

## Her Majesty Queen Noor

- Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan
- Founder & Chair, King Hussein Foundation
- Founding Member, Global Zero (international initiative working towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide)

Her Majesty Queen Noor is an international humanitarian, activist and an outspoken voice on issues of global peace-building, nuclear non-proliferation, women's empowerment, and cross-cultural understanding. She is actively involved in a number of international organizations dealing with global peace-building and conflict recovery and currently serves as an expert advisor to the United Nations on these issues.



Her Majesty Queen Noor was born Lisa Najeeb Halaby to an Arab-American family distinguished for its public service. After receiving a B.A. in Architecture and Urban Planning from Princeton University in 1974, she worked on international urban planning and design projects in Australia, Iran, the United States and Jordan. She married His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal of Jordan in 1978.

Queen Noor is an outspoken voice on issues of human rights, international exchange and understanding of Arab, Muslim and Western relations, and conflict prevention and recovery issues such as refugees, missing persons, poverty and disarmament. She has also helped found media programs to highlight these issues. Her peace-building work has focused on the Middle East, the Balkans, Central and Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Queen Noor's work in Jordan and the Arab world has focused on national and regional human security issues in the areas of education, conservation, sustainable development, and cross-cultural understanding. She is also actively involved with international and UN organizations that address global challenges in these fields.

Since 1979, the initiatives of the **Noor Al Hussein Foundation** (NHF), which she chairs, have transformed development thinking in Jordan and the Middle East through pioneering programs in the areas of poverty eradication and sustainable development, women's empowerment, microfinance, health and the arts as a medium for social development and cross-cultural exchange, many of which are internationally acclaimed models for the developing world. NHF provides training and assistance in implementing these best practice programs in the broader Arab and Asian regions through the **Jubilee Institute**, the **Institute for Family Health**, the **Community Development Program**, **Tamweelcom—the Jordan Micro Credit Company** (which has been ranked the regional MFI leader and eighth best performing in the world), the

**Information and Research Center, the National Center for Culture and Performing Arts and the National Music Conservatory.**  
[www.nooralhusseinfoundation.org](http://www.nooralhusseinfoundation.org)

In 1980, following the Arab Summit Meeting in Amman, the Queen called for an annual meeting of Arab youth– the **Arab Children's Congress**, which has brought young people together in Amman from throughout the Arab world and, since 2004, from the international community to promote understanding, tolerance, and solidarity. During two weeks of travel, learning, and cultural interaction in Jordan, participants are encouraged to discuss and debate contemporary issues and challenges facing the Arab and international communities.

In 1995, Queen Noor chaired a **National Task Force for Children (NTFC)** to monitor and evaluate the condition and status of Jordan's children. To encourage and facilitate cooperation among often competing organizations, the NTFC established the National Coalition for Children in 1997 as a forum to coordinate and promote partnerships among all public and private institutions, and NGOs involved with children's affairs. The NTFC also established a national policy and research center as well as Jordan's first child information system on the World Wide Web. The **Information and Research Center (IRC)** is a policy research center providing access to materials, models and methodologies that can assist practitioners and policy makers in promoting awareness and more effective and targeted socio-economic planning. The Center has focused on critically important issues, such as child labor, urban poverty, youth and culture, smoking among teens, and gaps and priorities in development programs.

The Queen also founded the Jordan's **SOS Children's Villages Association** which has established three SOS children Villages, a school and youth facilities throughout the country. She is an Honorary member of the General Assembly of the SOS-Kinderdorf International.

Queen Noor's appreciation for the role of Culture and the Arts in the formation of individual and national identity is reflected in a wide range of her national and international initiatives the **Jerash Festival** for Culture and Arts, the **National Handicrafts Development Project**, the **National Music Conservatory**, and the **National Center for Culture & Performing Arts**.

In 1981, she brought together a diverse group of Jordanian public and private sector visionaries to launch the annual **Jerash Festival**. For almost three decades, the festival provided a vibrant venue—one of Jordan's most important archaeological sites—for Arab and international performing artists, and served as a dynamic catalyst for the promotion of Jordanian and Arab culture and arts and cross cultural exchange. The **National Handicrafts Development Project** was launched in 1985 to revive and preserve a unique aspect of Jordan's national heritage while developing income generating opportunities for women. Subsequently, the **Jordan Design and Trade Center** was established to raise the standards of national handicrafts production, to increase women's productivity and economic role, to create new jobs, marketing strategies, and opportunities for the industry to become a new, sustainable source of national income.

