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How a single Jordanian tribesman put the ‘cold peace’ with Israel at risk

Jordan faces growing outrage over Israel’s actions in Gaza and the West Bank. Now, the latest border crossing shooting has reignited long-standing resistance, placing the kingdom’s fragile peace treaty with Tel Aviv in jeopardy and leaving the monarchy in a tight spot.

When truck driver and retired soldier [Maher al-Jazi](#) stepped out of his vehicle last week at the Allenby (Al-Karameh) border crossing between Jordan and the occupied West Bank and opened fire, he wasn’t aiming to kill the three Israeli security officers.

Like Ahmad al-Daqamseh’s operation in 1997 and Sultan al-Ajlouni’s in 1990, before him, Jazi’s shots were not about individual targets but a greater statement. The 1994 [Wadi Araba Treaty](#) between Jordan and Israel had no place for men like them – men driven by deep-seated anger at an occupation they believed would never be justified.

This is what makes 39-year-old Jazi’s actions so dangerous. They tap into a long history of regional resistance that the occupation state has repeatedly tried to suppress. It’s no wonder Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded by [stating](#) in his weekly cabinet meeting that “Israel is surrounded by a murderous ideology led by Iran’s axis of evil.”

Indeed, just like his statement, the nature of occupation – any occupation – is first and foremost the distortion of history and truth, twisting narratives in a futile search for legitimacy. Jazi’s message, through his deed, was to recalibrate the compass of resistance. His bullets pointed not at people but at the occupation itself, disregarding borders, bridges, and the illusion of ‘peace’ agreements with Israel.

A new Amman Message

Maher al-Jazi’s letter to Netanyahu serves as a reminder that it is Israel that has spread – and continues to spread – death and destruction. Jazi’s bullets also carried a powerful message to

Jordan's King Abdullah II, fired at the bridge named after his father, King Hussein: that the terms of King Hussein's 'reconciliation' with Tel Aviv are no longer valid, and perhaps never were.

This was vividly expressed through the [joyous celebrations in Amman](#), where many Jordanians, descendants of Palestinians displaced during the Nakba, took to the streets. The bold operation also received praise from various [Palestinian factions](#), who saw it as "an affirmation of the Arab peoples' rejection of the occupation," as conveyed in a Hamas statement.

The Jordanian monarchy, long insulated via treacherous deals like the 1994 [Wadi Araba Treaty](#), which normalized Amman's relations with Tel Aviv, must now confront a rising tide of fury. Jazi's tribe, the Huweitat, with its history of resistance dating back to the "[Battle of Dignity](#)" in 1968, poses a direct challenge to the Hashemite kingdom, demanding that King Abdullah address the anger long [brewing](#) on Jordan's streets.

Abdullah, like his father before him, knows that the region is a tinderbox. The sparks ignited by Netanyahu's actions in Gaza and the West Bank could lead to a full-scale conflagration, particularly in Jordan.

Coming just days after another attack north of Hebron in the West Bank by retired Palestinian soldier Muhannad al-Asoud at the [Tarqumiya checkpoint](#), Jazi's operation demonstrates the growing momentum of such resistance and individual initiatives.

Crown on shaky ground

For decades, Jordanians, including the monarchy, have seen the security of the West Bank as their own. King Abdullah's grandfather was assassinated at the gates of Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1951, and his father was haunted by the Israeli idea of an "alternative homeland" for Palestinians in the Hashemite Kingdom – a concept that still worries Jordan's leaders today.

As one Jordanian political activist tells *The Cradle*, Abdullah must learn from the past:

King Abdullah II must now draw what must be drawn from past experiences, not because of what Maher al-Jazi did, which is a resistant and natural reaction, but because of the new bloody Israeli campaign on the western side, which may cause a wave of refugees that the Jordanian regime cannot bear.

According to the Jordanian activist, pushing millions of Palestinians from the West Bank to flee east toward Jordan, or even continuing to abandon them in the face of the massacre, will generate a social, security, and economic explosion, whose repercussions on internal and regional stability cannot be borne by the monarchy, nor any ruling regime in general.

Jordan's history with Palestine is complicated. The union between Jordan and the West Bank in 1950, followed by the 1988 "disengagement" under King Hussein, shows how the kingdom has responded to the Palestinian cause.

At the time, in his [address to the nation](#), King Hussein said:

Jordan, dear brothers, has not nor will it give up its support and assistance to the Palestinian people, until they achieve their national goals, God willing. No one outside Palestine has had, nor can have, an attachment to Palestine or its cause firmer than that of Jordan or of my family. Moreover, Jordan is a confrontation state, whose borders with Israel are longer than those of any other Arab state, longer even than the combined borders of the West Bank and Gaza with Israel.

Yet today, the Israeli war on Palestinians poses an undeniable challenge to the Jordanian monarch. The illusion of separation, held up for 36 years since the disengagement, is crumbling under the weight of nonstop Israeli aggression.

Broken promises and land grabs

The 1994 treaty with Israel made Jordan the second Arab state after Egypt to normalize relations with Tel Aviv. Since then, the promise of supporting Palestinians has largely gone unfulfilled. The colorful balloons that rose over the White House to celebrate the handshake between King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin stand in stark contrast to the bloodshed that has followed in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.

It was the so-called peace agreements with Jordan and other Arab states that emboldened Israel to push its "historical land" narrative. In 1967, there were no Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Today, thanks to normalization deals, [more than 167 settlements](#) and 186 outposts exist, housing nearly 800,000 settlers. This stark reality underscores the failure of the "land for peace" formula, replaced by Israel's vision of expanding its territorial claims.

Ironically, it was Netanyahu who attended King Hussein's funeral just five years after Wadi Araba. Now, the same Israeli leader [threatens Jordan over its water rights](#), a resource the former monarch once promoted as a "fruit of peace."

Jordan received 50 million cubic meters of water from the Sea of Galilee annually, an amount that increased to 105 million cubic meters in 2010. Yet Netanyahu's blackmail, in the context of the ongoing violence, reveals the fragility of these agreements.

Tribal and public dissent grows

Will King Abdullah take the pulse of the Jordanian people, who have been outraged by events in Gaza for the past 11 months? Will he cut off the flawed trade deals that continue alongside the massacre? For now, Amman seems content to distance itself from the

Palestinian struggle, describing Maher al-Jazi's operation as an "isolated incident" and condemning the targeting of "civilians" – a bizarre way to describe the three occupation security forces killed by the ex-Jordanian soldier.

Maher al-Jazi's tribe, however, has a different perspective. They [described](#) his actions as a "natural response" to the crimes committed by the occupier. They placed the blame squarely on Netanyahu, declaring that Maher's blood is no more precious than that of the Palestinians and that he won't be the last martyr.

These words carry significant weight. The tribes of Jordan, which have often provided a [safety net](#) for the Hashemite kingdom, are now voicing their dissent. Maher al-Jazi's act, like those of Ahmad al-Daqamseh and Sultan al-Ajlouni before him, challenges the boundaries imposed by colonialism on the kingdom. His operation recalls the sacrifice of fedayeen like [Khalil Izz al-Din al-Jamal](#), the first Lebanese martyr for Palestine in 1968.

Jazi's commando operation, therefore, reflects the deep frustrations of a region caught between occupation and the failure of diplomacy. Netanyahu's rhetoric about Israel being surrounded by a "murderous ideology" is just another attempt to legitimize what every occupier does: deny the root causes of resistance.

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