

Tobacco Industry Interference

Index 2025 - Jordan



Global Alliance
for Tobacco Control



EMPHNET
The Eastern Mediterranean
Public Health Network





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Global Alliance for Tobacco Control (GATC):

The GATC is a civil society alliance whose mission is to unite the global tobacco control community and serve as the voice of civil society to accelerate implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), while integrating tobacco control in the global health and development agendas. GATC, formerly Framework Convention Alliance (FCA), was created in 1999 and formally established in 2003. The organization formally transitioned from FCA to GATC in November 2022. GATC works on the development, ratification and implementation of the international treaty, the WHO Framework on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The WHO FCTC is the world's first modern day global public health treaty. It requires involved Parties to adopt a comprehensive range of measures designed to reduce the devastating health and economic impacts of tobacco.

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"Every year, millions of children around the world lose their right to choose-the right to health, the right to a life free from addiction-as the tobacco industry targets them with deadly products disguised in child-friendly designs and flavors, under false pretenses of freedom, coolness, and even safety. The 2025 Tobacco Interference Index reveals a troubling reality: despite years of evidence and advocacy, little has changed. The industry continues to sit at policy tables, blocking life-saving regulations-such as those reducing product appeal-and exploiting corporate social responsibility initiatives to falsely present itself as a champion of education, gender equality, and community welfare.

The consequences to this are stark. According to the Jordan Adult Tobacco Survey, 51.6% of the population smokes, with 38% starting before the age of 17 and 83% before the age of 24. When governments fail to recognize that the tobacco industry is not like any other business, public health pays the price. It is time to pause and ask: Is this the future we want? What will the next 10 or 20 years look like if we stay on this path?"

- HRH Princess Dina Mired, a leading global advocate for Cancer Control and NCDs, has served as President of UICC, Honorary President of EORTC, and was recognized by WHO as an “eminent champion of NCDs” (2018) and recipient of the “World No Tobacco Day” Award (2021).

"Tobacco industry interference in Jordan remains relentless. While there have been modest improvements, the Government continues to grant the industry privileges, a public platform, and even veto power over health policy under Articles 9 to 11 of the FCTC. The tobacco industry further exploits causes such as women's empowerment, environmental protection, and youth support to normalize its presence and obscure the deadly harm of its products. Yet, the tobacco control community in Jordan has been steadily growing, enhancing advocacy for positive change. Their efforts deserve recognition: it takes courage and strength to defend public health when government policies still allow space for industry influence. What Jordan needs now is not incremental change but bold reforms to meet its FCTC commitments and build a society free from the vested interests of the tobacco industry."

- Leslie Rae Ferat, the Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Tobacco Control (GATC)

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Executive Summary:

The 2025 Tobacco Industry Interference Index (TIII) for Jordan evaluates the extent of industry influence on public health policy, in line with Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), covering January 2023–December 2024. Data were drawn from public records, government documents, and civil society monitoring.

Jordan's score decreased slightly from 82 to 80, reflecting improvements driven by the Ministry of Health's adoption of the National Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy 2024–2030. However, tobacco industry interference remains high and systemic.

Key Concerns

- **Policy Development:** The industry retains seats in Jordan Standard and Metrology Organization (JSMO) committees regulating tobacco and nicotine products, with significant voting power. Jordan's Conference of Parties 10 (COP 10) position did not fully align with FCTC obligations.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Industry-led initiatives-tree planting, charity funding, cultural sponsorship-continue to receive government participation, enhancing industry image.
- **Regulatory Concessions:** Expanded product permits
- **Violation of advertisement, promotion, and sponsorship ban:** Through promotion and normalization of industry in government-linked media outlets.
- **Unnecessary Interactions:** Parliamentary visits to factories and sponsorship of national events.
- **Transparency & Conflict of Interest (COI)** Limited access to government–industry interaction records; unresolved conflicts of interest among senior officials.
- **Preventive Measures:** The new strategy includes stronger COI disclosure and non-governmental organization (NGO) collaboration, but cross-ministerial enforcement is weak, due to factors such as fluctuating political will.

Other Issues

- Industry counter-narratives, as seen in attacks on KHCC's e-cigarette position statement.
- Duty-free loopholes enabling illegal product sales and aggressive advertising.

Recommendations:

Adopt a whole-of-government approach to exclude industry from policy-making, apply national laws to all retail environments (including duty-free), ban CSR partnerships, ensure full disclosure of industry interactions, engage multiple ministries, and strengthen all measures, with priority to youth protection and taxation policies.

Closing remarks

Jordan's persisting high overall score in the country's fifth report indicates that much remains to be done. Stagnation in scores across various items can be summarized as being the result of the persisting representation of tobacco industry directly or through front groups in critical governmental committees (JSMO, Jordan Restaurant Association (JRA), the Senate); the mindset within government that the tobacco industry contributes to Jordan's economy and is a credible entity with regards to CSR, and that can play the role of a public benefactor with access to high level interactions with many governmental agencies; the tendency to overlook the movement of senior government officials to and from the tobacco industry; and the difficulties civil society continues to face when requesting documents pertinent to reporting industry presence in governmental activities.

There have been many developments since 2019, when Jordan's tobacco control community began organizing efforts to document critical events and occurrences that have long been a concern in the country. Vaping and heated tobacco products have flooded the local market at a pace much faster than regulatory responses to these products. Meanwhile, conventional tobacco products continue to be used at alarming rates with no regulatory changes to how they are being packaged, marketed or sold. The most recent statistics indicate an almost ten percentage point increase in prevalence of overall smoking (driven by an alarming increase in use among females). Widespread improvement across all tobacco control policies is needed.