**The National Music Conservatory** was initiated in 1985 to develop accomplished musicians in classical Arabic and Western music, to foster music appreciation, to promote teacher training and public school music curricula in Jordan and international exchange of artists. The Conservatory also provides music education at the College and Preparatory levels, leading to Bachelor's Degrees in various specialties, as

well as counseling and training in clinical music therapy for families and children who are victims of violence.

**The National Center for Culture & Performing Arts (PAC)** began in 1987 to promote the performing arts as a medium for developing conflict resolution skills and cross-cultural understanding. The Center's work has led to creative approaches to social development, environmental and human rights issues. The PAC has pioneered national, regional, and international efforts to promote democratic values and a global culture of peace through interactive theater, dance, plays and television programs.

Queen Noor also chairs the **King Hussein Foundation** and the **King Hussein Foundation International (KHFI)**, which she founded in 1999 to build on King Hussein's humanitarian vision and legacy in Jordan and abroad through national, regional and international programs that promote education and leadership, economic empowerment, tolerance and cross cultural dialogue and media that enhance mutual understanding and respect among different cultures and across conflict lines.

[www.kinghusseinfoundation.org](http://www.kinghusseinfoundation.org)

KHFI awards the annual **King Hussein Leadership Prize** to individuals, groups or institutions that demonstrate inspiring and courageous leadership in their efforts to promote sustainable development, human rights, tolerance, social equity and peace. Past recipients of the Prize are Professor Muhammed Yunus (2000), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (2001), Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (2002), Mary Robinson (2003), Médecins Sans Frontières (2004), The Arab Human Development Reports, Dr. Rola Dashti, Saliha Djuderija, and OneVoice (2005), Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Seeds of Peace (2006), green energy entrepreneur Robert Freling (2008), and Just Vision and Palestinian peace activist Ayed Morrar (2010).

In May 2007, KHFI launched an annual **Media and Humanity Program** during New York City's Tribeca Film Festival to promote media projects that bridge social, economic, political and cultural divides with special emphasis on the Middle East and Muslim world. Queen Noor also launched **Cinema Verite**, an international initiative to promote socially-conscious cinema during the 2007 Cannes Film Festival.

Her Majesty was also co-founder of the **Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund**, a not-for-profit initiative by private media, the United Nations, and global philanthropists to promote and support media content that enhances cross-cultural understanding. In 2009 the organization merged with **Soliya**, a non-profit industry leader in using new media technologies to foster cross-cultural understanding.

Initially inspired by the first Earth Day in 1970, Queen Noor has made environmental priorities an essential component of her work to promote human security and conflict resolution. Not long after her marriage, Queen Noor became patron of Jordan's **Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)**, the Middle East's first environmental NGO, responsible for planning nationwide nature reserves, environmental clubs and the integration of biodiversity concepts into curricula throughout the school system, the region's first eco-tourism/rural development projects and programs to regulate diving, protect endangered marine species, clean up coastal beaches and shores. RSCN programs have become models for conservation and sustainable development, and have also provided training and capacity building to institutions throughout the Middle East.

The Queen founded an NGO for the protection of Jordan's coastline and supported the establishment of

the Gulf of Aqaba's Marine Science Station. She also founded the Arab World's first children's museum, the **Children's Heritage and Science Museum**, and in 1988 the **Mobile Life and Science Museum**, an outreach program targeting young people in rural areas, which provided computers, books, exhibits, and hands-on educational and recreational activities focused on environmental protection, health, the sciences, and Jordan's history.

Queen Noor chaired Jordan's National Commission in 1990 which developed **Jordan's National Environment Strategy**, the region's first, and **Jordan's Environment Law** which set standards for water use and quality, specifications to measure and control air pollution, and conditions for the establishment and operation of wild and aquatic nature reserves. It has imposed stringent fines on vessels polluting the marine environment, and ensured that factories and vehicles reduce their emissions within a limit set by the Ministry of the Environment.

As a member of the **International Commission on Peace and Food**, Queen Noor presented the results of a five-year international research program: "Uncommon Opportunities: An Agenda For Peace And Equitable Development" in 1994 to the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for adoption by the UN. The report presented practical strategies to accelerate political stability, progress, and peace to ensure food security and employment, and to promote human development, demilitarization, and environmental protection.

