

Summary

Since the beginning of the Israel-Gaza war, Jordan has experienced pro-Palestinian protests daily. New developments threaten to enflame existing pro-Palestinian protests in Jordan, as well as increase pressure on Jordan's regime to sever its relations with Israel and reconsider its relationship with the US. Anti-government protests are more likely to be cracked down on by security forces. Heightened tensions and emotions tied to the conflict increases the risk of verbal and physical attacks against individuals perceived to be pro-Israel, or even associated with the US.

Recent events and developments

In Jordan, pro-Palestine protests have occurred on a daily basis since Israel's campaign into Gaza, especially in the capital, Amman. On May 3, thousands of people gathered outside the Grand Hussein Mosque to peacefully protest the continued Israeli strikes on Gaza, one of 16 pro-Palestine protests held there since March 1. The Tla Al-Ali district of Amman, in which the Israeli embassy is located, has seen 24 protests since March 1, with a majority being peaceful. Between October and November 2023, Jordanian police arrested over 1,000 people in a sweeping crackdown on pro-Palestinian protests, after which protests reduced in frequency. However, unlike in other Arab states, protests in Jordan have continued, fluctuating in size and frequency. Most protests were peaceful until protests in the Tla Al-Ali district turned violent between March 24 to March 27. As tens of thousands of Jordanians marched towards the Israeli embassy to protest the war, Jordanian security forces arrested and beat dozens of protestors, journalists, politicians, and union figures. However, beyond demands for an end to fighting in Gaza, more recent protests have increasingly demanded a severing of Jordan's ties with Israel, a reconsideration of relations with the United States, and have been defined by a growing discontent with the Monarchy and its foreign policy. The regime maintains close ties with the US, and cooperates with Israel, recently airing the idea of signing a water-electricity deal with Israel. It should further be noted that 22.3% of Jordanians, and more than 46% of Jordanian youth are currently unemployed.

Impact assessment

With Israel's incursion in Rafah ongoing, existing pro-Palestinian protest movements in Jordan are most likely going to increase in frequency and size. Equally, pressure on the Jordanian government to cut ties with Israel, and to reconsider its relationship with the US will inevitably increase. Pro-Palestine protests have resonated with a wide demographic of Jordanians, including both native Jordanians and those with Palestinian background, of which there are approximately 3 million. As tensions rise, and as the war remains continues, peaceful protests may turn violent. Security forces are likely to crack down on instances of protests that are perceived as posing a threat to embassies, particularly the Israeli embassy, and government buildings. Additionally, growing criticism of the government may become a more defining feature of protests, potentially transforming them from pro-Palestine protests into anti-government protests. If the Jordanian regime refuses to make concessions to protestors, the likelihood of a growth in anti-government sentiment, and potentially protests, increases. Protests perceived to be a threat to the reputation and/or stability of the government and monarchy are highly likely to be cracked down on, as seen in late March. Protests are most likely to occur in public spaces, in front of government buildings, and by the Israel and the United States embassies. An additional risk could be verbal, physical, or violent attacks against individuals perceived to be Israeli, pro-Israeli, or not sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. A similar risk may arise for individuals from the US, or associated with the US, due to US support of Israel.

Advice from Forth Global

- Advise staff traveling to Jordan to undertake a several days long HEAT training prior to travel.
- Monitor local news and communicate with local partners to remain updated on developing events.
- Advise staff to avoid government buildings, embassies (Israeli & American), and public areas in case of developing protests.
- Avoid expressing any and all opinions regarding the Gaza-Israel conflict, publicly and online.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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