Nevertheless, it is also important to highlight achievements. Firstly, His Majesty King Abdullah II has declared protection of minors and youth from the harms of tobacco a national priority. With regards to industry interference, the long-awaited official launch of Jordan's National Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy, and recommendations within it to enforce Article 5.3, have slightly improved Jordan's score relative to the previous (2023) score. In addition, the tobacco control community has been growing gradually, thereby enhancing efforts to advocate for positive change. Interference reporting, dissemination of findings, and advocacy to limit interference, are all iterative processes and each report offers additional insight into how these can be improved. Undoubtedly, without unified government action, enforcement of Article 5.3, and robust civil society engagement, Jordan's tobacco control gains risk being undermined by persistent industry influence.

Table (1): Summary of Tobacco Industry Interference Index Score by Year of Publication

Report Year	2019	2020	2021	2023	2025
Tobacco Industry Interference Index Score*	79/100	78/100	78/100	82/100	80/100
Global Ranking*	32/33	50/57	72/80	85/90	TBD/100
Breakdown by category					
Level of participation in policy development	15/20	16/20	16/20	16/20	16/20
Tobacco industry related corporate social responsibilities	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5
Benefits giving to the tobacco industry	9/10	8/10	10/10	10/10	10/10
Unnecessary interactions between	15/15	15/15	15/15	15/15	15/15
Measures of Transparency	7/10	8/10	8/10	8/10	8/10
Conflict of interests	12/15	12/15	12/15	14/15	14/15
Measures that prevent Industry Influence	16/25	13/25	12/25	14/25	12/25

***The higher the number the worse the performance**

Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2025 – Jordan

Background:

Tobacco and nicotine product use remains alarmingly high in Jordan (1). According to the most recent Jordan Adult Tobacco Survey (JATS), conducted in 2024 and published in 2025, 51.6% of people living in Jordan aged 15 and older are current users of tobacco, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (1). Breakdown by nationality revealed that 53% of Jordanians and 49% of non-Jordanians are current tobacco users (1). Prevalence is markedly higher in men (71.2%) compared to women (28.8%) (1).

Over the past two decades, tobacco use in Jordan has more than doubled (2-4), from 25% in 2004 to 51.6% in 2024 (1, 2). This upward trend has been consistent in both men and women (1-4). Moreover, minors remain exposed to aggressive tobacco marketing and retail sales, with numerous tobacco outlets located within 150 meters of schools (5). These practices violate the Tobacco Display Regulations 73/2013 which requires a minimum of 250 m distance from educational and health facilities for conventional tobacco products and 500 m for Electronic Nicotine and Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems ENDS/ENNDS and Heated Tobacco (5, 6). Moreover, the types of tobacco products used have also diversified, including nicotine-based alternatives such as electronic-cigarettes (e-cigarettes), vapes, and heated tobacco products, alongside conventional cigarettes and waterpipe. (1-7). A significant contributor to the situation in Jordan is tobacco industry interference (TII), which continues to undermine tobacco control efforts in Jordan (8-11), despite Jordan's status as one of the earliest signatories and Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) (8-12). While the Ministry of Health has made efforts to strengthen the implementation of Article 5.3 of the FCTC, these efforts are often undermined by competing priorities within other government sectors perceived as more industry-friendly (8-11). Thus, the country continues to score high in the industry interference index (8-11). Past documented interference includes allowing tobacco industry representatives to participate in, and even vote on, policy decisions related to tobacco products specifications, the acceptance of corporate social responsibility initiatives, and positioning tobacco companies as essential economic stakeholders (8-11). Additionally, the “revolving door” phenomenon, whereby senior public officials transition into advisory or executive roles within the tobacco industry following their government service, remains a particularly concerning practice that erodes the integrity of public health policymaking (8-11).

In August 2023, His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan publicly called on the government to develop a comprehensive national strategy for tobacco and smoking control, emphasizing the protection of minors and the need for full enforcement of the Public Health Law No. 47/2008 and its amendments (13). In response, a national multisectoral committee was convened to co-develop the Jordan Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy 2024–2030 (14). The strategy aligns with the principles of the FCTC and aims to address critical gaps in tobacco control policy, enforcement, and program implementation (14).

Against the backdrop of these political and regulatory developments, the 5th Tobacco Industry Interference Index of Jordan (2025) builds upon previous iterations by incorporating newly gathered data from 2023 and 2024, and outlines next steps, including the planned development of the next index based on data to be collected in 2025.

Objective:

To provide a comprehensive assessment of tobacco industry interference in Jordan between 2023 and 2024.

Methods:

Study Setting and Design

This study followed the established methodology of the TIII (15) to document and analyze incidents of tobacco industry interference in Jordan during 2023 and 2024. The approach is based on Article 5.3 of WHO FCTC, its implementation guidelines, and decisions and recommendations adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) (15). Data were obtained from publicly available sources as well as official records provided by the Jordanian Ministry of Health, given that the TIII has been adopted as a national indicator within Jordan's National Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy 2024–2030 (14).

Data Collection

A comprehensive desk review was conducted to identify evidence of tobacco industry interference. Systematic Arabic and English searches were performed via Google using combinations of relevant keywords in both languages such as “tobacco,” “smoking,” “Philip Morris International,” “Jordan,” with results filtered for content published on or after January 1, 2023. To capture additional events or documents not indexed by search engines, supplementary sources included news articles; social media content; professional networks and civil society reports; publicly available financial disclosures; stock market filings; and government documents, including meeting minutes and policy drafts, obtained directly from the Ministry of Health.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed qualitatively to identify, categorize, and evaluate incidents of tobacco industry interference according to the TIII criteria (15). Each incident was classified by type (e.g., policy participation, corporate social responsibility, unnecessary interaction), frequency, and severity (15). The TIII scoring framework was applied across 20 core items, each rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater interference. A predefined scoring rubric informs the TIII guidelines (15) was used to ensure consistency. Two additional supplementary items, introduced in response to COP9 and COP10 recommendations regarding Article 19 (liability) and the existence of a public database, were assessed qualitatively but not included in the final score, per the scoring matrix. The final index score was calculated by summing the scores from the 20 scored items, yielding a total score out of 100. A narrative synthesis accompanied the scoring for each item, incorporating supporting evidence and references.

