

Drivers And Barriers Impacting Propensity Toward Violent Extremism

JARASH: TARGET LOCATION ANALYSIS



Jarash City, Jarash governorate.

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This report provides Target Location-specific findings as part of a larger study entitled, "Factors Influencing Propensity Toward Violent Extremism and Influence Pathways Toward Extremism in Jordan."

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	4
2.0 ISLAMIST AND VEO SUPPORT	7
2.1 Support for VEOs	7
2.2 Support for Political and Non-Violent Islamist Groups	16
3.0 BASIC NEEDS DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....	26
3.1 Education and Employment.....	26
3.2 Utilities and Services	35
3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt	38
4.0 GOVERNANCE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....	43
4.1 Central and Local Governance.....	43
4.2 Law Enforcement.....	53
4.3 Human Rights and Civil Liberties	58
5.0 PSYCHOSOCIAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....	60
5.1 Locus of Control	60
5.2 Religious Values, Attitudes and Beliefs	69
5.3 Exposure to Crime and Conflict.....	85
5.4 Exposure to VE and Perceptions of VEO Threat	92
6.0 EXTERNAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....	98
6.1 Perceived Impact of Foreign Relations.....	98
6.2 Perceived Impact Of Foreign And Domestic Interventionism	102
7.0 COMMUNICATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....	113
7.1 The Role of Violent Extremism Propaganda	113
7.2 The Role of the Media	120
7.3 The Role of Violent Extremist Narratives.....	124

List of Acronyms

AJYC:	All Jordan Youth Committee
AQ:	Al Qa'ida
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
CVE:	Counter Violent Extremism
DK:	'Don't Know' (GQ Answers)
FSA:	Free Syrian Army
GID:	General Intelligence Directorate (Jordan)
GQ:	Guided Questionnaire
IAF:	Islamic Action Front
ISIS:	Islamic State in Iraq and Al Sham
JAF:	Jordanian Armed Forces
JD:	Jordanian Dinars
JN:	Jabhat Al Nusra (Al Nusra Front) ¹
MB:	Muslim Brotherhood
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
RF:	'Refuse to Answer' (GQ Answers)
UAE:	United Arab Emirates
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
USD:	US Dollars
VE:	Violent Extremism
VEO:	Violent Extremist Organization

¹ In July 2016, Jabhat Al Nusra (Al Nusra) rebranded as Jabhat Fatah Al Sham (Conquest of Syria Front). For the purposes of this report, the group is referred to as the former since primary research—including specific questions about Al Nusra—commenced prior to the group's rebranding.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Research showed that although there is low support for violent extremist organizations (VEOs), there have been cases of locals leaving Jarash to fight for groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and Al Sham (ISIS), Jabhat Al Nusra (Al Nusra Front) (JN) and Jaysh Al Islam in Syria. However, it is important to differentiate between those fighters recruited in the earlier years of the revolution and those who have joined more recently. Specifically, the former were often driven by a humanitarian desire to help Sunnis suffering from Assad regime oppression and tyranny. By contrast, more recently, the Jordanian public has become sensitized to the brutal activities of VEOs, particularly those committed by ISIS. In fact, the ISIS murder of Jordanian pilot Moath Al Kasasbeh and the subsequent release of the video in February 2015 was a polarizing moment, with ISIS popularity dramatically falling in the aftermath.



The Jarash public remains deeply opposed to the Assad regime's atrocities. This, along with JN's relative absence from Jordan and its low media profile, has often resulted in softened views toward this VEO. In fact, many in Jarash still consider the organization one of the more realistic hopes for saving Syrians from the Assad regime. This does not automatically translate, however, into behavioral support for the group. To the contrary, ISIS continues to dominate the media space and so remains the group of interest for the small number of locals unfazed by the murder of Al Kasasbeh and/or more willing to place blame for his death on the government's 'unwise' decision to support the Coalition against extremism in Syria.

