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JORDAN'S COUNTERTERRORISM POLICIES:
RESPONSE TO COMPLEX THREATS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's security problems are arguably greater than at any other point in the last several decades. Jordan faces significant issues that not only open it to possible penetration by radical terror groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), but also have the potential to severely destabilize internal stability.

One of Jordan's greatest security fears is that ISIL will establish a base in Jordan from which to commit violent jihad.¹ This is not out of the realm of possibility; in the past year, scattered Jordanian support for ISIL has unsettled the Kingdom, and thousands of Jordanians have travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight. In April 2014, a group of Jordanian ISIL members fighting in Iraq issued a video on YouTube burning and shredding their Jordanian passports and invoking deceased al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The jihadists in the video described Jordan's King Abdullah II as "a worshipper of the English" and vowed to "slaughter" him.² In the Jordanian southern city of Ma'an, dozens of men demonstrated in June 2014 in support of ISIL, and in August 2014 the al-Qa'ida flag flew over its central square for at least a month. Furthermore, as of early 2015, an estimated 1,800 to 2,000 Jordanians were fighting alongside ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusrah (JN).³

Despite facing terror threats in the past, some of which threatened the very integrity of the country, Jordan has never had a counterterrorism strategy as comprehensive or robust as it is today. We hope to explain what factors account for this phenomenon. While much has been written about Jordan's counterterrorism policies, Jordan's current counterterrorism postures have

¹ David Schenker, "Countering the ISIS Threat to Jordan," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 13 July 2014, available from <<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/countering-the-isis-threat-to-jordan>>, accessed 20 September 2014.

² Ibid.

³ Raed Omari, "On Jordan's true role in the anti-ISIS alliance," *Al Arabiya*, 20 September 2014, available from <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2014/09/20/Jordan-s-role-in-the-anti-ISIS-alliance.html>>, accessed 20 September 2014.

not been analytically compared to its past policies in the early 1990s and early 2000s. Jordan's current level of counterterrorism policies is largely a response to threats posed by ISIL and other extremist groups currently operating in Syria and Iraq. The Kingdom's enhanced counterterrorism policies over the past year are notable, especially given that the country has faced terrorist threats for almost as long as the country has existed.

Jordan's current counterterrorism posture is more robust today compared to previous periods in the country's history due to a confluence of factors which have led to significant policy changes. The main factors (not in any order of importance) which have compelled the Kingdom to increase its counterterrorism policies are: 1) the close proximity of the threat; 2) domestic sympathy and support for extremist groups; 3) extremist groups' robust use of social media and the Internet to radicalize and recruit individuals; 4) individuals radicalized abroad or inside Jordan and conducting attacks there; and 5) economic hardships.

While all of these factors have contributed to Jordan's decision to increase and implement counterterrorism policies, these drivers cannot be weighted evenly. Some factors likely influence government policymaking to a greater degree than others when considering counterterrorism policy changes. Furthermore, it must be noted that most of the ramped-up policies have occurred in the past year, since summer 2014. This likely reflects a heightened threat perception by Jordan towards the conflict in Iraq and Syria in response to changing events. ISIL's territorial expansion in Iraq, a weakened moderate and strengthened extremist opposition in Syria, and Jordan's participation in the anti-ISIL international coalition are all timely factors.⁴

⁴ Fred Lawson, "Syria's Mutating Civil War and Its Impact on Turkey, Iraq and Iran," *International Affairs* 90.6 (November 2014).

II. METHODS

The research design is a within-case variation study. Specifically, we analyze Jordan's counterterrorism policies during periods when Jordanians returned radicalized from fighting in external conflicts involving jihadist actors. We examine two past cases, in addition to the present: 1) the early 1990s, when Jordanians returned from fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan; and 2) the past 2000s, when Jordanians returned from fighting U.S. and Coalition forces in Iraq. We look at Jordan's counterterrorism postures in response to these threats and why these past responses were more limited in comparison to Jordan's current counterterrorism posture.

The main sources informing our analysis include peer-reviewed journals, news media, and in-person interviews. We conducted interviews in Amman, Jordan in January 2015 with journalists, scholars, and policymakers to discern their perspectives on the biggest threats to Jordan's security today and how the Jordanian Government is dealing with the threat. Although we sought to use as wide a range of sources as possible, our research methods had some limits.

Jordan's security services are opaque and it is difficult to find open-source information about their current activities and threat assessments. Additionally, although Jordan's parliament is relatively transparent, we have imperfect knowledge of King Abdullah II's decision-making process. While we are able to assess the major factors that have influenced Jordan's decision to increase the level of counterterrorism and counter-radicalization policies, there may be other drivers that significantly informed the government's decision-making process of which we are not aware. Furthermore, due to the ongoing nature of the conflict in Syria and Jordan's ever-developing response, a major challenge in our research was ensuring that our analysis of Jordan's counterterrorism policies was current and in line with recent developments.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Jordan has dealt with threats from fighters returning from Afghanistan in the late 1980s and early 1990s as well as from Iraq in the 2000s and is now coping with Jordanians returning from fighting in Syria and Iraq. Although the existing literature on Jordan's counterterrorism program extensively examines past successes and failures, it lacks a cohesive analysis of the current situation compared to past policies.

States operate under many assumptions when enacting counterterrorism policies. Counterterrorism has both short-term and long-term objectives—in the short-term, states seek to prevent specific attacks, and in the long-term, eliminate a group and its political appeal.⁵ Counterterrorism strategies differ depending on the type of terrorism states face, but they typically involve a mix of at least four strategic options: 1) repression and violence; 2) conciliation/policy concessions (to win hearts and minds; 3) legal reforms to strengthen a state's ability to deal with terrorism; and 4) bolstering political moderates.⁶ Each strategy has its merits and challenges; for instance, repression and surveillance could keep a group from carrying out attacks, but it could further radicalize members and the larger sympathetic community. Likewise, a state's promotion of moderates as an alternative to extremists can delegitimize those moderates as government "stooges" in the eyes of potential terrorist recruits.⁷

Miller notes that counterterrorism policies are most successful when states take into account what was effective (and ineffective) in the past.⁸ However, proving a counterterrorism policy's effectiveness is not easy. A terrorist attack is often a sign of policy failure, but typical

⁵ Arie W. Kruglanski, Martha Crenshaw, Jerrold M. Post, and Jeff Victoroff, "What Should This Fight Be Called? Metaphors of Counterterrorism and Their Implications," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 8.3 (2008), 99.

⁶ Arjun Chowdhury and Ronald R. Krebs, "Making and Mobilizing Moderates: Rhetorical Strategy, Political Networks, and Counterterrorism," *Security Studies* 18.3 (July-Sep 2009), 374-5; Gregory D. Miller, "Confronting Terrorisms: Group Motivation and Successful State Policies," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19.3 (2008), 334.

⁷ Chowdhury and Krebs, 373.

⁸ Miller, 332.

metrics of policy success—including a decline in a terrorist group’s number of attacks or followers—could merely indicate a strategic shift inside a group.⁹ Therefore, an evaluation of a state’s counterterrorism policies must take into account more factors than just basic metrics of the terrorist groups they seek to counter.

Jordan’s current security response to ISIL takes advantage of a wider range of policy options compared to past mechanisms used to combat counterterrorism threats. Early in Jordan’s history, it faced terrorism from pan-Arabists, Palestinians, and internal threats. King Hussein and initially King Abdullah II sought to thwart terrorist groups through heavy repression of internal discontent mixed with frequent amnesties.¹⁰ W. Andrew Terrill, a Middle East expert at the Strategic Studies Institute, characterizes this approach to minimizing dissent “as directing generosity at those who have tasted punishment and thereby allowing them other options than becoming increasingly hardened life-long criminals.”¹¹ This policy backfired with the release of Jordan’s most notorious terrorist, now-deceased AQI leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in a 1999 amnesty.

Several factors in the last three decades have increased the threat of radicalization in Jordan by creating political disillusionment and leading Jordanian jihadists to form criminal and terrorist groups to strike out at non-Islamic targets and the regime.¹² Jordan underwent major societal changes in the 1990s, including the first intifada; the U.S. invasion of Iraq (which Jordan opposed); the arrival of approximately 250,000 Palestinians expelled from Kuwait after the Gulf War; Jordan’s 1994 peace treaty with Israel; and economic problems that led to cut subsidies and raised taxes. Experts also argue that Jordan’s relatively closed political system, its pervasive

⁹ Ibid., 337.

¹⁰ Nachman Tal, *Radical Islam in Egypt and Jordan* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 235.

¹¹ W. Andrew Terrill, *Global Security Watch—Jordan* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 25.

¹² Joas Wagemakers, “A Terrorist Organization that Never Was: The Jordanian “Bay‘at al-Imam” Group,” *The Middle East Journal* 68.1 (Winter 2014), 61.

security services, ties to the West, and a stagnant economy increase the potential for domestic radicalization.¹³

Early jihadist groups like Muhammad's Army and Bay'at al-Imam showed that fighters returning from jihad in Afghanistan posed a danger to Jordan's security, and that not all Islamist groups in Jordan would allow themselves to be co-opted by the regime. Despite this, the government did not enact any major legal or military changes in light of the threat. Security forces simply surveilled and detained hundreds of civilians without charges or solid evidence throughout the early 1990s to cope with the threat of returnees from Afghanistan.¹⁴

Prior to 2006, when Jordan passed its first counterterrorism law, terrorism suspects were charged under the penal code.¹⁵ Although Jordan faced some threats from returnees from Iraq, it was mostly able to prevent attacks on its soil. An International Crisis Group report notes that foreigners, not Jordanians, carried out most attacks in Jordan during the early 2000s, since intelligence services were generally successful at keeping tabs on Jordanian radicals.¹⁶ Some critics greeted the large amount of terrorist prosecutions prior to November 2005 with skepticism and charged the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) with overzealousness.¹⁷ Overall, the threat from returning fighters from the Iraq war was lower than from Afghanistan in the late

¹³ International Crisis Group, "Jordan's 9/11: Dealing with Jihadi Islamism," *Middle East Report No. 47* (November 23, 2005), available from <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/jordan/047-jordans-9-11-dealing-with-jihadi-islamism.aspx>>, accessed 14 October 2014, 17; Terrill, *Global Security Watch*, ix.

