

ISIS Aims Squarely at Jordan, Next Stop Is Israel

The terror group calling itself the Islamic State has rolled through major parts of Iraq and occupies land in Syria, but its ambitions spread far beyond the territory it now controls.

Jordan is a major tourist destination. Each year, millions of tourists flock to famous sites, including Petra.

"I think Petra is amazing. I think it truly is one of the wonders of the world," one tourist told CBN News.

But now Jordan finds itself on the front lines with the Islamic State.

Azraq is the last major town in northern Jordan before Iraq. On the road that leads straight to the border, Sunni troops supported by ISIS control that border crossing.

The group's aggressive moves toward Jordan's border have many worried about the future of King Abdullah and the Hashemite Kingdom.

In a recent video, Jordanians fighting for the Islamic State in Iraq tore up their passports and pledged to slaughter the king.

"From their point of view Jordan is an artificial country. It has to be removed. Next stop is Israel," Jonathan Fine, an Israeli analyst with the Institute for Counter-terrorism, told CBN News.

Looking at the map, Jordan shares a long border with both Syria and Iraq. You can also see that Jordan serves as a buffer on Israel's eastern border.

In the vast desert to the north, the Jordanians maintain a

strong, well-armed and well-trained military. But Fine sees Jordan's threat coming from the inside, not its border.

"The danger is embedded in the potential of Muslim Brotherhood supporters among the mass of Palestinians who might cling and adhere to the ideology of the IS in Iraq," he said.

Hopefully Jordan won't face this enemy. It has two strong allies in the United States and Israel.

"I don't think I'm exaggerating that both Israel and the U.S. will prevent any takeover of IS of Jordan because from an Israeli point of view, the eastern front has always been a sensitive issue," Fine explained.

That's why Israel thinks it is vital to control the Jordan Valley on its eastern border. But the threat goes far beyond the borders of the Hashemite Kingdom.

"In their eyes, the definition of the enemy is Western civilization, not a foreign policy of one government or another," he said. "And when they say they target the Judeo-Christian alliance as their major enemy, they mean what they say."

For now, Jordan, usually a quiet political player, sits on the front lines, part of the new reality in an ever-changing Middle East.