

[\(Japanese Version\)](#)

[\(Arabic Version\)](#)

May, 2021

What happened to the royal family of Jordan?

1. A tremor struck Jordan



A tremor struck Jordan on Saturday, April 3rd, 2021. Executive military officers visited the court of Prince Hamza, the half-brother of the current king, and ordered him to be under house arrest on suspicion of treason. The BBC broadcast aired a video posted by the prince. The news was prevailed around the world¹. Prince Hamza served as crown prince from 1999 to 2004 after the throne of the current king. He is a popular royal family among the people.

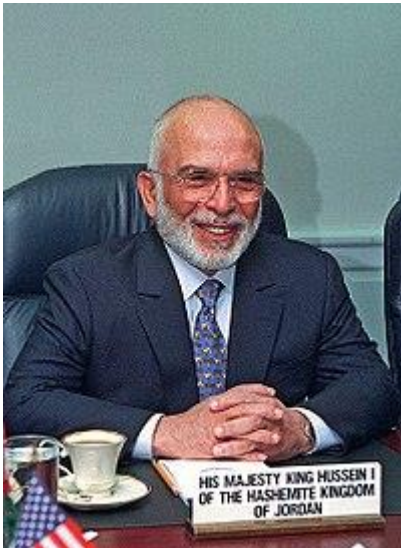
Eighteen people, including two important figures, were arrested and interrogated. The Deputy Prime Minister held a press conference on April 4 and disclosed the details². But the background and motives of the case remain a mystery.

The official state name of Jordan is Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. King of Jordan is a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. In 1921 after World War I, Jordan became independent from Ottoman Empire as the Emirate of Trans-Jordan. This year, therefore, marks the 100th anniversary of its founding.

Jordan is a small and fragile country. The country is surrounded by Iraq in the east, Israel in the west, Saudi Arabia in the south and Syria in the north respectively. It had been tossed back and forth by the swinging Middle Eastern politics. The country itself has many domestic problems. Jordan suffers from lack of natural resources, the weakness of economy and the large number of Palestinian refugees. It has always been forced to walk a tightrope. The Hashemite royal family has survived in the rough seas and has ruled the country till now. But the inner problem of the family is quite complicated. In order to understand the case, it is necessary to check the royal kinship over former King Hussein.

2. Royal kinship over former King Hussein

* See [‘Genealogy of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’](#)



Former King Hussein, the father of the current King Abdullah II, became the third king in 1952 and kept its position for nearly 50 years until he died in 1999. During his tenure, the war continued in the Middle East, including the Second, Third and Fourth Middle East Wars, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Gulf War. King Hussein skillfully lasted through the storm. He made the world aware of the value of the small country Jordan.

Prince Talal, the younger brother of King Hussein, became crown prince because Hussein had no boys when he was crowned in 1952. Hussein has been married four times in his life. Her second queen was the Englishwoman Tony Gardner. She delivered Abdullah, the current king, in 1962. Tony Gardner was called Queen Muna in the Arabian name. Later she was divorced. Prince Hamza was born in 1970 to Hussein's fourth wife, Lisa Halaby (commonly known as Queen Noor). Queen Noor is a Syrian-Lebanese American who was born in Washington, USA.

Mothers of Abdullah II and Hamza were both foreign women. King Abdullah is a child of mixed parentage between Arab and White. This is the first time that the Hashemite family descendant of the Prophet Muhammad has the king of mixed blood.

The reign of King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan continued until 1999, when King Hussein passe away. Then, the incident took place regarding the assignment of the crown prince.

3. Crown prince had been replaced twice

In 1999, King Hussein (then) had been admitted to a hospital in US for cancer treatment. King realized that he had no life expectancy. He took a surprising action. He returned home by a special flight while lying on his bed. King persuaded his younger brother, then Crown Prince Hassan, to hand over the title of the crown prince to King's eldest son, Abdullah II, of 38 years old. King Hussein flew back to the United States immediately and he died shortly.

