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**Rights of religious minorities and peaceful
coexistence: the "Jordanian model"**

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Abstract:

The issue of minorities in general and religious minorities in particular is one of the topics that have received great attention from the international community; humanitarian organizations and human rights organizations have received the attention of international conventions and treaties for the fact that the international community believes that giving this group (the minorities) their rights in all its forms would contribute to spreading peace and increasing the cohesion of societies.

The belief in difference and diversity, respect for the beliefs and ideas of others, and the full belief in the importance of coexistence between followers of different religions, and that religions are a center for gathering and not for division, which is one of the most important elements of the cohesion of the state and thus achieves the true concept of citizenship and that the homeland is for all without any discrimination of religion, gender or race.

Giving minorities their rights also contributes to the advancement and progress of the state, and avoids the dangers of divisions and strife.

The Middle East region is one of the regions that have witnessed and still does many conflicts and wars which made that region a fertile ground for many divisions, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination.

Despite its geographical location in the midst of these conflicts, Jordan is considered an impressive model, a safe country, and an example of the most beautiful manifestations of peaceful coexistence and the rejection of manifestations of discrimination and discrimination among its citizens.

Although the religious minority in Jordan (the Christian religion) is considered a minority in relation to the population as a whole, the Jordanian state has, since ancient times, respected the religious minority; the observer of the Jordanian constitution notes that this constitution does not distinguish between

inhabitants and focuses on the concept of citizenship, and also the state has worked to enact legislation and laws that unify the rights and duties of all citizens.

Since its accession to the membership of the United Nations in 1955, the Jordanian state has respected all international covenants and covenants promoting justice and equality among all citizens regardless of their religious and ethnic differences, and grant everyone their rights, whether the right to worship, education, and occupy high positions.

The Jordanian state realized that a strong and successful state is the state that understands the true concept of humanity and that removing any reasons for discrimination between citizens and justice and equality between them is the cornerstone for maintaining the security of the state, preserving achievements and achieving more of them.

The involvement of all citizens, without exception, that everything is common, and that everyone is a partner in facing and overcoming challenges, as well as achieving goals, is also a common thing for all, the country is for everyone.

Where now there are many customs and traditions between Muslims and Christians that represent the most wonderful manifestations of coexistence and integration among citizens

Introduction:

Diversity and difference are inevitable among human beings, whether of different races, languages, colors, or religions. Almost no part of the earth is devoid of citizens living in one country, each with cultures, affiliations, and customs that differ and distinguish them from others. Whoever believes in humanity is well aware that this diversity is what creates the social fabric and strengthens social bonds; it promotes the exchange of cultures, respect for others and their freedoms and privacy, and does not violate them. Therefore, this diversity is a point of gathering, strength, and exchange of cultures and experiences, and not a point of division, injustice, and tyranny.

The presence of groups in society with affiliations different from the majority's affiliations does not mean depriving them of their rights, marginalizing them, or treating them differently from the majority.

A civil state is a state that adopts the rule of the law as its compass, allows a plurality of cultures, religions, and ideas, seeks to achieve justice and equality among all members of the society, and takes all necessary measures to integrate all groups and not exclude any group for any reason. Therefore, the small number of groups with linguistic, ethnic, or religious affiliations does not mean that they are not within the community and that their members do not belong to the state. It is unreasonable to punish a group (a minority) that has affiliations that distinguish it, or to strip it of its rights for the reason that its number is less than the rest of the community.

Minorities have become prominent human rights issues due to the violation of rights, injustice and tyranny that these minorities are subjected to. In addition to being subjected to political, social and economic pressures in the countries in which they are living.; there are many definitions of the term “minority”, for example, the special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention Discrimination and Protection of Minorities "Francesco

Capotorti "defined the minority as "A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the State—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language".¹

Moreover, in the definition of the Venice Commission's draft of the Convention on the Protection of Minorities of 1991 (Article 2/1): A minority is a group that is few in number in relation to the rest of the population of a state so that its members who hold the nationality of this state possess ethnic, religious or linguistic peculiarities different from the rest of the population, and they are motivated by a will to preserve their culture, customs, or language ².

If we want to get more insight on the definition of a "minority", we will not find a specific and agreed-upon definition in all international legal instruments, whether multilateral agreements, treaties and bilateral decisions (resolutions) of international organizations ³.

This is due to the diversity and abundance of conditions that are experienced by the minorities that live within a state and the different characteristics of the countries in which they live, or even their separation from the state to which they belong, and the many criteria adopted for formulating the concept of

1 _ UN. Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Special Rapporteur to carry out a Study on the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Study on the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities / by Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities [E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Rev.1, para. 568](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/pdf/E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Rev.1 para. 568).

2 _ Explanatory Report On The Proposal For A European Convention For The Protection Of Minorities 1991, 2018 [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL\(1991\)008-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL(1991)008-e) / [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-PI\(2018\)002-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-PI(2018)002-e)

3 _ Matthew Frank, Making Minorities History: Population Transfer in Twentieth-Century Europe, pg 354 https://books.google.io/books?id=DS5dDgAAQBAJ&pg=PA374&lpg=PA374&dq=https://documents-dds-nv.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/903/66/PDF/NL790366.pdf?OpenElement&source=bl&ots=VOSE4KlyGX&sig=ACfU3U05qeAz6ciOgvxHNPesMh_KvHr-Ag&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiF687-it_4AhX6ivOHHa7pAW4Q6AF6BAGCEAM#v=onepage&q=https%3A%2F%2Fdocuments-dds-%20ny.un.org%2Fdoc%2FUND0C%2FGEN%2FNL7%2F903%2F66%2FPDF%2FNL790366.pdf%3FOpenElement&f=false

minority, whether the criterion of number or the numerical ratio in relation to the majority or the criterion of strength and empowerment. However, the most important thing is that everyone agrees that these minorities have legitimate rights that must be granted, and they cannot be marginalized, oppressed, or separated from society in any case.

The United Nations classifies minorities, in declaring persons belonging to minorities in Article 1, into: national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and states; states must protect their existence. Consequently, as is clear in this declaration, the focus in all its clauses is to give minorities their rights and take all measures to grant them and create conditions for them to strengthen their identities and not to exclude them, marginalize them, or detract from their rights in all areas ⁴.

The question now is what are the rights that minorities demand, including religious minorities? And this is what the focus of research in this thesis

Many scholars who specialize in minority affairs, including religious minorities, believe that, based on the United Nations declaration regarding minorities in all its articles, international standards and charters regarding minorities, in addition to studying minority communities, what minorities are looking for and religious minorities in particular(5) is: 1. The Protection of survival or existence which means ensuring that this minority is not subjected to genocide, displacement, killing or demise ; Religious minorities, just because they follow a religion other than the majority religion may be subjected For genocide, killing or exclusion them

On the other hand, and according to "The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" "article 2" genocide means any of the

⁴ _ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-rights-persons-belonging-national-or-ethnic>

following acts which are committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

1. The Killing of the members of the minority group as well as causing physical and moral harm to minorities., Deliberately subjecting the group to difficult living conditions to cause partial or total material destruction, preventing childbearing within the minority by imposing measures aimed at this, and Forcibly taking minority children and bringing them up with other groups ⁵.
2. The Protection of the identity of minorities: Religious minorities demand the preservation of their religious identity and the provision of all necessities to strengthen their religious identity, educate it and pass it on to future generations and to ensure that it will not be destroyed , obliterated, or become extinct ; The freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites must be protected and promoted with all the comfort, the provision and protection of places that are designated for worship and the freedom to teach religion in appropriate places, in addition to the celebration of holidays and sacred occasions in accordance with the principles of religion or belief. All of the above was explicitly stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 18 " Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance" ⁶
3. Equality and non-discrimination: This means not distinguishing between the religious minority and the majority and equating them in rights, duties, laws and freedoms, as well as with political participation, jobs and economic life as a whole, equality means the absence of special laws for the majority that

5 _ Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/MinorityRights_en.pdf

6 _ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 18 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights#:~:text=Article%2018,%2C%20practice%2C%20worship%20and%20observance.>

deprive the minority from, or the existence of a special law for the minority that restricts it or deprives it of its right.

Equality means that the law applies to everyone without discrimination.

"Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights, including those set forth in the present declaration, individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination" ⁷

The Middle East is considered as the land of conflicts par excellence. This region has been suffering from the scourge of wars, conflicts and political turmoil for decades. For example, in the twenty-first century, the region witnessed the US military intervention in Iraq and the subsequent insecurity, internal and sectarian divisions, in addition to the Arab Spring revolutions, which showed many political and economic imbalances, which unfortunately took another turn of bloody fighting and civil wars, as is happening in Syria, Yemen, Libya and other countries in the region, in addition to the eternal Arab-Israeli conflict, which was and still is the focus of conflicts in the region.

Not to mention also the emergence of gangs and terrorist groups; these constant disturbances and conflicts over the years have contributed to the destabilization of security and division among the people of the same country, the lack of confidence in governments to provide equality and justice in rights and duties among the people of the country, the lack of the concept of citizenship and belonging to the homeland, and resorting to the narrower circle of each group, whether religious, linguistic or ethnic; these contributed to the poor understanding of the concept of the minority as a strange group in a society that does not belong to it and does not have rights which enabled the emergence of terrorist groups such as the terrorist "ISIS" group, which adopts extremism as its approach and does not represent any religion, but it was able to exploit sectarianism, injustice, discrimination and tyranny to which it

7 _ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Article 2
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-rights-persons-belonging-national-or-ethnic>

exposed people, including minorities, and to attract members of minorities to join them, believing that by doing so, they will obtain their rights and redress the injustice inflicted upon them.

And because humanity sees good and optimism despite all circumstances and frustrations, we must talk about a brighter side and a more than wonderful model in the Middle East, despite all the obstacles mentioned previously, a model of coexistence and integration among members of society, which is one of the reasons that made it a safe and stable country in the middle of an area rife with wars. A country at the forefront of the region's countries in various fields such as education and health, attracting tourists and investments from various regions of the world. It is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Geographically, "Jordan" which is located in the middle of the Middle East; Jordan has played a major role in attempts to establish peace in the region, thus gaining the appreciation and respect of the international community. Jordan has had a pivotal role in alleviating crises in the region, whether the Palestinian issue or its humanitarian role in receiving large numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Jordan has a population of about 11 million.

With regard to talking about religious minorities in Jordan, the vast majority in Jordan are Muslims, and Christians, according to official sources, constitute only 3-6% of the population⁸.

The Jordanian society is considered as a model of blending of cultures and coexistence, but the question here is what are the reasons that have prompted Jordan to pay attention to this small percentage of Christians? How does the Jordanian state guarantee their rights and what does it do for them? And what is the role of the Jordanian state and its leaders in consolidating the principle of dialogue between religions and promoting peaceful coexistence? And what is the result of these efforts on social coexistence among citizens of all

8 _ Jordanian Department of Statistics <http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/population/population-2/>

religions and the consolidation of the principle of national identity that unites all, and the principle of citizenship is far from any differences?

The study is organized as follows. The first chapter of this study begins with an overview from the core of the reasons and motives for the Jordanian state to pay attention to the Christian minority, despite their small number, from constitutional and legal articles, and how the Jordanian constitution regulated the rights of citizens, including minorities, without any discrimination, in addition to the fact that the origins of the Jordanian Christians are rooted in the Jordanian lands since ancient times. This chapter will discuss that; one of the reasons is to protect stability, maintaining security and giving everyone their rights, especially minorities.

In Chapter II, what are the rights that are provided by the Jordanian state to the Jordanian Christian minority and to be guaranteed as legitimate rights and not as a burden on the Jordanian state, as this chapter details these rights from political, legal and economic rights in addition to social rights.

Chapter III reviews the role of the Jordanian state by explaining the importance of religious dialogue and the most important international endeavors in that.

Lastly, Chapter IIII, describes how all these efforts have become the basis for peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians and are reflected on the daily life in Jordan. This chapter shows some examples and wonderful customs that have become an integral part of the lives of Jordanians.

CHAPTER. I

Motives and reasons for the interest in the Christian minority

1.1 The historical roots of the Christians in Jordan

1.1 .1 The historical origins of existence

The Jordanian Christians are one of the oldest Christian communities in the world, and they have a key role in establishing the Jordanian state, they have played leading roles in the fields of education, health, commerce, tourism, agriculture, science, culture, and many other fields.

Historically, the presence of Christians in the Levant, of which Jordan is one, dates back to after the Romans got rid of the era of persecution of pagans who prevented religious freedoms and their entry into Christianity, so they were preaching Christianity. The Arab tribes converted to Christianity and moved to the Levant and settled in Jordan, including the Ghassani tribe, where there are Muslims and Christians in addition to other tribes, and most Jordanian Christians are considered to be among the Arab tribes that converted to Christianity in the fourteenth century. ⁹

The Christian presence in the Arab countries is the result of the presence of the Christian religion in the Holy Land (Jordan and Palestine), during the Ottoman rule in 1518, some cities in Jordan and Palestine enjoyed stability and calmness and this subsequently increased the Christian presence as a result of the Christians coming to the Holy Land for worship¹⁰.

Later, Christians played an important role during the Great Arab Revolt led by Sharif Hussein bin Ali in 1916 - who is considered the ancestor of the royal

9 _ Christianity throughout its history in the East, Middle East Council of Churches, first edition,2001

10 _ Abu jabber,Saad, The Christian presence in Jerusalem during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, pg 27

family in Jordan - and this revolution, was against the oppression of the Ottoman Empire that established the Emirate of Transjordan, which later became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan¹¹.

1.1 .2 The importance of Christian religious sites

Jordan contains many historical Christian holy places which indicate the origins of the presence of Christians in Jordan.

Among the most important sites of Christian pilgrimage which is officially recognized by the “Vatican” are: 1- "Baptism" that is where Jesus (the Christ) (peace be upon him) was baptized – 2- Mount Nebo 3- Mukawar and 4- the Church of Our Lady of the Mountain in Anjara and 5- Mar Jordan¹².

There are many churches of historical and religious importance in Jordan that represent Christian denominations, such as: 1- The Church of the Nazarene, 2- the Church of Jesus Christ, 3- the Maronite Church and many others, in addition to the sites and temples that are present in most Jordanian cities; there are more than 141 Christian sites in Jordan¹³.