¹⁴ Beverly Milton-Edwards, "Climate of Change in Jordan's Islamist Movement," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Abdel Salam Sidahmed, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), 130.

¹⁵ Jon Gambrell, "Jordan amends, widens its anti-terrorism laws," *The Associated Press*, 1 June 2014, available from <<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/jordan-amends-widens-its-anti-terrorism-laws>>, accessed 18 October 2014.

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

1980s and early 1990s, likely since the Iraq conflict had not subsided before the beginning of the Syrian war in 2011.¹⁸

Jordan's security services have played a major part in supporting moderate Syrian groups against Assad. The country has served as a conduit for arms and other supplies from Middle Eastern countries, and Jordan has allowed the United States to train Syrian rebels inside Jordanian territory.¹⁹ In southern Syria, where many tribal groups stretch across the border into Jordan, Jordanian intelligence has been suspected of influencing many of the moderate rebel groups.²⁰ Reed notes another difference in Jordan's counterterrorism response—for the first time, it is using its military to help clamp down on terrorism, instead of relying exclusively on its security services. Jordan has increased security along its northern border with Syria and also has pressed educators, clerics, and other prominent individuals to denounce ISIL.²¹

Many Jordanian ISIL supporters have come from its Salafi community. Salafism is a literalist fundamentalist Sunni trend that rejects religious interpretations after the first three generations of Muslims.²² Both al-Qa'ida and ISIL are Salafi-jihadist organizations, in that they seek to replicate the path of early Muslims but also believe holy war is justified. Jordan's Salafi movement, estimated in early 2014 to number around 15,000 (of which 5,000 are Salafi-jihadists), developed in the 1970s, especially after prominent Salafi theorist Muhammad Nasir al-

¹⁸ Truis Hallberg Tønnesen, "Training on a Battlefield: Iraq as a Training Ground for Global Jihadis," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20.4 (2008), 557.

¹⁹ David Schenker, "Preventing ISIS Inroads in Jordan," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 3 September 2011, available from <<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/preventing-isis-inroads-in-jordan>>, accessed 20 September 2014.

²⁰ Aron Lund, "Southern Discomfort: The Insurgency in Daraa," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 31, 2013, available from <<http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=53474>>.

²¹ John Reed, "Jordan tackles homegrown Islamists as it joins attacks on Isis," *Financial Times*, 5 October 2014, available from <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/08fc027c-4a29-11e4-bc07-00144feab7de.html>>, accessed 18 October 2014.

²² Jacob Olidart, "The Politics of 'Quietist' Salafism," *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World*, Analysis Paper No. 18 (February 2015), available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/02/salafism-quietist-politics-olidart/olidart-final-web-version.pdf>>, accessed 13 March 2015, 7.

Din Albani settled in Jordan in 1979 and drew many of his followers to study alongside him.²³ Albani and his followers are considered quietist Salafis—they seek increased religiosity in society through educational reforms and preaching (*da'wa*) instead of through politics or violence.²⁴ As a result of Albani's influence, the great majority of Salafis in Jordan are “conservative, non-violent, and pro-government.”²⁵ Nevertheless, the activities of the non-quietist Salafi minority have invited regime surveillance and suspicion.

Wiktorowicz notes that the Salafi movement in Jordan and the rest of the Muslim world is split between those who support *takfir*, and those who do not.²⁶ *Takfir* is the practice of declaring other Muslims apostates; it is an extremist interpretation followed by only a tiny minority, most prominently in ISIL. Salafis can further be divided between those who condone jihad (without engaging in *takfir*) and those who condemn it. Prominent Salafis in Jordan like Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Qatada, and Abu Sayyaf have publicly promoted jihad in Syria (through non-ISIL groups like JN) but condemn *takfir*.

Although most scholars do not know exact numbers of each faction in Jordan's Salafi community, they note that the Salafi-jihadi ideology has grown in Jordan since the 1990s.²⁷ Inside Jordan, many Salafis see the Hashemite family as illegitimate and even unbelievers. They view state-organized Islam as corrupt, and usually work and preach outside the formal government system.²⁸ Jordan's security services have arrested and placed many Salafis under surveillance for connections to terrorism, pushing most Salafis—especially the more radical

²³ Quintan Wiktorowicz, “The Salafi Movement in Jordan,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32.3 (May 2000), 222; Mona Alami, “The New Generation of Jordanian Jihadi Fighters,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 18 February 2014, available from <<http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2014/02/18/new-generation-of-jordanian-jihadi-fighters/h17c>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

²⁴ Olidart, 20.

²⁵ Kirk H. Sowell, “Jordanian Salafism and the Jihad in Syria,” *Hudson Institute*, March 2015, available from <<http://www.hudson.org/research/11131-jordanian-salafism-and-the-jihad-in-syria>>, accessed 16 March 2015.

²⁶ Wiktorowicz, “The Salafi Movement in Jordan,” 223.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 226.

ones—to interact through informal social movements.²⁹ As a result of this informal nature, there is a “certain degree of spatial locality” to Salafi-jihadist recruitment networks, particularly in poorer areas with a strong Salafi presence like in Zarqa and Ma’an.³⁰ This informality makes the security services’ task more difficult in monitoring and censoring radical discourse and activities.

IV. PAST POLICIES AND CONTEXT

As previously mentioned, Jordan faced jihadist threats in past, including from individuals returning radicalized from conflict areas. By examining cases of Jordanians returning from fighting in Afghanistan and then Iraq and analyzing the regime’s responses, we can more effectively evaluate governmental policies against current threats.

Arab Afghan Returnees

The war in Afghanistan against the Soviets was a major turning point for the development of Salafi-jihadism in the Arab world. The Arab brigades in Afghanistan, which numbered about 5,000, consisted of Islamic activists from around the Middle East and led to the exchange of ideology, experiences, and ideas.³¹ Mujahideen rhetoric was a powerful recruitment tool, as pictures of Muslim fighters were displayed in thousands of articles in Islamic newspapers and magazines distributed throughout the Middle East and beyond. This propaganda introduced an “Afghan”—or more violent—approach to Islamic politics, in which the Arab brigades were willing to die for the cause of establishing an Islamic state.³²

Afghanistan was an important experience for these “Afghan Arabs” because many came away from the Soviets’ withdrawal believing that ridding the Arab world of Western influence

²⁹ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 127; Wagemakers, “A Terrorist Group that Never Was,” 64.

³⁰ Wiktorowicz, 139.

³¹ Milton-Edwards, 127; Mohammed M. Hafez, “Jihad After Iraq: Lessons from the Arab Afghans,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32.3 (2009), 75.

³² Milton-Edwards, 127.

could only happen through jihad and armed struggle.³³ According to Israeli journalist Ehud Ya'ari, "They [saw] Afghanistan not as the final Islamic victory, but as a springboard for the next step forward."³⁴ In addition to developing and strengthening a violent extremist ideology and creating a global network of radical adherents, the Afghanistan experience taught Afghan Arabs how to use weapons and explosives, and some came back with actual combat experience.³⁵ It is not particularly surprising that many would use these skills in several of the world's Islamist insurgencies in the next few decades.

Some of the Jordanians who returned from Afghanistan in the late 1980s and early 1990s posed a domestic security threat. Although Jordan and most other Arab countries placed no barriers on Arab Afghans returning home—unlike in later foreign wars—the GID was concerned about returning militants' potential radicalization as well as weapons and explosive expertise, and placed many under immediate surveillance.³⁶ Once home in Jordan, Arab Afghans—estimated to numbers in the low hundreds—faced major problems rehabilitating into society. The government provided no readjustment assistance, and the depressed economy made finding jobs difficult. A number of returnees joined violent Salafi-jihadi groups in Jordan in the early 1990s.³⁷

One such extremist group that threatened Jordan in the early 1990s was Muhammad's Army (Jaysh al-Muhammad), established in Jordan in 1988 by Samih Abu Zaydan, a Jordanian returnee from Afghanistan and a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Zaydan conceived the idea for the organization when he met with influential jihadi theorist Abdullah Azzam in Afghanistan.³⁸ The ultimate goal of Muhammad's Army was to establish an Islamic state, or

³³ Ibid., 128.

³⁴ Ibid., 127.

³⁵ Hafez, 77.

³⁶ Terrill, *Global Security Watch*, 126.

³⁷ Wagemakers, "A Terrorist Organization that Never Was," 61-62.