It was Prince Hamza, a half-brother, who became the crown prince in 1999 under the new King Abdullah II. At that time, Abdullah II had a son named Hussein with the Palestinian Queen, Rania. But Hussein was only five years old. So, King Abdullah II made his half-brother Hamza the Crown Prince. During the reign of King Abdullah II, there were the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the Iraq War in 2003. The Middle East continued to be unrest. The king and crown prince of half-brothers cooperated each other to keep small Jordan in safe.



However, in 2004, the same problem took place about the replacement of crown prince. The King declared that he would replace Hamza with his son, Hussein, as the crown prince. It was a repetition of the same as the time of former King Hussein. The difference was that in last time the king and the crown prince were full-brothers and this time they were half-brothers respectively.

The replacement of crown prince was done peacefully without any inner battle. The reason of peaceful succession would be that Jordan, a small and fragile country, could not afford to waste time on the trouble of the inner circle within the royal family. Both the king and the crown prince fully acknowledged the situation. Hamza gave up the position of the crown prince. King Abdullah II picked up the symptom of future family struggles by adopting the inheritance rule that the king's son should be the next king.

Generally speaking, the succession issue is not so simple even if the person concerned (in this case, Abdullah II and Hamza) agreed each other. There are many people in both sides looking for sweet fruits. They might lose their sweet fruits if their boss lost his position. They, therefore, try to persuade or allure the boss to keep the status quo. In this case, it could be possible to think that the entourage of Prince Hamza tried to attempt coup d'etat. Furthermore, Hamza's wife, Princess Basmah, might be involved in the plot. Basmah was a first female pilot in Jordan. She was born in Canada and her father was a businessman. Her mother-in-law, Queen Noor was a Syrian-American.

Remember the kinship of the current King Abdullah II. The King's mother, Princess Muna, was an English woman. King's wife, Queen Rania was born in Kuwait to a Palestinian refugee doctor. Then Crown Prince Abdullah fell in love with Rania when she was working as a journalist in Jordan after graduating from college in Kuwait. Rania became the Crown Princess and later the Queen. She was a Cinderella girl.

Commenting in the style of a gossip magazine, Princess Basmah is a genuine Jordanian and her mother-in-law was a Syrian Arab. On the other hand, Basmah's brother-in-law, King Abdullah II is a half between Arab and British, and his wife Rania is a Palestinian refugee.

Basmah might think that which is more suitable, her husband or King's son as the successor of the noble Hashemite Family which is the descendent of Prophet Muhammad? It was reported that Princess Basmah contacted a certain country in search of asylum after the incident was disclosed³. It can guess that Hashemite house turmoil was based on the complicated kinship.

This is a gossip-style commentary on the case. There is no difference between the royal family or

the merchant family in both the East and West regarding domestic struggle.

4. The case was over

* See '[Genealogy of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan](#)'

The day after the incident, Deputy Prime Minister briefed the case at a press conference.⁴ According to his explanation, the military intelligence ordered the prince to be under house arrest on suspicion of rebellion. They showed the obvious evidence about the communication between Prince Hamza and a foreign institution. Princess Basmah, wife of Prince Hamza, asked a foreign senior official to escape from Jordan just after she noticed the raid by military intelligence. Deputy prime minister has not disclosed the name of foreign country. Authorities arrested 18 people for national treason, including two key figures, a former finance and planning minister and a person who is closely related to the royal family.⁵

The military authorities advised King Abdullah II to arrest Prince Hamza. But the King said that this was a problem within the Hashemite family. He asked the help of his uncle Prince Hassan. Prince Hassan was once forced to hand over the position of crown prince to Abdullah II by his brother King Hussein. It was a ironic fate for Hassan. However, Prince Hassan is now a guardian of the Hashemite family and an integral part of the security of the small Kingdom of Jordan. Prince Hassan called his nephew Prince Hamza to his residence and persuaded him to apologize the King.⁶



In the end, Prince Hamza issued a statement signed by himself, explaining that he had no intention to revolt against his half-brother King Abdullah II and was just wheedled by his surroundings.⁷ On April 7, the King broadcasted on TV that Prince Hamza was part of the royal family and was under his patronage.⁸ In addition, the King and Prince Hamza jointly attended the ceremony to commemorate the 100th anniversary of

independence of Jordan. Photos have been released to media.⁹ Authorities subsequently announced that they closed the file and released 16 of the 18 suspects excluding two key figures¹⁰. Later, in early May, two royal advisers retired and a new director general of royal court was appointed. This meant that the case was over.¹¹ A lot of mysteries were left behind.