For the fact that we have earlier mentioned the different Christian sects in Jordan, there are many sects that are recognized by Jordanian law, and this indicates that there is no fear of the Christian presence in the Jordanian state. The sects are: 1- Greek Orthodox, 2- Roman Catholics, 3- Armenian Orthodox, 4- Melkite Catholics, 5- Anglicans, and Maronite Catholics, 6- Lutherans, 7- Syriac Orthodox, 8- Seventh-day Adventists, 9- Unitarian Pentecostals, and 10- Copts¹⁴.

11 _ Nuseirat Fadwa, Arab Christians and the idea of Arab nationalism in the Levant and Egypt (1840-1918). Pg 55

12 _ Jordan Tourism Board

<https://portal.jordan.gov.io/wps/portal/Home/GovernmentEntities/Agencies/Agency/Jordan%20Tourism%20Board?nameEntity=Jordan%20Tourism%20Board&entityType=otherEntity&lang=en&isFromLangChange=yes>

13 _ khrisat ,mohammad, Christians in Salt District, page 126

14 _ International Report on Religious Freedom in Jordan for the year 2017 <https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/jordan/>

The Christian presence and their holy places in Jordan are present and spread in most of its cities, in the north, center and south, therefore they are not confined to a particular city or region on the grounds that there are no restrictions on building churches and schools affiliated with the Christian faith; Christians are not strangers or immigrants, but rather indigenous people who live side by side with their fellow Muslims.

The Jordanian Christians are an essential and indispensable component of Jordanian society. They are neither outsiders nor guests, but rather one of the founders of the Jordanian state; they have shared with their Muslim compatriots the achievements; they have shared and together they endured hardships, their achievements and their contributions for ages. The Jordanian state cannot ignore their rights or their shadow, despite their small number; they are indigenous people with a long history.

1.1 .3 The sacred Papal visits and their significance

Jordan is the only Arab country that has received four papal visits; the first visit was the visit of Pope Paul VI in 1964, and it is considered the first visit of Pope Paul outside Italy as well as the second visit of Pope John Paul II in 2000, and the third visit in 2009 of Pope Benedict XVI, while the fourth visit was the visit of Pope Francis in 2014 ¹⁵. It is noteworthy that in 1994, Jordan and the Vatican agreed to establish full diplomatic relations between them at the level of ambassadors to further strengthen the ties between them ¹⁶.

These visits and distinguished relations have many meanings, including the belief and affirmation and trust of a well-established Christian entity such as the Vatican, in Jordan's keenness on Christian citizens and their appreciation of the Jordanian state for preserving and caring for the holy sites, and emphasizing that Jordan is a holy land, the incubator of the Christian presence since ancient times; moreover, it is a country of interest and respect for all the whole world. It is also a confirmation from the Jordanian state that it is the land of peaceful coexistence and the land of peace and that it is very keen on all citizens without any discrimination; it is also an affirmation of the Christian presence and its contributions to the establishment, development and prosperity of the Jordanian state.

These visits of the Popes of the Vatican who are a symbol of more than 2.7 billion Christians to a region that witnesses many conflicts, divisions and dangers are visits that have a religious and moral impact that Jordan is a model country that believes in pluralism and moderation, a country that respects dialogue and coexistence, a country that respects the principles of human rights.

15 _ Ministry Of Tourism And Antiquities <https://www.mota.gov.jo/Default/Ar>

16 _ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates <https://www.mfa.gov.jo/>

1.2 The Religious and historical responsibility

Islam is a religion of mercy and tolerance, like other monotheistic religions; these religions' goal is to correct people's behavior and spread peace and love among humans

The teachings of the tolerant religion of Islam are an approach and a roadmap for Muslims; the majority of Jordanian society is Muslims who live next to their Christian brothers with love, peace and harmony.

In Jordan, the ruling family derives its religious law from the fact that the Hashemites are descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, religious responsibility requires the state with all its components to deal with the tolerant teachings of this religion which call for respect for others and respect for their religions, beliefs and freedoms.

Christianity is a divine religion that Muslims recognize and believe in, and even not recognizing it is not considered a Muslim. Islam told us that religions came to complement each other and complete the message of peace and love between people; this is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: "We do not distinguish between one of his messengers" in reference to Jesus Christ and the Christian religion.¹⁷

And speaking of Jesus Christ, Muslims consider him the Prophet of God, who was sent to rid people of misguidance to guidance, and that the teachings of the Christian religion came to support the truth and call people to goodness. The Virgin Mary is considered a symbol of religion for Muslims, a symbol of peace and sacrifice, and in the Holy Qur'an there is a surah with the name "Maryam".

The teachings of Islam are clear and moderate, belief in the Christian religion is a duty, and Christians are the owners of a sacred divine religion that calls

17 _ The Holy Qur'an- Surat Al-baqarah- verse-286

for good and love and denies evil. The Qur'an also made it clear to the Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims that the closest people to you and those who love you are the Christians, because you and I are striving for the same goal, which is peace, love and faith.

Here is an explicit call for harmony between religions and the rejection of any difference or discrimination

"And that you will find the closest of them in affection for those who believe are those who said, 'We are Christians.'"¹⁸

In the Qur'an and the Bible there are many similar stories. Most people know the story of the disciples, the disciples of Christ, peace be upon him, who helped the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and supported him. The denominators are common and the goal of the two religions is one. Islam and Christianity both call us to goodness, honesty, love and tolerance.

The Islamic history is full of scenes of respect for the rights of Christians; the teaching of Islam that the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, recommended in general does not differentiate between a Muslim or a Christian, and Islam recommends respect for Christians as brothers and people of a holy religion. Islam recommends to be close to them and to preserve their sanctities and churches and not to touch them. Christians are brothers we love, we trade with, and we marry from them.

And has make the issue of faith related to his love; "None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself"¹⁹. Here he is to spread love among everyone, for he did not say he loves the Muslim only.

This approach continued among Muslims after the death of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the age covenant made by the Muslim

18 _ The Holy Qur'an - Surat Al-Mae'dah- Verse-82

19 _ A Prophetic teaching and saying

Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, which is considered a pact of love and peace between Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem, and in which Muslims preserved churches and sanctities; they preserved them and the properties of Christians while they are safe and reassured, and it is a sacred duty on the every Muslim.

All of these evidence and events make it imperative for the Jordanian state, its leadership and its religious legitimacy to deal in the spirit of the tolerant Islamic religion and to show and implement what Islam has commanded us of love for others, respect for religions, preservation of places of worship, giving Christians their rights and not violating their rights, rather, increasing care for them. Muslim and Christians are brothers, Christians are the owners of a sacred message, citizens, and partners in building the country.

The Jordanian state has continued to defend every Christian sanctuary and considers the Hashemite custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem a duty on the Jordanian state. Jordan's firm position stems from the fact that East Jerusalem is an occupied land, and sovereignty over it belongs to the Palestinians, and the Hashemite custodianship of its Islamic and Christian holy sites is entrusted to the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, King Abdullah II, and the responsibility to protect the city is an international one in accordance with the obligations of states in accordance with international law and international resolutions

Jerusalem is a holy city for all of humanity, and it should always be a symbol of peace and harmony and a key to stability and security. No one can prevent a Muslim from going to the mosque or prevent a Christian from going to church. The Islamic and Christian holy places in Jerusalem are administratively subordinate to Jordan, and the state maintains the security of the Islamic and Christian holy sites, their maintenance and care.

It is no secret to everyone that one of the provisions of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel is to maintain the Hashemite guardianship over the holy sites and not to prejudice the identity of Jerusalem as a holy place for Muslims and Christians, The ninth article of the treaty talks about respecting the holy places and respecting the religious and historical role of Jordan towards the Islamic and Christian holy sites, in addition to stressing the freedom of worship and the sanctity of the holy places and not engaging them in political conflict and always striving for dialogue between religions.

1.3 The Implementation of the constitution and respect for international treaties and conventions.

Christians are Jordanian citizens; the articles of the constitution are applied to them like other citizens. The Jordanian state, as a civil state that respects the rule of law, seeks to respect the constitution as the basis and reference for laws. The Jordanian constitution does not differentiate between followers of religions (Muslims and Christians), In the sixth constitutional article, "Jordanians are equal before the law, and there is no distinction between them in rights and duties, even if they differ in race, religion or language". It is an explicit provision for non-discrimination between citizens in terms of duties and rights.

There is a very important matter must be clarified, as Article 2 of the Jordanian Constitution states, "Islam is the religion of the state and the Arabic language is its official language; this indicates only the religion of the majority and does not at all indicate a derogation of the rights of adherents of the other religion; the religion of tolerance and respect for the freedom of belief of others.

In the third chapter, we will show the role of the Jordanian leadership in spreading the true meaning of the tolerant Islamic religion and the role of that in spreading peace and coexistence among all. As is well known, the constitutional texts must be interpreted by looking at them as a single unit that complements each other, so that no text is interpreted in isolation from the other texts. Journalist Tariq Masarweh, who is a Christian, says here I quote, "Our constitution knows the religion of the state, Islam, nevertheless, Christians do not feel that they are strangers. Islam is its civilizational affiliation" ²⁰.

20 _ Omush ,bassam ,Muslims and Christians in Jordan, page 43

Article 14 confirms this, as it states, “The state protects the freedom to practice religious rites and beliefs in accordance with the customs that are observed in the Kingdom, as long as they are not contrary to public order or contrary to morals,” as well as Article 19, which states that “groups have the right to establish their schools and establish them to educate their members, provided that they observe the general provisions stipulated in the provisions of the law. They are stipulated in the law and are subject to the government’s control in its programs and directives” and Article 22 which states: “Every Jordanian has the right to hold public positions under the conditions specified in the law and regulations” ²¹and other constitutional articles that affirm equal Jordanians in belief and exercise of freedom of religion and worship, their education and their equal positions and others.

It is worth mentioning that since the 1952 constitution, the word “minority” has been abolished from the constitution due to the state’s belief in the principle of equality. The word “Christian” is preceded by the word “minority.” This applies to other groups, a word that does not exist in the Jordanian street dictionary and in the daily life of Jordanians. Jordanians say our Christian brothers, not the Christian minority

If we note the keenness of the Jordanian constitution not to leave any constitutional gap for differentiation or discrimination, but rather to pay attention to the idea of national identity which is something that would give all groups their importance and emphasize that the homeland is for all and that each group is an essential component of the components of Jordanian society.

The Jordanian constitution and Jordanian legislation and laws attach great importance to the issues of human rights and the concern for non-discrimination between citizens. Furthermore, the Jordanian constitution was keen that these legislations are in harmony with the principles of human rights

21 _ Jordanian Constitution Articles 6/1 ,19, 22/1

https://memr.gov.jo/EBV4.0/Root_Storage/AR/EB_Info_Page/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1_2022.pdf

and international charters and treaties. The Jordanian constitution, in its second chapter, which is titled “Rights and Duties of Jordanians” within articles (5-23) contains great interest in the rights that must be provided to all citizens related to public freedoms, religious freedoms and freedom of expression, and all religious practices.

In addition to the applicable laws such as the Labor Law and the formation of parties and professional unions which the legislator was keen on non-discrimination. Jordan joined many regional and international conventions and treaties that would regulate and improve the landscape of human rights and renounce discrimination and racism such as the approval of the "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Cairo" in 1990 and of course, the two international covenants on civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.

Jordan is considered one of the countries with a distinguished position among the countries of the world, due to the position of Jordan, which always seeks moderation, spreading peace, principles of love and dialogue among all.

Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is the reference and basis in international law on minority rights, as the article states the following: “In states where ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be deprived of the right in common with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”²². This article regulates many rights of minorities, such as freedom of belief and practice of worship and personal rights of minorities; this article is considered the starting point for many laws and treaties on minority rights.²³

22 _ Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr.pdf>

23 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 14 https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

Jordan joined the two covenants on civil and economic rights and economic and social rights in 1975. Jordan is keen to abide by, implement and work with the provisions of treaties and make them a reference for the enactment of laws and legislation regulating the rights of Jordanians.

The follower of Jordan's reports and documents in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) regarding the rights of minorities in general and religious minorities in particular finds that. In each of the periodic review cycles, there are constant and serious efforts by Jordan to adhere to international standards, for example, we find that in the first cycle

The observer of Jordan's reports and documents in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) regarding the rights of minorities in general and religious minorities in particular, believes that in each periodic review cycle, there are continuous and serious efforts by Jordan to adhere to international standards, for example the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (which is the report of papers submitted by eight stakeholders) did not mention that there were violations of minority rights Religious organizations in Jordan, and the report called on the government to facilitate the registration procedures for NGOs in the field of human rights ²⁴, and With regard to the conclusions and recommendations for this session, we find that there are no recommendations that are related to any discrimination on the basis of religion, while the majority of the recommendations came to increase and strengthen human rights and to further integrate them with local legislation.²⁵

With regard to the comprehensive periodic report of the second session, there was also no recommendation, comment or question regarding discrimination on the basis of religion. During the dialogue session, 75 delegations made statements, most of them praising the Jordanian role with regard to human

24 _ Report of the working group on the universal periodic review / fourth session 2009 / Jordan

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session4/IO/A_HRC_WG6_4_JOR_3_A.PDF

25 _ Report of the working group on the universal periodic review / Eleventh session 2009 / Jordan <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/136/38/PDF/G0913638.pdf?OpenElement>

rights and its response to the requests of the special rapporteurs, and its constitutional amendments and the implementation of legislation related to human rights, the enactment of more than 30 laws to promote human rights ²⁶.

Similarly, in the third session and in the dialogue session made by 95 data delegations, Jordan did not receive any question or recommendation regarding the rights of religious minorities, in this report, a tribute to the Jordanian state for responding to the recommendations of the second cycle , and for the creation of specialized institutions and departments to follow up on human rights affairs ²⁷.

Jordan performs its duty towards the international community, presents recommendations and suggestions, and directs questions to countries in which religious minorities are exposed to violations of their rights and marginalization. Jordan's commitment to international conventions and treaties is an extension of its belief in the rights of Jordanian Christians in Jordan and their effective role in various fields.