Ethical Considerations

As this study relied exclusively on publicly available information and did not involve the collection or use of personal or sensitive data, formal approval from an ethics committee or institutional review board was not required. The research activities were conducted in accordance with principles of ethical research and the Declaration of Helsinki.

Summary of findings:

The report shows a modest 2-point drop in tobacco industry interference, from 82 to 80, due to increased preventive efforts by the Ministry of Health and the Government of Jordan. However, significant obstacles remain unaddressed, such as the tobacco industry’s continued participation in policy development, corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, and the provision of benefits to the industry.

The lower the score,
the better the ranking

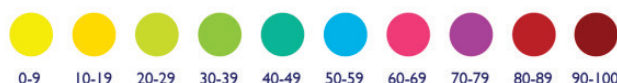


Figure (1): Tobacco Industry Interference Index Scale Categories, the lower the score the less industry interference (16)

a) INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The tobacco industry continues to maintain a presence on the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO) tobacco committee, which oversees specifications relating to labelling, packaging, and the contents of tobacco and recreational nicotine products (17). In 2024, the committee was restructured (18), and the committee representation of tobacco industry expanded: in addition to the two proxy seats previously held through the Jordan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, two additional proxies were allocated via the Amman Chamber of Commerce and the Amman Chamber of Industry (19). Consequently, representatives from BAT, JTI, and PMI now hold over 25% of the votes [4/14], which grants the ability to veto policy decisions unilaterally (19). In 2023, the committee attempted to revise technical regulations governing e-cigarettes by an indirect request from the industry (17). These proposals failed to pass due to opposition from anti-industry members on the committee. Work is currently focusing on renewing some regulations for traditional cigarettes (17, 19).

Separately, the Jordan Restaurant Association (JRA) submitted in 2024 a formal request to the Prime Ministry advocating the resumption of waterpipe licensing nationwide (20). The Prime Ministry forwarded the request to the Ministry of Health for evaluation (20).

During Jordan's participation at the WHO FCTC Conference of the Parties (COP) 10, the head of delegation—and official representative from the Ministry of Industry and Trade—expressed views aligned with the tobacco industry, by supporting a working group versus an expert group on FCTC Articles 9 and 10 regarding the contents and emissions of tobacco products (21, 22). COP 8 had suspended the working group, formed by Parties, the role of which is to collect available evidence in hope to create a comprehensive guideline on the implementation of Articles 9 and 10 (23). Due to the lack of new evidence and scientific gaps, the formation of an expert group was done to assist in understanding that gaps, and potentially (in a future role) conduct research and create new evidence to support the working group's mandate (23). These views and statements were made by 18 Parties (including Jordan) out of 183 Parties to the FCTC.

PMI industry representatives from Jordan were also seen in Panama during COP operations (21, 22). Notably, Jordan's official COP statement was finalized while the former Trade Minister—subsequently reappointed in 2024—was reported to have held a consultancy role with PMI, with no documented end date (21, 22, 24).

Notwithstanding these influences, the JRA was invited to participate as a stakeholder in drafting the National Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy (14). While the JRA promoted industry-aligned positions, civil society representatives—including the co-authors of this report—strongly opposed them, ensuring that none of these positions were included in the strategy (14).

In addition, JTI sits on the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission's food industry committee, lending further influence over regulation and normalization of their role (25).

b) INDUSTRY RELATED CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) ACTIVITIES

In early 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture, Madaba Municipality, and JTI jointly launched a series of tree-planting initiatives (26). These events were endorsed by the Minister of Agriculture, who participated personally in one event (26).

Additionally, following a visit by a delegation from the Parliamentary Labor Committee to Naour factories—including PMI's—the members publicly praised PMI for its contributions to local employment (27). The Labor Committee prominently featured the visit on the House of Representatives' official website (27).

JTI also produced a YouTube promotional video via the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission's food industry subcommittee, featuring on the commission's website the company as a champion of economic growth, employment, and community welfare (28, 29). In parallel, JTI contributed to a clothing drive with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (30), and co-sponsored a Japan Day celebration with the Japanese Embassy in Jordan and a local university (31).

Meanwhile, PMI funds a longstanding NGO offering workshops in English, digital literacy, and academic mentoring aimed at youth, women, and children (32, 33). The NGO's head is employed by Greater Amman Municipality (34), raising potential concerns about influence and role of governmental employees outside of their civil duty.

c) BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

The Prime Ministry approved BAT's expansion to include e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products under its authorized operations (35). In an additional case, the Customs Department sought import exemptions that would violate Public Health Law No. 47/2008, the Ministry of Health fortunately declined these requests (36, 37).

The Ministry of Industry and Trade has advocated for tobacco manufacturing operations inside duty-free zones—a change that could greatly benefit tobacco companies (38). State-funded media outlet Addustour also published favorable coverage of PMI (39, 40), praising its annual report and casting the company as a leader in women's empowerment, climate change response, and sustainability (39). PMI was further lauded for receiving the "Top Employer" award in Jordan (40).

d) FORMS OF UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

The visit of the parliamentary Labor Committee to the PMI factory resulted in promotional messaging on the House of Representatives' website—a clear example of unnecessary, industry-enhancing visibility (27).

