



# Summary Report of Radicalization Trends in Jordan

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## **1. About the Project**

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and broader social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualises this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) so as to move towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include a sense of being victimised; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of “us vs them” identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts, including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation-states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalisation often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analysing, and devising solutions to online radicalisation will be central to the project’s aims.

## **2. Summary**

This report summarizes the country reports submitted to D.Rad project from Jordan’s team studying radicalization as a phenomenon and action in Jordan in the period 2011-2021. The report describes major incidents that are considered as a turning point in identifying and (re)shaping radicalization and de-radicalization, presents a contextual framework of how radicalization erupted in the country and highlights agents and channels of radicalization and de-radicalization. It also discusses elite and public perceptions of radicalization incidents and, finally, emphasizes the role of media in radicalization and de-radicalization.

Jordan has challenged radicalization since it when faced multiple violent attacks from the 1970s to the present. This is due to Jordan’s political, religious, and socio-economic stance. Although there is no defined separation between right-wing

and left-wing factions of extremism, the country mainly suffers from internal and external radicalized threats. Internal radicalization is manifested in (1) state-led actions which provoke disturbance among political parties and nationalities along with its approach in tightening its security grip justified under state security;(2) Muslim Brotherhood which is a legitimate opposing political party, (3) tribal radicalization which threatens national unity, (4) Salafi-Jihadism which promotes radical Islamic ideology; and (5) refugee radicalization which is also seen as a threat to Jordanian's welfare and peace. External radicalization is depicted through (1) Al-Qaeda in Iraq and (2) ISIS in Syria.

When it comes to countering radicalization, the regime relates this responsibility to its own official institutions. They established de-radicalization units within its security forces and military units in which they adopt a more civil and educational path in combatting radicalization. Civil society organizations' role in countering radicalization was restricted by the state's policy before 2011 but was encouraged, under the supervision of the regime, to take part in preventing radicalization through implementing awareness campaigns and workshops.

### **3. Introduction**

Radicalization involves the increasing rejection of established law, order, and politics and the active pursuit of alternatives, in the form of politically-driven violence or justification of violence. Despite the fact that Jordan's state-led strategy has been to counter-radicalization, its structure has been formulated in a religious manner asserting the importance of understanding the real and moderate Islamic methods and calls on human welfare instead of promoting the collective responsibility in countering radicalization. Dealing with radicalization is subject to the supervision of the General Intelligence Department (GID), Public Security Directorate (PSC), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Social Development, and the Ministry of Endowments. However, these organizations fail to understand the causes and catalysts from which radical ideologies seeps out, and abandon any interference or dialogue on behalf of civil society organizations and institutions. The result has been that Jordan oscillates between heightened security measures and political reforms, especially in the aftermath of 2011. It was noticed that the Jordanian public opinion has witnessed a state of division regarding the governmental intervention against the "Islamic State" organization. Many Jordanians believe that this war was not their war from the beginning, and that Jordan has colluded with the other countries in their struggle with "ISIS" which resulted in a significant increase in the number of extremist jihadists joining ISIS, who may later resort to transferring the conflict into Jordanian territory.

De-radicalization is the process which counters the rejection of established law, order, politics, and involves the active pursuit of alternatives in the form of politically-driven violence or justifications of violence at individual (micro), organizational (meso), or societal (macro) levels resulting in a shift from violent to nonviolent strategies and tactics. This report approaches the phenomenon of radicalization in Jordan neutrally

while focusing on major violent incidents that have helped to shape public opinion. The report also delineates the main radicalization agents and de-radicalization stakeholders in Jordan as part of the Work Package “Mapping Stakeholders and Situations of Radicalization” of the D.Rad project. We present a contextual background of Jordan’s situation regarding the structure, agents and channels of radicalization and de-radicalization. The main sources that this report will rely on are published books, reports, studies, research papers, and the researchers’ qualitative analysis related to radicalization and de-radicalization topics.