26 _ Universal Periodic Review / Twenty-fifth Session / 2014 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/100/61/PDF/G1410061.pdf?OpenElement>

27 _ Universal Periodic Review / Thirty-first Session / 2018 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/258/14/PDF/G1825814.pdf?OpenElement>

1.4 Maintaining stability and maintaining the security

As is well known, the Middle East has witnessed many conflicts and disagreements that destabilized security and stability in the region, in addition to the Arab Spring and the subsequent insecurity in many countries of the region and the emergence of terrorist groups that exploited the injustice and tyranny of some of the peoples of the region and were able to poison the minds of the people, especially the youth, with ideas Racism. An extremist who has nothing to do with the heavenly religions and does not even represent humanity.

Since its inception, the Jordanian state has been keen to be a neutral state that seeks peace because it believes that one of the components of a successful state is to maintain its internal stability from any tendencies or conspiracies to provoke strife. Jordan believes that the presence of minorities anywhere is a double-edged sword. If these minorities are marginalized or their rights are diminished, they will be an easy prey for extremism, sedition and security disturbance. As for the Jordanian state, all citizens should be given their rights without any discrimination, this would maintain stability and close down the door to any extremist or racist ideas.

The state does not exclude any group and always seeks to unite ranks, demands to face challenges together and achieve achievements together, The Jordanian state has intensified its efforts to block the pretexts of sedition in front of any person or party that tries to destabilize security or exploit the difference of religions to create strife and disputes.

The Jordanian state sought to increase dialogue and emphasized the Christian and Muslim scholars on the statement of the tolerance of religions, and stressed the importance of religious discourse and its impact on society.

The state also stressed the importance of the media in spreading the true message of the media which is to spread peace and provide everything that is

useful to society and educate generations that this country is the inheritance of grandparents and fathers, and it is our present and the future of our children.

The strength and stability of internal security is an approach followed since ancient times that cannot be tampered with, everyone is in one trench which is the trench of the homeland. There is no injustice to any group or discrimination of one religion over the other even if it is in the simplest things. For example, Christian and Islamic religious holidays are considered as official holidays for all without exception. It is a statement of trying to be fair in everything.

CHAPTR II.

The Christian rights in Jordan

The Christians and the Muslims are all, by lay and legislation, considered as Jordanian citizens who are subject to the constitution, and the constitution is the rule for all. It does not change or be applied according to anyone's mood. Therefore, the Jordanian constitution has always been firm and does not leave any gaps that might lead to distinguish any citizen from another; all citizens are equal in rights and duties.

"All Jordanians are equal before the law, and there is no distinction between them in rights and duties even though they are differed in race, language, or religion" ²⁸

On the grounds that the majority of Jordanians are Muslims, and in the interest of equality and justice and to preserve the rights of Christians who reside in Jordan, the constitution and laws preserve special privileges for them, such as: their personal status laws, their own courts, and others, in addition to the rest of the rights that are lawfully stipulated for all citizens. ²⁹

Jordan is also committed to the United Nations conventions on human rights which are the two international covenants on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

This chapter is going to contribute to understanding more of the rights that are granted to the Christians in Jordan, and the efforts that are made by the Jordanian state to legislate laws in order to guarantee their rights.

28 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 6 https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

29 _ Omush ,bassam ,Muslims and Christians in Jordan, page144

2.1 The civil and political rights

Civil and political rights according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) include the right to life, freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression of opinion, freedom of assembly, electoral rights, and the right to a fair trial. ³⁰

2.1.1 The right to believe and worship

Christian citizens in Jordan enjoy a decent life and live their normal lives in safety, and they are present in all major cities of the country; they have their own preserved identity and communities where one can find a majority of Christian citizens living in certain areas from north to south; they are free to practice their religious rituals and customs.

The Jordanian state, with all its components, including the ruling system, the governing system, and the people, ensure that people enjoy equal rights of freedom of religion and belief, and that the people can freely choose their own beliefs and religion, and that no one would be forced to adhere to a belief or religion other than the one he/she believes right. Likewise, the Christians in Jordan are called “the people of the covenant” which is an authentic Islamic term which means that Muslims should be conservative, protectors and defenders of all the Christians. Moreover, the teachings of the Islamic religion guarantee and maintain freedom of belief as there is no compulsion in religion. Everyone can practice their own creed without interference from others.

The Christians in Jordan live in stability and security, and have the right to practice their rituals with the utmost freedom, The Jordanian state guarantees the protection of freedom of expression and all forms of worship and religious rites and rituals; this is clearly stipulated in the Constitution in Article 14.

30 _ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr.pdf>

" The Jordanian state protects the freedom to practice religious rites and beliefs in accordance with established customs in the Kingdom unless these practices violate public order or is against morals. " ³¹

The Jordanian state criminalizes any attack on the freedom of any citizen, or his life and private freedom.

"Every assault on public rights and freedoms, or the sanctity of private life of Jordanians is a crime which is punishable by law." ³²

Christian denominations have a presence and rights in Jordan; the law recognizes "11" sects and they have what is called the Council of Churches and it acts as an administrative body to facilitate tax and customs exemptions, in addition to issuing civil documents such as: (marriage and inheritance contracts.). In Jordan, just like mosques in Jordan, churches are exempted from paying fees and taxes; there are many churches and sects of all kinds: Eastern, Western, and Protestant; this is perceived as an affirmation of freedom of belief and the freedom practicing of religious rites; Christians celebrate their feasts and religious occasions, church bells ring in all regions, and prayers are performed freely; Christian holidays are marked as official holidays for all citizens of Jordan (both Muslims and Christians).

The state also protects places of worship as they are recognized as sacred places; the Jordanian state also provides material support and maintenance of religious places, and seeks to promote them as areas that attract tourists from all over the world.

Consequently, freedom of worship and belief is preserved in Jordan.

Furthermore, the Personal Status Law No. 36 of 2010 deals with the right of non-Muslim women who are married to a Muslim to perform her religious

31 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 14 https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

32 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 7/2 https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

rituals. Let alone, the Muslim husband is obligated to enable his Christian wife to perform her religious rituals with complete freedom.³³

33 _ Personal Status Law No. 36 of 2010

https://www.equalitynow.org/discriminatory_law/jordan_personal_status_law_no_36_of_2010/#:~:text=36%20of%202010,-Discriminatory%20Laws%20November&text=Article%2061%20of%20Jordan's%20Personal,explicit%20consent%20to%20the%20work.

2.1.2 The right to assemble and establish associations

Jordanian laws has emphasized equality and non-discrimination on the basis of race, language or religion, and with regard to the establishment of parties, Article 5 of the Political Parties Law No. 39 of 2015 states the following: “

1-The party is to be established on the basis of citizenship, equality between Jordanians, commitment to democracy and respect for pluralism. Political,

2-It is not permissible to establish a party on a religious, sectarian or ethnic basis.³⁴

In Jordan, for example, you will not find Christian and other groups, or parties of a particular sect or religion, but parties that are established on the basis of political pluralism and the exchange of ideas among members.

The law also punishes and criminalizes anyone who does, a gathering, an act, or providing assistance to a person gathering or association with the aim of insulting religions, inciting strife between sects, inciting racism, insulting the feelings of any citizen, or despising his belief, ideas, color or race.

Christians have the right to establish associations and freely practice work in these establishments, for example, the Young Women's Christian Association which was founded in the year 1956, as well as the Jordanian Caritas Association. Christians have the right to meet and do their jobs whether this gathering is meant for cultural, political or for charitable reasons. "Jordanians have the right to meet within the limits of the law."³⁵

The Jordanian state has enacted many amendments to the laws with the aim of facilitating the establishment of associations and easing the restrictions that are imposed on their registration with the aim of raising awareness and clarifying the importance of these associations and peaceful assemblies in order to

34 _ Article 5 of the Political Parties Law No. 39 of 2015 <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/misc/jordan-law-on-political-parties-law-2015>

35 _ Jordanian Constitution Article16, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

increase the interaction of community members and their involvement in public work and charitable work.

2.1.3 The Right to a fair trial

Article 101 of the Jordanian constitution states: "Courts are open to all and are protected from interference in their affairs"³⁶

The judicial system in Jordan is divided into: civil courts, religious courts, and special courts, and Christians have their own religious courts to increase justice and equality that are governed according to the rules of the Christian religion and according to the constitution, issues that are related to personal status, such as religious affiliation, marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance, all fall under the jurisdiction of religious courts; under the constitution, matters relating to the personal status of Christians are under the jurisdiction of the judicial courts of Christian religious sects. These courts are available to all sects such as: the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Melkite Catholic, the Armenian Orthodox, the Coptic, the Syriac Orthodox, and other sects.³⁷

As for personal or family status cases in which one party is a Muslim and the other party is a Christian, these cases are considered by the civil courts, and this is also in order to achieve justice, unless the two parties agree to resort to the Islamic Sharia courts.³⁸

The ninth article of the Code of Judicial Conduct also clarifies the need for non-discrimination in all its forms, and for the judge to respect pluralism and societal diversity, and to be equal in his/her behavior and speech among all without prejudice to religion, race, or nationality, and to emphasize this to all court officials as well.³⁹

36 _ Jordanian Constitution Article101_ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

37 _ Jordanian Constitution Article104_ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

38 _ Jordanian Constitution Article105_ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

39 _ The ninth article of the Code of Judicial Conduct <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/Code-of-Judicial-Ethics.pdf>

The Jordanian Civil Code guarantees fair compensation to everyone who is exposed to cases of racial discrimination, whether in his belief or freedom, or harm him, and the law obligates him to return the right to the extent of the harm he caused to the victim. ⁴⁰

Here are some examples of compensations according to the law in different courts, for example, in civil cases, compensation is for acts of racial discrimination, and in administrative cases, and administrative decisions based on racial discrimination are annulled.

40 _ Jordanian Civil Law No. 43 of 1976 <https://wipolex-res.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/ar/jo/jo019ar.pdf>

2.1.4 The Right of expression and opinion

Like any Jordanian citizen, the Christian citizen has the right to express his/her opinion. Throughout history, Jordan has known many Christian thinkers and journalists who used to express their opinion with all impartiality and frankness; many of their thoughts and sayings have been taught in schools and universities.

" The state guarantees freedom of opinion, and every Jordanian can freely express his opinion by word, Writing, photography and other means of expression provided that his/her opinion does not exceed the limits of Law "⁴¹.

At the same time, the state guarantees, through its laws, a balance of freedoms between individuals, so that no individual in his expression would violate the freedom of others or prejudices the belief, thought or religion of others; the freedom that blindly affects the security of the country.

Moreover, considering journalism and the media as means of expression, the Jordanian law ensures that freedom of expression is protected far from forms of religious or any racial discrimination.

Article 20 of the Audio-Visual Media Law states that the media are obligated to respect the human being and the rights of citizens through pluralism of expression, and not to broadcast what might incite hatred and racism, or may insult religions or religious sects, or stirs up strife and racial strife.⁴²

Article 7 of the Press and Publications Law affirmed the freedom of opinion and expression and affirmed the obligation not to publish everything that

41 _ Jordanian Constitution Article15_ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

42 _ Article 20 of the Audio-Visual Media Law http://www.mc.gov.jo/echobusv3.0/SystemAssets/PDF/Law/2119bd3d-4fde-4f8e-897e-462f602ccf30_%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%20%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%20%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%85%2026%20%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%A9%202015.pdf

might lead to conflict and division among citizens; it also emphasized the respect for religions and religious rites and the freedom of thought and belief.

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2.1.5 The right to vote and political participation

As for elections, every Jordanian has the right to run for the parliament (the lower house), and has the right to elect someone to represent him/her; to ensure the representation of the Christian citizens, a quota has been allocated for them to ensure their presence in the parliament. Also, with regard to the Senate (the upper house), there is a good number of Christian citizens with extended experience and knowledge in political, economic and cultural fields, and others.

The result of the Jordanian state paying attention and emphasizing the Christian citizens, it can be vividly seen that the Christian presence in the political scene is present and strong. There is a permanent parliamentary representation for them and an important presence in the various ministries and they occupy high ranking managerial and administrative positions in the state; the Jordanian constitution does not require religion to hold positions, but rather requires competence. "Appointment to public positions, both permanent and temporary, in the state and the other related departments and municipalities shall be on the basis of competencies and qualifications." ⁴⁴

The Christian citizen also hold high positions and ranks (generals) in the army and security services, and they have always proved their high efficiency and have helped to develop the army and security services with sincere devotion.

The Jordanian Christian hold very important positions and have played a key role in Jordan's history. For example, but not limited to, Mr. Marwan Muasher who is a well-known Christian was the foreign minister who was responsible for the peace treaty negotiations with Israel in the year 1994, another famous Jordanian Christian who incepted the idea of establishing the first medical structure, the military general, Dr. Daoud Hanania.

44 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 22/2 _ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

The various party affiliations of Christians in Jordan, including conservatives, liberals and others belong to the leftist parties.

Jordanian Christians have held several positions, including: Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Ministers, Education Minister, Health Minister and Political Development Minister.

Jordanian Christians have also served as ambassadors for countries that have important relations with Jordan, such as The United States of America, Italy, and France, in addition to their presence in the Senate and the Parliament, in addition to their contributions to the media, culture and art sectors; It is worth mentioning that one of the founders of the political theater, Jordan, who criticizes governments in a cynical way is the Jordanian Christian artist “Musa Hijazin”.

Consequently, all the above mentioned legitimate political rights indicate two things:

1. The state’s belief and recognition that the Christian component is a part that cannot be separated or neglected, as it is an essential component of the Jordanian society that cannot be dispensed with in any way.
2. The Christian citizens feel comfortable in their country and desires to participate and provide everything they have to raise and advance their country which they cannot abandon or leave it.

2.2 The Economic social and cultural rights

No two differ in the importance of the economy in raising the state and improving its level; the economy and politics follow two parallel lines for the prosperity of any country. As is known, Jordan has been greatly affected by the political events in the countries around it and was affected by the suspension of exports as a result of closing the land borders with those countries in addition to receiving large numbers of refugees.

The Jordanian state confirmed its responsibilities towards all citizens as being all “alike”, including Christian citizens, and has always made every effort to provide a decent life for all its citizens. It is well known that political freedom, intellectual maturity, true belonging and the public interest take precedence only when people are rid of fears of unemployment and disease and their economic needs are adequately met.

