



Jordan Media Institute • معهد الإعلام الأردني

“the priorities of national identity and the influence of culture on political participation and the media”

Amman - Jordan

Abstract

At a symposium held at Jordan Media Institute (JMI) on Monday, former Jordanian Prime Minister Abdelraouf Rawabdeh encouraged Jordan’s youth to get involved in political life and form political parties that reflect their beliefs. He added that democratic participation is the only tool for political reform.

The symposium, titled “Current events and political participation: Elections and the media,” was held in cooperation with Canal France International (CFI), and was moderated by Dr. Sabri Rabihat. Rawabdeh highlighted the foundations of the formation of the Jordanian state, and its national identity, as well as its sources of strength and the challenges that it has confronted in its first 100 years. Jordan, he said, was founded on the ideals of pan-Arabism, and it advanced a model of centrism and moderation in its public policy.

Rawabdeh also said that it was necessary for Jordan to carve its own identity, in order to confront the region’s historic and geographic challenges. He said this identity focused on the principles of the Great Arab Revolt, and the values that it represented for the advancement of the Arab nation, which was the cornerstone of Jordan’s national and Arab identity.

In his dialogue with JMI's students and gathered journalists, Rawabdeh said that democracy is a source of strength for countries and that it is not simply an ideology but rather a method of governance that takes root over time. He added that active political parties form the foundation of political participation and that democracy and parliamentary government rely on political parties and regular elections. Jordan, he said, is in need of dynamic, democratic political parties that are accepting of others, capable of putting forward ideas that serve the society.

He explained that while there are dozens of registered parties in Jordan, there are no truly effective ones. This absence paves the way for ideological, regional, utilitarian, and tribal foundations to control the electoral process. The real parties, by contrast, are able to present political programs and development plans and can weaken political money.

In response to students' questions, Rawabdeh said that the responsibility of choosing members of parliament falls on their popular bases. They must choose their representatives on the basis of clear agendas and development plans, and they should not reelect representatives if they fail to fulfill their duty to meet the aspirations of their constituents. He said that this is where the role of the media comes in, to supply citizens with information on the performance of their representatives, and on whether or not they are upholding their promises.

On the issue of Jordan's relationship with Palestine, meanwhile, Rawabdeh said that the relationship between the two peoples does not resemble any relationship between any other country and the Palestinian issue. He emphasized that the Arab unity between the two banks of the Jordan river is grassroots and democratic, and the

Palestinian issue was and still is the top priority of the Jordanian leadership and people.