³⁸ Milton-Edwards, 127.

caliphate, through armed jihad in Jordan. When Zaydan returned to Jordan, Islamists from the moderate Islamic Action Front (IAF) had won seats in the 1989 elections, and other reforms were taking place under the umbrella of democratization, but Zaydan and Muhammad's Army wanted more radical change.³⁹

When Zaydan returned to Jordan, he recruited individuals for Muhammad's Army and created armed cells, each headed by one member. The covert group for the first few years focused on training, recruitment, and funding. According to later court transcripts about Muhammad's Army, money was obtained through collection at mosques throughout Jordan and used to buy firearms.⁴⁰ Even though the core of Muhammad's Army consisted of fewer than 20 cadres, it had already conducted its first attacks in Jordan by January 1991 against targets it considered inimical to its beliefs, including stores selling alcohol and members of Jordan's Christian community, including a rocket attack on Kamil Hadda, a Greek-Orthodox priest. Before group members were arrested in the summer of 1991, Muhammad's Army executed its final attack against a Jordanian intelligence officer who was investigating the group.⁴¹

In this period, Jordan did not have specific counterterrorism laws. Instead, the Jordanian Government used its security services to arrest and question more than 100 people connected to Muhammad's Army. Although this group clearly threatened Jordan's security, by September 1991 most of the detainees were released after allegations of torture. However, 18 men were sent to trial in Jordan's State Security Court, which was presided over by three military judges. The court sentenced eight men to death on November 25, 1991 on charges of plotting to "illegally change the country's constitution, possessing explosives and arms, attempting murder and terror acts, belonging to an illegal group, collecting funds for illegal organisations and using fake car

³⁹ Ibid., 128.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 128-9.

license plates.”⁴² In December 1991, King Hussein commuted the death sentences to life imprisonment in a goodwill gesture.⁴³

Muhammad’s Army demonstrated that Afghan returnees were a problem in Jordan and showed that not all Islamist groups in Jordan would cooperate with the regime.⁴⁴ Although these returnees threatened Jordan’s security, the government did not make any major policy, legal, or military changes to deal with the threat, in contrast to later periods. Instead, security services detained hundreds of civilians without charges or solid evidence throughout the early 1990s to cope with the terrorist threat posed by Jordanians returning from fighting in Afghanistan.⁴⁵

Zarqawi and al-Qa’ida in Iraq (AQI)

After the beginning of the war in Iraq in 2003, Jordan pursued a more active policy against returning fighters than it had in Afghanistan. Jordanians travelling to Iraq were usually arrested upon their return. Unlike most Jordanians drawn to Afghanistan, who had been poor and uneducated, those drawn to fight in Iraq were more educated and came from “good families,” according to a lawyer who represented many Jordanians accused of terrorism in Iraq.⁴⁶ However, most foreign fighters in Iraq, especially in later years, were used by AQI as suicide bombers, which reduced the numbers of returning fighters to Jordan.⁴⁷

In contrast to the Jordanian Government’s tacit acceptance of Jordanians traveling to fight in Afghanistan, it was firmly against Jordanian volunteers fighting in Iraq since they were fighting against a key ally, the United States. However, many Jordanians sympathized with the anti-U.S. insurgency. A June 2005 Pew poll reportedly “stunned the Jordanian Government”

⁴² Ibid., 129.

⁴³ Ibid., 130.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Nir Rosen, “Thinking Like a Jihadist: Iraq’s Jordanian Connection,” *World Policy Journal* 23.1 (Spring 2006), 14.

⁴⁷ Tønnessen, 558.

when it revealed that 60% of Jordanians trusted Osama bin Laden and 50% supported violence to get rid of non-Muslim influence.⁴⁸ Although this did not reflect equal support within Jordanian society for radical Islam, it reflected popular anger against the United States and sympathy for Iraq's Sunni tribes, many of which had familial ties to Jordan. Similar factors have accounted for Jordanians' support of moderate and radical opposition groups in Syria today.

Support for fighters in Iraq did not last, however. AQI, ISIL's antecedent led by Jordanian national Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, conducted a series of terrorist attacks in Jordan from 2002 to 2005, concluding with triple hotel bombings in Amman in 2005. Zarqawi's experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, combined with his imprisonment in Jordan in the 1990s, inspired his targeting of the country.⁴⁹ After returning from Afghanistan in the early 1990s, Zarqawi joined a Salafi group, Bay'at al-Imam, led by Salafi-jihadi cleric Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. The entire group was arrested in 1994 for planning an armed operation against Israel and smuggling weapons.⁵⁰ Zarqawi grew even more radical in prison; after his release in a 1999 amnesty ruling, he returned to Afghanistan to set up a training camp for Jordanian and Palestinian aspiring jihadists.⁵¹ In 2002, Zarqawi's nascent group (not formally a part of al-Qa'ida until October 2004) went to Iraq in anticipation of the upcoming U.S. invasion.

Unlike bin Laden, Zarqawi believed in attacking the "near enemy" (Arab nations) before the "far enemy" (the West). He masterminded sectarian attacks against Shi'as in Iraq, which helped plunge the country into a civil war.⁵² Zarqawi also sought to attack Jordan, from what

⁴⁸ Rosen, 14.

⁴⁹ Alami.

⁵⁰ Wagemakers, "A Terrorist Organization that Never Was," 66.

⁵¹ Tønnesen, 545; Mohammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Hanieh, *Tanthīm "al'dawla al-islāmīa": al-āzma as-sunnīa wa al-šara'a 'ala al-jihadīa al-'alimīa [The 'Islamic State' Organization: The Sunni Crisis and the Struggle of Global Jihadism]* (Amman, Jordan: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2015), 29.

⁵² Frederic Wehrey, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Jessica Watkins, Jeffrey Martini, and Robert A. Guffey, *The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War* (RAND: 2010), available from <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG892.pdf>, accessed 2 March 2015, 117.

many observers attributed to his “special hatred” for its monarchy and security services instead of from any strategic focus by al-Qa’ida.⁵³ Samih Asfour, the head of the GID at the height of Zarqawi’s attacks in Jordan, claimed AQI attempted to attack Jordanian and foreign targets in the country 12 times, including an unsuccessful rocket attack on a U.S. Navy ship in Aqaba and the 2005 hotel attacks.⁵⁴ With his death, however, the threat somewhat subsided.⁵⁵

V. TODAY’S THREAT

ISIL, like its predecessor AQI, has the potential to destabilize Jordan by increasing the threat of terrorist attacks and further radicalizing Jordan’s Salafist population.⁵⁶ In contrast to the threat from AQI, however, the threat from ISIL to Jordan is complicated by spillover effects of the conflict in Syria. Syria’s civil war, which began as a series of peaceful demonstrations that eventually descended into a multi-front ethnic and religious struggle, has significantly affected its neighbors through a spillover of violence, displacement, and economic instability. Jordan has been impacted along multiple dimensions, particularly with ISIL’s growth in membership and territory. A number of factors, evaluated below, have heightened Jordan’s threat perceptions toward the conflict in Syria and Iraq, particularly in the last year.

Geography and Proximity to Conflict

One of the unique factors influencing Jordan’s decision to build up its counterterrorism apparatus is the proximity of the civil war in Syria as well as ISIL’s base of operations in Iraq and Syria. Unlike the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, proximity is an issue in the current conflict since Jordan shares a border with both Syria and Iraq. In the Iraq war, most of the

⁵³ W. Andrew Terrill, “Jordanian National Security and the Future of Middle East Stability,” *Strategic Studies Institute* (January 2008), 45; Samih Asfoura, “Major-General Samih Asfoura, Director, Jordanian General Intelligence Department,” interview with Mohammed Najib, *IHS Jane’s Terrorism & Security Monitor*, 22 December 2005, 1.

⁵⁴ Asfoura, 2.

⁵⁵ Terrill, “Jordanian National Security,” 45.

⁵⁶ The Soufan Group, “IntelBrief: Homecoming: ISIS Returns to Jordan,” 25 June 2014, available from <<http://soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-homecoming-isis-returns-to-jordan>>, accessed 20 September 2014.

fighting remained contained in Iraq, yet the proximity of fighters to Jordan reduced the complexity of AQI carrying out strikes in Jordan.⁵⁷ The Jordanian Government perceived Zarqawi's attacks in Jordan as personal revenge against the country instead of official al-Qa'ida policy. Therefore, after Zarqawi's 2006 death, the threat from Iraq was seen as diminished.

Today, however, the threat to Jordan from ISIL and other extremist groups is amplified as a result of the more than 500-kilometer border (310 miles) it shares with Iraq and Syria, where internal fighting is raging.⁵⁸ Fishman notes that Jordan's "threat prioritization" changed significantly after the summer of 2014 since the border it shared with ISIL grew much longer as the group made significant gains in Iraq.⁵⁹ Further, ISIL has explicitly threatened Jordan and sees Jordan as a vital "linchpin" to uniting its caliphate. If ISIL were able to control parts of Jordan, it could open new routes for arms and fighters between Iraq and Syria.⁶⁰ ISIL leadership has called gaining control over Jordan as integral to broadening its wars on Damascus and Baghdad. In the summer of 2014, after its surprise attack on Mosul, ISIL announced on social media that it would "soon bring the Islamic State" to "brothers in Jordan."⁶¹

Jordan's proximity to ISIL particularly concerns the Jordanian Government because ISIL has explicitly rejected borders and seeks to establish a caliphate throughout the Middle East, including Jordan; furthermore, it is increasingly behaving like a state.⁶² According to Dr. Musa Shteivi, director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, Jordan may not be an immediate target of ISIL, but if the group succeeds in establishing control over Syria and

⁵⁷ Hafez, 87.

⁵⁸ Omari.

⁵⁹ Ben Fishman, "Jordan: Caught in the Middle Again," *Adelphi Series* 54.447-8 (December 2014), 125.

⁶⁰ Taylor Luck, "After success in Iraq and Syria, ISIL will find it tougher to crack Jordan," *The National*, 19 June 2014, available from <<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/after-success-in-iraq-and-syria-isil-will-find-it-tougher-to-crack-jordan>>, accessed 8 March 2015.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Musa Shteivi, interview by Elyse Monti and Sarah Patterson, 5 January 2015.