The Queen is Patron of **IUCN**, the oldest international conservation organization in the world, Founding President and Honorary President Emeritus of **BirdLife International**, and trustee emeritus of **Conservation International**. She is a Director on the global board of **The Hunger Project** and Ambassador of **Future Harvest**, a network of international research centers located around the world that seek to make agricultural issues and the need for international agricultural research more immediate and relevant to policymakers, the media, and the general public.

In 1995, Queen Noor received the United Nations Environment Programme Global 500 Award for her activism in environmental protection, in promoting awareness, and in initiating community action for the preservation of Jordan's natural heritage. Queen Noor has also been honored with the Healing the Planet Award from Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Global Environmental Citizen Award from Harvard Medical School's Center for Health and the Global Environment.

Queen Noor has traveled extensively throughout the Balkans since her first humanitarian mission in 1996 after the fall of Srebrenica. She is a Commissioner of the **International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)**, created through the Dayton Accords to promote reconciliation and conflict resolution through the search for, recovery, and identification of missing persons from the armed conflicts in the Balkans. She has supported the development of ICMP's groundbreaking forensic DNA identification system, which is the leading provider of DNA-assisted identifications to governments worldwide dealing with catastrophes and human rights cases. Her Majesty has overseen ICMP's families/community reconciliation programs and advocated with the leaders of BiH to finalize the establishment of The Missing Persons Institute, critical to resolution of the tragedy of tens of thousands of missing and murdered in the 1990s Balkans conflicts.

In 2004 and 2005, as an expert advisor to the **United Nations**, Queen Noor traveled to Central Asia to advocate for adoption and implementation of the Ottawa Treaty throughout the region and for multi-sectoral commitment to the Millennium Development Goals in Tajikistan, one of the world's poorest

countries.

A long-time advocate for a just Arab-Israeli peace and for Palestinian refugees, she is a board member of **Refugees International** and an outspoken voice for the protection of civilians in conflict and for displaced persons around the world. She has visited Pakistan to assess and promote support for Afghan refugees during the war, and is advocating for international support for more than 2.5 million Pakistanis forced to flee government-militant clashes in the northwest region, as well as nearly 5 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq and in Jordan, Syria and other countries after the 2003 Iraq conflict. She has repeatedly testified before the US Congress on this issue.

Queen Noor has been an advisor to, and global advocate for, the **International Campaign to Ban Landmines since 1998**, travelling to Central and Southeast Asia, the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America to advocate with governments, support NGOs, and visit with landmine survivors struggling to recover and reclaim their lives. She has testified before the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus appealing for humanitarian assistance and justice for hundreds of thousands of landmine victims worldwide.

At the invitation of President Andres Pastrana and President Alvaro Uribe Velez, Queen Noor undertook several humanitarian missions to Colombia to try to negotiate a series of humanitarian accords with the leaders of the country's guerilla insurgency on landmines, child soldiers and kidnappings, to promote mine awareness programs in rural and conflict areas with **UNDP**, to advocate against the use of anti-personnel mines, especially in civilian areas, and to oversee the destruction of Columbia's last arsenal of anti-personnel mines.

She is a founding leader of **Global Zero**, an international movement working for the worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons. She represented Global Zero at the historic 2009 UN Security Council meeting, which endorsed the goal of global zero, and was an advisor to the 2010 film **Countdown to Zero**- a powerful documentary film about the escalating global nuclear arms threat.

Queen Noor is also involved with a number of other international organizations advancing global peace-building and conflict recovery such as the **Nuclear Age Peace Foundation**, **Seeds of Peace**, **Council of Women World Leaders**, and **Women Waging Peace**. She is also President of the **United World Colleges**, (UWC), a network of 13 equal-opportunity international IB colleges around the world which foster cross-cultural understanding and global peace; a Trustee of the **Aspen Institute**, and a Board Member of **America Near East Refugee Aid**. She is Honorary Chair of the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building, which brings together Jordanians, Palestinians, and Israelis to improve the living conditions of the region's poor. The Queen also serves as a member of the Pew Global Attitudes Survey International Advisory Board.

In recognition of her efforts to advance development, democracy and peace, Queen Noor has been awarded numerous awards and honorary doctorates in international relations, law and humane letters.

She has published two books, *Hussein of Jordan* (KHF Publishing, 2000) and *Leap of Faith: Memoirs of an Unexpected Life* (Miramax Books, 2003), a *New York Times* best seller published in 17 languages.

Queen Noor has four children, Their Royal Highnesses Princes Hamzah and Hashim and Princesses Iman

and Raiyah.