Therefore, economic rights must be paid attention to, preserved and preserved as a legitimate right for all. ⁴⁵

The Jordanian laws also contributed to opening the door for investment and increasing economic projects that would raise the level of the Jordanian economy.

The Jordanian Christians have had a prominent role in investing and providing job opportunities for all, in Jordan, you will find that Christians own banks such as: The Union Bank and The Al-Ahly Bank, hospitals such as: Palestine Hospital, and other companies, factories, and satellite media channels such as the "Roya "channel.

All the above-mentioned contributions to the economy of the Jordanian state indicate that the Jordanian legislation preserved for everyone, including

45 _ Awad ,jabber, Economic and social rights in the Arab constitutions, a comparative view, pg 76

Christians, the full rights in the economic process and the comfort of
Christians and their investment in their country with all comfort.

2.2.1 The Right to work

The Jordanian state provides fair job opportunities for all without any discrimination; the Jordanian state also guarantees the provision of a safe and healthy work environment and requires that the wages must be appropriate to the working hours. Working hours are determined in eight working hours, and an increase wage must be paid for any additional hours, and workers have the right to holidays and vacations, and work is organized into unions that everyone has the right to join without any restrictions.

The constitution also stipulates the necessity of providing employees with health and social security insurance as well as end-of-service benefits and pensions. Also, obligatory employment shall not be imposed on any Jordanian citizen, “Compulsory work shall not be imposed on any person, but a job or service shall be lawfully imposed upon any person”⁴⁶, nor shall it be confiscated or unlawfully exploiting any person’s money, “No one’s property may be confiscated except for the public benefit and in return for fair compensation as specified in the law”⁴⁷.

It is worth mentioning here that these legislations and regulations apply to all Jordanians. You will not find jobs in Jordan dedicated only to Muslims without Christians, and you will not find a Jordanian Christian employee working 10 hours and a Muslim employee working two hours, for example!!! If the law applies to everyone, and sometimes the law and customs distinguish Christians with simple advantages, such as the right for a Christian employee to be late for his official shift on Sunday morning to be able to perform prayer in the church, and in the month of Ramadan the hours of the Christian employee are reduced just like the Muslim employees.

46 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 23 _ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

47 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 13 _ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

The Jordanian government applies labor laws to workers regardless of gender, religion, and color without any discrimination, and everyone has the right to resort to the judiciary and labor courts to claim labor rights according to the laws.

2.2.2 The Right to Education and Training

The state has paid great attention to the issue of education. Jordan occupies a prominent position in the field of education, whether school education or university education in all its stages. Education has witnessed a remarkable development, whether academic education or vocational education, and it is a right for both sexes and for all without distinction.

The Jordanian state also believe in the creation of conscious, educated generations who are capable of facing challenges and protecting the country. For this reason, basic (primary) education is compulsory for all, and no one has the right to deprive his children of that free compulsory education, Moreover, education is considered free in government schools for all levels (from first grade until 12 grade).⁴⁸

Of course, all Christian citizens are covered by these rights, and the children of the Christian faith have the right to teach the Christian religion. They have the right to build private schools and teach the Christian religion within their curricula.⁴⁹

Muslim students have the right to enroll in these schools, just as the Christian students have the choice of attending Christian classes or not, and they are not forced to do so at all

In Jordan, there are more than 30 Christian educational institutions, from universities such as Madaba University, Latin Schools, Congregational Religious Schools, Baptist schools, and others, as we have mentioned above, Muslim students have the right to join these educational institutions with a more than wonderful scene of the meaning of coexistence.

48 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 11 _ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

49 _ Jordanian Constitution Article 20 _ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2016.pdf?lang=en

The Jordanian state also sought to develop the school curricula and included the values and concepts of human rights in these curricula and to promote the values of tolerance, acceptance of others despite their differences and the importance of these differences and the diversity of cultures with the cohesion of society, and that the main goal of religions is to spread the values of peace and love among all human beings.

The curricula also included the danger of inciting and promoting hate speech and racial discrimination and its danger to societies; the state stressed the importance of school activities and trips, especially to the holy places, and their importance by increasing the awareness of students and their openness to dialogue and integration with the cultures of others.

As in Jordan, there are many educational institutions and centers that encourage dialogue between the followers of religions and to achieve the principles of equality, tolerance, rejection of intolerance and respect for beliefs.

The Jordanian state encourages scientific research, innovation and creativity and provides opportunities for that for all. The King Abdullah Schools for Excellence were established in order to serve this particular purpose; these schools attract distinguished students and do not require a specific religion and do not discriminate between one Jordanian and another.

The Jordanian state has also sought to support teachers and provide them with everything they need to do their job to the fullest. The teachers' union was established to organize and support their work. Queen Rania's initiative for distinguished teachers aims to honor distinguished teachers and motivate teachers to perform their work better. Of course, all this is for all Jordanians without exception.

In order to provide job opportunities and reduce unemployment, the Jordanian government established training centers which are aimed at training and

employing young people. The mosaic training centers in Madaba were the biggest evidence of training Jordanian Christian youth and giving them their rights like other Jordanians.

2.2.3 The Right to health

Jordanian Christians, like other Jordanians, have obtained the right to health insurance inside government hospitals, as they enjoy free treatment inside these medical centers. The government has also obligated companies and factories to provide health insurance for their workers and all workers without discrimination as well.

Christians have also contributed to the development of the medical sector in Jordan, which distinguishes Jordan from many countries. They built many hospitals, such as The Italian Hospital, Al Noor Hospital, and others.

Christians have provided the Jordanian medical sector with many skilled doctors and who contributed to the development of the medical sector in Jordan

And in an even more wonderful state, the Christian general, Dr. Daoud Hanania, was the first to take the vaccine against the Corona virus to encourage people, and this is evidence of the Jordanians' appreciation and respect for this doctor by the Jordanians.

2.2. 4 The right to housing

There are no special areas for Christians, and no areas isolated from the rest; Jordanian Christians live next to their Muslim neighbors and shares everything with them and form the joined fabric of the Jordanian society.

At a time when the state paid great attention to the issue of housing and presented many initiatives and solutions for low-income women, the state did not differentiate between citizens with this and did not provide a solution for one group over the other.

The government also established housing for army personnel and housing for teachers and others, and did not stipulate the condition of religion to apply for

these housing, or, for example, did not grant housing to Muslims and forbade Christians. Everyone is equal, the right and the homeland is for everyone.

The issue of human rights and freedoms occupies a large place in the Jordanian legislation and laws, and these legislations take into account the non-discrimination between Jordanians on the basis of religion, language or race.

Jordan is also a member and party to many United Nations conventions on human rights and has ratified many international and regional covenants and covenants from which the enactment of its laws was derived

Jordan has many national institutions that are concerned with human rights that aim to promote human rights principles, take into account the enemy of discrimination, renounce racism, and strengthen the democratic approach. In other words, Jordan is not affiliated with any party or takes instructions from anyone in order to increase transparency and perform its work impartially

Also, in every ministry or government institution, there is a department to follow up on human rights and discrimination issues.

The Committee for Women in the Jordanian Parliament is also considered one of the most important committees in following up on the affairs of freedoms and rights and presenting interrogations to the government in the event of violations

As in Jordan, there are many non-governmental organizations (NGO's) that are interested in the affairs of human freedoms and the protection of human rights, such as the Arab Organization for Human Rights and the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.

Finally, the position of the government coordinator for human rights was created in the prime minister's office to coordinate between the three

authorities regarding human rights, and the freedoms and dignity of the Jordanian citizens without marginalization or discrimination.

Chapter III

III The Jordanian state's role and its leaders in interfaith dialogue

No one can deny the importance of interfaith dialogue as it is a bridge that paves the way for us to reach peace, security and stability, and it is an important and main key to solving problems and rejecting violence and hatred.⁵⁰ Interreligious dialogue in its simplest meaning is that each party respects the religion and belief of the other party, and that it is an important party worthy of discussion.

Interfaith dialogue generates a feeling that rights are not monopolized by anyone, and increases cooperation and partnership in resolving crises and achieving achievements ⁵¹. Jordan adopted the policy of religious dialogue and made it a method for it, because of its belief in its importance in facing challenges and achieving goals.

In this chapter, the principles and values of the religious dialogue policies in Jordan will be explained as well as the efforts that are made by the Jordanian state that are represented by its leaders at the local and international levels.

3.1 The starting points for the policy of religious dialogue in Jordan

The basis of the policy of religious dialogue in the Jordanian state

The issue of religious dialogue is an integral part of Jordan's internal and external policies; the interest in this has increased, especially after the

50 _ Interfaith dialogue is a necessity of time <https://www.alwatan.com.sa/article/38605>

51 - SULAIMAN ,WILLIAM and kameI,abdulaziz, interfaith dialogue,page 11

emergence of terrorism and its repercussions on societies with the increase in violence and hatred.

The Kingdom's interest in the importance of interfaith dialogue increased after the increase in terrorist acts and religious extremism in the world. King Abdullah II has led this interest in clear steps and called the whole world to the importance of dialogue and cooperation to combat terrorism, extremism and religious fanaticism. King Abdullah II was the first Muslim and Arab leader to visit the United States After the terrorist attacks that took place in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. To confirm that terrorism does not represent any religion.

And speaking of King Abdullah II, it is worth mentioning here that King Abdullah is a figure who has won the respect of the international community and has strengthened Jordan's role and message of spreading peace and has contributed greatly to increasing dialogue and has presented many initiatives that seek peace and interfaith dialogue. For this reason, King Abdullah has won many international awards, we mention of which:

1. The Prize for Political Courage in France in 2003 awarded to the King by the French Sorbonne Society for International Politics and the Journal of International Politics for his courage and vision for the future of the Middle East.
2. The Golden Order of Merit of the City of Athens in 2005; he was awarded this prize in recognition of his initiatives to encourage interreligious and intercultural dialogue.
3. Saint Andre Invited First International Prize for Dialogue of Civilizations in 2006; the Board of Trustees of the Saint Andrei Foundation, the first invited guest and the Center for National Glory of Russia decided to award the King the award bearing the name of Saint Andrei for his clear contributions to ensuring the dialogue of civilizations and "because he is the man through

whose hands the idea of dialogue of civilizations was realized in the Middle East,” according to the head of the awarding committee and the master of the ceremony, Oleg. Atkov. ⁵²

4. Westphalia Peace Prize / Germany in 2016; in appreciation to his efforts in establishing world peace, and to enhancing the endeavors of stability and security for the various peoples of the world.

5. Templeton Prize in the USA in 2018. This is due to his efforts to achieve interfaith harmony, protect Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and protect religious freedom.

6. Peace Lamp Award / Italy in 2019: In recognition of his efforts to promoting human rights, fraternity, interfaith dialogue and peace in the Middle East and the world, and in appreciation of his tireless efforts to promote human rights, fraternity and peace in the Middle East and the world. ⁵³

This effort, which Jordan pursued under the leadership of King Abdullah, has been built on principles and basics, as the Jordanian policy of religious dialogue is based on several axes, which we will discuss with the following points

52 _ The Royal Hashemite Court <https://rhc.jo/en>

53 _ The Royal Hashemite Court <https://rhc.jo/en>

3.1.1 Islam is a religion of tolerance and coexistence, and the true essence of it must be shown

Accordingly, the Jordanian state, especially King Abdullah II, took upon himself the religious duty of showing the extent of Islam's tolerance and that it is a religion of love and respect for others, and that the teachings of Islam came to bring people out of ignorance of thinking and fanaticism to a culture of dialogue, respect and love. Everything that is attributed to peace such as: extremism and killing, is dishonorable and does not represent Islam. The true Muslim is the one who deals with everyone with love, helps everyone and rejects the language of violence.

In a speech that won everyone's admiration in the European Parliament, King Abdullah clarified the true meaning of Islam and Muslims, in his speech; he spoke about the characteristics of a true Muslim and the extent of his tolerance and love for others, And the first word that a Muslim gives is “peace be upon you”, and it is wishing peace to the other.

Islam also spoke a thousand years before the Geneva Convention, Muslim soldiers were instructed not to kill a woman, a child, or an old man, or cut down a tree, and not to harm a monk or church, these are the values that we have learned and we must raise the next generation on. In his speech, King Abdullah II described those who attribute violence to Islam as terrorists who are outside the teachings of Islam, and Islam is innocent of them and we will not allow them to hijack our true religion.⁵⁴

Whenever Jordan exerts great efforts to support Islamic scholars in their efforts to clarify the tolerant teachings of Islam and the true understanding of this religion, which calls for harmony and respect for others; it is also their

54 _ King Abdullah II speech to the European Parliament in 2015 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSqfw5RoX0s&t=563s>

duty to make it clear to the whole world that extremism and violence cannot be associated with any religion and that it does not represent any religion.

For this reason, an international Islamic conference was held in Amman, at the invitation of King Abdullah II, in the presence of more than 50 countries and 200 scholars of the Christian religion, to clarify and explain that what the Islamic religion calls us to is solidarity, tolerance and brotherhood, and the Coexistence and interfaith dialogue are rooted in the Islamic religion, and this is what King Abdullah explained at the Nation's Renaissance Conference for Interreligious Dialogue in Jakarta in 2014. ⁵⁵

3.1.2 The Christian presence is rooted in Jordan and the region, and protecting them is our duty

The Jordanian state considers the protection of Christians present in it or in the Arab region as a duty, not a gift or favor. Arab Christians are an integral part of our region's past, present and future and any attack on Christians and their sanctities, in addition to being an attack on humanity, is an attack on Islam and Muslims in general.

In Jordan, the Jordanian people, with their various components, believe that they are one and indivisible society, friends, brothers and partners in building their country and their future, a society that believes in dialogue and the exchange of cultures. Christians are indigenous people who have their rights, and it is considered the duty of any state to share them, integrate them with society, protect their existence and guarantee them security and stability.

As the Jordanian state believes in the inviolability of holy places and the protection of places of worship is a must, how not! It represents the spirit of dialogue and from it we learn tolerance, love and respect for others. The Jordanian state's adherence to the Hashemite guardianship to protect the sacred is something that cannot be waived or waived. Protecting religions and their places of worship is to protect peace, coexistence and harmony among human beings.