#### **4. Overview of Current Radicalization Trends**

Due to its geographical, political, religious, and socio-economic stance, Jordan has confronted radicalization since the 1970s to the present. What have been steering radicalized movements are a mix of both internal and external factors starting with state-led actions. Also, radicalization movements have been stimulated by the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi-Jihadism, lone wolves, and refugee radicalization as internal factors. Al-Qaeda in Iraq and ISIS in Syria have been identified as external motivators of radicalization. While the country’s policing/ intelligence system is highly alert to prevent violent attacks inside the country, external factors can be seen as the most threatening of all radicalizing agents as they have managed to carry out unforgettably violent attacks in the history of Jordan. Jordan was and is still exposed to multiple violent attacks because of its strategic location inside a largely unstable geopolitical region (neighboring Palestine, Iraq, and Syria). This section focuses on major violent events taking place in Jordan between 2001-2020 that can be considered as indicators in the study of radicalization and de-radicalization. Due to the lack of other systematic and detailed data on radical violence in Jordan, the report primarily depends on *Global Terrorism Database* (GTD)<sup>1</sup>, Shorufat Center for Globalization and Terrorism Studies<sup>2</sup>, and the reports issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in Sydney.<sup>3</sup> The researchers also rely on their own analysis of certain events depending on their abilities as researchers and academics, and as citizens of the country with first-hand experience.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=1&casualties\\_type=&casualties\\_max=&country=102&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=GT&DID&od=desc#results-table](https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=1&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&country=102&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=GT&DID&od=desc#results-table)

<sup>2</sup> a research Centre in Jordan specialized in the large-scale reciprocal effect of the process of globalization, global terrorism, and Islamic extremism. <https://www.shorufatcenter.com/about/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.economicsandpeace.org>

According to the IEP results published in 2020, aiming at measuring the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), the numbers of deaths stemming from terrorist attacks in 2019 was reported as 59 per cent lower than at their peak in 2014. The fall of deaths mirrors a reduction in the impact of terrorism and radicalization, with 103 countries recording an improvement on their GTI score, compared to 35 that recorded a deterioration (Global Terrorism Index 2020). According to the study, the GTI score does not only track the numbers of deaths, but also incidents, injuries, and property damage. Despite the overall fall in the impact of terrorism across the world, it remains a significant and serious problem in many countries. Jordan is among many countries in the Middle East that continues to face the threats of terrorist activities due to the government's rejection of the Salafi-Jihadi interpretation of Islam, and along its borders because of its proximity to regional conflicts in Iraq and Syria. However, in the "Global Terrorism Index" Jordan is ranked among the low-threat regions and ranked 57 among other world countries. The phenomenon of terrorism in Jordan is not largely linked to local environment; rather it is primarily an outcome of geopolitical events and developments taking place externally and sometimes internally. The external developments that influenced the phenomenon of terrorism and radicalization recently in Jordan are the Syrian crisis and the emergence of ISIS.

The story of radicalization in Jordan starts with the Arab-Israeli conflict in late 1960s and during the 1970s had a huge impact on the rise of radical movements, not only in Jordan but in the region as well. One could claim that at this time there were no separatist, right-wing, or left-wing radical groups or movements in Jordan; yet, a nationalist radical conflict appeared in Jordan between 1970-1973, manifested in the civil war between Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and Black September organization under the leadership of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)<sup>4</sup>. Under the pressure of many Arab leaders, the civil war was halted in 1971 and the Black September members were exiled to Lebanon. However, this organization later claimed responsibility for several attacks on Jordanian soil from 1971-1973<sup>5</sup>. This war and its repercussions caused tension between Jordanians (Transjordanians) and Palestinian-Jordanians which resulted in attributing a trans-ideological Jordanian identity: "Bedouin tribal identity, Islamic identity, and Hashemite identity" (Fruchter-Ronen, 2008, P. 245). This Jordanian-Palestinian polarization led to increased tensions between the populous and would continue to disrupt political relationships over subsequent decades.

Between the end of the 1970s and early 1990s, the region was induced by revolutionary movements while Islamic activism was taking some baby steps towards its radical approach due to Arab-Israeli conflict and the War in Afghanistan. Muslim

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<sup>4</sup> After the Jordanian-Palestinian forces won the battle of Karamah against Israel in 1986, the Palestinian-Jordanian groups known as "fedayeen" were economically and politically supported by Arabs. They, under the leadership of the PLO, started acting as a state within a state, grew their power, and called for overthrowing the Hashemite rule in 1970.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Jordanian civil war and Black September, please read (Nevo 2008; Fruchter-Ronen 2008; Riedel 2020)