Iraq, Jordan will likely be next.⁶³ Similarly, journalist Randa Habib, who has covered the Middle East for 25 years, notes that ISIL “behaving like a state is different” from al-Qa’ida and other extremist threats Jordan has faced in the past, which makes it a much more dangerous and intractable threat.⁶⁴ In the areas under its control, ISIL operates courts and collects taxes. The group also administers services including education, health care, and telecommunications.⁶⁵ As Habib noted, “ISIL is at the door of Jordan.”⁶⁶

ISIL’s proximity is also concerning because the group has been able to conduct hit-and-run attacks along Jordan’s border. In summer 2014, ISIL took control of the Turaibil border crossing for several hours before the Iraqi army regained control.⁶⁷ In December 2014, the group destroyed at least six Jordanian border control posts on the Jordan-Iraq border. There have also been several attempted border crossings from Syria into Jordan; however, it is unclear if these “infiltration attempts” were perpetrated by members of ISIL or other jihadist groups.⁶⁸

In addition to ISIL operating in areas bordering Jordan, JN, al-Qa’ida’s affiliate in Syria, is located in some of the same areas as ISIL in Syria and also threatens Jordan’s security. While JN does not want to establish a caliphate immediately, it still believes the Jordanian Government works too closely with the West, and it may conduct attacks in Jordan if given the opportunity. Elements of JN are also dangerously close to Jordan, including in Dara’a, which is located in southwestern Syria just north of the Jordanian border.⁶⁹ Given JN and ISIL’s proximity to

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Randa Habib, interview by Elyse Monti and Sarah Patterson, 4 January 2015.

⁶⁵ Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants,” *The Atlantic* (March 2015), available from <<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

⁶⁶ Habib.

⁶⁷ Abdul-Rahman Abu Sneineh, “ISIS sets its sights on Jordan,” *Alakhbar English*, 24 June 2014, available from <<http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/isis-sets-its-sights-jordan>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

⁶⁸ Erin Banco, “ISIS Destroys at Least Six Border Control Stations on Jordan-Iraq Border,” *The International Business Times*, 16 December 2014, available from <<http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-destroys-least-six-border-control-stations-jordan-iraq-border-1759922>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

⁶⁹ Habib.

Jordan, along with ISIL's expansionist ideology, the Jordanian Government has had to increase its security and take other counterterrorism measures in order to protect itself.

Domestic Sympathy and Support for Extremist Groups

The Jordanian Government's concern about the level of domestic sympathy and support for extremist groups in Iraq and Syria has contributed to its decision to increase counterterrorism measures within its own country and against external groups. Retired Jordanian Major General Adeb Sarayreh has stated that JN, along with ISIL and other radical organizations, pose a direct internal threat to Jordan, citing the "considerable" number of supporters and sympathizers they have in Jordan and the possibility for terrorist attacks in the country.⁷⁰ Inside Jordan, there is a high level of support for jihad against Assad, even from quietist Salafis.⁷¹ These supporters could provide safe haven for extremists, help increase recruitment, or carry out an attack themselves.

There is some domestic support and a certain degree of sympathy for ISIL in Jordan. A Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) poll in December 2014 found that only 61% of Jordanians viewed ISIL as a terrorist organization.⁷² In October 2014, former Prime Minister Marouf al-Bakhit estimated that between 2,000 and 4,000 Jordanians ascribe to the extremist takfiri (excommunicationist) current of Islam espoused by ISIL, and around 1,300 have fought for ISIL in Iraq and Syria.⁷³ Further, in June 2014 dozens of men in Ma'an demonstrated in support of ISIL, backing "the [ISIL] conquest of Iraq," and called for the removal of the borders established

⁷⁰ Muath Freij and Raed Omari, "Jordanians show support to Kingdom's joining anti-terror coalition," *Jordan Times*, 24 September 2014, available from <<http://jordantimes.com/jordanians-show-support-to-kingdoms-joining-anti-terror-coalition>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

⁷¹ Joas Wagemakers, "Jordanian Jihadis and Syria," interview with Aron Lund, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 31, 2013, available from <<http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=53476>>.

⁷² Center for Strategic Studies (CSS), "Istiḥlā' lil-rā'i al-'ām: hawal b'ad al-qaḍāyā al-rāhina al-waṭanīa wa al-iqlīmīa [Public opinion poll: About some current national and regional issues]," September 2014, available from <<http://www.jcss.org/Photos/635478413205219966.pdf>>, accessed 2 March 2015, 38.

⁷³ "Akthar min 1300 urdani yuqatilun ma' da'esh fi al-'iraq [More than 1300 Jordanians are fighting with ISIL in Iraq]," *Al-Arabiya*, 19 October 2014, available from <<http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/iraq/2014/10/19/ال-عراق-في-داعش-مع-ع-يقاتلون-أردن-ي-1300-من-أكثـر>>, accessed 23 Feb. 2015.

by the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, hardcore ISIL supporters in Jordan are a tiny—if vocal—minority, and number in the low thousands out of a population of 6.5 million.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, support for ISIL in Ma'an and other regions persist, despite ISIL's brutal execution of captured Jordanian Air Force pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh in early 2015. In December 2014, one of the leading ISIL activists in Ma'an, who preferred to be referred to as Abu Abdullah, stated that he and others were working to build their base and reach out to people at work, in homes, in mosques, and in the streets to call them to "the real Islam."⁷⁶ Abu Abdullah believes he will eventually have enough militants to take over Jordan; while this may seem like a stretch, extremists are gaining momentum. During the summer of 2014, Zarqa, Ma'an, and several other cities in Jordan witnessed Salafi-jihadi marches where protestors claimed support for ISIL. ISIL's strongest supporters in Jordan are Salafi-jihadis, whose number has doubled to at least 9,000 members since the 2011 outbreak of the Arab Spring uprisings. According to Hassan Abu Haniyeh, an expert on Islamic movements, Salafi-jihadis used to be contained to a few towns, but "now you find jihadists everywhere in the kingdom."⁷⁷ ISIL is also gaining support from some members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. According to Ibrahim al-Hmeidi, a local school supervisor in Ma'an, the number of Salafi-jihadis is exceeding the number of Brotherhood members there.⁷⁸ While the actual number of dedicated ISIL supporters in Jordan may be relatively small, they have the potential to cause problems for the Jordanian Government.

Although support for ISIL in Jordan remains limited, support for JN appears higher. A December 2014 CSS poll that asked Jordanians about ISIL found that only 60% of Jordanians

⁷⁴ Sneineh.

⁷⁵ Mohammed Daraghmen and Karin Laub, "In this marginalized Jordanian town, support for ISIS grows," *Haaretz*, 6 December 2014, available from <<http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/1.630270>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

viewed JN as a terrorist organization.⁷⁹ Although this number is worrying given JN's affiliation with al-Qa'ida and its ideological closeness to ISIL, it is not particularly surprising since many well-known Arab religious clerics supportive of JN are Jordanian, including Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Qatada, and Abu Sayyaf (Mohammed al-Shalabi).⁸⁰ JN's spiritual leader, Sami al-Aridi is Jordanian.⁸¹ Jordanian religious clerics have also grown more influential in JN as the conflict between JN and ISIL grew.⁸²

One of the most prominent JN supporters has been Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a Palestinian-born cleric and leading Salafist spiritual figure in Jordan. He is widely quoted in jihadist literature and he served as an early mentor to Zarqawi.⁸³ Maqdisi recently finished a five-year prison sentence in Jordan in 2014 on suspicion of helping terrorists. However, both in and outside of prison, he has been active in spreading a message of support of JN. Before ISIL took Mosul in the summer of 2014, Maqdisi condemned the actions of ISIL, calling it a "deviant organization," and urged ISIL members in Syria to abandon the group and join JN instead.⁸⁴ Since Maqdisi was able to issue some of these statements from prison, some think the Jordanian Government gave Maqdisi and other religious authorities certain privileges with the idea of guiding JN's rhetoric so it agrees with Jordanian interests.⁸⁵

Other prominent Salafi clerics in Jordan have expressed support for JN over ISIL, like Abu Qatada, who was acquitted of terrorism charges in Jordan in 2014. Like Maqdisi, Abu

⁷⁹ Center for Strategic Studies (CSS), "Istiqlāl lil-rā'i al-‘ām: ḥawal ḥakūmat al-daktūr ‘abdāllah an-nasūr al-thānīa ba‘d murūr ‘ām wa nuṣf ‘ala teshkīliha wa b‘aḍ al-qaḍāiā al-rāhina [Public opinion poll: About the second government of Doctor Abdullah Ensour after a year and half and some current issues]," December 2014, available from <<http://jcss.org/Photos/635550104895218464.pdf>>, accessed 8 April 2015, 22.

⁸⁰ Suhaib Anjarini, "Al-urdañiyūn fī ‘jabhat al-nuṣra’: ḥiṣat al-malak [Jordanians in Jabhat al-Nusrah: King's share]," *Al-Akhbar*, 16 January 2015, available from <<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/223939>>, accessed 7 March 2015.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Islamic State finds fertile ground in Jordan," *BBC*, 24 September 2014, available from <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29335811>>, accessed 8 March 2015.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Anjarini.

Qatada has issued fatwas against ISIL.⁸⁶ Similarly, Jordanian cleric Abu Sayyaf has told media and jihadist sources that he “actively participated in establishing al-Nusrah Front.”⁸⁷ These clerics’ public endorsements of JN have likely caused some Jordanians to support JN over ISIL.

