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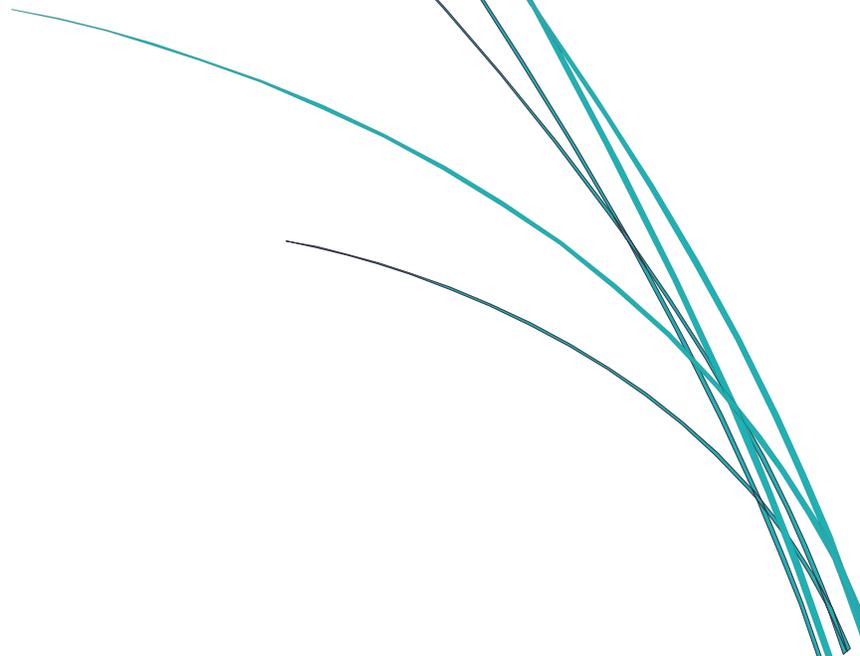
The Knowledge Platform on
Sexual and Reproductive Health
and Reproductive Rights



Fact Sheet

The Trend of Jordan Births Numbers During COVID-19

2021



The trend of the numbers of births in Jordan

Since the mid-20th century, Jordan has undergone fundamental transitions in all aspects of society, particularly in demographic aspects that have been subject to rapid changes in population growth elements (births, deaths and net migration), leading to the transition of Jordan's population from one of a high to low levels of childbirth, which as a whole has been an indicator of Jordan's going into a phase of demographic transition and what ensues of consequent population opportunity characterized by a substantial decline in the proportion of young people and a significant rise in the proportion of the population at productive ages. The most significant feature of this change is the drop in the proportion of children under 15 and the growing proportion of the population in the age of manpower (15-64 years). According to the 1979 General Population and Housing Census, the proportion of the population under the age of 15 has dropped from 50% to 34.6% according to the 2015¹ General Population and Housing Census, and it is estimated that the percentage reached 34.3% in 2020 of approximately 3.7 million people². The proportion of children currently constitutes a high one, which means that further growth in the population is expected.

Childbearing has played the biggest role in the population change in Jordan as a result of the continued decline in the overall birth rate during the years 1976-2018, with a drop in the rate as follows:

- from 7.4 a child per woman in 1976 to 5.6 a child per woman in 1990
- and to 4.4 a child per woman in 1997
- and to 3.7 a child per woman in 2002,
- 3.6 a child per woman in 2007
- and 3.5 a child per woman in 2012
- and 2.7 a child per woman in 2018³

These outcomes indicate that the overall birth rate has lost 40.5% of its value between 1976 and 1997 and about 53% of its value between 1976 and 2012 and 63.5% between 1976 and 2017/2018.