JTI's corporate sponsorship of the Jordanian-Japanese Friendship Association raises additional concerns (31). The co-authors of this report requested its exclusion from Japanese Embassy-sponsored events; the request was granted in part. However, JTI continues to participate in national events under the broader umbrella of Japanese industry representation (31). While monitoring is ongoing, the co-authors aim to follow-up with the organizers.

Other entities with tobacco industry investments maintain relationships with government or quasi-government bodies. For instance, Duty-Free outlets have partnered with Middle East University, which has ownership ties to a waterpipe molasses factory (41). Union Tobacco and its shareholders wield considerable influence due to their investments and connections (42), and investors in major financial institutions such as Jordan Bank include stakeholders in tobacco industry (43). These relationships facilitate frequent collaborations and may obstruct enforcement of tobacco control measures.

e) TRANSPARENCY

Due to absence of new evidence, there is no change in the score for this section. The NGOs still face a challenge in accessing data related to tobacco industry from different governmental bodies. The meeting minutes between governmental officials and tobacco industry are not publicly disclosed, and when contacting the different agencies, the co-authors of the report had to rely on direct connections to obtain information.

f) CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The current Minister of Industry and Trade has served as a consultant to PMI since 2019 (44). While he relinquished board positions upon entering office, there is no documentation confirming whether or when his consultancy formally concluded (21, 22, 44).

No new cases of conflict-of-interest involving government officials have emerged since the previous report. Moreover, none of the individuals previously identified quit their positions (8-11).

g) PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Scores in this domain decreased (improved) by two points following adoption of the National Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy 2024–2030 (14). The strategy planes include provisions for disclosure of first- and second-degree ties to the tobacco industry for public officials, emphasizes implementation of FCTC Article 5.3, and formalizes collaboration with tobacco control NGOs during the preparation of the 2025 TII report (14). It also strengthens access to information through the Ministry of Health and includes plans for advocacy and awareness-raising workshops (14).

Recommendations from 2025 TII Index and Implementation of Previous Recommendations

The co-authors of the report have reviewed the implementation of the previous recommendations and the level of implementation by the government of Jordan up to the end of December 2024 (45). Table 2 lists the recommendations and the level of implementation. Out of the 14 recommendations, four were fully implemented, 2 were partially implemented, and the remaining were not implemented. The two partially implemented relate to the utilization of the Access to Information Law which was done only once until end of December 2024. The training on Article 5.3 is well done at the level of NGOs and Ministry of Health, but insufficient for civil servants, Parliament, and other stakeholders. In 2024, The GATC has conducted NGOs training session, and the WHO EMRO office conducted government representatives training. However, such efforts are insufficient to cover all stakeholders in Jordan.

Table 2: Implementation level of previous TIII recommendations

#	Recommendation	Implementation
1	Prohibit tobacco industry sponsorship	Green
2	Transparency and to disclose meetings	Red
3	Limit government interactions to the minimum necessary	Red
4	Prohibit gifts from the industry to civil servants	Green
5	Prohibit the industry from participating in policy setting	Red
6	Prohibit endorsement from government to tobacco industry activities and initiatives	Red
7	To utilize the Access to Information Law in order to obtain key information from the other ministries and organizations	Orange
8	Amend the Public Health Law 47/2008 or to establish a tobacco control law with provisions mirroring Article 5.3 of the FCTC	Red
9	Collaborate with partners to strengthen tobacco control strategy setting, implementation, and monitoring	Green
10	Article 5.3 training to NGOs, civil servants, and other stakeholders	Orange
11	Code of conduct revisions to include disclosure of first- and second-degree relatives' conflict of interest	Red
12	Remove privileges given to the tobacco industry	Red
13	Conduct new surveys, data collection, and make the TIII as a deliverable in the national strategy	Green
14	For the stakeholders to publish their tobacco control reports transparently and make their data available	Red
*Red means not implemented, orange is partial implementation, green is fully implemented.		

Based on the current report, the co-authors of the report recommend the following:

1. Fully implement the previously listed recommendations from the previous reports (Table 2).
2. Put in place a new preventive measure –for 2 years following completion of the civil duty assignment– to prevent “revolving doors” by prohibiting working for key industries for those who hold positions that might directly lead to leverage. Similarly, transition from industry to civil duty should also be controlled to ensure that individuals cannot hold a position of power which can directly maximize the industry’s benefits –they previously worked for and served, unless they are excused from making decisions when COI is plausible.
3. Amend the current bylaws to prevent any tobacco or nicotine (or harmful) industry from engaging in CSR activities. Additionally, introduce fines referred to as “social harm levy” which will be used to improve tobacco control projects implementation. Moreover, all financial contributions paid by tobacco industry should be publicly disclosed.
4. Establish a centralized public registry documenting all (tobacco) industry interactions with government officials and institutions.
5. The Ministry of Environment should assess and publish annual reports on tobacco-related environmental damage, including cigarette filter waste, electronic and plastic waste from electronic products, waterpipe single-use plastics, and wastewater contamination, ensuring no tobacco industry interference in the data collection, analysis, and reporting.
6. Establish a national mechanism with sectoral approval to ensure that Jordan’s position on health-related agreements is issued and lead by the Ministry of Health –including the position statements to COP and MOP. These positions should be fully protected from the vested interests of the tobacco industry, which could contradict the global tobacco control agenda harming the reputation of Jordan regionally and globally.