VEO recruits come from a variety of socio-demographic backgrounds. For example, although poorer individuals are often less well educated and therefore more susceptible to some VEO narratives, other recruits have come from educated and even comfortable backgrounds. This second group has typically joined out of frustration and bitterness at the stagnant job market and weak economy that has failed to meet expectations after years of expenditure on schooling and time spent studying. This diversity within the recruitment pool has made it harder to identify 'at risk' locations, although there remains considerable concern about those who live in refugee camps. Such individuals tend to suffer worst financially and are most likely to experience a sense of marginalization and discrimination, whether they are Syrian or Palestinian. Of the towns, Souf poses the greatest perceived violent extremism (VE) threat. This is due to the presence of a strong Salafist movement: although respondents disagree on whether Salafism directly leads to sympathies for VEOs, there is sufficient reason to suspect that some individuals who become Salafists display the same vulnerability to go on and sympathize with VEOs. The same is true of the Muslim Brotherhood, although the perceived correlation is lower, largely due to fact that the organization has overt political ambitions within the existing domestic government structure – as opposed to supporting the idea of creating a new one. As such, the strong presence of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in VEO-prone areas such as Souf Camp is as much a positive as it is a negative.

The vast majority of locals access television (especially Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya and Jordan TV) and social media sites (especially Facebook) to learn about news and events in the area, country and wider region. However, there is little to no new coverage of VEOs within the domestic media. Instead, the Jordanian

press tends simply to regurgitate VEO products, careful to apply a wise measure of self-censorship. Even those unofficial outlets that seem more supportive of VEOs tend to take releases from the ISIS-affiliated Amaq and Dabiq productions and create news items out of these, spreading them across Twitter and Facebook. Despite the lack of local media sympathy for VEOs, it could still be argued that sensationalizing the threat adds to the sense of awe that VEOs are keen to generate.

The government has been effective in monitoring the web and has taken swift action where needed. As a result, VEOs have had to rely on face-to-face recruitment techniques, often with the help of texts that describe or support popular VEO narratives, including: the threat of the West against Islam, religious duty for violent jihad and how opposition to 'takfirist' Muslim governments and individuals is permissible. However, here too the government has taken steps, including the enlisting of government-sponsored imams, monitoring mosques and imams, encouraging discussions and lectures at schools and among key civil society organizations (CSOs) and other less immediately-obvious counter violent extremism (CVE) measures including the Jarash festival. This is not to say that more cannot be done. To the contrary, respondents complained that the government does not monitor all of the many imams and mosques. Likewise, there is evidence to suggest that the state doesn't care so much about the spread of VE as it does about people opposing the state.

Jarash is tribal, which brings benefits as well as threats. For example, although there have been cases of inter-tribal conflict, these have not lasted long. Besides, the tribal structure also encourages closer monitoring of members and greater support to those in need of help. It remains possible that affiliation to tribe may stand in the way of greater affiliation to Jordanian unity and national identity. However, the aim should be to fuse the latter with the former instead of challenging it. Similarly, local conservative values clearly assign different roles to women and men – for example the local community looks down on the former working late into the day. However, women nevertheless have authority within the home and are valuable 'early detectors' of changes of attitude and behavior in their sons.

Local society places the greatest share of responsibility on parents to ensure that their children do not join VEOs, although the extended family and peers are also there to help and intervene where necessary. Despite this, respondents acknowledged that Jordanians are easily led by emotions. This is a positive in that credible and well-spoken pro-moderate leaders will enjoy respect and trust, although it is also a negative in that respondents felt that Jordanians can become quick to anger and follow leaders with more nefarious agendas. For the moment VEOs have not managed to exploit this emotional sensitivity. For example, even where individuals criticize the government, they refuse to do the same of the monarchy. Undoubtedly, this is partly through fear of repercussions, but it is also clearly the result of genuine respect and trust in Jordanian leadership.

The same is not true for certain members of the international community. There remains deep antipathy toward Israel, the Syrian regime and Iran. However, the situation is not always entirely clear. For example, although there is deep mistrust of Western intentions and quick rejection of seemingly anti-Islamic decisions taken by countries such as France, the United Kingdom (UK) and the US, the same respondents acknowledge that locals strive for the quality of life that such countries offer their people. Likewise, religious values can often appear contradictory. On the one hand there is strong desire for Islam in politics and for the rule of Sharia. However, on the other there is a wish for people to have the freedom to practice their own religion, and a rejection of takfirist violence even against Jordan's oldest enemies. Unraveling the situation in Jordan partly depends on acknowledging the difference between different

types of extremism, and the attitudes to these types. For example, many Jordanians place social extremism (antisocial behavior) as a priority before political extremism (VEOs as proxies for political individuals and groups). Likewise, there is a difference between extremism and violent extremism. By Western measure, Jarash society can seem extremist yet locals reject violence in any form. As such, successful CVE programs will trace a careful path between these issues, using local culture as a catalyst rather than trying to 'repair' those parts that do not fall into line with a generic vision of what moderate Jordan should look like.

