

Jordan



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Industry Participation in Policy Development

The tobacco industry (TI), initially represented by Japan Tobacco International (JTI) and Philip Morris International (PMI) on the JSMO committee, expanded its influence after the committee's restructuring. British American Tobacco (BAT) also gained representation, giving the TI more than twenty percent of the committee's votes. Because an eighty percent approval threshold is required, the TI now has effective blocking power. The seats are allocated through the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, Jordan Chamber of Industry, Amman Chamber of Commerce, and Amman Chamber of Industry.

The Jordan Restaurant Association (JRA) submitted an opinion to the Prime Ministry requesting the legalization of shisha licensing and the relaxation of related regulations. The Prime Ministry supported the request and forwarded it to the Ministry of Health for review.

2. Industry CSR Activities

The Ministry of Agriculture partnered with JTI on tree-planting campaigns. Parliament conducted a visit to the PMI factory in Naour, commending its role as a local employer. JTI was also featured in a promotional video by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, which praised the company as a contributor to reducing unemployment and supporting the economy. In addition, the government's official news agency, Petra, promoted JTI's celebration of National Independence Day. These activities illustrate how corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are used to enhance the

industry's public image with government endorsement.

3. Benefits to the Industry

Parliament has promoted TI activities through official channels. The customs authority, acting on behalf of the industry, requested import exemptions, but these were declined by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Industry and Trade advocated for allowing tobacco factories to resume operations in duty-free zones. The Prime Ministry also approved BAT's request to expand its registered functions to include the production and sale of electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

4. Unnecessary Interaction

Parliamentarians visited the PMI factory, while the Minister of Social Development organized a workshop on sustainable civil society that included participation from an astroturf NGO sponsored by PMI. The Jordanian-Japanese Friendship Association partnered with JTI as a sponsor, with a member of the Jordanian royal family serving as patron. Several NGOs urged organizers to exclude JTI from future sponsorships.

Entities with investments in the TI continue to work closely with government agencies. The Duty Free has collaborated with the Middle East University, whose owner operates a shisha factory. Union Tobacco and its shareholders retain strong influence across the country, and major investors in the Jordan Bank also hold shares in the TI. These organizations maintain direct relationships with government and conduct frequent collaborations.



5. Transparency

The government does not publicly disclose meetings or interactions with the TI, even when such interactions are necessary for regulation.

6. Conflict of Interest

The government does not prohibit contributions from the TI or related entities to political parties, candidates, or campaigns, and it does not require full disclosure of such contributions.

The former Minister of Trade previously worked as a consultant for PMI before being appointed to his ministerial role in September 2024. Several former government employees currently hold senior positions in the TI, reflecting potential conflicts of interest and close ties between industry and government.

7. Preventive Measures

The National Strategy, adopted through 2030, aims to improve transparency and strengthen alignment with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. As part of this effort, the government has approved requests from NGOs to access information, though the process remains incomplete. The strategy also includes measures to raise awareness of Article 5.3, marking a step forward in demonstrating the government's commitment to tobacco control.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Fully implement the 2023 recommendations from the previous report.
2. Prevent “revolving door” situations by adopting a two-year restriction for officials after leaving public service before working in the TI.
3. Amend current bylaws to prohibit tobacco and nicotine industry CSR activities. Introduce a “social harm levy” to fund tobacco control programs.
4. Establish a centralized public registry documenting all TI interactions with government officials and institutions.