Social Media and the Internet

Extremist groups’ use of social media is a major factor contributing to Jordan’s decision to ramp up its counterterrorism efforts. The Internet did not play a role in recruiting and spreading the message to Muslims to come fight in Afghanistan. While the Internet was a way for groups like AQI to publicize their message and recruit individuals to fight against the coalition in Iraq, the use of social media by extremist groups is a relatively new phenomenon, one that several groups have embraced. ISIL is no exception and has a particularly robust social media campaign that has been effective in radicalizing and recruiting individuals to their cause. The ISIL threat to Jordan is different from past threats because of the “social media effect.” Recruiters do not have to be physically located in Jordan or other countries to recruit new members.⁸⁸ King Abdullah II acknowledged ISIL’s powerful social media apparatus in a December 2014 interview with Charlie Rose when he stated, “[ISIL has] been very successful in new media, in reaching out to youth all over the world, frustrated people, who are young people without jobs and being able to create or recruit the other part of it.”⁸⁹

ISIL is one of the pioneering extremist groups in the use of social media. It runs a large and sophisticated social media campaign and uses social media and messaging services including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter to disseminate its message, enhance its credibility in

⁸⁶ Hazem al-Amin, “Abu Qatada acquitted of conspiracy in Jordan,” *Al Monitor*, 27 June 2014, available from <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/06/jordan-abu-qatada-acquitted-isis-advance-iraq.html>>, accessed 8 March 2015.

⁸⁷ Anjarini.

⁸⁸ Habib.

⁸⁹ King Abdullah II, “His Majesty King Abdullah II’s Interview on PBS’s Charlie Rose – Transcript,” 6 December 2014, available from <<http://usvisit2014en.rhcjo.com/hmkiicharlierosetranscript/>>, accessed 24 March 2015.

competing with al-Qa'ida for leadership of the global jihad movement, and aid in fundraising and recruitment.⁹⁰ ISIL also uses social media to disseminate graphic images to intimidate and encourage sectarian violence between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, as ISIL has publicized mass executions of Shiite militia soldiers and government officials it captures via social media.⁹¹

ISIL has also effectively used Twitter to spread its message and ideology. In early June 2014, when ISIL was seizing Mosul, the group posted almost 40,000 tweets in one day, which included updates on their progress.⁹² In addition to tweets by official ISIL members, Internet users not affiliated with ISIL enhanced the group's presence on Twitter by retweeting the group's messages. According to author and analyst J.M. Berger, ISIL likely has thousands of fighters on social media, along with thousands of supporters online.⁹³ ISIL also cleverly adds hashtags like #Ebola and #WorldCup, which have nothing to do with the group, to its tweets to reach a wider audience.⁹⁴

ISIL is unique from other extremist groups in its use of the Internet because ISIL is the only terrorist group to have developed a Twitter application. In summer 2014, ISIL developed a Twitter app for Android phones called "The Dawn of Glad Tidings," which provided information and news on ISIL. Users of the app agreed to let ISIL send tweets to and from a user's account, amplifying the group's message. One Twitter account can sometimes broadcast ISIL tweets to hundreds or thousands of other accounts.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Alexander Trowbridge, "Jihadists on the move in Iraq with weapons, hashtags," *CBS News*, 16 June 2014, available from <<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/isis-jihadists-on-move-in-iraq-using-weapons-and-twitter-hashtags>>, accessed 16 November 2014; Robert Hannigan, "The web is a terrorist's command-and-control network of choice," *Financial Times*, 3 November 2014, available from <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/c89b6c58-6342-11e4-8a63-00144feabdc0.html>>, accessed 11 November 2014.

⁹¹ Trowbridge.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Hannigan.

⁹⁵ Trowbridge.

Even actions which would seem to discourage recruitment, like ISIL's February 2015-released video via Twitter in which the group burned alive captured Jordanian Air Force pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh in a cage, has emboldened the group. While many Jordanians were disgusted and appalled with ISIL's brutal murder of Kasasbeh, some Jordanians still back ISIL despite the pilot's killing.⁹⁶ A number of Jordanians who remain supportive of ISIL reside in Ma'an, a hotbed of support for ISIL. From Ma'an alone, about 300 men have traveled to fight in Syria in the past year. Radicals see Jordan's government as the enemy for participating in airstrikes against ISIL, likely contributing to their acceptance of Kasasbeh's killing.⁹⁷

ISIL's dissemination of the video was meant, in part, to energize and motivate the group's members and to prove to them and potential recruits that ISIL can strike back against the coalition's airstrikes.⁹⁸ The barbaric method and taping of Kasasbeh's murder was meant to maximize drama and to show ISIL's hatred of the West and those who are aligned with it.⁹⁹ ISIL likely also released the video to improve recruitment, since the coalition airstrikes are killing ISIL fighters who are not seen dying or fighting, which the group could use as valuable recruitment material.¹⁰⁰ Clearly, ISIL's use of social media to distribute its propaganda and recruit individuals is an extremely concerning factor bolstering the group's penetration in Jordan.

Individuals Radicalized Abroad or in Jordan

Similar to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, Jordan fears the threat from radicalized individuals entering Jordan to recruit individuals or carry out attacks, whether from Jordanians returning radicalized, radicalized refugees, or other foreign fighters. Although the GID is one of

⁹⁶ Saba Abu Farha, "Many Jordanians back ISIL despite pilot's killing," *USA Today*, 8 February 2015, available from <<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/02/08/jordan-islamic-state-support/22988539/>>, accessed 24 March 2015.

⁹⁷ Abu Farha.

⁹⁸ The Soufan Group, "IntelBrief: Responding to the Islamic State," 4 February 2015, available from <<http://soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbrief-responding-to-the-islamic-state/>>, accessed 24 March 2015.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

the Middle East's most sophisticated and effective intelligence services, and it has been able to halt most homegrown terror attacks and arrest Jordanians returning from fighting in Syria and Iraq, the 2005 Amman bombings revealed that major attacks could still slip by it.¹⁰¹

With so many refugees living in Jordan's major cities, the Jordanian Government fears that radicalized refugees may pose an internal, if not homegrown, threat to security. King Abdullah II has pointed out that some "bad apples" may slip across Jordan's border under the guise of refugees and pose a threat to the country.¹⁰² The king stated the Jordanian Government vets as many people as it can who cross the border, but admitted the government may have missed a few.¹⁰³ Some of these refugees may have been radicalized before their arrival, and may be arranged in groups of "sleeper cells" that could pose a direct threat to Jordan's security.¹⁰⁴

Extremist groups have used the tactic of hiding among refugees in the past. For instance, the suicide bombers who perpetrated the 2005 hotel bombings in Amman were Iraqi, and were able to "hide among the influx of Iraqi refugees to Jordan" during the war."¹⁰⁵ Zarqawi used Iraqis to carry out attacks in Jordan because, "unlike Jordanians with known family and tribal ties," they did not immediately catch the attention of the GID.¹⁰⁶ On one hand, this points to the GID's effectiveness in preventing homegrown terrorism—but at the same time, it reveals a major flaw in their counterterrorism tactics.

¹⁰¹ Curtis Ryan, "Jordanian Foreign Policy and the Arab Spring," *Middle East Policy* 21.1 (Spring 2014), 148.

¹⁰² King Abdullah II.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Omari.

¹⁰⁵ Nikita Malik and Abdullah Shami, "Jordan: The Jewel in the ISIS Crown," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 24 June 2014, available from <<http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=55995>>, accessed 8 March 2015.

¹⁰⁶ International Crisis Group, 14.

The more time refugees spend out of school and in refugee camps, the more the government fears that they will become vulnerable to terrorist recruiters.¹⁰⁷ Refugee support for JN has grown in parallel with the group's successes in Syria.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Syrian fighters in the camps reportedly move easily across the border to fight in Syria by bribing drivers to transport them at night.¹⁰⁹ If Syrian refugees can move easily across the border to fight, it is not a stretch to believe that Jordanians can do so as well.

In addition to refugees, the Jordanian Government is extremely concerned with Jordanians who are fighting in Syria returning to Jordan radicalized and with the skills to execute an attack. If the Jordanian fighters perceive themselves as successful in Syria, they will probably want a more active political role in Jordan, and could use violence as a way to gain attention for their grievances.¹¹⁰

There are numerous Jordanians fighting with JN in Syria; if they are able to overthrow the Assad regime, the group may employ similarly violent tactics against the Jordanian Government. Jordanians have played an important role in JN since the group was created. Jordanian Salafi-jihadism was key in mobilizing Jordanian "emigrants" and recruiting them into JN from the beginning. Around that same time, ISIL emir Baghdadi was sending important Jordanian jihadist figures, including Mustafa Saleh Abdel Latif (Abu Anas al-Sahaba) and Iyad al-Toubasi (Abu Julaibib) to Jordan "to organize volunteers and work on recruiting Jordanian

¹⁰⁷ Linda Hindi, "When the boys come back from Syria," *Jordan Times*, 8 June 2014, available from <<http://jordantimes.com/when-the-boys-come-back-from-syria>>, accessed 20 September 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Slobodan Lekic, "Refugees see al-Qaida-linked militants as best option for Syria's future," *Stars and Stripes*, 6 February 2015, available from <<http://www.stripes.com/news/refugees-see-al-qaida-linked-militants-as-best-option-for-syria-s-future-1.328101>>, accessed 23 March 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Sarah A. Tobin, interview by Elyse Monti and Sarah Patterson, 26 February 2015.