2.0 ISLAMIST AND VEO SUPPORT

2.1 SUPPORT FOR VEOS

Hizb ut-Tahrir is a known VE group but there is disagreement on links to JN and ISIS.

Several respondents believed that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a well-known VEO in Jordan but acknowledged that it carries out few activities Jarash. Indeed, some time has passed since the latest clash with the government, with the most infamous recent event taking place in June 2014 when security forces arrested three members (Ahmad Ismail Omar, Ibrahim Mohammad Omar and Yazan Ayman Al Mahrouq) for protesting against banning the Hizb ut-Tahrir Al Khilafa conference. Nevertheless, the group continues to enjoy support. For example, one respondent felt that Hizb ut-Tahrir still has followers despite the ban imposed by the government, especially from areas such as Zarqa, and a second respondent estimated the number of supporters to be in the thousands. This support exists for several reasons. Firstly, its low threat profile means that many locals can continue supporting the group in attitude even if they don't support it in action. Secondly, prior to the government ban, the organization was able to operate openly and generated a significant degree of public following. Thirdly, respondents believed that the sophistication of Hizb ut-Tahrir's communication campaigns, including newspapers such as the Al-Raya publication, helped in the dissemination and uptake of the group's messages.¹ Fourthly, respondents paid testament to the power of Hizb ut-Tahrir narratives, including the fight for freedom, opportunities to gain wealth (albeit off stolen oil, antiquities, etc.) and the promise of virgins in Paradise. Fifthly, Hizb ut-Tahrir has exploited some popular complaints such as calls for the Jarash Festival to close because it is immoral (see comments on the MB below). There was some disagreement over whether Hizb ut-Tahrir was a gateway to other VEOs and/or other groups such as the MB and Salafist Quietists. For example, one respondent claimed that Hizb ut-Tahrir recruited on behalf of JN and ISIS, although he was not able to provide any proof to support the claim. Meanwhile, one respondent insisted that Hizb ut-Tahrir has a strong following outside of Jordan – notably in Russia. He described visiting St. Petersburg where he met a woman who insisted that Hizb ut-Tahrir is highly influential within the city of six million inhabitants, with notable successes even in recruiting security officers as well as local women (the latter used for sexual jihad). However, the respondent provided no further details.

Many do not consider Hamas a VEO.

Several respondents insisted that it was not fair to label Hamas a VEO, and refused to compare it to others such as JN or ISIS. Instead, they described the group as a national liberation organization or resistance movement, despite any occasional violent outbreak. For example, one respondent confessed that he, and even his mother, pray at the mosque for Hamas to be victorious when conflict breaks out with Israel. Another argued that Hamas was more respectful and humane than other VEOs, contrasting the way it treated the kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit with ISIS savagery against Jordanian Air

¹ "The aim of the newspaper is the secret spreading of extremism through their perverse media. Their meetings were secretly taking place in houses." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Forces pilot Moath Al Kasasbeh.² A third insisted that Hamas had never struck against Jordan or carried out any related activities in Syria, Lebanon or Egypt. Despite these votes of confidence in Hamas, respondents admitted that the group remains somewhat ephemeral and that it is easy for average people to carry on supporting Hamas in theory rather than in practice, largely because it is a cause outside of Jordan. As such, one respondent concluded that support for Hamas would dramatically decline if it ever took action inside the country.

As for those opposed to Hamas, they often did not condemn the group as a VEO but nevertheless expressed strong opposition to the idea of Muslims fighting other Muslims, especially given the existence of other reasonable alternatives such as Fatah and the Palestinian army.³ Likewise, respondents also disagreed over whether the organization can operate in Jordan relatively more openly than other VEOs. For example, one claimed that Hamas releases official statements prior to conducting an operation – either inside or outside Jordan – to the approval of many locals.⁴ However, another claimed that Jordanians – such as those working in embassies and other government institutions – have to pretend that they consider Hamas a terrorist group in order to keep their jobs, even if they secretly approve of it. A third even criticized Hamas for staying in hiding while others such as JN and ISIS were prepared to operate openly, albeit in Syria.

