



The current marital status of Jordanian men and women

The marital status of the population differs from the number of marriages that take place in courts and are recorded by the Civil Status and Passports Department each year.

Marital status refers to the distribution of Jordanians aged 15 and over into two groups: (1) Those who have been married before. (2) Those who have not yet married.

The current marital status of Jordanian men and women is not the product of a single year, but rather the result of marriages, divorces, and deaths that have occurred among Jordanians over many past decades. Therefore, this status does not change overnight, as the saying goes.

The latest available data from the Civil Status and Passports Department show that 67.3% of Jordanian women (aged 15 and over) have ever been married, and that 56.9% of Jordanian men (aged 15 and over) have ever been married. The group of those who have ever been married includes currently married individuals, divorced individuals, and widows/widowers of both sexes.

If we exclude the youngest age group, those aged 15-19, the proportion of Jordanian men who have ever been married rises to 66.7%, and among Jordanian women to 77.5%. In general, the proportion of those who have ever been married increases with age, reaching approximately 96% among Jordanian men and women aged 75 and over.

As for polygyny among Jordanian men, it is a rare phenomenon. We find that only about 1.3% of married Jordanian men have more than one wife, numbering approximately 39,000 married men. The low rate of polygyny in Jordan is attributed to the fact that marrying a second wife is usually preceded by the divorce of first wife, meaning that the man remains with only one wife. This makes having a single wife the predominant pattern for married men in Jordan, and polygyny a rare occurrence.

Among the categories of marital status are divorced individuals and widows/widowers of both sexes. The proportion of divorced men among men aged 25 and over is 3.3% and 5.6% among women aged 25 and over. However, there is a significant difference between Jordanian men and women in the proportion and number of widows/widowers. While the proportion of widowers among Jordanian men aged 60+ is less than one percent, the proportion of widows among Jordanian women aged 60+ reaches about 42%. While the number

of widowers among Jordanian men is less than three thousand, the number of widows among Jordanian women is approximately 221,000.

The significant difference between Jordanian men and women in the proportion and number of widows/widowers is due to nine reasons: seven of them are demographic and social reasons, and the other two are biological and legislative. For further clarification on these nine reasons, please refer to the fact sheet "Widowhood/Widowerhood - Its Levels and Disparities Among Jordanians by Age and Sex" via the following link on the Higher Population Council's website:

https://www.hpc.org.jo/sites/default/files/ltrml_byn_lrdnyyn_wlrdnyt_2026.pdf