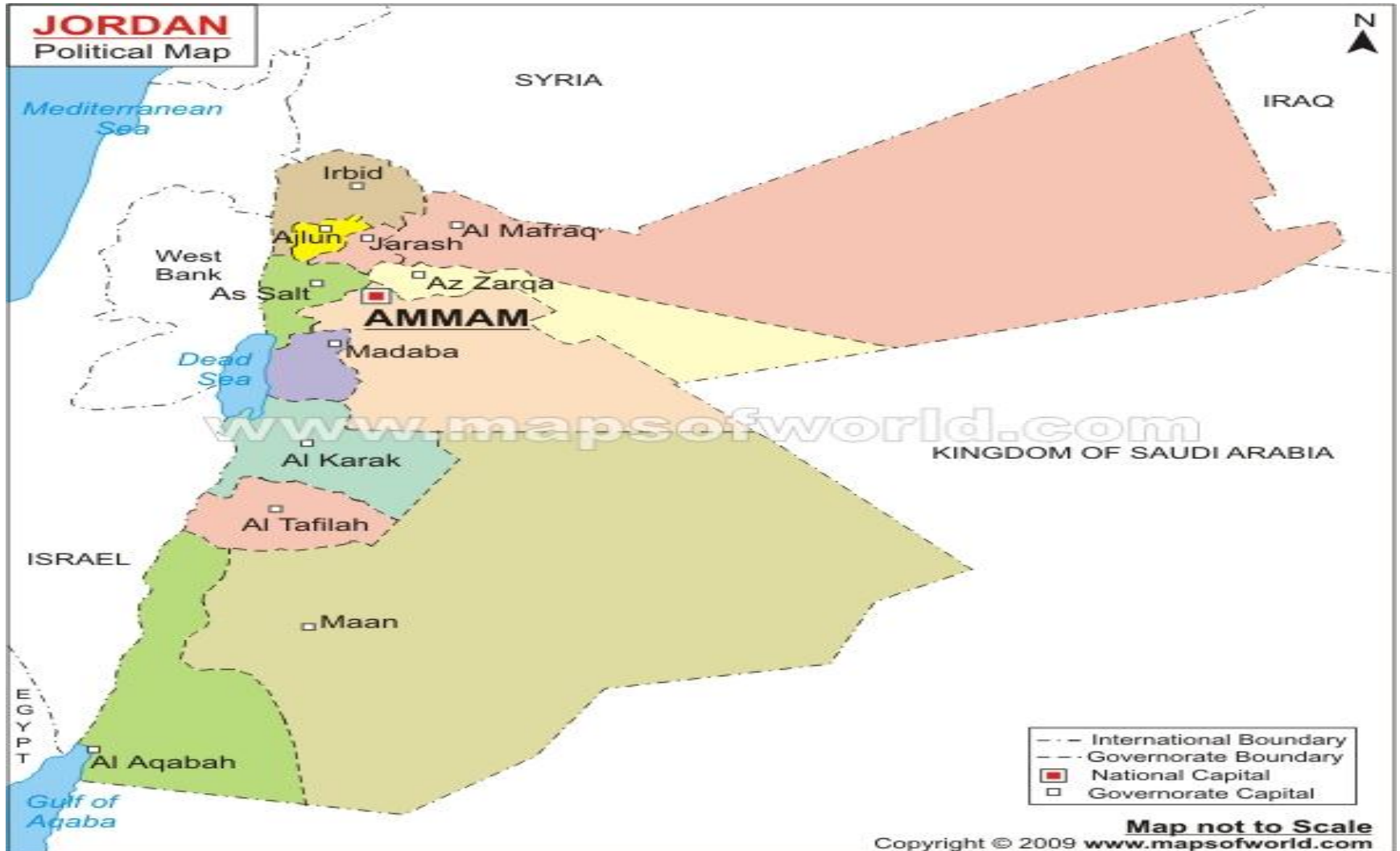


JORDAN



GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

- Jordan is a relatively small country situated at the junction of the Levantine and Arabian areas of the Middle East. The country is bordered on the north by Syria, to the east by Iraq, and by Saudi Arabia on the east and south. To the west is Israel and the occupied West Bank, while Jordan's only outlet to the sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, is to the south. Jordan occupies an area of approximately 96,188 square kilometers.
- Population (2009): 5.97 million.
Religions (2001 census est.): Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6%, other 2%.
Languages: Arabic (official), English.
Education (2007, according to Jordan's Department of Statistics): Literacy--92.1%.
Health (2007): Infant mortality rate--20/1,000. Life expectancy--71.6 yrs. male 74.4 yrs. female.
Ethnic groups: Mostly Arab but small communities of Circassians, Armenians, and Chechens
- Government Type: Constitutional monarchy.
Independence: May 25, 1946.
Constitution: January 8, 1952.
Branches: *Executive*--King (Head of state), Prime Minister (Head of government), Council of Ministers (cabinet). *Legislative*--bicameral parliament (appointed upper house known as the Senate, elected lower house). *Judicial*--civil, religious, special courts