"We can't say that it [Hamas] is extremist or terrorist, because we want to differentiate between people who are defending their land and people who are occupying it, and Hamas doesn't fight its people, Hamas is fighting a state occupying its land and it's a legitimate resistance movement. Of course, the biggest evidence is the compassion that Hamas and Gaza received during the war last Ramadan."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Focus: Hamas is a resistance movement, not a VEO.

"I definitely exclude Hamas out of the list. I'm not defending them but I believe they are fighting the Zionist occupation, where the right to fight is protected by international law as well as the Security Council, which doesn't consider people who fight the occupier as terrorists. However, radicalization is another thing, with several features that Hamas doesn't possess. In fact, terrorists are targeting Hamas in the most horrific way; many times - genocide waged by the brutal Zionists on the Gaza strip. We are not like any other Arab nation. Jordanian people involved in the

² "Shalit was allowed to read newspapers, eat, and drink. He was comfortable and when he got out he stated this. This is one example and I don't categorize Hamas as a terrorism movement, god forbid. It is a national, Arab, Palestinian movement with the aim of liberating Palestine." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

³ "I have the army of Mahmoud Abbas and a Palestinian army. Why should I form a new army when later the two armies will fight? How many problems have there been between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority? There cannot be a country with two armies, and there cannot be a country with an army and militias." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

⁴ "When Hamas wants to do an operation inside or outside Jordan, they release an official statement. They are very obvious and you see people who support them and encourage them." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

Palestinian cause to a great extent look at Hamas with Palestinian eyes. I don't think Jordanians of different classes confuse Hamas with terrorist organizations in Iraq and the Levant. Our people are aware of Hamas fighters as Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation. Any group of people falling under occupation has the right to resist and not only because it's protected by the international law. Even if the Jordanian people don't know that by law, they obviously know it in their hearts; they have been involved in all stages of the Palestinian resistance and the adoption of the Palestinian cause. The official discourse in Jordan doesn't consider Hamas a terrorist organization and hasn't even classified it as one, unlike Egypt and many other Arab countries. I haven't seen anyone in Jarash comparing Hamas with Al Qa'ida. It's quite obvious that Hamas is not fighting people of its own, or even killing Muslims and Arabs, but it is definitely defending Palestinians and fighting the Zionist occupation."

(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

JN enjoys more support than ISIS or AQ, but ISIS gets more coverage and wealth.

The vast majority of respondents lacked real awareness or knowledge about VEOs, and were only able to identify broad characteristics such as ISIS' support for the establishment of a caliphate.⁵ Nevertheless, many distinguished between JN, ISIS and Al Qa'ida (AQ). For example, most saw JN as an organization with objectives limited to overthrowing the Assad regime in Syria, and that as a result there are countries willing to integrate JN into the wider Syrian opposition movement. JN's focus against Assad, with clearer evidence of the group fighting against the regime, has also helped win it wider public support, particularly at the start of the revolution in Syria and given the subsequent weakening of the Free Syrian Army (FSA). This was true of Jarash as well as across the rest of the country.⁶ For example, one respondent insisted that JN fighters were 'mujahideen' rather than extremists, and that there are still vocal supporters of JN in Jordan. Another cautioned that there are inevitably groups within JN that behave in an unacceptable way, comparing these to bad cholesterol, but still argued that JN is more palatable than AQ and ISIS. In fact, 80 percent of Jarash Guided Questionnaire (GQ) respondents agreed that there was opposition toward ISIS in their community. This dropped to 59 percent for JN, 47 percent for Hamas and 37 percent for the Islamic Action Front (IAF) (see Figure 5).

As for those who felt that JN has lost ground to ISIS, one explained that over time bad groups within JN have warped the organization's objectives to now include opposition against Israel. As a result, this has led to infighting and JN's loss of support from international sponsors.⁷ Another added that groups such

⁵ "Until now people can't relate and don't know the real differences between JN and Daesh...what are the goals, and who is in it and who isn't. The only difference we see is that JN has not appeared in the same powerful media way as Daesh." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

⁶ "I don't think it is sympathy as much as it is ignorance, because all those who carry a weapon for Daesh or Nusra have no identity, and are killing their own people. They are not right to do so, but Nusra does have a lot of sympathy in Jarash" (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