The significant decline in the overall birth rate in Jordan over time is due to several reasons, most notably of which is the high level of education for females, as the percentage of women aged 15-49 hold a secondary

¹ المصدر: دائرة الإحصاءات العامة، التعداد العام للمساكن والسكان 1979 والتعداد العام للسكان والمساكن 2015

http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population_Estimares/PopulationEstimates.pdf

³ المصدر: دائرة الإحصاءات العامة: مسح الخصوبة العالمي 1976، ومسح السكان والصحة الأسرية في الأعوام 1990، 1997، 2002، 2007، 2012، 2017/18.

school qualification with more than 54% in 1990 going up to 75.6% in 1997, to 88.7% in 2007 to 90.1% in 2009-2012, and to 90.8% in 2017/2018⁴

Also, another reason for the decline in the overall birth rate is late first marriage for females. The average age at the time of first marriage for women aged 25-49 went up from 19.6 years in 1990 to 21.5 years in 1997, and to 21.8 years in 2002 to 22.2 years in 2007, 22.4 in 2009 and 2012 and 22.7 in 2017⁵, at a difference of 3.1 years when looking at the years 1990 to 2017.

The medium age at the time of first marriage for females over the past 10 years has also increased from 25.8 years in 2011 to 26.6 years in 2019. The medium age at the time of first marriage for males has increased from 29.7 years in 2011 to 31 years in 2019⁶. This has contributed to the drop of the percentage of married women (15-49 years) at childbearing age. The percentage of women (15-49 years of age) who have been previously married has dropped 5.5% between 1976 and 2017 from 65.7 per cent in 1976 to 60.2% in 2017.

The most significant decline was in the percentage of those who have been previously married in the 20-24 age group, where the percentage dropped from 64% in 1976 to 35.2% in 2017, as well as in the 25-29 age group, the percentage dropped from 87.4% in 1976 to 68.1% in 2017⁷

Another indicator of the decline in marriages was the drop in marriage contracts according to statistical reports of the Supreme Judge Department, which fell from 77700 in 2017 to 70734 in 2018, to 67696 in 2019, and to 67389 in 2020. The reason for the decline in these ratios is attributed to many social and economic factors, the most important of which are the high cost of marriage and the high cost of living, added to that, the essentials of starting a family, including housing as compared to economic conditions, high unemployment rates among young men and women, and the growing trend to spend longer years in pursuit of their education, especially amongst females.

Other reasons that have contributed to the significant decline in the overall birth rate in Jordan over time is the increasing use of family planning methods, as the proportion of currently married women using family planning methods has increased as follows:

⁴ المصدر: دائرة الإحصاءات العامة: مسح السكان والصحة الأسرية في الأعوام 1990، 1997، 2007، 2009، 2012، 2017/18.

⁵ نفس المصدر السابق

⁶ دائرة الإحصاءات العامة، الكتاب الإحصائي السنوي 2019.

⁷ المصدر: دائرة الإحصاءات العامة: مسح الخصوبة العالمي 1976، ومسح السكان والصحة الأسرية في الأعوام 1990، 1997، 2002، 2007،

2012، 2017/18.

- from 35% in 1990 to 53% in 1997
- and to 56% in 2002,
- to 57% in 2007,
- to 59% in 2009
- and to 61% in 2012,
- then dropped to 52% in 2017⁸

A 2012 study of the Kingdom's Population and Family Health Survey indicates that women not marrying at a childbearing age has contributed to more than one third of the value of the decline in fertility rate in 2012, while the use of family planning methods has contributed to the other third in the decline in fertility rate. This is an attestation of the role of these two factors in influencing childbirth in Jordan.

Low birth rates do not necessarily mean a sharp drop in the number of births annually. This is due to the fact that the population base, particularly the number of Jordanian girls and women of childbearing age (15-49 years) residing in the Kingdom has become significant and constitutes the driving force for future births as, according to the results of the General Census of Population and Housing 2015, their number has reached 1.7 million females.

According to the low scenario in population projections 2015-2050⁹, there will be a rise to 1.9 million in 2020, and to 2.2 million in 2030 and 2.5 million in 2050, when the number of Jordanian births will drop according to population projections 2015-2050. And according to the low scenario the number of Jordanian births will drop from 175224 births in 2015 to 171353 newborns in 2020; to 164216 births in 2024; to 147120 births in 2030; to 160467 births in 2040 and to 161484 births in 2050¹⁰.