On Observing the Next Report Covering 2025-2026 Tobacco Industry Interference

The tobacco control NGO community has strengthened its collaboration both nationally and internationally. Partnerships have expanded to include regional and global networks, enabling more effective capacity building, coordinated advocacy, and a unified approach to monitoring and reporting under the umbrella of the Global Alliance for Tobacco Control (GATC). This report itself is a product of such collaboration, illustrating how shared resources and expertise can amplify efforts to advance the FCTC's objectives and press for progressive reforms.

Despite these advances, 2025 has already seen documented violations of Article 5.3, which explicitly calls for protecting public health policy from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry:

- **National Celebrations:** The tobacco industry was promoted for celebrating national independence day on government-owned media (46).
- **Corporate Social Responsibility Collaborations:** The tobacco industry supported orphan funds through an initiative framed as philanthropy but effectively serving as brand promotion (47).
- **Environmental Initiatives as Image Building:** More tree-planting initiatives were conducted with local municipalities (48).
- **Government Engagement with Industry-Funded NGOs:** The Minister of Social Development hosted a workshop on “sustainable civil society” that included participation from an NGO funded by PMI, raising questions about the independence of the event and the implicit legitimization of industry-affiliated actors (49).

These incidents underscore a persistent challenge: while certain arms of the government are advancing strong tobacco control measures, other sectors are either overlooking or actively facilitating industry access to public platforms. This disjointed approach risks undermining the MOH's progress, diluting the impact of the national strategy, and giving the tobacco industry continued avenues to influence public opinion and policy.

The upcoming 2025–2026 TIII report will be a critical test of whether Jordan can translate high-level political declarations into a whole-of-government approach—one that closes these gaps, enforces Article 5.3 without exception, and addresses the remaining pathways through which the tobacco industry exerts influence.

Other Tobacco Control Issues and Critical Reflection on Tobacco Control in Jordan

a) Follow-up from the Previous Report: IQOS Promotions, and the expansion to PLOOM

The promotion of IQOS has continued online, with a new survey launched by IPSOS in 2023 (50). The newer promotions focused on individualizing the product and the experience using colors, shapes, limited edition products, and add ons (51). The latest adverts even feature ZYN, a nicotine pouch product from PMI citing world-wide shipment (52). The expansion and persistence of these ads are a violation to the Public Health Law 47/2008. Although ZYN and nicotine pouch products are not sold legally in the national market, they were seen in the duty-free area (Figure 2).

2024 has also witnessed the launch of JTI's “PLOOM” which was heavily advertised in social media and local social media influencers from different backgrounds were invited and live broadcasted from their Instagram accounts (53). It went further to having PLOOM's sticks sponsor Christmas and New Year's parties hosted by prominent Arab singers (53).

b) Queen Alia Airport Duty Free Shop – observation and documentation from the co-authors of the report

Our observations from Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) in Amman reveal numerous and alarming violations of both national laws and the FCTC:

1. Excessive and aggressive advertising, strategically placed to maximize visibility. These are often located adjacent to sweets and confectionery; subtly normalizing tobacco use and targeting younger audiences.
2. Misleading health claims, heated tobacco products are openly promoted with scientifically unsupported and dangerous claims such as “99% less toxicants compared to a cigarette”. Promotional slogans in the departure halls include “Flight Friendly – take me on board,” “Zero Smoke – enjoy anytime, anywhere,” among others, designed to position nicotine products as lifestyle accessories rather than dangerous, addictive substances.
3. Sale of illegal products including
 - E-cigarettes with nicotine concentrations as high as 50 mg/ml, far exceeding the national legal limit of 20 mg/ml.
 - Flavored e-liquid products (e.g., candy and sweet flavors), are restricted under Jordanian law and the e-liquids technical regulations (54).
 - Oversized e-liquid containers (e.g., 150ml), whereas the national limit for refill containers is 10ml (54).
 - Nicotine pouches, which are not allowed in the national market.
4. Lax enforcement of sales limits, where although signage claims to restrict cigarette sales per traveler according to their destination (ranging from 200 to 800 cigarettes), these limits are not enforced in practice. Staff have reportedly allowed sales that exceed these thresholds. When questioned by the co-authors of the report, salespeople confirmed that there are no actual upper limits on purchases.
5. Deceptive packaging, where some cigarette packs are marked with misleading statements such as “manufactured without additives,” implying a healthier or less harmful product, despite clear evidence to the contrary.
6. Violation of display regulations at entry points. At points of entry, while the products technically meet national legal standards, their presentation does not. Displays are prominent, easily visible from outside the duty-free zone, and often accompanied by illegal advertisements. Examples include:
 - Slogans such as “Progress is a vision away” and “Take one for the road,” prominently featured on electronic boards and static displays.
 - Product placements for brands like Mazaya and Al Fakher next to chocolate stands, presented at child’s eye level and with colorful, appealing packaging.
 - Rotating LED advertisements that create dynamic and enticing visuals — particularly effective on children and youth.



Figure 2: Images of violation of the FCTC taken by the co-authors of the report from Queen Alia Airport Duty Free Shop

Duty-free shops at international airports, including QAIA in Amman, are often regarded as “foreign territory,” operating outside the jurisdiction of national tobacco control laws. This interpretation, however, is fundamentally flawed. The WHO FCTC is not merely a set of recommendations, it is a binding international treaty that applies to all areas within a country’s jurisdiction, including duty-free zones (55). Exempting duty-free shops from national regulations not only undermines public health efforts, but also violates the very spirit of the FCTC, to which Jordan is a Party.

In contrast, international examples demonstrate how duty-free shops can comply with both national and international tobacco control norms. For example, airports such as Dublin (Ireland) and Helsinki (Finland) offer textbook examples of best practices (Figure 3). These airports enforce strict tobacco control measures, including the complete absence of tobacco or nicotine advertising, limited availability and visibility of products, higher prices to deter impulse purchases, no visual displays of tobacco products — selections are presented discreetly on plain A4 paper, clearly defined and enforced upper limits on the quantity of tobacco products per traveler.

