

Jordan national day

Working toward a more secure, stable Middle East

Demiye Haddad
AMBASSADOR OF JORDAN

Today, May 25, Jordan celebrates the 69th anniversary of its independence. It is with profound honor and privilege that I convey the best wishes of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, the Royal Family, the government and people of Jordan, to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, His Excellency Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the government and people of Japan, and our deep appreciation for this great nation as an essential pillar of stability and prosperity in its region and the rest of the world, a close friend and partner with whom we share our principles and ethics.

Sixty years have passed since diplomatic relations between Jordan and Japan were established and from the first day our friendship quickly grew and flourished, nourished by the unique and spe-



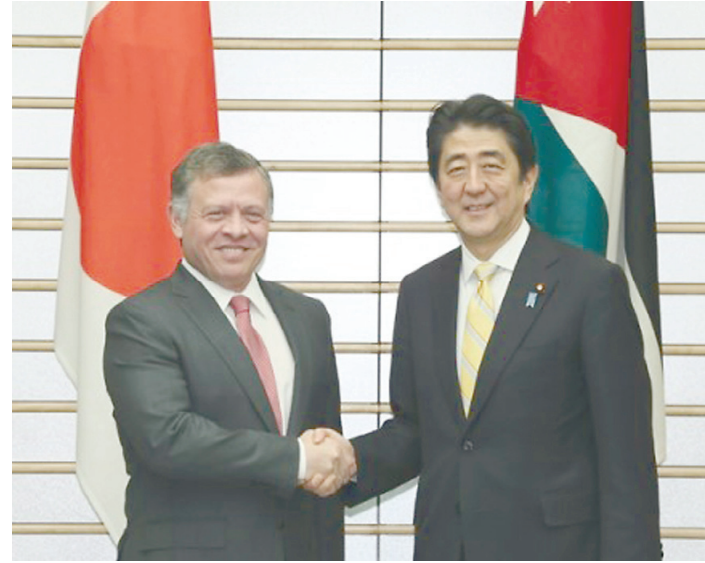
cial ties that bind the Royal Family of Jordan and the Imperial family of Japan, and the vast similarities we share, especially our deep commitment to the causes of peace, freedom, democracy and better life for all.

The bilateral relations between our two countries witnessed a powerful boost during the past six months, starting with the eighth Royal Visit of His Majesty King Abdullah II to Japan in November 2014, followed by the Official Visit of H.E. Prime Minister Abe to Jordan in January, then the summit meeting between the two leaders during the Asian-African Summit in Jakarta last month. This unprecedented momentum is a strong testament to the level of partnership we happily reached, reflected by the Joint Statement of last November's Royal Visit that set a road map for a Strategic Partnership, enhancing all aspects of our ties and building further avenues of cooperation to serve the best interest of our two friendly peoples and regions.

The latest two landmark visits also witnessed a front-row role by the business sector, dur-

ing which the two leaders met chairmen and presidents of top companies in both countries, while witnessing the signing of joint venture agreements to produce electricity in Jordan from solar energy. It is also worth mentioning that H.M. the King held a round table meeting with a leading group of Japanese think tanks specializing in the Middle East, thus highlighting their importance to our bilateral relations.

This year we also celebrate the 16th anniversary of H.M. the King assuming constitutional powers. His Majesty's guidance, wisdom and visions lifted Jordan to where it is now, a modern and advanced society that respects its identity and heritage while realizing remarkable advancements and achievements in all fields, built on the rule of law, the protection of freedoms and democracy, as well as equal opportunity to all Jordanians to fulfill their dreams through hard work, dedication and serving their community. Jordan today is considered a well-established and wide-ranging medical and education center in the region that competes with leading centers around the world. We receive patients and students from dozens of countries who trust our professionals to help them enjoy a better life. Our pharmaceutical companies provide Jordanian-made medicine to more than 70 countries, whereas the software and online content created by Jordanians in Arabic cover over 75 percent of



King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan meets with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Nov. 20 in Tokyo during his visit to Japan. CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

that sector.

While we reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the Japanese people for the heinous murder of innocent Japanese citizens this year by the hands of criminal terrorists, and while we mourn our martyred pilot, the late Capt. Muath al-Kasasbeh, who was inhumanely assassinated by the same terrorist group in Syria, a hero who gave his life serving his country and faith, paying the ultimate price for his fight to help free the world from the terror of those *khawarij* (outlaws), we reconfirm our commitment to fight terrorism and intolerance wherever found, hand in hand with our Japanese partners, whose support and assistance help Jordan and

other countries in the region in their strive for a more stable and secure Middle East.

Jordan is blessed with the gift of stability and security despite what the region is witnessing these days. This was possible through the strong leadership and wisdom of His Majesty King Abdullah II, along with the unwavering vigilance, and determination of our people to never allow extremism to touch their country, or the lives they built for their families, keeping Jordan a moderate and tolerant society where human rights and dignity are safeguarded, and where doors are open to millions of refugees who found in Jordan a safe haven for themselves and their loved ones.



The historic city of Petra is a UNESCO World Heritage site and Jordan's leading tourist attraction. EMBASSY OF JORDAN

We deeply appreciate Japan's continued support and assistance to Jordan's socioeconomic development policies. It is a known fact that Japan's overseas development assistance (ODA) touched almost every Jordanian, and covered a wide range of projects, especially in areas such as water, where Jordan is extremely poor in, security and human resources development. We will always cherish the contributions of those Japanese experts and volunteers who choose to leave the comfort of their homes to help us on our path for the future. We also express our gratitude to Japan for the latest ODA package which will help ease part of the burden Jordan endures

to care for the 1.4 million Syrian refugees it hosts, whether inside refugee camps or in host communities where 90 percent of refugees live. We believe Japan is a force for good and deeply appreciate the efforts of its esteemed government. H.E. Prime Minister Abe's policy speech in Jeddah in May 2013, the speech in Cairo in January 2015 and the four tours he made to the Middle East during the past two years are clear testaments to Japan's commitment to further strengthen its ties with our region and assist its countries in their efforts to enhance regional stability, security and prosperity.

I would like to conclude by saying that Jordan enjoys a deep and mesmerizing beauty,

from Petra, chosen as the second of the New 7 Wonders of the World, carved entirely in rose red mountains, to Wadi Rum, which travelers describe as a journey to the moon, to Jerash where 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 and very therapeutic.

On behalf of all Jordanians I invite you to visit Jordan, greeting you all by saying "Ahlan Wa Sahlan," which means "You are welcome with no burden as one of us."

I also would like to thank The Japan Times for granting me this opportunity to address its distinguished readers.

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to the People of
the Hashemite Kingdom
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on the 69th Anniversary
of Their National Day



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