According to Civil Status and Passports Department data/ birth numbers updated on 9 February 2021, the number of Jordanian births over the past 11 years has fluctuated between drop and rise, falling from 190419 births in 2010 to 175492 newborns in 2013 and then rising to 192802 newborns in 2017. The numbers then went down for three consecutive years 2018, 2019, 2020; it fell to 164158 births in 2020.

⁸ المصدر: دائرة الإحصاءات العامة: مسح السكان والصحة الأسرية في الأعوام 1990، 1997، 2002، 2007، 2009، 2012، 2017/18

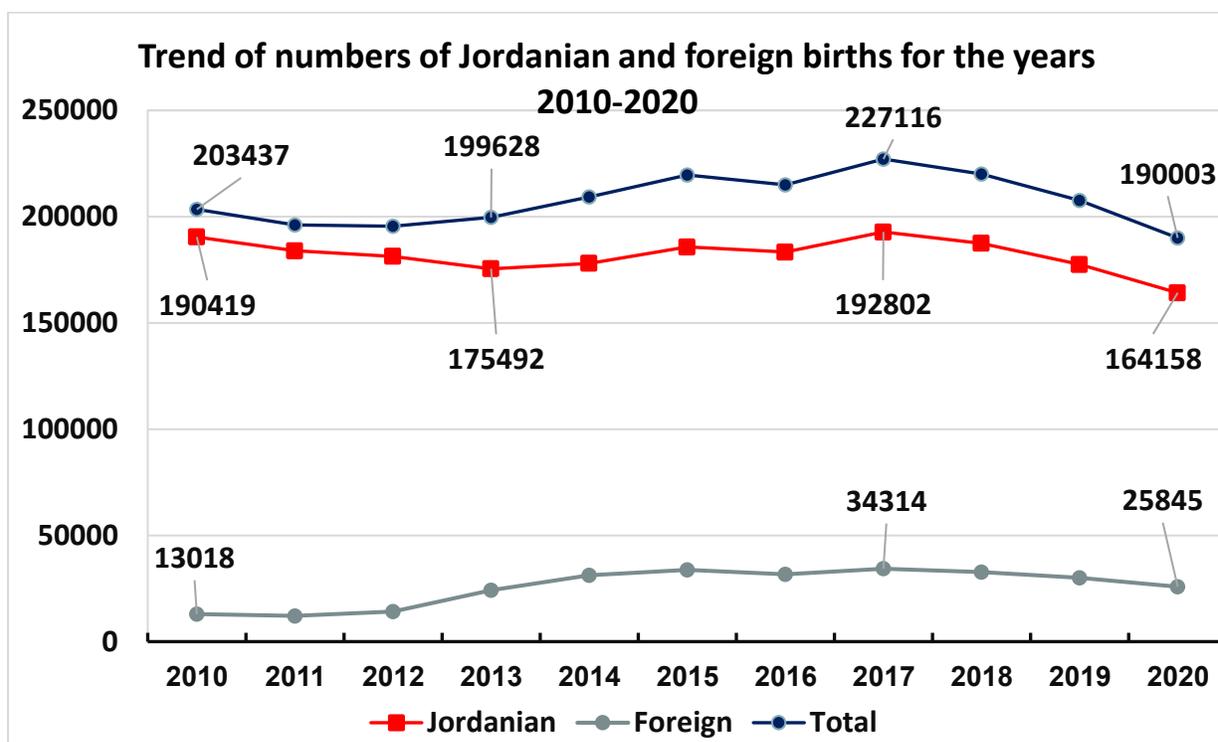
⁹ دائرة الإحصاءات العامة، الإسقاطات السكانية للأفراد المقيمين في المملكة للفترة 201-2050، 2016

¹⁰ دائرة الأحوال المدنية والجوازات، 2021/2/9، (مخاطبة رسمية)

The level achieved in the number of births in 2020 constitutes the expected level of the number of Jordanian births in 2024, according to population projections, i.e. an advance in the decrease in the number of births for four years compared to population projections.