Even in airports with relatively less strict laws, such as Vienna International Airport (Austria), compliance with national legislation is evident. Products are displayed in discreet side units, not in prominent or high-traffic areas. Furthermore, only products that meet Austrian legal standards—such as e-cigarettes with no more than 600 puffs (equivalent to 2ml of liquid), legally permitted nicotine content, and authorized flavors—are available for purchase.



Figure 3: Images from international duty free shops taken by the co-authors of the report; left image from Vienna, top right from Helsinki, and bottom left from Dublin.

A Call for Legal and Ethical Accountability

Duty-free shops must not be granted immunity from national legal frameworks, especially when dealing with addictive and toxic substances. Nicotine and tobacco products should never be treated like other consumer goods. Allowing duty-free retailers to violate laws sets a dangerous precedent: if tobacco is exempt, what prevents these shops from selling other harmful products like cannabis, simply because they are legal elsewhere?

The exemption of QAIA’s duty-free from tobacco regulations:

- Contradicts international obligations under the FCTC.
- Encourages regulatory loopholes that benefit the tobacco industry.
- Actively endangers public health—especially among youth.

Jordan must take urgent, decisive action to align duty-free operations with national tobacco control laws and international best practices. If duty-free shops continue to be a blind spot in regulation, they will remain a powerful vector for undermining tobacco control in the country.

c) The case of KHCC's position statement on e-cigarettes and the response by the industry

In August 2024, the King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC), under the Patronage of HRH Princess Ghida Talal of Jordan, issued a landmark position statement on e-cigarettes (56). The statement outlined, with scientific clarity, the lack of credible evidence supporting e-cigarettes as effective smoking cessation tools (56). It further highlighted the worrying trend of their rising prevalence among university students in Jordan, a development that risks reversing hard-earned progress in reducing the use of other tobacco products (56).

The position statement was welcomed by tobacco control NGOs and received strong backing from the public health community (56). Its launch event drew the participation of high-level policymakers, signaling both national attention and potential momentum for policy change (56).

However, the nicotine industry was quick to respond. The company ANDS launched an aggressive critique of KHCC's statement, attacking both its methodology and the scientific evidence on which it was based, and urging the adoption of the harm reduction narrative (57).

Yet, the UK report referenced by ANDS spokesperson has been widely discredited by the international tobacco control research community (58, 59). The now-infamous claim that e-cigarettes are "95% less harmful" than conventional cigarettes was not grounded in rigorous scientific evidence (60). Rather, it emerged from an expert committee with multiple conflicts of interest—some members having received direct or indirect financial support from the vaping and tobacco industries, which they failed to fully disclose (60). These claims were largely based on opinion, not robust empirical research, and lacked sufficient evidence to justify sweeping public health conclusions (60).

In the UK and other markets where this message was amplified, the result was a rapid expansion of the e-cigarette market, contributing to the creation of a new generation addicted to nicotine—particularly among the youth (61). This trajectory mirrors the historical playbook of the cigarette industry: position the product as a "harm reduction" tool, downplay risks, and leverage marketing strategies that appeal to younger demographics.

The episode underscores an urgent warning for Jordan. Industry counterstatements like this are becoming increasingly frequent in the national discourse. Without a strong foundation of independent, science-based capacity building for both government bodies and NGOs, the tobacco and nicotine industry will continue to fill the information void with well-crafted but misleading narratives. In this context, Jordan's public health community must remain vigilant, to ensure that policymakers are equipped with unbiased evidence, and are aware of Article 5.3, and actively challenge attempts to undermine national tobacco control efforts under the guise of harm reduction.

d) Other promotions to the tobacco industry in Jordan

The tobacco industry has received independent promotions from collaborators who conducted services to them. For example, Offtec has promoted JTI in a promotion about supplying them with storage unit (62). Roya News promoted JTI for 25 years of innovation and sustainable growth (63). Watan News promoted the collaboration between BAT and the Lebanese tobacco industry and having BAT manufacture tobacco for export to Lebanon (64).

e) Critical Reflection

Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) asserts unequivocally that "there is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests" (55). Yet, in Jordan, a country long committed to tobacco control in active statements, the practical application of this article remains compromised.

Despite the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Health and civil society organizations, tobacco use in Jordan continues to escalate. The prevalence of tobacco use among women has quadrupled in the past two decades—a trend that reflects the increasing normalization and targeting of women by the tobacco industry (1, 2). This disturbing rise is occurring in parallel with an enduring societal perception of the tobacco industry as a pillar of the national economy (20, 25, 27, 28, 38, 65), and a significant contributor through direct taxation, employment, and even tourism, despite clear evidence to the contrary (66).

The Investment Case for Tobacco Control in Jordan demonstrated that in 2015 alone, the country suffered over US \$1 billion in combined direct and indirect health-related losses due to tobacco use, dwarfing any perceived economic gains from the industry (66). The report also outlined the substantial economic benefits of implementing the MPOWER measures, projecting a return on investment of JD 1:247 over a 15-year period (66).

It is against international obligations and treaties, and ethically indefensible to allow the industry to participate in the regulation of its own addictive products—yet this remains the case in Jordan (17, 19). Reducing the government’s dependence on tobacco tax revenue is essential to breaking this cycle. This requires a dual approach: identifying and developing alternative revenue streams while simultaneously increasing tobacco taxes in line with WHO best practices. Additionally, the government should explore innovative approaches to corporate accountability, such as introducing a “social harm tax” on the tobacco industry (55). This revenue could be earmarked to support NGOs and the Ministry of Health who are engaged in health promotion, youth protection, and environmental cleanup from tobacco-related waste.