⁷ "At the beginning of the war or revolution, no one expected to have these divisions, that groups would intervene in Syria. The first one that appeared on TV was the Al Nusra front. The superpowers supported it but when it showed that it's goal was to fight Tel Aviv after fighting Bashar, the superpowers started fighting it. Infiltrators reached

as Hamas and ISIS are still the ones that generate most discussion and media coverage – the former for its focus against Israel and the latter for its attacks on Jordanian soil. As such, these are the most prominent groups in people’s minds, meaning that JN has become less relevant.⁸ Another respondent agreed and also pointed out that ISIS has the largest supply of weapons and wealth compared to other VEOs and that this has ensured that they have remained the most active VEO in the Arab world. Finally, one respondent claimed that JN members are nearly all Syrians fighting for a better life. Meanwhile, ISIS receives funding from the Gulf (and possibly the US), whereas Zionists fund AQ. As such, he believed that these differences in sponsor highlight differences in objectives.

“I remember last Ramadan, at the end of June, I was in a taxi and it was a long ride, so we started talking. A taxi driver sees many people and talks to many people. It was a long ride and the streets were empty after Iftar... We started talking about religion and jihad. We talked about the importance of jihad and prayer. The taxi driver started convincing us about jihad, he was inviting us to join Jabhat Al Nusra. We made him feel as if we were jihadists; we wanted him to talk more. We know there are many supporters in Jordan.”

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

Focus: JN recruitment in Jarash.

“According to my slight knowledge, Jabhat Al Nusra is the top recruiter in Jordan. However, these groups aren’t stable, they are always on the move and shifting leaders, targets and operations. Jordan considers these groups as terrorists and radicals now. Four years ago, the country used to tolerate such movements but not anymore; they are unacceptable and illegal. Again, I believe Jabhat Al Nusra is the number one recruiter of youths in Jordan, especially from areas in Jarash. I used to hear that many youngsters joined Jabhat Al Nusra, not Daesh. There is a famous story around the area: a sheikh, a Qur’an reader and mosque imam, joined Jabhat Al Nusra becoming its Mufti, Prince and within the highest order of the group. He recruited so many victims through social media networks unfortunately. Even after he left the group he tried to sway many others. The problem in Jarash was such people trying to influence citizens with an average academic background, planting bad seeds in their heads, using proof and evidence, and the Qur’an to serve their own interests, desires, speeches and religious interpretations. Such recruits cling on to the ideas of Muslim scholars, even the bloody ones and the jihadi beliefs.”

positions of authority in groups like JN and started informing on each other for a piece of land or a village or a city to control.” (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

⁸ “Al Nusra does not have very many customers as they say – not a lot of people speak about them, but people speak more about Daesh and Hamas. JN are not very present in the media, or mentioned in the media as much as Daesh are in the news, and until now they haven’t carried out any terrorist acts against Jordan; they haven’t killed anyone from here, but Daesh have. People are very scared of Daesh, especially in Jarash in the North, because we are most at risk since they are close to our borders, and we see what Daesh is doing in the areas that are under their control, that they are trying to expand.” (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

Support for VEOs has declined in the wake of foreign and domestic brutality.

Respondents described how, during the earlier years of the Syrian revolution, there was widespread discussion of the positive role that groups such as JN could play. For example, one reminisced about how people would openly talk about jihad at public events such as weddings and funerals. Another described how Salafists set up preachers on podiums to extol the virtues of fighting the Assad regime. Indeed, in 2012 over 100 Arab scholars signed a document approving of jihad in Syria. Even when ISIS emerged in 2013 there was support for the concept of violent confrontation against the Assad regime, with those opposed at risk of being labeled Assad regime sympathizers. For example, one imam recalled how he was reported to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Intelligence Services for delivering a sermon against jihad in Syria. At the time, these government bodies accused the imam of attempting to change Jordan's policy.⁹ However, the majority of respondents believed that public support for VEOs has reduced, and cited a number of reasons. Firstly, it became increasingly apparent that groups such as JN and ISIS would not deliver the envisaged 'knock-out' blow to the Assad regime. In fact, conspiracy began as to whether confrontation with Assad was ISIS' objective at all. Secondly, Jordanians became shocked at the level of VEO brutality, again especially in the case of ISIS, and found it increasingly hard to square ISIS' supposed Islamic principles with its actions. Thirdly, the more recent phenomenon of VEO attacks on Jordanian soil, often against the armed and security forces, has proved deeply unpopular with the public. For example, on June 06, 2016 an individual broke into a building for the Jordanian intelligence services facing Baqa'a camp, overpowered and killed a guard, and then killed four officers. Respondents explained that they deeply opposed such attacks not only because people are loyal to institutions such as the Army, but also because they weaken the country.¹⁰ Similarly, a number of respondents believed that one of the main reasons the majority rejects the presence and influence of VEOs in Jordan is that they have seen the negative consequences of VEO activities in neighboring countries. For example, many deplored the idea of large numbers of Jordanians becoming refugees, and of family members, especially women and children, facing instability and insecurity.¹¹ These respondents concluded that no matter the current situation, VEOs, and those responsible for supporting them, will ultimately fail in Jordan.