¹¹⁰ Alami.

immigrants.”¹¹¹ While individual Jordanians were trickling into Syria to fight, they did not start arriving into Syria in waves until July 2011.¹¹²

After the major split between JN and ISIL, Jordanians make up “the lion’s share of power” in JN’s chain of command.”¹¹³ For example, many of JN’s most important military leaders in Dara‘a are Jordanian, including Abu al-Miqdad al-Urduni and the recently deceased Anwar Abu Faris, as well as the Dara‘a emir, Abu Umar al-Urduni. Jordanians are also prominent in the Ghouta area, where Abu Khadija al-Urduni is the general judge and Abu al-Baraa is the emir of Western Ghouta. In Jordan itself, Salafi clerics in Zarqa have helped recruit fighters for JN.¹¹⁴

Economic Hardships and Refugee Burden

Jordan’s poor economic situation, in part due to abrupt population growth from the high number of Syrian refugees flooding into the country, must be counted as another factor contributing to the Jordanian Government’s decision to enact additional counterterrorism measures. If ISIL continues to spread its territory and influence, Jordan can expect more refugees to arrive in the country and strain its economy and social services. Moreover, Jordan’s longstanding economic morass may contribute to a situation in which poor, disaffected Jordanian youths see ISIL as a way to earn a decent wage and defend their religion, although of course the link between poverty and terrorism is not direct.¹¹⁵

Jordan’s Syrian refugee population threatens its economy and internal stability. As of January 2015, Jordan hosts almost 650,000 Syrian refugees registered with the UN (in addition to 58,000 Iraqis), and the government believes that up to 700,000 unregistered refugees may be

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Shteivi.

living there as well.¹¹⁶ As only 20% of registered refugees are living in refugee camps, with the rest mostly located in urban areas, Jordan's economy and social services are severely strained. Energy and real estate costs have risen and Jordan's education, health, and labor services are under severe pressure.¹¹⁷ Refugees are so pervasive in Jordan's cities that, as Randa Habib noted, "there isn't a single shop in Amman that does not have a Syrian."¹¹⁸ This is particularly notable since refugees are not legally allowed to work in Jordan, so most Syrian workers are in informal work and driving down already low wages in sectors such as construction and service.¹¹⁹

Although Jordan faced similar economic pressures from Iraq refugees in the 2000s, the current situation is significantly worse. From 2003 to 2010, half a million Iraqi refugees entered Jordan, putting some pressure on resources such as education, subsidized food, and gas supplies.¹²⁰ As is now the case with Syrian refugees, most Iraqi refugees settled in urban areas instead of refugee camps, which drove up housing costs. However, many of the Iraqi refugees that settled in Jordan after 2003 were in the middle and upper class (lower class Iraqis predominantly went to Syria), and did not place major demands on social services.¹²¹

Currently, Jordan is unable to meet much of the economic burden from refugees on its own. So far, international aid has been insufficient; government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani has claimed that foreign assistance covers "only about 30% of the costs borne by the Jordanian Government."¹²² Furthermore, this will likely be a long-term problem—Taher Masri, Jordan's first Palestinian Prime Minister, expects many Syrians to remain permanently in Jordan

¹¹⁶ Fishman, 125; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile – Jordan," January 2015, available from <<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486566>>, accessed 20 February 2015.

¹¹⁷ Fishman, 125.

¹¹⁸ Habib.

¹¹⁹ Jose Ciro Martinez, "Bread is Life: The Intersection of Welfare Politics and Emergency Aid in Jordan," *Middle East Report* 44.272 (Fall 2014), available from <<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer272/bread-life>>.

¹²⁰ Wehrey et al., 40; Terrill, "Jordanian National Security," 31.

¹²¹ Wehrey et al., 98.

¹²² Martinez.

and other host countries, creating a situation echoing the Palestinian diaspora in which families are split across borders.¹²³ Thus, Jordan will face a heavy refugee burden for many years to come, and it is unlikely that it will be able to easily adjust without significant economic growth and diversification.

Jordan's long-standing economic woes are merely compounded by the economic burden of hosting Syrian refugees. King Abdullah II noted in December 2014 that Jordan suffers from poverty and unemployment and stated, "The economy is struggling, mainly because of the large number of refugees."¹²⁴ A Congressional Research Service report listed many of Jordan's economic problems, particularly high unemployment (30% among the youth), frustration over corruption and the need for connections (*wasta*) to access good jobs, and mandated International Monetary Fund reforms that have led to unpopular subsidy cuts in vital goods like electricity and gas.¹²⁵ A Gallup poll in December 2012 noted that 73% of Jordanians described themselves as "struggling" economically, the highest percentage by over 10 percentage points since 2008.¹²⁶

Beyond the fear of refugee radicalization, the economic pressure generated by Syrian refugees could have major implications for Jordan's economy. Echoing fears from the refugee crisis during the Iraq War, some Jordanians fear that the appeal of fighting for groups in Syria will increase as Jordan's economic woes continue.¹²⁷ In September, King Abdullah II admitted that ISIL is rumored to pay as much as \$1,000 per month to foreign fighters, which is the equivalent of a middle or upper class income in Jordan.¹²⁸

¹²³ Taher Masri, interview by Elyse Monti and Sarah Patterson, 6 January 2015.

¹²⁴ King Abdullah II.

¹²⁵ Jeremy M. Sharp, "Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service (CRS)*, Report RL33546 (2 December 2014), 9-10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁷ Wehrey et al., 97; Taher Masri.

¹²⁸ Erin McClam, "ISIS Pays Foreign Fighters \$1,000 a Month: Jordan King," *NBC News*, 20 September 2014, available from <<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/isis-pays-foreign-fighters-1-000-month-jordan-king-n209026>>, accessed 22 February 2015.

Summary: Heightened Threat Perceptions

Threat perceptions are difficult to quantify, particularly with so many factors in play. However, as shown in the sections above, each of the factors identified as shaping the nature of Jordan's security threats are more complex than before and help account for Jordan's raised threat perceptions as a result of the Syrian conflict and ISIL. These factors were all present from 2011 through 2013, but the threat has grown considerably more complex in the past year. ISIL swept through large parts of Iraq, fighting near the border intensified, and millions of Jordanians were horrified and terrorized by a released video of ISIL burning a captured Jordanian pilot alive. Furthermore, most Jordanians travelling across its northern borders to fight since summer 2014 have gone to ISIL, which has explicitly called for expanding into Jordan and thus poses an immediate threat. Although Jordan has faced terrorist threats in the past, the threat today is seen as less contained and more damaging to the regional order, even more so since last year.¹²⁹

Below is a chart summarizing these findings and comparing the five identified factors across three time periods. "Somewhat" indicates that part or all of the factor was present, but was not as impactful to the Jordanian Government threat perceptions as it has been during the 2014-2015 time period.

	Early 1990s Afghanistan	Early 2000s Iraq	2014-2015 Iraq & Syria
Proximity to Conflict	No	Somewhat	Yes
Domestic Sympathy/ Support for Extremist Groups	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Media & The Internet	No	Somewhat	Yes
Threat from Radicalized Individuals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Economic Hardship & Refugee Burden	No	Somewhat	Yes

¹²⁹ Shteivi.

VI. JORDAN'S POLICY RESPONSES

Due to the presence of all five factors and the threat posed by ISIL, Jordan has instituted several new policies and amended old laws. The government's response to current threats from extremist groups is greater than its response to similar threats in the past, mainly due to the severity of the present situation. While the threat is certainly greater than it was in past periods, in part due to ISIL's focus on the "near" rather than the "far" enemy, the magnitude of the policy responses is largely due to King Abdullah II's perception of the threat emanating from extremist groups operating in Iraq and Syria, namely ISIL. The king likely sees today's threat from ISIL as greater than any previous threats from extremist groups in Jordan's history, as demonstrated in his comments about and actions taken in response to ISIL.

King Abdullah II has called war against ISIL a critical fight for Jordan, despite significant popular ambivalence to Jordan's participation in the international coalition against ISIL until the death of Lt. Kasasbeh.¹³⁰ Last summer, the king stated in an interview that he considered the war against ISIL to be more Jordan's fight than the United States'.¹³¹ In another interview in December 2014 with Charlie Rose, the king called for the Islamic world to take the lead and responsibility for confronting Islamic extremism. The king noted that a "strategic, holistic approach" is necessary throughout the Middle East, and Muslims need to "take ownership" and "start fighting back."¹³² Moreover, the king has been the driving force behind much of the government's enhanced counterterrorism policies over the past year, which have included legislative, military and security, and enhanced public and social measures. King

¹³⁰ Hassan Hassan, "Jordan's battle against ISIL no longer 'someone else's war'," *The National*, 4 February 2015, available from <<http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/jordans-battle-against-isil-no-longer-someone-elses-war>>, accessed 1 April 2015.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² King Abdullah II.

Abdullah II's role in Jordanian policymaking cannot be overstated. Most analysts view Jordan's parliament as essentially a rubber stamp to the king.¹³³

Legal Measures

Jordan's counterterrorism laws are relatively new, despite that Jordan has faced terrorism threats for decades. There were no anti-terrorism laws in Jordan prior to 2006, so before these laws were passed, Jordan used its penal code to deal with terrorism-related issues.¹³⁴ In 2006, Jordan passed its first anti-terrorism law, which the government stated was necessary to prevent attacks on Jordanian soil, in response to the 2005 al-Qa'ida triple hotel bombings in Amman which killed 60 people.¹³⁵ In addition to the 2006 anti-terrorism law, Jordan also introduced a "Fatwa Law," giving only clerics sanctioned by the state the right to issue fatwas.¹³⁶

The 2006 law remained unchanged until June 2014, when the law was amended to widen the state's authority to fight terrorism. The new amendments were passed largely due to the increasing numbers of Jordanians and foreigners traveling to fight in Syria, and criminalized "speech deemed critical to the king, government officials, and institutions, as well as Islam and speech considered defamatory of others." It also amended the definition of terrorism to include "disturbing [Jordan's] relations with a foreign state."¹³⁷ Jordan can now charge networks that support terrorist groups or spread ideas of committing acts of terrorism. Jordan's amended laws can also be applied to media outlets or websites, but Jordan's Information Minister Mohammed

¹³³ Fishman, 131; Habib.

