



Jordan

Jordan is a place where Jesus and His disciples walked, and its Biblical heritage extends back even to the time of the patriarchs. But today this legacy is more of a tourist attraction than an indication of a vibrant Christian community.



Mount Nebo, Jordan

Jordan is often seen as an oasis of peace and tolerance for Christians, compared to some other Middle Eastern countries. Seats are reserved in parliament for them, and they have a strong presence in the business community. But Jordan is not as free and tolerant as is generally assumed. Islam is the state religion, and although the Jordanian monarchy styles itself as the protector of the country's Christian minority, for many years Christians have been emigrating to the West. The size of the Christian minority is now estimated to be just 1.5-3% of the population.

Muslims who convert to Christianity face the greatest problems. Even though neither the constitution, nor the penal code, nor the civil law ban conversion from Islam, the government in practice forbids it, since the personal status of Muslims is governed by sharia law. Evangelising amongst Muslims is also prohibited. If someone files a complaint of apostasy against converts, they may be deprived of their civil rights and lose their families and property.

Some converts have reported being summoned and questioned by the security services, threatened with court and other actions, and offered rewards for denouncing their conversion. These converts also reported that the authorities withheld from them certificates of good behaviour, which are needed for job applications or opening a business, and told employers to fire them. Converts are often socially ostracised, and some have reported facing threats and physical and verbal abuse from their families and Muslim religious leaders.

Although the heads of Jordan's recognised Christian denominations advise the government and administer all official matters relating to Christians, the authorities continue to treat Christian converts as Muslims rather than as Christians under the law, and this has serious implications for inheritance and other matters. Similarly, some Christian denominations are officially recognised and enjoy a good measure of freedom. But other Christian groups are registered as "societies", and by law they need government approval for their budget as well as other administrative restrictions.

[Browse Projects](#)