The protection of the Christian presence is considered a first line of defense for the protection and continuity of dialogue, which is reflected in coexistence and tolerance, and thus the ability of the state to defend its issues that it believes in and its ability to flourish and progress in the political, economic and other fields.

3.1.3 The challenges are common, and we must work together to confront them

Among the Jordanian political principles of the importance of religious dialogue is that the challenges and difficulties do not confront one group without the other, but rather are common and affect everyone, therefore, concerted efforts must be made; challenges, in their various forms, political, economic, or whatever, do not differentiate between one religion and another.

Perhaps one of the most important challenges that our societies always face and that require constructive and effective dialogue is the problem of religious extremism and sectarian conflicts. Here, it must be noted that religious extremism exists in all religions and is not monopolized by religion.

Therefore, dialogue leads us to agree on the concept of moderation and opens our minds to distinguishing extremists and excluding them from our societies. Consequently, fighting extremists is the sole responsibility of everyone from all religions.

King Abdullah II emphasized this when receiving Arab church leaders and foreigners participating in the Conference on Challenges Facing Arab Christians, stressing that combating extremism, fanaticism and sectarian conflict requires coordinated efforts and requires the cooperation of all.⁵⁶

The Jordanian state also believes that one of the reasons for the emergence of extremism is injustice, exclusion, economic insecurity, disrespect for others, isolating them and insulting their religions, Therefore, it is necessary to secure a decent life, consolidate justice and empower societies, also promote mutual must be respected, promote the integration of societies, popularize the idea of dialogue and promote a culture of coexistence.⁵⁷

56 _ Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 24

57 _ Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 26

King Abdullah has always made it clear in his speech during the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly and asked everyone to cooperate and find solutions to the crises facing the world and to provide new opportunities for dialogue, reconciliation, prosperity and peace.

He added that the international community must increase cooperation and coordination to combat extremism and terrorism and rid our societies of them; he stressed that Jordan is among the forefront of countries that seek dialogue initiatives and combat extremism, and that it is in constant coordination with the United Nations Security Council to increase cooperation and achieve results.⁵⁸

58 _ Speech of King Abdullah II at the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_tg6UK1UUc

3.2 The efforts and initiatives of the Jordanian state in dialogue and coexistence between religions

3.2.1 Research institutes, religious studies and initiatives

In addition to legislative efforts and constitutional amendments that would preserve the rights of citizens without discrimination and adhere to international covenants and conventions on human rights; Jordan realized that the culture of dialogue must be strengthened and stemmed from a stable land and a conscious society in order to spread the idea at the global level.

Therefore, Jordan began to take the necessary measures and harness all possibilities to spread and strengthen the culture of dialogue among Jordanian society because of its importance for the safety and prosperity of society and to be a stable starting point for international initiatives and conferences that would produce results that benefit other societies

The Jordanian state realized that there must be places for scholars and opinion-holders, and a scientific organization that conducts studies and research, keeps pace with developments and events, and be a reliable reference for religious studies; the following centers are considered one of the most important centers for religious research and studies:

1. The Royal A'l al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought ⁵⁹:

The Royal A'l al-Bayt institute for Islamic Thought is considered one of the most leading institutions; it is an independent international non-governmental Islamic institution. Its center is located in Amman, the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; it works to serve Islam and humanity as a whole; it aims to introduce the religion and Islamic thought, correct incorrect concepts and ideas about Islam, and highlight intellectual giving.

59 _ The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought <https://www.aalalbayt.org/?lang=ar>

Islam and its impact on human civilization.

The Royal A'1 al-Bayt institute is concerned with consolidating the exchange of views and promoting the concepts of moderation and tolerance, as shown by the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, and the Ahl al-Bayt, and the good values and morals they advocate; the Foundation seeks to cooperate with research centers, academies, institutions, scientific bodies, and universities to increase awareness, exchange views, and popularize the tolerant values of religions.

The Royal A'1 al-Bayt institute has held many Symposia and in cooperation with many studies and research centers; these Symposia aim to open doors for dialogue and exchange of views and cultures for example: Symposium: "The Prophet's Sunnah and Its Approach to Building Knowledge and Civilization" (19-22 June 1989 AD), in cooperation with the International Institute of Islamic Thought / Washington, United States of America (within the scope of the Seventh General Conference) and Symposium: "Islamic lifestyles and their impact on health and human development ; in general" (23-26 June 1989 AD), in cooperation with the Regional Office of the World Health Organization for the Eastern Mediterranean (Alexandria) and the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences (Kuwait); the institution was also able to deliver its message globally and held many cooperations with Arab and international institutions and centers.

For example, the Cooperation with Cambridge University Library in publishing "Index Islamicus", a major guide for researchers in Islamic civilization founded by Prof. J.D. Pearson. The first volume thereof was published in 1958. It is an indispensable guide for every researcher in the fields of Islamic Civilization because it traces periodically all the books and articles which have been issued about the Islamic languages. Furthermore, the Institute signed an agreement with Cambridge University Library upon which an annual grant was given for ten years, 1982-1991.

Since the third issue of volume VI (July 1982) until 1991, all issues of the quarterly “Index Islamicus”, 38 totals, have been compiled at the University Library, Cambridge, under the auspices of The Aal al-Bayt Institute. and signing a protocol of cooperation between the Foundation and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1402 AH = 1982 AD, to exchange manuscripts, books and visits by scholars, and to encourage the translation and publication of scholars’ research on both sides related to Islamic civilization.

The institution documents its efforts in religious harmony with volumes, pamphlets and books, and publishes them to increase awareness and a culture of coexistence and tolerance. This institution is chaired as a founding member by His Royal Highness Prince El-Hassan bin Talal, and its members consist of Jordanian, Arab and international nationalities.

2. The Royal Institute of inter-faith Studies: ⁶⁰

The Royal Institute for Religious Studies in Amman was established in 1994 and is considered as an incubator for interdisciplinary studies on issues of interfaith and intercultural dialogue with the aim of consolidating the values of pluralism and diversity and promoting societal peace and peace at the regional and global levels; the Institute focuses on spreading common human and moral values that contribute to the strengthening of cooperation and relations between different religions, alleviating mutual misconceptions about the “other”, in addition to deepening common denominators in a way that contributes to achieving coexistence.

The Royal Institute for Religious Studies aims to consolidate dialogue between the followers of religions and cultures as an effective tool in confronting the phenomena of extremism, fanaticism and exclusion and to promote a culture of mutual respect, understanding, understanding and

60 _ The Royal Institute of inter-faith Studies <https://riifs.org/ar/project/teachers-of-tomorrow-tot-2019-2021/>

acceptance of the other among the components of the same society, in addition to encouraging regional communication on religious and cultural issues through effective communications and interaction within academic and religious environments.

The Institute is based on principles and values such as diversity and harmony, seeking to diversify backgrounds, approaches and ideas; recognizing that differences make a team stronger; respecting differences and striving to contain them and the principle of respect and treating others with honesty, integrity, humility and empathy, in addition to working in a team spirit and maintaining serious standards for all the work of the Institute whether it is research, academic or various activities.

Building interactive communities and regional and international partnerships between professionals and religious leaders and promoting socially resilient and counter-extremism environments. It is the vision that the institute seeks to reach. The Institute has been able to conclude many agreements that are aimed at expanding the base of dialogue and consolidating the values of understanding and coexistence, such as the memorandum of understanding between the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and a memorandum of Cooperation between the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. In addition to many other agreements that seek to involve institutes, universities and research institutions by conveying the idea of interfaith dialogue and coexistence between societies.

The institute also aims to set up projects targeting religious subjects teachers in order to increase their awareness of their responsibility to spread the culture of dialogue among school students; the Institute also implements projects that target the youth category to increase their motivation to understand religious and cultural heritage, in addition to the projects of religious leaders and motivate them to increase their efforts towards society and raise awareness of

the dangers of extremism and intolerance. In addition to projects aimed at preparing teachers capable of promoting human values inspired by moderate religious values, encouraging diversity and accepting the other and preparing Teachers who believe in dialogue and reject extremism.

3.2.2 Initiatives

Jordan is considered one of the forefront countries that has taken upon itself the responsibility of rapprochement between religions and increasing dialogue and coexistence among followers of religions. Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad, who is the King's advisor for religious and cultural affairs, mentions in his book "Twenty Years of Religious and Historical Initiatives"

Religious initiatives expanded as they began in the nineties of the last century and centered on Jordan and the Jordanians, and then extended to include Islam and Muslims everywhere ⁶¹. It is noteworthy that Prince Ghazi is the owner and supervisor of many initiatives and always seeks to increase dialogue between religions and has devoted much of his time to his money for peaceful coexistence between religions

In this part of the thesis, we will review the most important religious initiatives announced by Jordan:

1. Amman message:

The Amman Message is considered one of the most important initiatives and a turning point for Jordan's approach to intercultural dialogue; it is also considered as the international initiative for all interfaith dialogue initiatives, and it has become a clear approach and reference for many institutes at the local and regional levels. ⁶²

The Amman Message is the Amman Message as a detailed statement that is issued by King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein in the year 2004, in Amman, Jordan; its main and straight forward aim is to publicly declare the reality of Islam and what is the true Islam, as well as to purify what is attached to Islam from what is not in it, and the actions that represent it and those that do not. Its

61 _Prince ghazi bin mohammad , Twenty Years of Religious and Historical Initiatives,page 2

62 _ The Amman message <https://ammanmessage.com/?lang=ar>

goal was to explain to the modern world the true nature of Islam and the nature of true Islam.

In order to give this principle legitimacy, King Abdullah sent several questions to the great scholars of the Islamic religion around the world who represent the different sects and schools of thought; the aim of these questions was to reach agreement and consensus. Sectarianism and violence are now true facts, so questions included: who is the true Muslim, is it permissible to renounce and expiate, and what is the new world by issuing rulings that are related to religion, religious "fatwas".

A year after the issuance of the initiative, the king called for more than one religious Islamic conference in Amman, which was attended by more than 200 Islamic scholars from more than 50 countries; it was agreed that no sect should be denied to another, the principle is the exchange and dialogue and the renunciation of conflicts, because the root of religion is mercy and tolerance, not violence and hatred, and that religion commands us to gather, not to separate and to discriminate, and that differences do not spoil the cause of friendship; it was also agreed that the only person who is authorized to talk about religious matters and to issue instructions and judge between people on religious matters (a religious fatwa) is the person who knows the tolerant teachings of Islam and who teaches religious matters in universities and religious institutes.

The Amman Message initiative won the approval of many political and secular leaders in the Islamic world, as many countries adopted the essence of the centrist initiative. For example, the Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Mecca in 2005 and the Conference of the Islamic Fiqh Academy in 2006 adopted the axes and principles of the Amman Message. ⁶³

63 _ Waheeb,mohammad , Islamic-Christian harmony in the shadow of the unity of the place (Jordan as a model),page 73

The Amman Message has taken the stage of implementation, as it has been circulated to mosque preachers and used in the media and entered into the school curricula and is considered a basic reference for many national and international legislation in introducing the teachings of the Islamic religion. George Yeo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, at the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly, describing the Amman message, “The fight against terrorism will be more difficult without this clarification.

King Abdullah made it clear that the results of the Amman Message and reaching a consensus among the Islamic sects are good news not only for Muslims, who provide them with a basis for unity and a solution to conflict among themselves, but also for non-Muslims; The protection of doctrines in Islam necessarily means maintaining the controls and means of internal control in Islam. Thus, it ensures the existence of balanced Islamic solutions to key issues such as: human rights, women's rights, freedom of religion, religiously acceptable jihad, good citizenship for Muslims in non-Muslim countries, and a just and democratic government; it also exposes the views of extremist fundamentalists and terrorists, which are not legally acceptable from the point of view of true Islam. ⁶⁴

64 _ Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 29

2. The initiative "A common word is the same between us and you":

This initiative is considered as a dialogue between Muslims and Christians, and it is an open letter signed by the most prominent Muslim scholars and intellectuals around the world addressed to the heads of churches and Christian denominations around the world, including His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Sponsorship of the Al al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, under the guidance and supervision of His Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad.

This principle, in which more than 138 Muslim scholars, academics and intellectuals participated, calls for peace between Muslims and Christians and to find points of convergence between the two divine religions, both of which call us to peace, tolerance and love.

This initiative is based on the fact that Islam and Christianity share the same essence based on verses from the Holy Qur'an and the Bible, and their participation in the golden commandment of love of God and love of neighborliness. This initiative consolidates the concepts of dialogue, understanding, tolerance and respect between Muslims and Christians and aims to achieve coexistence and harmony among all human beings and respect for the sacred symbols of religions ⁶⁵.

It is noteworthy that the letter (the initiative) which was written by Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad came after several major events that increased the gap between Christians and Muslims, such as caricatures insulting the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and Pope Benedictus' speech in 2006, which was considered a provocative speech to Muslims⁶⁶. Hence, King Abdullah asked Prince Ghazi to hasten to issue a principle of dialogue between Muslims and Christians and to seek to demonstrate his tolerance of religions and the

65 _ Waheeb, mohammad , Islamic-Christian harmony in the shadow of the unity of the place (Jordan as a model),page 77

66 _ Common word initiative <http://www.acommonwaord.com>

participation of religious scholars and the consensus that religions cannot command us to abuse or violence.

The initiative has generated a worldwide resonance with a wide welcome from Christian religious institutions and figures, heads of churches and humanitarian organizations, and even among prominent political figures, for example, but not limited to: the Vatican welcomed the initiative and invited him to meet with a number of religious scholars. Also, The Archbishop of Canterbury issued a theological response entitled "A Common Word for the Common Good" in addition the former British Prime Ministers, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, also welcomed the initiative and stressed the importance of its content to enhance stability in the world.