Brotherhood (MB) was brought from Egypt to Jordan by Abd Al-Latif Abu-Qura<sup>6</sup> and was allowed to operate by the Jordanian Monarchy in 1948 although other political parties were banned from operating in the country from 1957-1992 (Lust, 2001, P.545). The MB participated in parliamentary elections, worked compatibly with the political system in Jordan, and supported democracy. In 1989, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) was founded in Jordan as the political wing of the MB. Its main members were Jordanians of Palestinian origin which indicates an asserted division within the Jordanian nationality. MB and (IAF) agenda started opposing the state's decisions after the peace relations between Egypt and Israel, Jordan and Israel, the Islamic revolution in Iran, the war in Afghanistan and the continued Palestinian conflict. Further, the emergence of Salafi groups as a "social phenomenon" in the early 1980s caused tension in the country. Although Salafists rejected the principles of political partisanship and considered their duty to obey the ruler, an intense rivalry and conflict occurred between MB and Salafi groups in an attempt to win supporters, control mosques which were fertile grounds for MB to recruit individuals, and create its social base. The striking paradox was that the state-led actions which once prevented the Sheikh of the Salafis, Nasir al-Din al-Albani, from preaching in mosques (apparently under the pressure of Sufi groups that were supported by the state) began to support Salafi groups and followers in early 1990s and open them to areas for public action to break MB's influence (Abu-Ruman and Abu Hanieh, 2013, P. 20).

In this period, Islamic activism was transformed from focusing on social civic engagement to a militant Islamic movement because of the repatriation of "Jordanian Afghan mujahedeen" who supported Bin Laden and his organization, Al-Qaeda. This ignited a conflict between Muslim Brotherhood, the only legal political party allowed to perform in Jordan, and Salafi Jihadists, supporters of religious extremism of Al-Qaeda. The latter was used by the state officials to weaken MB and, at the same time, they were prevented from practicing their apolitical and religious agenda. As a result, they found in Al-Qaeda in Iraq and its call for fighting US invasion of Iraq a manifestation to their agenda. This made Jordan encounter many challenges in combatting extremist ideology internally, especially extremist Jordanians who supported and sympathized with external radicalized agents such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

Jordanian officials have feared that external agents would recruit Jordanians, Salafi-Jihadists or lone wolves, to conduct violent attacks. Yet, they were surprised when a shocking terrorist attack was perpetrated by Iraqi people affiliated with Abu-Musab Al-Zarqawi and Al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2005 marking it as the first insurgency on Jordanian soil orchestrated by an external agent. A series of simultaneous bombings targeted three five-star hotels (Radisson SAS Hotel, Grand Hyatt Hotel, and Days Inn Hotel) in Amman on November 9, 2005. Between 2005 and 2015, the state-led actions took all measures to protect the country from encountering another violent attack. The

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<sup>6</sup> Abu Qura was a merchant from the Jordanian city of al-Salt who had been a staunch proponent of the Palestinian cause for years. For more information please read (Wagemakers, 2020)

public may have tolerated the bad economic, social and political conditions that were running out in the country for the sake of the country's safety and peace. This raises the question of whether history was indeed repeating itself. The civil war in Syria and ISIS interference to fight against Assad's regime has won the Jordanian public's attention and sympathy. To extremists who supported ISIS inside the country, their hope to establish a new Islamic State that adopts Sharia Law was again rejuvenated. Extremists again opposed Jordan's joining the international coalition to fight ISIS claiming that this war was not Jordan's war. When ISIS militants captured Jordanian fighter Pilot Muath Al-Kasasbeh, after his jet crashed in Raqqa, they released a video of Al-Kasasbeh burning alive. This incident caused ISIS supporters and sympathizers to turn against them, call for revenge, and supported the state's participation in the US coalition against ISIS.

In light of what was mentioned, the situation can be interpreted in the following manner. The Jordanian government would not directly interfere when these different Islamic groups attempted to denigrate each other. Yet, direct violent confrontation with militant radical Islamic activism, or any other violent actions, is conducted only once the state security is threatened. The Palestinian conflict and the War in Afghanistan steered a political radical scene in the region until the US invasion in Iraq in 2003 was declared and an international coalition to fight terrorism was established by the US president. As mentioned earlier, followers of Salafi-Jihadists in Jordan started to mobilize under Abu Musab Alzarqawi leadership. They were responsible for the attack that targeted three hotels in Amman in 2005 as a way to hit back at American, Israeli, and European intelligence. Three Iraqi suicide bombers died and the fourth one, Sajida Al-Rishawi was captured by the police. Many Jordanians who were sympathetic to Al-Qaeda in Iraq, and who condemned the war on Iraq and Jordan's political stance in this war, veered sharply against Abu Musab Alzarqawi.