⁹ "I said there is no jihad in Syria and I mentioned some of the horrendous things that the so-called jihadists are doing there in Syria. Some people complained to the Ministry for Religious Affairs and the Intelligence Services. The Intelligence Services called me and told me you are calling for a different policy from this country's policy. But my sermon was clear and recorded thank god." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

¹⁰ "In 2011 people were supporting them because people would go jihad and defend Syria and Arabs. After 2013 people started believing that the organization of the state of Islam is a terrorist organized group, that's why they stopped supporting them. With every operation that happens here in Jordan, they become less popular and people stop sympathizing with them." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

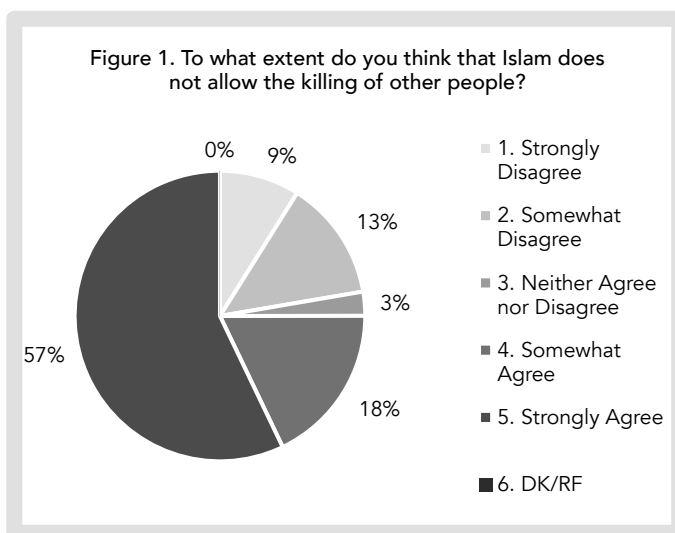
¹¹ "Citizens fear for the country, they fear Jordan becoming, god forbid, like the neighboring countries. We can't imagine ourselves as refugees! The idea is horrifying, meaning my sons and wife and daughters. I can't imagine them becoming refugees." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

"Jordanian society refuses extremism, and whoever gets involved should expect consequences. The biggest evidence is what happened in Baqa'a camp a while ago – an attack that was condemned by all parties and tribes. It was a criminal incident in every sense of the word: you kill people who are there to protect you and protect the homeland, and are from the same religion and country, and maybe neighborhood – you kill them then you go to the mosque at the same time? Our god is merciful and our religion is a religion of mercy and accepting others, so how can you execute people who don't relate to your ideas? Who gave you the authority to do such a thing?"

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

ISIS support dramatically declined in the wake of the killing of Al Kasasbeh.

The most polarizing event that has undermined public support for ISIS was the VEO's torture and killing of Jordanian Air Forces pilot Moath Al Kasasbeh.¹² Several explained that the Prophet Mohammed never killed a prisoner and that ISIS's actions were fundamentally un-Islamic. Others clarified that ISIS' decision to burn the pilot to death was utterly forbidden in the Islamic faith, as only God can kill with fire. Furthermore, they pointed out that Al Kasasbeh was a good Muslim who was only carrying out orders from his superiors.¹³ As such, respondents unanimously condemned the killing in the strongest terms as a crime against Islam and humanity, claiming that ISIS's popularity dramatically fell to a fraction of its earlier level and has not since recovered. Even those who admitted that there was, prior to the murder, some sympathy and even support for ISIS (especially over its sectarian rhetoric), nevertheless agreed that after the murder ISIS became 'Kharijite' and 'terrorists' operating outside of the true jihad framework.¹⁴ Indeed, 75 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 22 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Islam does not allow the killing of other people (see Figure 1).