3. The World Interfaith Harmony Week

At the United Nations General Assembly, King Abdullah launched the World Interfaith Harmony Week in 2010, The initiative dedicates the first week of February every year to celebrate the harmony of religions in the world. The main objective of the initiative is to confront violence, renounce hatred, call for dialogue, and spread the culture of respect and tolerance, this initiative was adopted by the United Nations in 2010 and the United Nations General Assembly stressed the urgent need for interfaith dialogue in order to enhance understanding and cooperation among people.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time, Ben Ki-moon, confirmed his support for the initiative and thanked Jordan and King Abdullah II, and confirmed that the United Nations had approved this initiative. The initiative provides a platform through which to express and prove to the world the importance of religious dialogue, and places of worship express the teachings of religions that call for tolerance and spread the culture of respect and dialogue.⁶⁷

This platform provides an opportunity to spread awareness among societies of the importance of accepting the other and coexistence among followers of religions. When proposing the idea of the initiative, King Abdullah stressed that we must resist division and spread the commandments of common religions calling for peace and harmony

To promote the idea, Jordan launched the King Abdullah Award for the World Interfaith Harmony Week, in which competition takes place between events based on increasing dialogue and coexistence between religions and promoting a culture of tolerance, then the committee, which includes Muslim and Christian personalities, evaluated these events and awards prizes to the most influential event With the aim of motivating individuals and associations

67 _ Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 78

to spread harmony. It is worth mentioning here that the initiative of the Interfaith Harmony Week focuses on the pioneering work of the “Common Word” initiative. ⁶⁸

⁶⁸ - Waheeb, Mohammad, Islamic-Christian harmony in the shadow of the unity of the place (Jordan as a model), page 77

4. Discussion papers of His Majesty King Abdullah

King Abdullah adopts the approach of dialogue and participation in opinion in his dealings with his people, and aims for this to involve all segments of the Jordanian people in finding solutions to the challenges facing the country; in his discussion papers that deal with political, economic and cultural issues and the challenges and difficulties facing the region, which are not considered mandatory papers or royal orders, the King tries to raise an issue for discussion, and his people exchange opinions and unite efforts to find solutions with an initiative that won the favor of the Jordanian people.

Among those discussion papers is a discussion paper entitled Our March towards a Renewed Democracy. The King spoke about respect for the other and that it is the way to establish a cohesive and strong society and that all Jordanians are considered as one family and that our future is one, so let us make the unifying national identity what distinguishes us, and put the interest of Jordan's prosperity above any difference, whether it is by race, religion or origin; the King called for mutual respect and respect for the other opinion to be our key to preserving our stability and the prosperity of our country

And in another discussion paper entitled "Towards empowering a democrat and an active citizen" The king emphasized that disrespect does not consist in differences of opinion, and in refusal to listen to others, the Difference in viewpoints is required to enrich our knowledge and culture, but If we differ in viewpoints, we keep respect and acceptance as our address and our approach, Differences in opinion do not spoil friendship.

In another discussion paper entitled "Roles Await Us for the Success of Our Renewed Democracy," the King discussed the importance of his religious and historical duty to protect the Islamic and Christian religious heritage, the protection of religious sanctities, and the promotion of the concepts of the

heavenly religions of tolerance and moderation; he also clarified his duty towards all members of the country to ensure the preservation of justice and equality without discrimination or discrimination and the preservation of the rights of all.

These discussion papers, which all Jordanians read, will increase openness to the culture of others and raise awareness towards respecting the opinion, belief and culture of others; it is considered as a type of dialogue that enriches the culture of society and its acceptance of the other despite its differences.

3.3 The importance of having a role model

In addition to King Abdullah's efforts and directives, he leads efforts to spread the culture of coexistence and make it a feature of the Jordanian society and its participation in regional and Arab societies, the humanitarian work scene appears in terms of convergence of views and hard work to spread the culture of tolerance and rejection of violence and discrimination; there are two characters of the Jordanian leadership who devoted much of their time to bring the views closer and strive towards peaceful coexistence between religions.

The Hashemite family believes that one of its religious and historical duties is to be the owner of the initiative and the leader of the approach, and to be the role model for the Jordanian people in general.

In this section, we will talk about two characters who are close to the Jordanian society and who have become role models by working to respect others and striving towards harmony and peaceful coexistence at the local and global levels.

1.HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal .

Prince El Hassan bin Talal, who is the uncle of His Majesty King Abdullah II, is considered one of the most important thinkers and researchers in the Arab world; he is considered the author of a broad thought and a logical analysis of events in the world. Prince El Hassan devoted a lot of his time and efforts to working on the convergence of ideas and spreading awareness of the importance of interfaith rapprochement and coexistence.

HRH Prince El Hassan has chaired many international committees and organizations, and is a member of many committees and organizations, including: the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Center for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution at the University of Oklahoma at the Center for International Programs in the United States and the Co-Chair of the

Foundation for International Tolerance for Human and Social Studies, Saint Petersburg (since 2006); he is a founding member and president of the Foundation for Research and Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. Prince El Hassan contributed in writing many articles and publications in both Arabic and English to many international newspapers which are aimed at promoting the idea of dialogue; Prince El Hassan is the author of many books such as the Pursuit of Peace and Christianity in the Arab World.

Prince El Hassan believes that dialogue is not just a discussion between individuals or followers of various religions to reach common convictions or a unified opinion only, Rather, it is an activity to create a consensus around a common reality and to create a life reality based on common understandings and frameworks of thinking and effective procedures for resolving and addressing contradictions and conflict. Prince El Hassan chaired and participated in many interfaith dialogue conferences, and he won many international awards in recognition of his efforts to work to consolidate dialogue and coexistence.

Such as:

1- His Highness was awarded the 2008 Niwano Peace Prize in May 2008 in Japan. 2- His Highness was also appointed to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences of the Institute de France. In October 2008, 3- His Highness was awarded the Peace Prize for the city of Augsburg in Germany. 4- His Highness was awarded the Markgräfin-Wilhelmine Prize in Bayreuth, Germany in November 2010. 5- His Highness was also awarded the Rabbi Mark H. Tannenbaum 2003 Prize in June 2003 for distinction in interfaith understanding; he won many other international awards in appreciation of his

efforts in dialogue, coexistence and understanding among followers of religions. ⁶⁹

2. HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad

His Highness Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad, the cousin of His majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan and the King's chief advisor for religious and cultural affairs. Prince Ghazi is considered as the pioneer of ideas and initiatives calling for dialogue and rapprochement between followers of religions and the rejection of fanaticism and sectarianism.

Prince Ghazi was keen to convey the idea of the Islamic religion to everyone, and that it is a religion of tolerance and respect for others, and that it is the religion that they command us to protect and be good neighbors for the followers of other religions; the initiatives that saw the light and became a method for many were the best evidence of that, for example, the initiative “A Common Word” which is inspired by the Holy Qur’an "Come to a common word that is equal between us and you. ” ⁷⁰ This initiative is an opportunity for scholars from both religions to meet and highlight the essence of religions by calling for love and tolerance. Prince Ghazi holds a doctorate in Islamic jurisprudence and has deepened the study of the true meaning of religions and their positive impact on evaluating human behavior, as it is the first advocate of humanity

The idea of convergence of ideas and unification of efforts preoccupied Prince Ghazi. In his book “Twenty Years of Religious and Historical Initiatives,” the prince reviews the most important efforts and initiatives over twenty years

69 _ <http://www.elhassanbintalal.io/ar-jo/%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D9%83%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%86-%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A9>

70 _ A verse from the Holy Qur’an

from 1993 to 2013, and the most important challenges he faced, accompanied by many friends and believers, through dialogue and interfaith rapprochement.

The importance of religious scholars was not hidden from Prince Ghazi's mind; he made a clear effort to take care of scholars and to invite them to explain the importance of the teachings of religions by spreading peace; he held many dialogues and understanding sessions for these scholars, such as the Hashemite scientific councils. Prince Ghazi also worked on increasing institutes, study centers, and universities that are specialized in the study of religions and their importance by transferring the essence of religions to societies. The Prince also paid wide attention to places of worship and caring for Islamic and Christian holy sites alike as they are a religious and historical heritage for Jordan and all Jordanians.

The presence of such two trusted and influential characters in societies has had a positive impact by transferring these experiences and illustrating their approach; we see many researchers in the field of religious harmony, who have issued synthesizers and books, and many seminars and conferences have been held to spread awareness and spread the message of peace, and the two princes had an important role in adopting many books and articles and sponsor a lot of conferences.

3.4 The Royal speeches and international conferences

The Jordanian state has always linked that one of the most important factors of security and stability in the world and the Middle East is the coexistence between religions and the bad culture of dialogue; you cannot find a society in which respect and acceptance of others, despite their differences, prevails, love and tolerance prevail, a disintegrated society or incites violence, sectarianism and hatred.

And because Jordan is part of the region and the world, and any security disturbance affects it negatively, the effort of the Jordanian state was not limited to the local or regional levels, and these efforts were not limited to seminars or papers, Rather, the Jordanian state sought to have its ideas heard in the most important international forums and called for conferences at the regional and global levels, and it seeks all the time to translate the outcomes of the meetings and conferences on the ground, and that people see its positive effects on societies.

3.4.1 International speeches

His majesty King Abdullah led the idea of conveying the Jordanian message of the importance of living among the followers of religions in the most important global platforms and international forums Among them:

1. Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II At MED 2015 / Mediterranean Dialogues Conference. Rome /Italy

In this speech, the King stressed the importance of dialogue by educating future and conscious generations, where in our current generation the principles of dialogue that unite us are under real threat. Fanaticism and terrorism threaten everyone; the terrorists who attacked Paris are those who carried out the Amman bombings ten years ago; we have a common destiny,

either we thrive together, or we fail together. Risks that were once seen as national challenges are now global.⁷¹

The King also stressed the importance of mutual dreams, as mutual respect is the real basis for partnership; we need to realize the importance of our interdependence. Muslims in Europe are part of the fabric of history and society here, just as Arab Christians are an integral part of the social fabric of Middle Eastern societies. The Muslim-majority countries of Europe in the Balkans are part of the future of the continent, just as our regions are part of a common global future. Hatred and persecution of minorities can never be justified or tolerated. This is the message that we must pass on to the next generation. The king also stressed that Islam, Christianity and Judaism command us to have mercy and compassion, and to preserve the dignity of everyone without exception.

2. The King's Speech to Academics and Diplomats in Armenia

In this speech, the King pointed out the importance of the Christian Armenians in the Arab world, the importance of Christian sites, and the duty of Jordan and its leadership towards preserving the sanctities for the followers of religions. His majesty said that our common history extends from a long time ago; the Armenians of the Middle East are part of the oldest Christian community in the world; they are an integral part of our region's past and have contributed to shaping its civilization; we look forward to working with you to continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the present of our region and building its bright future.⁷²

In Jordan, the Armenian Orthodox Church of Mar Qara Bet stands at the site of the baptism of Jesus, peace be upon him, as a witness to the continuous Armenian history in our country. Personally, I was fortunate to have the

71 - Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II At MED 2015 / Mediterranean Dialogues Conference. Rome /Italy

72 - The King's Speech to Academics and Diplomats in Armenia

opportunity to support the rehabilitation of the site of the baptism of Jesus, peace be upon him, a site of great importance to Muslims and Christians.⁷³

In Jerusalem, the Armenian Quarter has been part of the city's centuries-old history. The Armenian Patriarchate is one of the churches protected by the Omari Pact, which represents a legacy of Christian and Islamic coexistence that goes back more than one thousand three hundred years, to the era of Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him. This legacy continues today, embodied in the Hashemite guardianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, a duty I am proud to perform. I am particularly proud of the responsibility of looking after the Holy Places of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which has been entrusted to me. ⁽⁷⁴⁾

Jerusalem holds great historical importance to me and my family, but it is also a city sacred to the followers of the three monotheistic religions, and everyone has an interest and responsibility in preserving spirituality, peace and coexistence that the city represents. The legal situation, as well as the historical situation with regard to the Islamic and Christian sanctities alike. We look to Christian leaders and friends like you and around the world to work with us to preserve Jerusalem as a city that unites us and a symbol of peace. ⁽⁷⁵⁾

3. The Speech of King Abdullah II at the 16th session of the Valdai Dialogue Forum/Russia

In this speech, His majesty King Abdullah II reviewed that despite the limitations, opportunities are still available, and dialogue and concerted efforts can find solutions, we have a role in the pursuit of a positive new world order, and that this is Jordan's future vision for inclusive and sustainable growth, despite regional turmoil, the approach of moderation and stability in our

73 - The King's Speech to Academics and Diplomats in Armenia

74 - One of the king's speeches

75 - One of the king's speeches

country, and our ambitious youth and openness to the world enabled us to build partnerships around the world; his majesty stressed that the presence of extremism in any religion is a danger to all religions, and that everyone should participate in eliminating them from our societies.

The two kings stressed that everyone should adhere to the basic values that bind us all, adhere to dialogue and respect the other, and working with them is the most important weapon we have to confront extremism and division. Likewise, everyone continues to strive for a Middle East that enjoys peace and stability

4. The Speech of His majesty King Abdullah II at the Islamic Heritage Conference: Promoting Harmony and Coexistence / India

In this speech, His majesty King Abdullah II explained that a large part of what we follow in the news or on the Internet regarding religion these days focuses on what divides people and around the world, mistrust and mutual suspicion are growing because of not knowing the other. Ideas based on hate distort what God has revealed to create conflicts and justify crimes and terrorism. We must take these risks very seriously. However, without letting it distract us from a very important fact, which is that religions seek to bring human society closer together

Religions urge intrinsic and common commandments of many societies in the world, and call for the love of God, the love of goodness, and the love of neighbor. It is religion and faith that inspires people to do good in their daily lives in countries like India and Jordan, where people of different faiths and races have worked and lived in harmony throughout history. Religion and faith lead us towards prosperity and development, by bringing different civilizations and cultures together around the common principles of humanity.

His majesty King Abdullah II also added that empathy, compassion and tolerance are the values in which billions of Muslims and non-Muslims all

over the world believe. These values require us to work together for our common future. In fact, the war the world is waging today against terrorism is not a war between different religions or peoples. It is between moderates of all faiths and societies against extremists who have made hatred and violence their belief

5. The Speech of King Abdullah II at the award ceremony of the Westphalia Peace Prize/Germany

In this speech, His majesty King Abdullah II affirmed that the collective interest represented in joint action is one of the most important teachings and common values among the three monotheistic religions whose roots go back to; his majesty cited a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, "He who is not merciful to people, God will not have mercy on him".⁽⁷⁶⁾

Therefore, the religious and moral value that motivates us to love our neighbors guides our global responsibility, which must also guide the relationship between followers of different faiths. Nothing serves the goals of international terrorist gangs more than our fears and misunderstandings of each other; Therefore, it is necessary to work collectively to end regional crises, close the vulnerabilities exploited by terrorists, and seek to integrate religious minorities into the societies in which they live.