Between 2011 and 2018, two waves that contributed to the increase of radicalization prevailed in the country due to the Arab Spring: the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as deteriorating situations in Palestine, and the stalemate in the Middle-East peace process. The first wave is linked to Islamic Activism in Jordan. Salafi-Jihadi groups in Jordan were left off the hook during the Arab Spring events because the Jordanian government was busy with efforts to weaken MB. This opposition political party led many peaceful demonstrations during the Arab Spring calling for political reform. The government encouraged the division within MB members and used Salafi-Jihadists as a tool to serve its agenda in denigrating the MB. There were concerns that "disgruntled Brotherhood youth may go underground and join radical jihadist groups as a result of the government crackdown on moderate Islamist movements" (AlSharif, 2016). Another factor which influenced political views in Jordan was the arrival of refugees from Syria.

Public opinion regarding Syrian refugees' arrival to Jordan saw this development as a threat to Jordan's well-being, as well as promoting concern for violent extremism (Kruglanski et al, 2018, p. 4). Thousands of Syrian refugees who fled the war in Syria were put in arid remote camps close to border points (Rukban and Hadalat) in 2014. The government, based on its intelligence, was also concerned

about the presence of ISIS sleeper cells among asylum seekers who came from Islamic State controlled territories. Thus, after security checks precautions, the government allowed a limited number of vulnerable refugees to move to Al-Azraq Camp. In 2016, a booby-trapped car leaving from Rukban was exploded at the military post that was serving the camp killing six Jordanian troops (Ghazal 2016). Other car bomb attacks followed this incident in 2017 and 2018 which forced the Jordanian government to prevent aid deliveries to the camp ('Thousands of Syrian Refugees Face Starvation as Russia and Assad Try to Force US. Out', 2018). The Camp's civilian Shura governing council tried to prevent the prevalence of IS fighters who were hiding among the refugees and "using refugees as human shields, with the knowledge of US military" ('Russia records Unidentified Helicopters delivering Weapons to Taliban, IS in Afghanistan', 2018). Human Rights Watch, among other international institutions and NGOs, condemned Jordan for the deteriorating conditions in Rukban and asking the government to move Syrian refugees to camps inside the country. The government refused to listen to their demands because it was primarily concerned about further terror attacks on Jordanian Soil.

Therefore, Jordan took and still takes maximum measures to confront radicalization that threaten the security of its citizens by (a) strengthening the overall enabling environment (institutionally and organizationally) to fight terrorism and radicalization; (b) supporting livelihoods for employment creation; and (c) fostering inclusion, social cohesion and participation, especially among marginalized groups, "Jordanian host communities and Syrian refugees" (UNDP 2018 a). Adding to that, Jordan tightened its authoritative and military grip on the media, opposing public opinion, and whoever is seen to be sympathizing with radical movements.

## **5. De-radicalization Programs**

After the Amman bombings in 2005, there was unanimous public condemnation of terrorism and radicalization of all forms. Surveys taken in the weeks after the bombings showed that approximately 80% of those polled had negative opinions of al-Qaeda; 90% believed al-Qaeda was a terrorist organization; and approximately 65% changed their views as a result of the bombings (US Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2005). The televised confession of suicide bomber Sajida al-Rishawi further inflamed the public against Zarqawi and Islamic extremists in general. Since then, state and non-state actors took part in countering radicalization and terrorism. The following section maps out de-radicalization actors: state and non-state.

### **5.1 Jordanian State Actors**

The Jordanian government has publicly condemned terrorist acts throughout the world, introduced heightened security measures, and drafted new counterterrorism legislation while pursuing the network of fugitive Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Jordanian security forces disrupted numerous terrorist plots, including several that targeted U.S. interests. Moreover, the government promoted religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and shared values between civilizations with a number

of initiatives, including the July International Islamic Conference in Amman, and the ensuing "Amman Message" which highlighted tolerance and moderation of Islam. The Amman Message has inspired the ministry of education to make a change on Islamic school textbooks which portray Islam to be tolerant towards other religious sects. They also warn against "terrorism and sabotage committed by terrorist organizations which use religion to disguise their actions. Jihad War is seen as exceptional, and only occurs if an enemy forces it on Muslims" (Jacobi, 2019, p. 1). However, the observer could see the ideological fissure between older generations and young generations when discussing issues related to Jihadism and tolerance. The majority of young contemporary Jordanians accept and respect Islam as a tolerant religion while their peers living in restricted, culturally confined areas look at Islam as the only religion and accuse whoever counter-argues with them as apostates. We would claim that the impact of the Amman Message has succeeded positively in changing the cultural and religious ideology about Islam.