¹³⁴ "Jordan's parliament approves country's first anti-terrorism law," *The Associated Press*, 28 August 2006, available from <<http://www.kcchronicle.com/2006/08/28/jordansparliament-approves-countrys-first-anti-terrorism-law/aqrp5s7/archive-749698290320.txt>>, accessed 19 October 2014.

¹³⁵ Gambrell.

¹³⁶ International Peace Institute (IPI), "A New Approach?: Deradicalization Programs and Counterterrorism," June 2010, available from <http://www.ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/a_new_approach_epub.pdf>, accessed 11 October 2014, 6.

¹³⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2015: Events of 2014* (2015), available from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/wr2015_web.pdf>, accessed 2 May 2015, 319.

al-Momani noted that a judge would ultimately determine who was guilty.¹³⁸ (See Appendix for a more thorough comparison of the language).

The timing of the new amendments reflected the government's increased anxiety about ISIL and the conflict in Syria. Until early 2014, returning fighters were not automatically arrested upon crossing the border back into Jordan, especially if they were first-time offenders who expressed regret about their actions.¹³⁹ Later in the year, Jordan began closing many of its border crossings with Syria in response to security concerns, and it has also started pressuring many Syrians refugees to settle in camps instead of cities.¹⁴⁰ Those actions indicate that security concerns grew in comparison to other calculations.

Jordan has already prosecuted several individuals under its newly amended anti-terrorism law. Jordanians returning to Jordan after fighting in Syria have been arrested and charged with "disturbing relations with a friendly nation."¹⁴¹ Between September and October 2014 alone, at least 60 people were arrested for jihadi activities, including posting videos and messages sympathetic to ISIL on social media, in a security force crackdown.¹⁴² Sentences have varied widely for those convicted. In December 2014, Jordan's State Security Court gave five youths, arrested in August, one to two years in prison for either joining ISIL or "using the World Wide Web to promote the ideas" of the group; a judicial source noted that the court had lessened the original sentences of three years each to give the defendants a chance to reform themselves due

¹³⁸ Gambrell.

¹³⁹ Suleiman al-Khalidi. "Jordan arrests influential al Qaeda scholar for 'incitement'," *Reuters*, 27 October 2014, available from <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/27/us-jordan-islamist-idUSKBN0IG1VS20141027>>, accessed 28 October 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Ian Black, "Patience running out in Jordan after influx of Syrian refugees," *The Guardian*, 1 December 2014, available from <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/01/jordan-syrian-refugees-patience-running-out>>, accessed 25 March 2015.

¹⁴¹ Anjarini.

¹⁴² Reed.

to their youth.¹⁴³ In February 2015, in contrast, the State Security Court gave a number of Jordanians five to fifteen years for joining or recruiting for terrorist groups, with charges added on for importing weapons and ammunition.¹⁴⁴

Military and Security Changes

In addition to increasing its legal authorities, Jordan has established military operations and a heightened security campaign over the last year in response to the threats posed by ISIL. In the past when Jordan has faced terrorist threats, it has always used the security services to clamp down on terrorism, but the military element is relatively new. Jordan is currently fighting a two-pronged war through an enhanced security campaign and military action.¹⁴⁵ Its military response consists of multiple components—increasing border security; training of moderate anti-Assad forces; and direct military action by participating in the international anti-ISIL coalition.

Jordan has increased its security along its border with Syria to prevent extremists from crossing into Jordan through the establishment of the Jordan Border Security Program, which involves sensors in order to prevent infiltration. Jordan's Special Operations Forces, such as the 71st Counterterrorism Battalion, are widely considered the best in the region.¹⁴⁶ In addition to beefing up security, Jordan's counterterrorism forces have been pressuring educators, clerics, and other individuals in Jordan to denounce ISIL.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ "Al-sijn li-5 urdaniyin adayanu bil-iltihāq wa al-tarwīj li-tanthīm da'esh [Prison for 5 Jordanians convicted of joining and promoting ISIS]," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 9 December 2014, available from <<http://aawsat.com/node/238871>>, accessed 3 March 2015.

¹⁴⁴ Muhammad Al-Da'ma, "Al-Urdun: aḥkam bil-sijn 'ala 'adad min anṣār 'da'esh' [Jordan: Prison sentences for a number of ISIS members]," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 16 February 2015, available from <<http://aawsat.com/node/291491>>, accessed 3 March 2015.

¹⁴⁵ Reed.

¹⁴⁶ Terrill, "Jordanian National Security," 56; The Soufan Group, "IntelBrief: Jordan's Counterterrorism Program," 27 August 2013, available from <<http://soufangroup.com/tsg-intelbriefs-jordans-counterterrorism-program>>, accessed on 20 September 2014.

¹⁴⁷ Reed.

Jordan has played an active role in assisting and training moderate anti-Assad rebel groups. The Jordanian military has significant expertise training other countries' police and special forces in the past.¹⁴⁸ Leaders of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in Amman said they have received light arms and modest financial aid from Jordan for more than a year. In addition to weapons and money, the FSA has received communications equipment from the Amman operations center, which is composed of advisors from the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and some European countries.¹⁴⁹ Jordan's "front" against ISIL has also expanded to Iraq, as government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani officially confirmed in March 2015 that it will train Syrian and Iraqi tribes and Iraqi Kurdish forces against ISIL.¹⁵⁰

The Jordanian military is also participating in the international air coalition, which began airstrikes in Syria and Iraq in September 2014. Beyond its pilots directly engaging in airstrikes, it has allowed the U.S.-led coalition to use Jordanian training centers, airfields, and its state security service to fight ISIL.¹⁵¹ This comes as no surprise, since the U.S. provides Jordan's armed forces with approximately \$300 million annually. The Jordanian Government has also allowed the United States to train moderate Syrian rebels inside Jordan.¹⁵²

Jordan's military activities against ISIL escalated significantly after the latter released a video gruesomely showing its fighters burning alive Jordanian pilot Lt. Moaz al-Kasasbeh after his capture by the group when his plane crashed in Syria in December 2014. Lt. Kasasbeh's death can be seen in many ways as a turning point in Jordan's counter-ISIL operations. Jordan increased the number of air sorties it flew against the group in both Syria and Iraq, and public

¹⁴⁸ Ryan, 148.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Muhammad al-Da'ma, "Al-urdun yudarib 'ashā'ir sūrīya wa 'irāqīya wa quwāt kurdīya li-mūwājihat 'da'esh' [Jordan trains Syrian and Iraqi tribes and Kurdish forces to confront 'Daesh']," *Asharq al-Awsat*, 23 March 2015, available from <<http://aawsat.com/node/319686>>, accessed 23 March 2015.

¹⁵¹ Reed.

¹⁵² Schenker, "Preventing ISIS Inroads in Jordan."

outrage has given the government a “rally around the flag” public opinion boost to carry out further military and counterterrorism measures.¹⁵³

Social Messaging Measures

Jordan’s current counterterrorism posture also includes specific social and public messaging aspects that were either non-existent, in the case of Afghan returnees, or not as robust as they are today. Jordanian security services have recently admitted they are trying to control the way in which religion is distributed by attempting to counteract ISIL in social media and sermons. Jordanian Information Minister Mohammad al-Momani said, “We continue to ask the clerics, the academics, the educators to speak about the true nature of Islam.”¹⁵⁴ In June 2014, Jordan released Salafi ideologue Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi and in September 2014 dropped terrorist charges against radical preacher Abu Qatada after he denounced ISIL from prison.¹⁵⁵

In addition to a public relations campaign against ISIL, Jordan has also recently increased efforts on messaging at mosques and is clamping down on illegal mosque construction and unauthorized imams in mosques.¹⁵⁶ Of the approximately 8,600 mosques in Jordan, most of them were built illegally and 4,500 of them are led by imams not appointed by the government.¹⁵⁷ The state has a great deal of control over religious life, yet is concerned that unauthorized imams are preaching violence. The Jordanian Government selects and pays imams at legal mosques; in return, the imams are supposed to support the monarchy and renounce jihadist ideology.¹⁵⁸ The Jordanian Government even distributes suggested weekly sermons to these imams and instructs them on topics to discuss or avoid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., interview.

¹⁵⁴ Reed.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Maria Abi-Habib, “Jordan Plans Crackdown on Unauthorized Mosques to Combat Radical Islam,” *Wall Street Journal*, 19 September 2014, available from <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/jordan-plans-crackdown-on-unauthorized-mosques-to-combat-radical-islam-1411157776>>, accessed 27 September 2014.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Jordan is attempting to control the messages distributed in unauthorized mosques as well, and is focusing its efforts on poverty-ridden areas outside of Amman like Zarqa, which has long been an extremist stronghold.¹⁵⁹ Zarqa has about 300 mosques, 80% of which are illegally built.¹⁶⁰ While Jordan is attempting to replace them with government-sanctioned imams, it is difficult due to a lack of funds. Jordan's Ministry of Religious Affairs has admitted funding problems for its anti-radicalization program, which requires \$70 million to be effective.¹⁶¹ Some Jordanians are upset and say that efforts to regulate anti-radicalization and unauthorized mosques should have been implemented after AQI bombed three Amman hotels in 2005.¹⁶²

This raises the questions of why the Jordanian Government did not implement more anti-radicalization programs sooner. Given that Jordan is starting to implement these projects now, the government perceives the current threats from ISIL and Jordanians returning from Iraq and Syria as greater than previous threats.

