of the region together and with Asia and Europe.

Jordan has a unique policy of open doors to all refugees, especially from neighboring countries. The instability and conflict in the region led to inflows of hundreds of thousands of refugees from surrounding countries during the past 10 years alone, most of whom want to remain and refuse repatriation. Those refugees are treated with utmost dignity and compassion and share a home with Jordan's 6.5 million inhabitants. They benefit from our free medical and education services provided by the government, and share our scarce and subsidized resources like water, food and energy. The heavy burden Jordan is carrying to provide for those in need is a true testimony of our commitment to human rights and causes of peace and stability,

and reflects the true nature of Jordanians who spare no effort to extend hands of friendship to all those in need.

Jordan today is considered a well-established and wide ranging medical and education center in the region that competes with leading centers in the world. We receive patients and students from several countries who trust our professionals to help them have a better future. Our reputation is solid and our deliverables are tangible.

Jordan enjoys a deep and mesmerizing beauty, from Petra, chosen as one of the new seven wonders of the world and carved entirely in rose-red mountains, to Wadi Rum, which is described as a journey to the moon, to Jerash, the best preserved Roman city in the region, to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, where winter feels like spring, and swimming is highly enjoyable while very therapeutic with natural cosmetic effects.

On behalf of all Jordanians, I would like to invite you to visit Jordan, saying, "Ahlan Wa Sahlan," which means "You are welcome as a family member."

My sincere appreciation to The Japan Times for granting me this unique opportunity to address its distinguished readers.

Thank you.



Sand and rock: Wadi Rum, also known as the Valley of the Moon, is where British officer T.E. Lawrence based his operations during the Arab revolt of 1917-18 and is one of Jordan's important tourist destinations. EMBASSY OF JORDAN

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to the People of
the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
on the 66th Anniversary
of Their National Day**

JAPAN-JORDAN ASSOCIATION

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