In November 2005, the Jordanian Government began drafting counterterrorism legislation "that would authorize penalties for anyone who condones or supports acts of terrorism." The bill would also allow authorities to hold terror suspects indefinitely (Country Report on Terrorism, 2009). Several attempts to amend the Terrorism Law of 2006 have followed: Anti-Terrorism Law No. 18 of 2014 and 2016 amendments which was approved by the Council of Ministers on January 8, 2017. This law aimed at confronting Global Terrorism and strengthening the security system in the face of terrorism, and tracking the persons suspected of or attempting to commit terrorist acts. In doing so, the regime has restricted freedom of speech and expression as a counter measure to prevent radicalization. This legislative bill witnessed significant condemnation from various societal groups including: jurists, civil society organizations, and activists about the possible restrictions on freedom of expression on the internet. For example, the amendments introduced an ambiguous and broad definition of "hate speech," as it was defined as "every statement or action that provokes discord or religious, sectarian, ethnic, or regional strife or discrimination between individuals or groups." This definition can be interpreted or applied to certain content expressed on the internet regardless of whether it is intended to incite hatred or harm, or poses a threat. The amendments also proposed criminal penalties for hate speech and equates hate speech with criticism of public figures or companies on social media. This will allow the authorities to detain anyone suspected of spreading hate speech from a period of 24 hours to seven days if not extended to one month. Hence, this measure could be used to target government opponents, activists and human rights defenders.

Jordan has also demonstrated regional leadership in the fight against ISIS as it joined the Global Coalition against terrorism. King Abdullah II, in a November 2005, address to the Jordanian parliament, declared, "the war on these terrorist organizations and their radical ideology is [Jordan's] war because we are targeted and we must defend ourselves, Islam, and the values of tolerance and moderation by fighting extremism and terrorists"

("Country Reports on terrorism", 2014). The Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF) participated in Global Coalition military operation against ISIS, humanitarian operations in support of communities targeted by ISIS, and the Jordanian Armed Forces bolstered defenses against terrorist incursions in the northern and eastern border regions (Kamal, 2018).

In 2016, the Ministry of Interior established a Directorate for Combating Extremism and Violence. Salameh Hammad, the Interior Minister at that time, claimed that "countering radicalization became institutionalized in Jordan" (Jfranews, 2016). The Community Peace Center is one of the central units that unite efforts directed at healing community rifts and tensions while dedicating the concept of institutionalization in awareness, prevention and treatment of radicalization threats. The Community Peace Center is a success story in Jordan; it has proven itself in fighting extremist ideology and some negative ideological behaviors. It was able to convince many of those who adopted any radical ideology to adopt a new moderate path especially among the youth through rehabilitating them intellectually, psychologically, and culturally.

#### **4.2 Non-State Actors**

From 2001 to 2020, civil society organizations' role in countering extremism has faced many challenges due to the political environment and the restrictions that were put on civil society posed by the 2014 Anti-Terror Law.<sup>7</sup> After the Syrian war in 2011 and the unexpected expansion of terrorism and radicalization, Jordan sought to combat forms of extremism by activating non-governmental organizations and civil society associations to assist the regime in preventing terrorism and countering radicalization. The Jordanian government aim to spread awareness among members of the local community and refugees including all groups of society (school students, university students, and young people from both genders and other members in the community). Yet, all non-state actors are linked to the state and "are created by a royal decree and presided by royal authorities, being this very common phenomenon in Jordan" (Casajuana and Delgado, 2018, p. 10). It is worth noting that "UN bodies and INGOs enjoy strong leverage compared to local CBOs" (Sayegh and Bondokji, 2017). We believe that this is due to how donors exert influence to support their agendas in the country.