As we previously indicated, the delay in the age of marriage plays a major role in this decline. The percentage of those who were previously married in the 20-24 age group tended to decline¹¹ during the period 2010-2020. It decreased from 33.2% in 2010 to 28.4% in 2015 to 26.6% in 2017, to 23.1 in 2018 and 22.7% in 2019, and reached about 20.1% in the second and third quarters of 2020, with a difference of (13) percentage points compared to 2010.

The percentage of those who were previously married in the 25-29 age group also tended to decline during the period 2010-2020; it decreased from 78% -79.8% in 2010-2014 to 75% in 2016 to 64.8% in 2017 to 62.2% in 2018 to 60.6 % in 2019 to 56.6% in the second and third quarters of 2020, with a difference of (23.2) percentage points compared to the period 2010-2014.



As for the trend of foreign births in Jordan¹², it recorded an upward trend during the period (2010-2017) that reached its peak in 2017, as the number of births increased from 13,018 in 2010 to 34,314 in 2017, driven by

¹¹ [/http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/ar/labourforce/employment-and-unemployment](http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/ar/labourforce/employment-and-unemployment) 11

¹² دائرة الأحوال المدنية والجوازات، 2021/2/9، (مخاطبة رسمية)

the presence of our Syrian brethren in Jordan and their attitudes about marriage in general and early marriage in particular, and then it tended to decline for three years in a row, as it decreased to (32692) in 2018, (30076) in 2019 and (25845) in 2020 for three years in a row 2018, with an estimated annual decline rate of (8.9%).

The proportion of those who have already married in the 15-19 age group has decreased from 18.8% in 2017 to 15% in 2019, and the proportion of those who have already married in 2019 has declined. The 20-24 age group from 56% in 2017 to 55.5% in 2019, and the proportion of those who have already married in the 25-29 age group has fallen from 76.6% in 2017 to 74.1% in 2019.

The decrease in the number of foreign births may be attributed to national efforts in the field of awareness, especially in the field of reducing early marriage, in addition to other factors associated with delaying the age of marriage. The percentage of those who were previously married in the age group 15-19 years decreased from 18.8% in 2017 to 15% in 2019¹³. The percentage of those who were previously married in the age group 20-24 years decreased from 56% in 2017 to 55.5% in 2019, and the percentage of those who were previously married in the age group 25-29 years decreased from 76.6% in 2017 to 74.1% in 2019.

The effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the number of births in Jordan

In an attempt to monitor the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the number of births in Jordan, and according to the data of the Civil Status and Passports Department for the number of births by months for the year 2020 and updated until February 9, 2021 and comparing it with the corresponding number of births by months for 2019¹⁴, the number of Jordanian births tended to decrease over a period of 12 months for the year 2020 compared to 2019. However, the sharp drop in the number of births in December, which records the births of pregnancies in the month of March 2020 (the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown in Jordan) was higher than the rest of the months, as it fell from 14,506 births in December 2019 to 12,946 births in December 2020, a decrease of 10.8%. This came contrary to expectations as it was expected that the number of births would increase during this month due to the lockdown that began on March 21st, 2020.

