



Jordan

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO kept expanding to the east joining many European countries that used to be allies for Russia. In 2008, NATO also showed an intention to include Ukraine in the future, making Russia fully surrounded from the east by NATO allies. As an expected result, Moscow felt severely threatened and, accordingly, responded to this before the enrolment of Ukraine and before any further expansion for NATO. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, announced some fundamental demands requesting the west to abide by, which are pulling back the NATO troops placed in Eastern European countries that joined the bloc following the Soviet Union's collapse as well as receiving a guarantee that Ukraine would never be able to be a NATO member in order to ensure the security of the Russian lands. The US and NATO dismissed the main Russian demands which backfired on Ukrainians when Russia started invading Eastern Ukraine starting with the Crimea region and then the South-eastern region "Donbas," consisting of Luhansk and Donetsk, and eventually going towards the west. The most dangerous part of this invasion took place this year when the Russian troops invaded the capital with aggressive military operations, including explosions and a series of missile attacks, leaving civilians in horror and pushing them to use subway stations as shelters. This "full-scale invasion," as per the description of the Ukrainian foreign minister, took its toll on the international trade movement and impacted a lot of countries on the economic level, especially those that have direct economic or political relations with either of the conflict's parties.

The Jordanian delegation is completely against the involvement of force in international relations. We also emphasize on the significance of respecting the UN Charter and international laws. Based on the previous, we voted for the draft resolution adopted by the UN to restore the Ukrainian sovereignty over its lands along with Ukraine's political and geographical independence. Surprisingly and unlike most of the other countries who voted for the UN draft resolution, Jordan took a relatively neutral position from the war in Ukraine. We have been always following the neutral language diplomatic approach; we did not even mention "Russia" in our statement when we voted for the UN resolutions. The reason behind this is simply because we established good relations with both Russia and the US, and we are quite careful not to lose any of the two partners. For example, after the active military presence of Russia in Syria, Russia has become the main gate to retrieve our relations with Damascus. Also, our King, Abdullah II, is the Arab leader to meet Mr. Vladimir Putin the most throughout the last two decades. On the other hand, we receive substantial and large financial aid from the US. Jordanian political analyst Amer Sabaileh told MEE: "I think Jordan cannot do anything but follow the American vision." This assures that the US is a powerful political and economic partner for us. To summarize our position of the war, read the following statements. "Among some other Arab countries, we feel trapped in this conflict," said Oraib al-Rantawi, director of the Amman-based Al Quds Centre for Political Studies. "We cannot go far from the United States, our strongest and strategic ally, but meanwhile, we cannot risk our relationship with Russia."

Like so many countries worldwide, Jordan faced some economic and political issues following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

1. Jordan's immediate concern right after the war broke out was to evacuate above 1700 Jordanian students living in Ukraine, especially in the Ukrainian cities of Kharikiv and Sumy, and to reunite Ukrainians in Ukraine with their families in Jordan.
2. Having a clear position from the war without losing any of our strongest allies: the US and Russia.
3. Like some Arab countries, such as Egypt and Lebanon, we also depend partially on the Ukrainian wheat. Although we just imported 10% of our wheat from Ukraine in the last year, the war raised public concerns and took the wheat's prices up.
4. The Russian-Ukrainian crisis has driven the prices up for a variety of goods that we cannot do with. Among them were the prices of electricity and energy supplies.

The Jordanian authorities, in its turn, suggested some solutions to address the issues mentioned above. (The solutions are following the same numerical order as the issues)

1. "Jordan is working to facilitate the arrival of Ukrainians seeking to reunite with relatives in the kingdom, including waiving all visa requirements," the king said at a press conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Foreign ministry spokesman Haitham Abu Al-Foul also said: "Jordan is exerting intensive diplomatic efforts through its embassies in Moscow and Ankara and relief organizations working in Ukraine to create corridors to evacuate Jordanians from the war-hit country," and this is exactly what happened.
2. As we did and as we are still doing, we will be following the neutral language approach to maintain our alliance with both parties. Nevertheless, we will need to show clearer position if the war goes on.
3. Our king immediately tried to absorb the public anger and responded to our concerns. His highness said that our wheat stocks are: "safe and work is going to increase them." What we concluded is that Jordan is searching for new wheat exporters to increase our exports of wheat again.
4. Our government subsidized the soaring prices initially till April when the IMF requested from the government to lift these subsidies again in order to maintain some monetary stability across the kingdom and for the government to be able to deal with the huge public debt. Nevertheless, the subsidies were not completely lifted. Hussein Al Labboun, head of the Energy Regulatory Authority, announced: "the subsidies will be used wisely. They will be lifted on those who do not deserve them among the high-income class." Moreover, other Jordanian officials claimed that the majority of the Jordanian population will not be charged more as long as they keep their electricity consumption low.

To sum up, as we believe that all these solutions are interim and might not work on the long run, we also believe that this crisis is facing all countries not just in our region but also worldwide, and we all must collaborate in order to find collective solutions that fit all parties. Our king, Abdullah II, shared us the same opinion when he said that we should collaboratively work with our Arab neighbors to tackle the economic issues caused by this war.

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