It is important to mention two main non-governmental agents who specialize in combatting radicalization in Jordan. The first is the Women Against Violence Association is registered as a foundation, in Amman, under the name: Group of Women Against Violence. It is also considered as the first non-governmental association in Jordan working on de-radicalization. It essentially addresses the issue of violence against women in all its forms and creates a place where women, affected by terrorist attacks and persecution, can discuss and share stories related to their physical, psychological and social suffering. This association performs valuable community functions regarding the concepts of violence and terrorism and contributes

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<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://www.alkarama.org/ar/documents/qanwn-mn-alarhab-lsnt-2014-1>

to healing women from the effects of terrorism and radicalization. The association reaches out to as many women as possible who have been exposed to terrorism and violent radicalization. It publishes articles and stories about women's mental, physical, and social suffering, and urges women to take part in promoting the spirit of values, freedom and justice for women (<http://www.womenav.org/>).

Shorafat for Globalization and Terrorism Studies Center is concerned with the influence of globalization on global terrorism, Islamic religious extremism, and their impact on international societies. The center offers analytical and holistic studies of high value, objectivity, intelligence and academic depth. The center is involved in publishing reports and studies, holding workshops, building quantitative indicators on globalization, global terrorism and religious extremism among other research oriented activities.

## **6. Social Media Trends**

The aim of this report is to delineate the cultural drivers of radicalization in Jordan, and to investigate the ways media objects attracts audience. In the previous sections, we have identified Jihadism as the dominant strand of radicalization in Jordan. We have also divided radicalization threats into internal and external variants. Internal radicalization is largely manifested in state-led actions, Muslim Brotherhood, Salafi-Jihadism and lone-wolves. This is also seen as a threat to Jordanian's welfare and prospects of peace. External radicalization is mostly depicted through Al-Qaeda in Iraq and ISIS in Syria. This report investigates the role of new tools of media affiliated with ISIS in mainstreaming radical ideas.

Since 2014, ISIS, The Islamic State, has occupied territories in Iraq, Northern Syria and beyond. Apart from the military battle ISIS was carrying on, there was another battle of ideologies and concepts taking place on social media and digital platforms. These platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others, have empowered ISIS since they are highly interactive parts of the Internet. This actually helped ISIS to recruit soldiers as the organization "has reached unprecedented levels of recruitment – no other organization in modern history has managed to recruit more fighters. Its professional and tactical use of media, propaganda and communications tools has far surpassed the strategies of other Jihadi movements." (The Secret of Attraction). In other words, to advance its military progress and accelerate the rhythm of its project, IS "increased reliance on international media and common man upon them." (Kawaja and Asma, p.106). The circulation and the widespread of ISIS discourse mainstreamed in media platforms directly and indirectly triggers injustice and grievance in Jordanian society. This is especially seen in the narrative presented by ISIS which polarizes local communities and delivers messages to justify violence as a tool to address socio-political grievance

In a new indicator of Jordanians' passion and their increasing use of various social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and others), a global study by the Pew Research Center put Jordan first in the world in an index of the ratio of the number of people using social media platforms and networks to internet users. This

was confirmed by consultant and trainer in the field of social media, Khaled Al-Ahmad, who said that a recent study and a list of countries in the world by (Pew Research Center) showed the superiority of Jordan when it ranked first in the indicator of the ratio of the number of adult social network users to the number of Internet users, where the percentage reached In Jordan 90%. Al-Ahmad said that this percentage means that about 90% of Internet users in Jordan through various means and tools, especially smart phones, are users of social networks, pointing out that the most used social networks in Jordan are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and LinkedIn. and others. <sup>8</sup> According to local official figures, the number of Internet users in Jordan is estimated at 8 million, and based on the global ratio, the number of users of various social networks in the Kingdom is estimated at about 7.2 million users. Al-Ahmad explained that the global study stated that Jordan ranked first in the world in the ratio of network users to Internet users by 90%, Indonesia came in second place with 89%, the Philippines by 88%, then Venezuela by 88% and Turkey by 87%.

Another study, conducted in the framework of the Networks of Mediterranean Youth project (NET-MED Youth) implemented by UNESCO with funding from the European Union in 10 countries of the Western and Eastern Basins of the Mediterranean (including Jordan), provides a quantitative analysis on Jordanian youth's media and technology consumption patterns, and their perceptions regarding Jordanian and regional media. The age group interviewed are between 18 to 29 years old. The selected sample is of Jordanian public and private community colleges and universities. The total sample is of 1018 youth, divided between 45.8% males and 54.2% females. (p.7) The study reveals that between home and personal ownership of PC's, laptops, tablets and smartphones Jordanian youth under study, in their overwhelming majority, are generally well equipped and connected to use and surf the Internet on daily basis from home or university, and partly through mobile broadband. Internet consumption is mainly divided by audio/video entertainment and downloads - primarily music clips - but more so for chatting and Internet search and browsing. *Religious content is claimed to be a top third preference.* As to social networking, Facebook, Google and chatting apps are primary tools for the overwhelming majority of youth under study.