¹² "After the martyrdom of Al Kasasbeh the table was turned and people knew that these people are criminals with no respect for the law, religion or Sharia. They are committing vices." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

¹³ "It [support for ISIS] declined after the burning of the Jordanian pilot Moath Al Kasasbeh. The incident was met with a big reaction from Jordanians last year. ISIS acted very stupidly and burnt the pilot even though he is Muslim, reads the Qur'an, and is executing orders from his superiors." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

¹⁴ "The mask fell: the language they [ISIS] used is not acceptable in Islam, not in any way, not in terms of morals or values. It was a painful humanitarian incident but it was a new turning point, a serious and good one that stopped the support and ideas that people were being dragged toward. It was also a turning point because it exposed the reality and facts of this group...and so the people turned against any terrorist group or ideological group." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Despite the reversal in ISIS' image, one respondent lamented the government's decision to draw even closer to the Coalition against ISIS. The respondent claimed that the murder was so shocking that the government did not need to take action so hastily. It should have waited for social outrage to build and build. Another respondent agreed but also warned that, over time, initial shock and anger at the treatment of Al Kasasbeh has turned into a stronger desire to not be involved in events in Syria at all. As such, although support for ISIS has remained low, there are more citizens questioning the sagacity of supporting the West in its fight against VEOs abroad. Only one respondent expressed outright support for ISIS, arguing that its philosophy based on power was a more appropriate way to run society than democracy, which would lead to the destruction of society.¹⁵ The same respondent also felt that ISIS fighters were still, ultimately, Muslims and were following their vision of Islam whether rightly or wrongly. As such, they pose a less fundamental problem than the spread of liberal counter-Islamic ideas and foreign governments.

"I go out in taxis every day. And I used to go out with my friends. We used to ask people [about the killing of Moath Al Kasasbeh]. They kept saying that it's a tragedy. At first they were very sad, but then they started talking about revenge. They wanted to burn them [ISIS], like they did. It is not like us to want revenge. And then people started saying that maybe it would've been better if he hadn't gone."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

Estimates on the number of extremists are low, but few doubt the threat remains.

Respondents acknowledged that they were unable to say with certainty how many Jordanian violent extremists exist. One proposed a number of around 2,000 in total across Jordan, a second cited 3,000, whereas a third estimated less than 10 percent of people in Souf Camp, and much lower outside of local Palestinian refugee camps. Although they acknowledged that official numbers are low, several argued that unofficial numbers may be much higher given the fact that these individuals are unlikely to declare their support openly.¹⁶ In terms of support levels for specific VEOs, most agreed that AQ's influence has declined in recent years. Meanwhile, although support levels for JN have been strong, this organization reportedly has not carried out many operations on domestic soil. To the contrary, its focus appears to be overthrowing the Assad regime. This has made both of these groups less prominent in the minds of many. By contrast, ISIS continues to capture the imagination by dominating the VE discourse.

Some age and gender demographics are seen as more susceptible to VE than others.

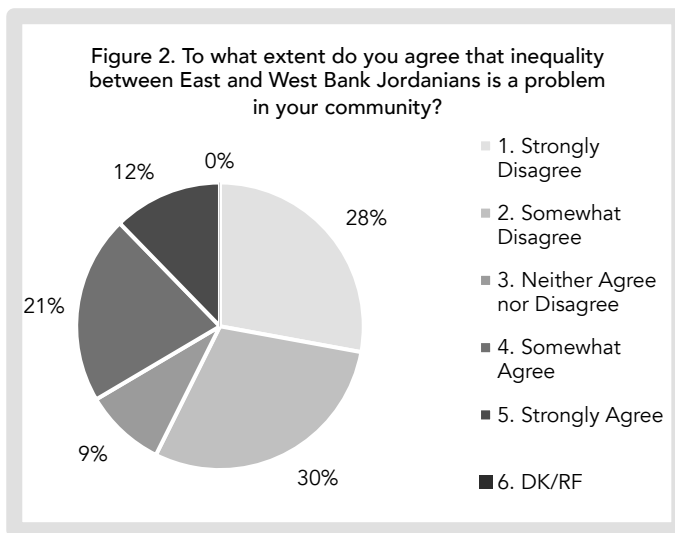
Respondents mostly believed that males are more susceptible to sympathizing with, and joining, VEOs than women. Several further identified young males around 18-25 years old (although some as young as 13 years and others as old as 32 years) as the most vulnerable. A few had heard of females supportive of extremist values, and maintained that these tended to be older women of around 45 years. However,