5. What's behind the case?

The biggest mystery is that which foreign country is involved in. Deputy prime minister said Princess Basmah had consulted with a foreign agency to flee the country. It is sure that the Jordanian authorities are aware of the truth.

An unreleased person having close relation with the royal family might be the answer. His name is Sharif Hassan bin Zaid. He was almost unknown in the country. Subsequent reports indicate that he has been in Saudi Arabia and has dual citizenship of Saudi Arabia and Jordan. It is said that he was the Saudi representative of King Abdullah II.¹² These facts tell that Saudi Arabia is involved in this incident. However, it is unclear whether the case is directly linked to King Salman or Crown Prince Muhammad of Saudi Arabia. The foreign institutions and their names will keep in secret forever.

Jordan is the neighbor of Saudi Arabia and Israel. The political relationship between three countries is very sensitive. Israel has recently regained diplomatic relations with the UAE and Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia is seeking peace with Israel. The Palestinian issue seems to have been put aside. Jordan has many Palestinian refugees and King Abdullah II has a Palestinian queen. Both the country and its ruler are in a delicate position.

In the economic scene, the current Jordanian economy is very critical. Jordan's public debt swelled to \$ 37.4 billion last year, accounting for 76% of GDP. The unemployment rate is as high as 25% and 55% for young people.¹³ Jordan which lacks natural resources such as oil and gas, has no choice but to emigrate to work in rich Gulf countries or rely on financial assistance from these countries.

If the house turmoil became deteriorate, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be in jeopardy. To defend the name of the Hashemite family as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad is the only way to survive.

End

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¹ Jordan prince was asked to stop destabilizing 'activities'

<https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/03/04/2021/Jordan-prince-was-asked-to-stop-destabilizing-%E2%80%98activities%E2%80%99>

2021/4/3 The Peninsula

² Jordan says prince liaised with 'foreign parties' over plot to destabilize country

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1837401/middle-east>

2021/4/4 Arab News

³ Prince Hamzeh, inner clique's attempts to undermine security, stability foiled — deputy PM
<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/prince-hamzeh-inner-cliques-attempts-undermine-security-stability-foiled-%E2%80%94-deputy-pm>

2021/4/5 The Jordan Times

⁴ Jordan says prince liaised with 'foreign parties' over plot to destabilize country

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1837401/middle-east>

2021/4/4 Arab News

⁵ Prince Hamzeh, inner clique's attempts to undermine security, stability foiled — deputy PM
<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/prince-hamzeh-inner-cliques-attempts-undermine-security-stability-foiled-%E2%80%94-deputy-pm>

2021/4/5 The Jordan Times

⁶ Prince Hamzeh vows loyalty to King, Hashemite legacy

<http://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-entrusts-prince-hassan-deal-issue-prince-hamzeh-%E2%80%94-royal-court>

2021/4/6 The Jordan Times

⁷ Statement signed by Jordan's Prince Hamza pledges support to King Abdullah II

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1838001/middle-east>

2021/4/5 Arab News

⁸ Prince Hamzah 'in my care' at his palace: Jordan King Abdullah II

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1839151/middle-east>

2021/4/7 Arab News

⁹ Jordan's King Abdullah II and Prince Hamza make first joint appearance since rift

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1841111/middle-east>

2021/4/11 Arab News

¹⁰ Jordan releases 16 defendants in 'sedition' case

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1847161/middle-east>

2021/4/22 Arab News

¹¹ Jordan's Royal court appoints Jaafar Hassan as director of king's office, accepts 3 resignations

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1854561/middle-east>

2021/5/6 Arab News

¹² Jordan .. Who is Sharif Hassan bin Zaid? – Erm News

<https://www.saudi24news.com/2021/04/jordan-who-is-sharif-hassan-bin-zaid-erm-news.html>

2021/4/4 Saudi 24 NEWS

¹³ Jordan public debt reached 85% of GDP in 2020

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1843481/business-economy>

2021/4/15 Arab News