6. The Speech of His Majesty King Abdullah II at the main session of the Fifth Conference of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions / Kazakhstan

Here His majesty indicated in his speech that the vast majority of people in our world today belong to religious communities, where Muslims and Christians alone constitute more than half of the world's population, and we live side by side as citizens, but our global society today is threatened by aggressive forces

⁷⁶ - A prophagic saying and Hadith.

that exploit religious differences. The great religions have at various times fought battles against this evil. We all have to be aware of this reality and face it.

Today, we Muslims are under brutal attack from Kharijites who distort our religion to justify their horrific crimes. Nothing harms our religion or the feelings of Muslims more than the actions of these criminal gangs that fuel sectarianism and ignite discord in the nation, and mislead young people and tempt them to give up their future. It spreads violence all over the world. Islam absolutely condemns this violence, whether it targets Muslims, Christians or religious minorities

7. The Speech of His Majesty King Abdullah II during the Security Council session on threats to global peace and security caused by terrorist acts/USA

Here, His majesty stated that in order to combat terrorism, we must adhere to these principles:

The first principle is global communication and commitment, as the threat is not confined to Syria and Iraq, but also exists in Sinai, Libya, Yemen, Mali, the Horn of Africa, and others. And this is not an Arab or Islamic battle only, because the countries represented in this council and everything else are in danger. It is the war of the age, and success in it requires a unified effort backed by strong resources. Success also requires a holistic approach.

Transnational terrorism thrives on crises, injustice, and sectarian strife. Winning hearts and minds require a strong stance against marginalization, poverty and exclusion. Parallel to security measures, there must be diplomatic and development efforts, job creation, education, and others.

The second key principle is to take immediate action; the new ideology of extremism is practicing worldwide recruitment through social media and clandestine partnerships; the more they control resource-rich lands, the more self-sustaining they become. And time is of the essence in this matter. We

have already started work, and what is required of this alliance now is persistence and perseverance until it achieves all its goals

The third condition is transparency, as these groups depend for their survival on deals and international support. Mr. President, a zero-tolerance policy must be applied to any country, organization or individual that facilitates, supports or finances terrorist groups, supplies them with weapons, or promotes them, whether through the media or through the use of the clergy to incite or help recruit fighters in these terrorist groups. Absolute compliance is a must, and we don't accept that a country complies on one side while wreaking havoc on another. His majesty stressed that the reference figures in every religion and country should raise their voice against fanaticism and distortion of religion.

We note here in these and other speeches of the King that the approach of the Jordanian state is clear and stable. There is no alternative to dialogue and that all parties bear their responsibilities. Extremism is not the monopoly of a religion, and terrorism and violence can annihilate everyone without exception, Collective work with a clear methodology, dialogue and respect for the belief and culture of others is the best solution to reach peace.

3.4.2 Conferences calling for dialogue and consensus

Conferences are an effective way to gather opinions and reach agreements. Perhaps the conferences' outcomes are a method and a roadmap for reaching solutions to crises. The Jordanian state is one of the first countries to hold or participate in conferences because it believes in the importance of exchanging opinions and reaching points of consensus, which reduces violence and sectarianism, and these conferences:

1. The summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Mecca

This conference was held after many political and religious leaders in the Islamic world adopted the content of the Amman Message, its principles and its three axes.

Where it was unanimously agreed on the contents of the Amman Message in a historic event, which is to bring together all religious sects in agreement and in full by recognizing that every sect has the right to expression and that mutual respect is something that cannot be tolerated

This agreement is considered a legal obligation for all sects, which will work for unity and renounce conflict. When intercourse and agreement, everyone devote themselves to finding solutions to other issues with a balanced thought and open to other cultures and beliefs, and of course realizing the importance of dialogue and coexistence between religions, as well as solving issues with a humanistic perspective, as all religions called us to.

One of the results of this conference is that the legislation and laws within each participating country must be what has been unanimously agreed upon, and thus constitutions and laws will rid themselves of discrimination and racism.

It was also agreed on the role of the media in highlighting the importance of this agreement to raise awareness of societies and to create generations that

welcome the other and its culture. Also, the importance of highlighting this compatibility in educational institutions and curricula, as no interest is superior to the interest of the nation.

So, the importance of this conference lies in reaching an agreement after studying the different opinions and accepting the viewpoints and believing that difference is inevitable and that freedom of opinion is unbreakable Faith in human values and respect for others would show this compatibility and make it a basis for resolving crises and challenges.

2. The catholic Islamic forum

It is a conference that was held in the Vatican against the backdrop of the "A Common Word" initiative. In it, it was decided that a new chapter in relations between Muslims and Catholic Christians must begin, as this is what Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran declared. He also stressed that yes, you must prove your own identity, but you must also respect others. The conference was unanimously agreed that Muslims and Christians should be instruments of love and tolerance, Acknowledgment that diversity is enacted by God in creation, and that this diversity and difference is an incentive for the exchange of opinions and cultures, not violence and fanaticism.

This conference came out with 15 recommendations that constitute a road map for Muslim and Christian relations, and that these recommendations were built on religious values and teachings, and that everyone should have human values at the forefront of relations and work together to save the world from fanaticism and violence.

3. The Conference on Challenges Facing Arab Christians

This conference was held in Amman, Jordan's capital, after the increase in attacks against churches and violence against Christians in the region and believing in its historical and religious role; the Jordanian state initiated a call

to hold a conference to find solutions to the violence that Christians are subjected to in the region, especially in Iraq and Syria. High-ranking heads of churches representing a number of Christian churches and denominations, as well as Muslim political and religious figures, were invited to assure every one of their rejection of any acts of violence against any religion or sect.

In the conference, the Jordanian state expressed its refusal to subject the Christians to any harm, and this is what our Islamic religion and humanity call for, They are brothers, neighbors and partners rooted in the Arab land, and that it is the duty of every Muslim to protect his Christian brother, and that everyone should unite to fight sectarianism and racism, The conference also stressed the necessity of educating future generations on the values of tolerant religions. Preserving the Christian identity is a duty on the Muslim as it is the preservation of the Muslim identity as a duty on Christianity; whoever believes in God and the teachings of religions believes that all religions invite peace.

The conference also agreed on the importance of dialogue between followers of religions, and that we set a clear approach to living and fraternity based on values, tolerance and respect, the conference also stressed the preservation of religious sanctities is the duty of everyone. the conference also stressed the preservation of religious sanctities is the duty of everyone

The importance of religious scholars in calling people to values and teaching them about their religion with moderation and tolerance.

Chapter III

IV Coexistence, not adaptation

The Christians in Jordan do not feel that they are treated as outsiders in the Jordanian society. Actually, they feel that they are authentic Jordanian citizens who are rooted in this country, like all Jordanians. They are the result of their culture and environment.

This chapter of the thesis deals with the study of the social relations between Jordanians (Muslims and Christians) and is going to present the finest examples that have made Jordan a role model among all countries of the world.

4.1 The Social Relationships

4.1.1 Christians adhering to their Jordanian identity and culture

Never be surprised if you are on any street in Jordan and ask a passerby how many Christians are in Jordan and the answer is 40%, 50%, or maybe more! Do not be surprised if you are on a tour in Amman, Madaba, Salt, or any Jordanian city and see the mosques and the churches next to each other or opposite each other!!

Muslims and Christians in Jordan are bound by a solid social contract, united by citizenship, love and belonging to Jordan and they are not distinguished by their differences in religion.

They are partners in the homeland; they have the same rights and have the same duties, and they share customs, traditions and cultures. The Christians in Jordan do not consider themselves outsiders or strangers to the Jordanian society, and they want to adapt to this society, and Jordanian Muslims share

this feeling , Jordanian historian Bakr Al-Magali expressed what is going on in the minds of Jordanians by saying: "We Jordanians reject the term minority when talking about Christians".⁽⁷⁷⁾

The Christians have deep roots in Jordan and the region, and they contributed to building Jordan with their Muslim brothers and their monuments and temples are living witnesses to this, and those who do not know the Church of "Uyun Musa" that was built in 756 AD, Khalda Church in Amman built in 687 AD, Akbarpol Church (built in 719 AD), Asftan Church (built in 756 AD), and many others. Jordanian Christians have since ancient times resolved the issue of their identity. They adhere to their religion which does not conflict with their belonging to the Arab and Jordanian culture and civilization.

Jordanians (Muslims and Christians) meet an ancient social contract of respect, love and partnership. Jordanian Christians have all the freedom and rights, and they are present in all cities, so we don't feel that Christians make up only about 5% of the population.

In Jordan, Muslims and Christians share the same social mores and customs; Muslims and Christians in Jordan share authentic customs and traditions; they are one family. They even share names, so you rarely find names that distinguish Christians from Muslims or names that distinguish Muslims from Christians, so you find among the Christians who name his son Omar or Abdullah, Osamah or even Marwan (all are considered as pure Muslim names) , and we find among the Muslims who name their daughters Mary, following the example of the Virgin Mary. And you will even find in Jordan the same family name, including Muslims and Christians, for example (Hadad, Najjar, Jallad, and many others.)

⁷⁷ - Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 22

The Jordanian Christians know the Muslim culture and coexist with its occasions because it is simply the same culture; everyone in Jordan realized that citizenship does not conflict with different beliefs; we are not talking about an identity specific to a Christian in Jordan. He/she is a citizen who practices his/her religious rites in his country as a Muslim practices his/her ritual in his country, this is the rule because of which we see the most wonderful examples of brotherhood and love among all Jordanians.

It is their country and they live in it. Perhaps one of the Christian clergymen replied when a foreign journalist asked him: How long have you been in Jordan? His answer was two thousand years ago, this answer was a confirmation that Jordanian society is cohesive and that Christians are not strangers to Jordan. ⁽⁷⁸⁾

Yes, it is a common life that is not a product of the moment, a life that has been around for decades, which has been built on tolerance and respect, and that Jordan is for all and no one can differentiate between Jordanians. This solid contract that Jordanians inherited from their parents and grandparents has become a normal thing in the daily lives of Jordanians who live it all year round.

The Christian presence was never sectarian or closed in on itself. Rather, they participated with their Muslim brothers in building the country and in the political and economic renaissance, and before that their contribution to resisting the occupation and unifying the country.

You will not be able to differentiate between a Muslim Jordanian or a Christian Jordanian, as everyone has the same customs, traditions and language.

⁷⁸ - Muslims and Christians in Jordan, page 86 Amoush ,bassam ,

Since birth, Jordanians (Muslims and Christians) share everything; they are born in the same hospitals, share study seats in the same schools and universities, play in the same playgrounds and parks, and occupy the same positions, they are united by a comprehensive national identity and are not separated by differences of belief or religion. Everyone lives side by side in peace and harmony, preserving national unity.

No one denies the contribution of Jordanian Christians to enriching and documenting Jordanian culture, as it is basically their culture; the Jordanian Christian historian Rox Al-Azizi is considered one of the oldest Arab historians who documented the history of Jordan; he contributed in authoring researches and very impressive literary works on Jordanian culture, including the research "The Jewels in Islam." And his book in which he praises one of the personalities of Islam "Ali bin Abi Talib" "Ali, the lion of Islam and its .saint"⁽⁷⁹⁾

In Jordan, you see that Jordanian Christians yearn to see their country prosper and also defend their culture or anything that affects Muslim Jordanians, Jordanians will never forget the humanitarian role that churches played in receiving Syrian and Iraqi refugees which Jordan still hosts the second largest proportion of refugees in the world compared to the number of citizens after Lebanon, as one out of 3 residents of Jordan is a refugee, and the fifth largest number of refugees in absolute terms, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).⁽⁸⁰⁾

⁷⁹ - al a'ni zaher , Jordan first (models of multi-ethnicity and coexistence of religions),page 105

⁸⁰ - the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-
<https://www.unhcr.org/ar/>

So, the churches hosted refugees without any differentiation by religion, with the aim of reducing the burden that was casted on the Jordanian state.

Jordanian Christians, despite their small number, did not prevent them from actively contributing to the development of the country, in a small city where the number of Christians does not exceed hundreds, they build schools and hospitals and put them at the disposal of the state, also Jordanian Christians fiercely defend their culture and their Muslim brothers and assert that it also affects them , For example, when the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, happened, Rev. Nabil Haddad, founder of the Center for Religious Coexistence, and Member of the National Center for Human Rights said: "This insult did not affect Muslims alone," emphasizing that it is an insult to Christians as well. In another example, the representative of the Jordanian Christian political theater, "Musa Hijazin", expressed his anger at these cartoons and said: "We are Arab Christians and Mohammad is for all Arabs. Yes, he is the Messenger of God, and you are the messengers of terrorism and sedition".

All of this would not have happened if Christians in Jordan felt one day that they were strangers, on the grounds that the relationship between Muslims and Christians is one of reciprocity, each of them is keen on the other, as they are partners in everything and possess the same principles and culture, they face the same challenges and aspire to achieve the same achievements.

The Arab Spring is considered one of the most important events that increased the pace of violence and unrest in the Middle East and Arab countries, and at a time when sectarianism and racism increased, Jordan was able to turn challenges into opportunities.

The Jordanians (Muslims and Christians) have proven that this coexistence was not by chance or for a specific time, but rather it is an approach based on a firm and strong foundation, which is respect and loyalty to the country and

belonging to it. Muslims are keen on Christians and Christians defend Muslims.

Because of this harmony and awareness, the spring was Jordanian par excellence, while the spring in many countries turned into autumn due to sectarianism and extremism.

The relationship between Muslims and Christians in Jordan did not stop at the level of citizens, but there is a more than wonderful relationship between Christians and the political leadership, led by His majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, who pays them attention and engages in their social relations, visits them and sponsors their celebrations and conferences because they are Jordanians.

The King and the Jordanian government do not hesitate to consult them, take advice, or listen to their opinions; the political leadership trusted them highly, as they held high positions such as ambassador, minister, deputy prime minister and many others.