Furthermore, the government must lead by example in enforcing tobacco-free norms. National recognition schemes and public financing mechanisms should be tied to compliance with smoke-free policies—for example, awarding institutional recognition only to government bodies or facilities that have been smoke-free for at least one year, or making access to government loans and grants conditional on tobacco-free environments. These measures would demonstrate a serious commitment to transforming policy into practice.

New partnerships are also urgently needed to expand the scope of tobacco control. The Ministry of Environment should play a more proactive role in assessing the environmental burden of tobacco. This includes the accumulation of cigarette butts and filters, as well as, electronic, plastic, and metal parts of e-cigarettes, their refills, and heated tobacco, the widespread use of single-use plastics in waterpipe products, the improper disposal of waterpipe molasses, and the environmental risks posed by waterpipe wastewater. A life-cycle analysis of tobacco products would reveal the extensive, often hidden, ecological damage that tobacco use inflicts, adding another compelling argument for stricter control.

Ultimately, without a truly whole-of-government approach, progress will remain slow and fragmented. Accountability must extend beyond the Ministry of Health, with each ministry recognizing and acting on its role in curbing tobacco’s societal toll. This includes ministries responsible for education, finance, labor, tourism, industry, youth, social development, and justice, as well as all regulatory departments. These ministries have a mandate to implement the WHO FCTC and the National Tobacco and Smoking Control Strategy 2024-2030.

The 2024 Jordan Adult Tobacco Survey clearly highlights the urgency of early intervention: 38% of smokers initiated tobacco use before the age of 17, and nearly 84% before the age of 24 (1). In a country where youth comprise a significant portion of the population, these figures signal a future public health crisis unless decisive action is taken now. Implementing the MPOWER package, enforcing Article 5.3 across all sectors, and considering bold new initiatives—such as Tobacco- and Nicotine-Free Generation policies—are not only feasible, they are essential.

Jordan stands at a crossroads. It has the data, the tools, and the international commitments. It has a strong collaborative body of NGOs with wide national, regional, and international tobacco control expertise –challenging to be found in other low- or middle-income countries. What remains is the political will to sever the ties between public health policy and an industry whose very business model depends on addiction, illness, and premature death. The time for partial measures is over. Protecting the youth from the cycle of addiction and harm must be prioritized above anything else. A comprehensive, coordinated, and uncompromising approach to end tobacco and nicotine use is the only path forward.

Jordan Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2025 Results and Findings

	0	1	2	3	4	5
INDICATOR 1: Level of Industry Participation in Policy-Development						
1. The government accepts, supports or endorses any offer for assistance by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry or any entity or person working to further its interests.2 in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control3 (Rec 3.4)						5
No change to the score. In 2023–2024, PMI, JTI, and BAT retained and expanded representation on the JSMO tobacco committee through seats held by the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, Jordan Chamber of Industry, Amman Chamber of Commerce, and Amman Chamber of Industry, giving them over 25% voting power—enough to block motions (needs 75% of the vote for motions to pass) (17, 19). JRA submitted a pro-industry request to ease waterpipe licensing, endorsed by the Prime Ministry (20). Jordan’s COP10 position, led by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, aligned with industry interests, with Jordan PMI representatives being present in Panama parallel to the COP (21, 22).						
2. The government accepts, supports or endorses policies or legislation drafted by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry. (Rec 3.4)						5
No change to the score. They JRA participated in the Tobacco and Smoking Control National Strategy meetings (14). Although they attempted to undermine the progress and made suggestions that were noted, the efforts of the Ministry of Health and the NGOs led to a favorable progress of the work and eventual adoption of the strategy. The changes to the e-cigarettes and cigarettes technical regulations were done with consultation of the industry with their membership in the committee (17, 19).						
3. The government allows/invites the tobacco industry to sit in government interagency/ multi-sectoral committee/ advisory group body that sets public health policy. (Rec 4.8)						5
No change to the score. The JRA sat on the Tobacco and Smoking Control National Strategy multisectoral committee (14). The JTI sits on a governmental committee through the accreditation and quality assurance commission, particularly on the committee (founded in 2023) on food industry (29 ,25). Moreover, an increase in the previous identified representation of the industry in JSMO committee (19 ,17).						
4. The government nominates or allows representatives from the tobacco industry (including State-owned) in the delegation to the COP or other subsidiary bodies or accepts their sponsorship for delegates. (i.e. COP & 4 5, INB 5 4, WG)4 (Rec 8.3 & 4.9) For non-COP year, follow the previous score of COP year.		1				
No change to the score.						

0 1 2 3 4 5

Although they are not on the delegation, the government endorsed the industry position, and made favorable statements in the COP 10 that the industry communicated to the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Ministry of Finance (21, 22, 67-69). The head of delegation, an employee at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, read the statement in favor of the industry (21, 22), while the industry through Jordan PMI representative were present at Panama during the period of the COP (21, 22).

INDICATOR 2: Industry CSR activities

5. A. Government agencies or their officials endorse, support, form partnerships with or participates in activities of the tobacco industry described as socially responsible. For example, environmental programs. (Rec 6.2)

B. The government (its agencies and officials) receives CSR contributions⁵ (monetary or otherwise, including CSR contributions) from the tobacco industry or those working to further its interests (eg political, social, financial, educational, community or other contributions (Rec 6.4) including environmental or EPR activities (COP10 Dec). NOTE: exclude enforcement activities as this is covered in another question

5

No change to the score.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Madaba Municipality joined JTI funded campaigns for planting trees (26).