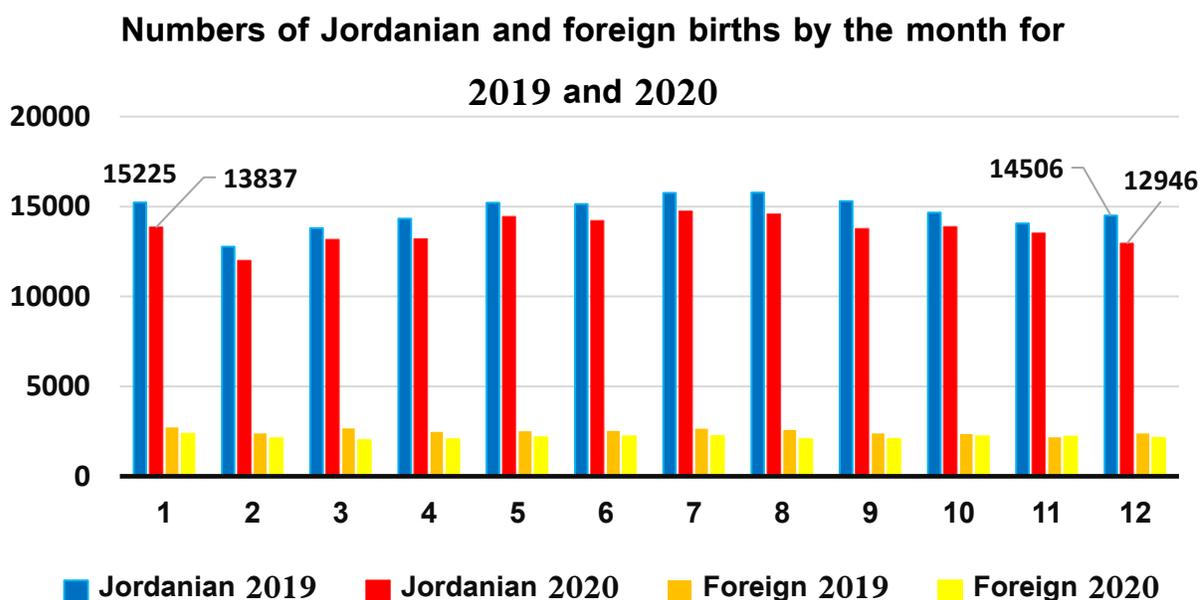
Likewise, the trend of the number of foreign births in 2020 by months compared to the number of births/ by months of 2019 did not contradict the trend of the number of Jordanian births/ by months in 2019 and 2020. The number of foreign births in 2020 recorded a decrease over a period of 12 months, and a decrease in the number of births in December 2020 compared to the number of births for the same month in 2019. The

¹³ /<http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/ar/labourforce/employment-and-unemployment>

¹⁴ دائرة الأحوال المدنية والجوازات، التقرير السنوي 2019.

number of foreign births in December 2019 reached (2371), while the number of births for the same month in 2020 reached (2131), recording a decrease of 10.1%, and that too was contrary to expectations.

It was expected that the number of births would increase during the period of quarantine and economic closure resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in Jordan, due to poor access to reproductive health services, especially family planning services during the complete lockdown, but what happened was the opposite: continued trend in the decline of the number of births. It can be said that the COVID-19 was not a reason for the increase in the number of births in Jordan, nor was it the only reason for the decrease in the number of births in December 2020, and perhaps the COVID-19 crisis was an additional reason for the decrease in the number of births in December 2020, inferred from this with the indicators that showed a noticeable decline in the number of births over the past years, even before the spread of Corona pandemic, the repercussions of the crisis and the resulting poor economic conditions and high unemployment rates could have led the family to seriously reconsider the consequences of the birth of a new child in light of the crisis conditions and its repercussions.



These findings are consistent with numerous global studies and reports on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the decline in birth numbers: A study carried out by Italian researchers¹⁵, analyzed data from Italy, France,

¹⁵ Francesca Luppi and others, The impact of COVID-19 on fertility plans in Italy, Germany, France, Spain and UK

Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Many people gave up plans of having children during the strict lockdown measures that were implemented in March and April of 2020. In another report¹⁶ based on statistics from the Ministry of Public Security in China indicated that the number of newborns in China decreased by 15% in 2020 compared to 2019, with the emergence of the new COVID-19 virus, which disrupted the economy and affected decisions of starting a family.

In another report by the Brookings Institution¹⁷ the number of children born in California, Arizona, Hawaii and Ohio in 2020 fell to more than 50,000 compared to 2019.

The Higher Population Council, viewed as the national reference for population issues, closely monitors demographic changes in Jordan, assessing the effects of population policies and programs on population age structure and population characteristics, particularly family planning policies and programs aimed at achieving demographic returns resulting from a decline in the proportion of young people and an increase in the proportion of the population in productive ages, low dependency rates, and it follows the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis on population dynamics, as it was not an only reason for the rise of births in Jordan.

¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-society-population-idUSKBN2A907A>

¹⁷ www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/12/17/the-coming-covid-19-baby-bust-update/



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