## **7. Evaluation of the Situation**

This report sheds light on the contextual background of radicalization in Jordan, the major agents and channels of radicalization and de-radicalization since 2001. As tackled from the state-level, radicalization in Jordan is steered by various ideologies which adopt nationalist and radical Islamic notions. Since the 1970s, Jordan has been affected by the repercussions and threats of terrorism and radicalization due to its political and social stance to secure the country from internal and external radicalized agents. Yet, its interference in international fights against terrorism and radicalization in Iraq and Syria has increased concerns and fissure within the Jordanian public opinion which resulted in mistrust between the state and its citizens along with the

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[/amp/. الأردن-الأول-عالميا-باستخدام-شيكات-ال](https://alghad.com/) See article on this link <https://alghad.com/><sup>8</sup>

increased number of radicalized recruits who join terrorist organizations. Since the report focuses on violent incidents and radicalized and de-radicalized agents from 2001 to 2021, it was noted that Amman Bombing in 2005 shed light on the dangerous impacts of terrorism and radicalized political ideologies in the country. Although Al-Qaeda claimed responsible for these attacks, as the suicide bombers were Iraqi agents affiliated with Al-Qaeda, this incident put the country at risk as being a target to further violent attacks. Following the attack, the regime has implemented several security measures to prevent future acts of terror. In the year 2016 several violent attacks were conducted by ISIS affiliates in the country. Public opinion, indirectly, put the blame for these attacks on the regime-led actions in combatting radicalization and for participating in the war in Syria which they not consider to be Jordan's war. This resulted in the spread of radical thoughts among marginalized spaces, including by Ma'an and refugee camps, alongside the practices conducted by lone wolves.

State-led actions can be seen to be provoking radical political ideologies in the country. The state's security forces abuse their power to suppress peaceful demonstrations that call for political and economic reform. This has raised tension and mistrust between the state and citizens. People become afraid to express their thoughts freely due to the restrictions on freedom of speech. The public are also fearful to join political parties in order not to be condemned as anti-governmental members. MB, the only legitimate operating party, was confined by the regime and their activities were suppressed although they are able to conduct peaceful reform demonstrations. On the other hand, the state has used agents from Salafi-Jihadist groups to weaken MB while at the same time labelling them as an illegitimate radicalized group. As a result, many members from MB have joined Salafi Jihadists and went to take part in the Syrian War.

The main threat that faces Jordan comes from External radicalized channels like Al-Qaeda and ISIS. As mentioned earlier, these two groups were responsible for many attacks that took place in Jordan in recent years. Lately it has been reported that ISIS agents have been infiltrating refugee camps on the borders between Jordan and Syrian. As significant violent attacks have happened at these camps, Jordanians are afraid that these agents could flee to the Jordanian soil and practice their terrorist activities as what happened in 2016.

With every terrorist attack that happens, not only in Jordan but also globally, the Jordanian people's awareness of the negative and horrific impact of radicalization increases. Also, radical political ideologies help pave the way for blending social and political opinion to counter terrorism and radicalization. As such, Jordan has embraced "a clear policy based on an information network, good relations, joint cooperation and exchange of information at the regional and international level" (Ayasrah, 2009). Although the international community looks at Jordan as a success story for combatting terrorism and radicalization, other civil society organizations like Human Rights Watch have questioned some human rights' violations. These violations have been conducted by the state's official and military institutions under the guise of protecting its security.



In one example, the regime has empowered its security service, deployed the General Intelligent Department (GID), Public Security Directorate, Jordan Armed Forces, and other governmental institutions in hunting radicalization, sacrificed democratization for security, and resulted in conflicts and division within the national body of the country as well as among the political parties. Tightening the police security is not Jordan's only strategy to indulge in the global fight against terrorism and radicalization; Jordan authorities have repeatedly stressed the important role of civil society, NGOs and the de-radicalized centers in responding to the threats of radicalization and terrorism as long as they perform under the supervision of military institutions. Whether Jordan's strategy in fighting radicalization is dynamic enough to assure its security as well as the region's security against future terrorism and radicalized ideologies will remain an open question that an answer to it would be revealed in the upcoming future global, regional, and national incidents.

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