The Parliament visited PMI factory in Naour as a Jordanian employer and praised their work (27). The JTI was given a video promotion on the accreditation and quality assurance commission as a sector that can reduce unemployment, increase national economy, and is good for the community (29).

Greater Amman Municipality employee conducted as president of her NGO a series of workshops aimed to support children, women and youth in learning English, computer skills, and prepare them for high-school and university programs through sponsorship by PMI in Naour (32, 33).

INDICATOR 3: Benefits to the Tobacco Industry

6. The government accommodates requests from the tobacco industry for a longer time frame for implementation or postponement of tobacco control law. (e.g. 180 days is common for PHW, Tax increase can be implemented within 1 month) (Rec 7.1)

5

No change to the score.

No new laws have passed during the follow-up period of the report that would suggest a change to the previous stance and level of interference.

7. The government gives privileges, incentives, tax exemptions, subsidies, financial incentives, or benefits to the tobacco industry (Rec 7.3)

5

No change to the score.

Exemptions to imports were requested by the Customs Department on behalf of the industry that the MoH has declined (37,36). In 2024–2023, BAT was granted permits for e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products supported by the Prime Ministry of Jordan (35). The Ministry of Industry and Trade advocated for tobacco factories to operate in duty-free zones (38). State-funded Addustour newspaper promoted PMI's corporate achievements (40,39).

	0	1	2	3	4	5
INDICATOR 6: Conflict of Interest						
13. The government does not prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns or to require full disclosure of such contributions. (Rec 4.11) 1 Never 5 Yes						5
No change to the score. The legislations have not changed since previous reports.						
14. Retired senior government officials form part of the tobacco industry (former Prime Minister, Minister, Attorney General) (Rec 4.4)					4	
No change to the score. The Previous Minister of Industry and Trade held a consultancy position in PMI and was reinstalled in September 2024 (44). Previous government employees are holding high positions in tobacco and nicotine industry (11).						
15. Current government officials and relatives hold positions in the tobacco business including consultancy positions. (Rec 4.10 ,4.8 ,4.5)						5
No change to the score. The previously identified Senate member still remains in his position (11). The Minister of Trade although has quit his positions in other organizations, a declaration to the Stock Exchange does not explicitly state if he remains or quit as a consultant to PMI (44).						
INDICATOR 7: Preventive Measures						
<i>SCORING for this section: 1. Yes, 2. Yes but partial only, 3. Policy/ Program being developed 4. Committed to develop such a policy/ program 5. None</i>						
16. The government has put in place a procedure for disclosing the records of the interaction (such as agenda, attendees, minutes and outcome) with the tobacco industry and its representatives. (Rec 5.1)				3		
Decreased from 4 to 3. The adoption of the National Strategy ensures that there is a plan until 2030 to achieve better disclosure and alignment with Article 14) 5.3). Moreover, the government has approved the request of NGOs to access information related to the report (71). Although we are still in the process of acquiring the additional information.						
17. The government has formulated, adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards with which they should comply in their dealings with the tobacco industry. (Rec 4.2); Yes – for whole of government code; Yes but partial if only MOH			2			
No change to the score. The government has a code of conduct, but does not compass the disclosure of 1st and 2nd degree relatives, or the disclosure regarding the Parliament and Senate (70). Though the National Strategy aims to address these gaps (14).						

	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. The government requires the tobacco industry to periodically submit information on tobacco production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues and any other activity, including lobbying, philanthropy, political contributions and all other TAPS activities such as CSR or EPR (COP10), as well as on tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations and individuals acting on their behalf, and tobacco industry funded groups and their research and marketing activities (Rec 5.2, 5.3, and COP9 and 10 Decision)			2			
No change to the score. The information is required to be sent to the government but is not publicly disclosed. Astroturfing is not documented nor linked to its original source of funding.						
19. The government has a program / system/ plan to consistently7 raise awareness within its departments on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines. (Rec 1.1, 1.2)				3		
Decreased from 4 to 3. The adoption of the national strategy has items to raise awareness on Article 5.3., including the release of the TIII (14). This paves the way to a new milestone for the commitment for change (14). However, the reflected change will take time to materialize and is expected to be documented in the next report.						
20. The government has put in place a policy to disallow the acceptance of all forms of contributions/gifts from the tobacco industry(monetary or otherwise) including offers of assistance, policy drafts, or study visit invitations given or offered to the government, its agencies, officials and their relatives. (3.4)			2			
No change to the score. Although gifts are banned, the other items are not covered (74-72). These require additional law change or ministerial decisions (at the level of the Minister of Health or Prime Minister).						
Total	80					

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Based on COP9 and COP10 Decisions highlighting Article 5.3 recommendations

A. LIABILITY: *Government has adopted or enforced mandatory penalties for the tobacco industry in case it provided false or misleading information (Rec 5.4)*

[5.4 Parties should impose mandatory penalties on the tobacco industry in case of the provision of false or misleading information in accordance with national law.]

No change in the legislation.

No liability on misleading information

B. KH RESOURCE DATABASE: Government adopted and implemented measures to ensure public access to information on TI activities

[5.5 Parties should adopt and implement effective legislative, executive, administrative and other measures to ensure public access, in accordance with Article 12(c) of the Convention, to a wide range of information on tobacco industry activities as relevant to the objectives of the Convention, such as in a public repository.]

The Ministry of Health in 2025 approved the NGOs request to the right of information in order to conduct the TIII report as part of the National Strategy (71). However, it did not have an umbrella coverage to all the requirements as per the FCTC. The aim with adopting the TIII as an item in the National Strategy that it would provide some sort of access to partially fulfill the article's obligations.

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Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2025 - Jordan



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