The social relations between Muslims and Christians in Jordan are characterized by being solid and rooted until they reached the limits of intermarriage; they are friends and neighbors who are united by humanity, respect, love and loyalty to their country.

4.1.2 Realistic examples that reflect coexistence

In Jordan, the media does not need to promote the relationship between Muslims and Christians. Jordanians live it daily and on all occasions Muslims and Christians in Jordan even participate in worship! They help each other to perform it.

This thesis, in this chapter, reviews some real stories that reflect the extent of the interdependence of Jordanian society and reflects the harmony between Muslims and Christians.

1. Religious occasions:

Ramadan is considered one of the holy months for Muslims, in which people fast until sunset, Christians respect the feelings of their fellow Muslims and do not eat or drink in front of them, Instead, they distribute water in the streets to drivers who are late to return home at the time of " IFTAR " ,and In the most famous tradition, the churches in most of the churches of the Kingdom prepare an “breakfast” for the fasting people, invite them to churches and ring church bells to celebrate with Muslims the advent of this month.

Also, Muslims also invite their Christian brothers to eat “IFTAR” together in a family atmosphere, and Muslim Christians race to buy sweets for this month, and women prepare them together. In honor of them and the continuation of this custom, which increases society's struggle, His Majesty the King invites the heads of the churches to have breakfast in a friendly meeting and not as an official meeting.

Jordanians exchange congratulations on religious holidays and visit each other. For example, on New Year's Day, Christian Muslims participate in the celebration and decorate a Christmas tree with their fellow Christians. Also, on Easter, children (Muslim and Christian) paint eggs to celebrate the holiday.

2. The story of the mosque of Jesus:

In a story that is more than wonderful, in which Muslims and Christians present Jordan with the most wonderful examples in the race to return the favor

The story begins in the governorate of Madaba where a Christian family donated land to build a mosque after noticing the lack of mosques in that area, and the state built the "Hussain bin Talal" mosque. After nearly 15 years, and because coexistence is a continuous idea and not an emergency, and after one of the Jordanian Muslims learned that there is a benefactor who wants to build a mosque, he decided to contact him and suggested to him that the mosque to be called the "Jesus " mosque (peace be upon him); the response of the man who wanted to build the mosque, why not? After all, he is the prophet of God and he commanded us with mercy and love, Christianity is a sacred religion as is Islam, and we in Jordan have shared everything since ancient times.

3. The story of Pastor Mohammad

Reverend Mohammad, known as "Mohammad the Christian", was born in the city of Karak in southern Jordan, and upon his birth his parents named him Mohammad, confirming the extent of interdependence and coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Jordan.

The Rev. Mohammad says, "It is rare to find a Christian named Muhammad, but my father did that to draw closer to God, and it is his way to God." He intends to remind people of the importance of the impenetrable unity between Muslims and Christians; Pastor Muhammad says that I derive my motto of serving people from Saint Paul, "If I am free from all, I enslave myself for all, to win the most "(⁸¹).

⁸¹ - Saint Paul the Apostle and the First Epistle to the Corinthians (9:19)

It is reported that Pastor Mohammad did not change his name when he became a priest because he believed that all prophets had one message: peace and love

It is also mentioned that he has a brother whose name is Ahmad, and he is one of the names of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him ⁽⁸²⁾

4. Deputy in the National Assembly

Jordanians do not forget when the Muslim representative (deputy of the lower house) in Madaba, Ahmed Al-Azaydah, died, how grief overcame everyone there, church bells rang and shops closed in mourning for him; the Christians say that he represented us before he represented Muslims, and that he cared about us and our demands; he did not differentiate between Muslims and Christians; he demanded the state for the rights of Christians before the rights of the Muslims. He was not racist, sectarian or biased towards one group

5. Roya TV channel

Roya channel is considered one of the most watched channels in Jordan and it is a diversified channel; the owner of this channel is a Jordanian Christian; he belongs to (Al-Saygh) family, and he is an investor in more than one sector.

The channel reflects on the importance of coexistence between religions by broadcasting the Friday prayer live on air; it also broadcasts the rituals of the Islamic pilgrimage from Mecca.

The channel also celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, and it transfers Christian prayers and religious events from the churches of Jordan, Jerusalem and the whole world as well.

⁸² - Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 99

6. Organ Donation

When the young priest William Azizat died, his family decided to donate his body organs, and they did not stipulate or decide the religion of the beneficiary. Indeed, the donation was made and his organs were distributed to five Jordanian Muslims who are now enjoying good health and are still communicating with the people of priest William.

Here, it should be noted that these stories were told because they are rare or strange to the Jordanian society, Jordanian society (Muslims and Christians) live in a comprehensive system of social, economic and political relations based on grandparents, preserved by fathers and continued by children. A system of relations that guarantees freedom of worship and the preservation of privacy in an atmosphere of respect, cooperation and stability

These stories would not have come without the respect for the other and faith in the commandments of religions and respect for the humanity of all; stories that reflected a reality that was not fake or forced; in every story, no one was forced to extend assistance and there is no law obligating anyone to do so, but humanity and respect for the teachings of religions are better than any law or any legislation.

4.2 The Jordanian experience of coexistence in sayings

The experience of interfaith coexistence in Jordan has always been respected and appreciated worldwide; this experience is considered a role model for all societies; clerics and politicians familiar with this experience have expressed their admiration for this experience.

This thesis reviews in this section some of the sayings that describe the Jordanian experience in interfaith coexistence

1. Dr. Raja'i Muasher, who held the position of Deputy Prime Minister in Jordan, is a Jordanian Christian who did not feel separated for a day. He was able to reach this position because of his kindness, and the religious barrier was never an obstacle in his way. He says, "I am a Christian by religion and an Islamic by culture".

Here he indicates the extent to which the two religions are close to the teachings calling for peace and goodness, Where the Muasher emphasizes here about the role of Jesus and the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, that their teachings calling for respect and tolerance have an effect for the end of time.

2. Mr. Ali Al-Fazza, who served as the King's advisor, is a Jordanian Muslim who says, "We are a small community and one family. No threats can challenge our unity"; it is an affirmation of the depth of the cohesion of the Jordanian society. Al-Fazza also shows that we are talking about a common life always and not for a period of time. This Jordanian experience does not need the media to promote it locally, but rather we need them to transfer this experience to others to benefit from it.

3. The Jordanian Muslim historian Bakr Al-Majai says, "The Hashemites do not view followers of other religions with a different view from the Muslim majority"; here, Al-Majali emphasizes the religious and historical duty of the

Jordanian leadership, emphasizing that rights are granted to all without any discrimination.

4. Patriarch Theophilus III, Patriarch of Jerusalem

The Patriarch says, "The issue of coexistence and religious understanding can hold the key to peace, and that Jordan, despite its difficult geopolitical position, was able to be characterized by balance, understanding, acceptance of differences and the promotion of human dignity". Here, the patriarch refers to the Jordanian role in spreading the culture of tolerance and its efforts to combat turmoil, as the patriarch referred to the Jordanian role in protecting Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem

5. Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

Against the background of the initiative of the Interfaith Harmony Week, which Jordan initiated, in response to the initiative of the Interfaith Harmony Week, which was initiated by Jordan, Mr. Kofi Annan said, "I thank Jordan and King Abdullah for the continuous efforts to advance, promote interfaith harmony and support world peace".

The former Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time gave his full support to the initiative, and the United Nations is proud to have adopted this initiative due to its importance in spreading interfaith harmony. ⁽⁸³⁾

6. Michael Bayondo, Founder and President of "Faith Together Uganda

"Faith Together Uganda" is one of the organizations that is concerned with religious coexistence and rejection of intolerance in Africa; this organization

⁸³ - Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 40

participated in the initiative of the Interfaith Harmony Week and won an award in recognition of its efforts to promote interfaith dialogue.

After reviewing Jordan's efforts to achieve peaceful coexistence between religions, Michael Bayondo said: " I didn't know that Jordan had a comprehensive system and we admire it"; here is an indication that Jordan has sought to remove the misconception about the Middle East and the Islamic religion, and Jordan has proven that the teachings of the Islamic religion require us to live with others and respect others.⁽⁸⁴⁾

7. Pope Francis

Father Francis said during his visit to Jordan, "I thank King Abdullah for his speech that the Christians in Jordan are in their home and their country"

Here, he praised the king's courage and concern for the Jordanian Christians in a region full of conflicts, and the Pope thanked Jordan for the good atmosphere among his sons, who are considered a model for the region.

The visit of the largest Christian religious institution, represented by the Pope, is the biggest evidence of Jordan's efforts to raise cooperation at all levels, spread the culture of tolerance and dialogue between religions. ⁽⁸⁵⁾

8. Priest Sebastian Demper

He is the founder of the Silsila Dialogue movement. He also participated in the Interfaith Harmony Week and was briefed on the Jordanian experience. He said, "We must help and inspire everyone. Draw attention to Harmony.

It is a form of thanks and appreciation to Jordan for this principle, .Week."

⁸⁴ - Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 97

⁸⁵- Muslims and Christians in Jordan,page 86 Amoush ,bassam ,

which enhances the concept of dialogue between religions at the local, regional and global levels. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

9. Cardinal Jean-Louis Touran

He is a French cardinal belonging to the Catholic Church, and he is the head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican. He visited Jordan in conjunction with Pope Francis' visit to Jordan and said, "Coexistence is a daily reality for all Jordanians, because they are together in schools and streets, they are interconnected and in solidarity". He visited Jordan in conjunction with Pope Francis' visit to Jordan and said, "Coexistence is a daily reality for all Jordanians, because they are together in schools and streets, they are interconnected and in solidarity. ⁽⁸⁷⁾

All these praises and others were not mere coincidence or false praise. It is a reality that Jordanians live daily, which cannot be condoned or denied. A reality as a result of continuous work, a clear approach and consistent policies that put the love of God, respect for religions and their teachings, and loyalty to the country before any individual interest or the interest of a particular; a reality that only reflects love, tolerance, harmony and love for others.group

Jordanians know that they may differ in religions, but they cannot differ in their respect for each other.

⁸⁶ - Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 19

⁸⁷ - Al samaeen ,rula , fortress of peace,page 44

Conclusion:

Diversity or difference was never a shame, never a cause for conflict; diversity .is something we are made for to exchange experiences and mix cultures

In light of the conflicts and wars in the world and the resulting displacement, groups emerged that were distinguished by a certain thing (religion, language or ethnicity) whose number was less than the rest of the groups of society and .they are called minorities

Unfortunately, these minorities are subjected to oppression, tyranny and deprivation of the most basic rights. The right to survive so as not to be killed or displaced without the slightest right, the right to preserve their identity and culture, where they are deprived even of its expression, and the right not to be discriminated against, subjected to oppression and violation of their rights. Just because they are a minority, the issue of minorities, especially religious minorities, has received the attention of the international community, and agreements, treaties and pacts have been concluded to reform these minorities and grant them their rights.

The Middle East is considered the mother of conflicts, as it has suffered from bloody conflicts and violations of humanity, in which minorities in general, and in particular religious ones, have been subjected to injustice and !deprivation of rights, and the reason is only that they are a minority

In the middle of this region, Jordan emerged as an example to embody the meaning of humanity and respect for others and their belief, religion and .culture

Jordan realized the importance of containing the religious minority and integrating them into society, despite their small number, which does not exceed 6% of the population, this small percentage was not a reason for Jordanian Christians to be deprived of their rights one day. The state did not

deny the history of Christians in Jordan, their deep roots in it and their religious sanctities the witness to the depth of their history in the Jordanian land, and the Jordanian state and its leadership did not abandon its religious and historical duty towards the Christian Jordanians.

The Jordanian state is led by the Hashemites, who are descendants of the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, who taught Muslims that Christians are their brothers and that Christianity is a divine, sacred religion. The teachings of Islam are clear, as are any religion that calls for respect for others, tolerance and love.

The Jordanian state, with its legislation and constitution, has been keen not to discriminate between a citizen and others because of religion or language, for everyone is equal before the law, even if the “minority” interest is not found in the Jordanian constitution; the constitution was carefully organized and the legislators were keen that there should not be a gap that would distinguish a citizen from others; they were also keen to abide by the international treaties and agreements emanating from the United Nations, of which Jordan is a member.

The Jordanian state was keen to give the Jordanian Christians their full rights; they have full political rights such as: electing and holding high positions in the state, economic rights such as: the right to own property and investment, social and cultural rights, the right to practice their religious rites freely, the right to establish parties, the right to peaceful assembly, in addition to the rights to education and health.

The Jordanian state realized early on that one of the factors of its stability is to preserve the components of society and give it its rights without discrimination in an area full of terrorism and extremists who see minorities as an excuse to carry out their terrorist schemes and spread sedition and extremism.

The efforts of the Jordanian state did not stop at spreading the idea of religious coexistence among the members of the Jordanian society; the state has sought to spread this idea which is a key to peace for the whole world, so the Jordanian state hastened to launch initiatives that are disgraceful to increase dialogue between followers of religions and hold conferences to reach a consensus on the importance of spreading the culture of dialogue and making .it a method for all

His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan also conveyed his message through the most important scientific platforms, so here he is giving a speech at the United Nations and another in the European Parliament to tell the world that the tools have come to unite us and not divide us.

All these efforts have resulted in the Jordanian society, Muslims and .Christians becoming an example of coexistence, harmony and harmony

You cannot differentiate between a Muslim or a Christian in Jordan; they have the same names and cultures and speak the same language; they are assembled and interconnected in the streets and schools; they are neighbors and friends; they celebrate holidays together and share their joys and sorrows with each other. No one can separate them or sow discord between them.

This coexistence and joint life are not fake or momentary; it is the daily life of the Jordanian which was planted by the grandparents and continued by the fathers and preserved by the children.

This wonderful model has received the approval and admiration of many political and religious leaders; they praised Jordan, its people, and its leadership with words that summed up the splendor of coexistence in Jordanian society.

Our differences do not separate us; our religions came to enhance our humanity

Difference is for acquaintance and integration, and no one is better for anyone except for what he offers to society and humanity.

"And we made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another, that the best of you with God is the most pious of you"⁽⁸⁸⁾

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⁸⁸ - A Qur'anic Verse-Surat Al-Hujurat-Verse number-13

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