In addition to its anti-radicalization programs, Jordan also has a religiously-based deradicalization program for prisoners, which is aimed at reengaging extremist prisoners into mainstream Islam.¹⁶³ The deradicalization program is tailored to the individual needs of the prisoner and can include employment counseling, basic literacy classes, and theological instruction.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, in January 2015, Jordan started separating Islamist prisoners from other prisoners, since several prisoners were radicalized and recruited to join groups like ISIL in

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013 – Jordan," 30 April 2014, available from <<http://www.refworld.org/docid/536229e3d.html>>, accessed 11 October 2014.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Jordanian prisons.¹⁶⁵ Jordanian Ibn Ibrahim, for example, was arrested in 2012 for possession of hashish and imprisoned in 2013, during which he was indoctrinated with militant Islam. In 2014, Ibn Ibrahim was on his way to Syria to join ISIL.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, several jihadi Jordanian clerics, including Abu Qatada and Abu Sayyaf, have acknowledged the important impact of prison radicalization on their own beliefs or on other prisoners.¹⁶⁷

Of course, a major problem facing the government's counter-messaging programs is that many potential or actual recruits to ISIL (and other extremist organizations like JN) see moderate imams as illegitimate, especially if they work for the government or under government-sanctioned programs. The state has very little control over how moderates—and extremists—are perceived on the ground.¹⁶⁸ In Jordan's case, even less extreme Islamists who could be powerful voices against ISIL's ideology, like Maqdisi, are seen by ISIL supporters as illegitimate.¹⁶⁹ Thus, the overall impact of this counter-messaging tactic may be minimal.

VII. MERE POLITICAL CALCULUS?

Finally, a potential counter-argument must be addressed—that these policy changes reflect nothing more than the regime seizing the political opportunity to strike against its opposition. Although the timing of the amendments to Jordan's anti-terror law reflects the government's increased attention to combatting radicalization, several observers believe that they do not significantly enhance Jordan's counterterrorism capabilities. David Schenker argues that even without the amendments, Jordan would still have arrested and convicted suspects under

¹⁶⁵ Sheera Frenkel, "Jordan's Jails Are Now Ground Zero In Its Fight Against ISIS," *BuzzFeedNews*, 6 February 2015, available from <<http://www.buzzfeed.com/sheerafrenkel/jordans-jails-are-now-ground-zero-in-its-fight-against-isis>>, accessed 23 March 2015.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Chowdhury and Krebs, 376.

¹⁶⁹ Sowell.

the penal code. Instead, the amendments may reflect a desire by the Jordanian Government to appear more attentive to the rule of law.¹⁷⁰

On the other hand, former Jordanian Prime Minister Taher Masri called the revised counterterrorism law “not democratic” because it could be interpreted too widely by the state.¹⁷¹ He also argued that it gave the government a pretext for arresting Islamists. Both before and after the 2014 amendments, critics have suggested that the law defines terrorism too broadly—Jordanians have been tried under the law for actions that are not related, or only tangentially related, to terrorism.¹⁷² Human Rights Watch has documented several cases of journalists or other public figures arrested after criticizing security officials; some have been released without charge, but others have faced trials in the State Security Court. The court dismissed terrorism charges of “undermining the political regime” for protestors from demonstrations in 2011 and 2012, but upheld lesser convictions.¹⁷³

These cases serve as reminders that Jordan’s government has long struggled with finding a balance between security and reform. Jordan has an ambivalent record implementing political and economic reforms, even those publicly supported by King Abdullah II.¹⁷⁴ Fishman notes that the “natural instinct for Jordan’s leadership” when facing external crises is to limit public freedoms, increase the power of the GID, and lean on the regime’s traditional base of support.¹⁷⁵

Although the Jordanian regime could be taking advantage of a permissible political environment in fighting terrorism to marginalize its opponents, most of the policy changes and their implementation have focused on terrorist targets, not political opponents. Egypt serves as a

¹⁷⁰ David Schenker, interview by Sarah Patterson, 11 February 2015.

¹⁷¹ Masri.

¹⁷² Habib.

¹⁷³ Human Rights Watch, 321.

¹⁷⁴ Curtis Ryan, “Security dilemmas and the ‘security state’ question in Jordan” (prepared for “The Arab Thermidor: The Resurgence of the Security State” workshop, London School of Economics, October 10, 2014), available from <<http://pomeps.org/2014/12/29/security-dilemmas-and-the-security-state-question-in-jordan>>, accessed 2 May 2015.

¹⁷⁵ Fishman, 129.

notable example of a government using security concerns to prosecute potential regime opponents, and while Jordan's regime has always taken a more subtle approach to its security services than Egypt, there is little sign of overt politicization. Rana Sabbagh, executive director at Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism, has criticized the amended terrorism law and the prosecution of Muslim Brotherhood leader Zaki Bani Irshaid under it, but has admitted that activists are unlikely to be charged in the State Security Court instead of in civilian courts. At the same time, she warned that threats to political reform and a "civil state" stemmed not only from takfiri ideology but also from Jordan's "security mentality."¹⁷⁶ Jordanian security services' overzealousness is a cause of concern, but it is not an indication that they are taking advantage of the expanded counterterrorism policies to target regime opponents.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The Jordanian Government's multi-faceted and more robust counterterrorism program consisting of legal, military and security, and social measures is in response to the increased threat it faces from ISIL, JN, and its own citizens who identify with these groups. Jordan's 2014 amended counterterrorism law provide greater authority for the government to arrest individuals on counterterrorism charges, widening the definition of terrorist to include individuals who disturb Jordan's relationships with foreign governments and criminalizing criticizing the king or government officials. These legal measures have been accompanied by an enhanced security response, which includes increased border security, and military action in Syria. The Jordanian Government's counter-messaging campaigns are attempts by the government to counter the influence of Islamic extremist groups and protect the country from terrorist threats.

¹⁷⁶ Rana Sabbagh, "Al-urdanīyūn 'ala habl meshdud bayna al-amn wa hurriya al-ta'bīr [Jordanians on tightrope between security and freedom of expression," *Al-Ghad*, 26 November 2014, available from <<http://alghad.com/articles/838710-حلت-عبي-را-و-حرية-الامن-ببين-مشدود-حبل-على-الاردن-يون>>, accessed 2 May 2015.

Jordan's counterterrorism responses reflect a country practiced at monitoring its population. Furthermore, its military and border services have prevented any true spillover of violence to Jordan. Nevertheless, Jordan's amended policies in the past year have not addressed major vulnerabilities. Despite several policies designed to reduce and manage incentives for terrorism—including wider counter-messaging efforts and harsher sentencing for returning or aspiring fighters—the ideological reasons behind ISIL's and JN's appeal remain. Furthermore, Jordan's economic stagnation, if not addressed with a long-term solution in mind, will continue to harm its internal security.

**APPENDIX:
Comparison of Anti-Terrorism Laws, 2006 and 2014**

The table on the next two pages compares the 2006 anti-terrorism law to the 2014 amended version. This is not a comprehensive comparison of every article in each law, but summarizes various articles to highlight the expanded definition of a terrorist act and the increased punishments. The bolded italic text highlights the controversial sections of the 2014 amendments.

	2006 Law¹⁷⁷	2014 Law¹⁷⁸
What Constitutes a Terrorist Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing or collecting funds for a terrorist act in Jordan or against its nationals or interests abroad • Mobilizing others inside or outside Jordan to join groups intend to commit terrorist acts in Jordan or against its nationals or interests abroad • Establishing a group or joining a group that intends to commit terrorist acts in Jordan or against its nationals or interests abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing or collecting funds for a terrorist act in Jordan or against its nationals or interests abroad • Acts would subject Jordan to hostile acts, <i>disturb its relations with a foreign country</i>, or subject Jordanians to the dangers of retaliation • Joining an armed group of terrorist organization, recruiting or training individuals for terrorist organization inside or outside of Jordan • Establishing a charity or joining one with purpose committing terrorist acts in Jordan or against its nationals or interests abroad • <i>Using information systems, the Internet, or any means of publishing or media or establishing a website to facilitate terrorist acts or support group commits terrorist acts, or promote their ideas, or fund it, or take action jeopardize Jordanians or their property at risk of retaliatory or hostile acts</i> • Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, selling explosive or chemical, biological, radiological materials; or weapons; or handling them to use for terrorist acts • <i>Assaulting the king’s life or his freedom, the queen, heir to the throne, or any guardians of the throne</i> • <i>Act committed with intention stirring insurrection against constitutional authority</i>, or prevents it from performing constitutional duty, <i>or changing constitution in illegitimate ways</i> • Forming gang with intention assault or thievery

¹⁷⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Anti-Terrorism Law No. 55 of year 2006,” available from <<https://www.unodc.org/tldb/showDocument.do?documentUId=8459>>, accessed 2 May 2015.

¹⁷⁸ “Proposed Amendments Law on Anti-Terrorism Law 2006 – Jordan,” available from <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/221134040/Proposed-Amendments-Law-on-Anti-Terrorism-Law-2006-Jordan>>, accessed 2 May 2015.

<p>Punishment for Committing Terrorist Act (depending on specific article violated)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary hard labor unless a stricter sanction is provided under any other law • Imprisonment for no less than three months and no more than three years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary hard labor • Temporary hard labor for a period not less than 10 years in prison • Hard labor for at least five years • Lifetime of hard labor • Imprisonment for no less than three months and no more than three years • Death penalty
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