¹⁵ "I see that the state of Khilafa will work as the best system for Muslims." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

¹⁶ "I know hundreds of Facebook profiles for Jordanian atheists, but they don't post about it, that's why when you say someone is a supporter for Daesh, it doesn't mean that he will talk about it publicly; he could be scared of being informed on and put in prison." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

virtually no one had heard of women going to fight for VEOs. Most explained that Jordanian culture was too conservative to allow women to believe or act in such a way.¹⁷ For example, one noted that Jordanian culture does not allow women to spend too much time outside of the home and so they are unable to spend significant time with potential recruiters.

Likewise, respondents rejected the idea of VEOs preying on those of a particular ethnicity, particularly in Jarash, not least due to the lack of ethnic divisions and the degree of importance that all Jordanians place on liberating Palestine and Syria. For example, although 33 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, 58 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that inequality between East and West Bank Jordanians is a problem in their community (see Figure 2). Meanwhile, the link between other socio-demographic factors and recruitment were less clear. For example, several respondents cited cases of educated (see section 3.1 Education and Employment) and/or married (sometimes with children) or comfortably off recruits (see section 3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt).¹⁸ This led one respondent to conclude that there is no relationship between extremism, gender, education, religiosity and morality,¹⁹



"I heard once about a 13-year old kid from Jarash who was caught before crossing the border to Syria. "What does death mean? Death is like a sting of a needle; the soul has escaped the body easily, especially a Muslim, rising to heaven next to the lord, surrounded by Al-Hour Al-Ein," he said. Can you imagine a 13-year old is saying this? Thinking this way because he is brainwashed. In the same way you are recording this interview, the device does not recognize whether I am laughing, telling the truth, or lying. Well boys at that age are the same. When they are naive and immature, they cannot filter out the truth; they just record." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

¹⁷ "Regarding the age [of recruits], it is 18-25: the gender is mostly male. Our society is conservative to some extent, so it is difficult for a female to deviate from Jordanian society and thank God there has been no incident of a female being recruited." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

¹⁸ "There are some cases of people that went to fight there that seem contradictory. For example, a head of household with five children and a wife went to fight because he believes in jihad in the name of Allah. This is not right because his children have the right to be taken care of. There are some people that went two or three years ago and they are still there, and their children are here – all they have is God now. Some of the families and the community around them are the ones that care for these children now." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

¹⁹ "Anyone can become an extremist. I watched the news. I was surprised by many names of people who joined ISIS. Like that English football player. People from Russia, from France, from China or India. It is all the same. But generally the segment most at risk is young males. It is less for females. And mostly poor young males, they drag them in with money. But they can get anyone; rich people, religious leaders, or even non-Muslims." (Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

Some recruits regret their decision but have no alternative.

A small number of respondents were able to comment on the attitudes and beliefs of Jordanians presently fighting on behalf of VEOs in Syria. These acknowledged that some of those who initially perceived VEOs as symbols of greater moral and religious strength believe that this is no longer the case. For example, one respondent described the regret of one JN fighter after witnessing internal rivalry and competition among members to plunder and take control of private property, and/or to reach positions of greater authority. Nevertheless, these recruits are unable to return back to Jordan, either because they fear strong action on the part of the Jordanian authorities and/or because they will be executed by VEOs such as ISIS for their betrayal. One respondent explained that the latter has been well documented on video with ISIS committing mass executions of those who have attempted to flee.

2.2 SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL AND NON-VIOLENT ISLAMIST GROUPS

Jarash is a Muslim Brotherhood center.

According to several respondents, although the government closed down the MB offices in April 2016 Jarash continues to be an important center for the Muslim Brotherhood – one even described it as the MB's capital in Jordan.²⁰ For example, the MB in Jarash runs schools for orphans and sons of the poor. Likewise, it supports college students. Furthermore, respondents confirmed that the Islamic Action Front, a political wing of the MB known for its sympathies toward Hamas and the Palestinian cause, has a strong following in Jarash, particularly in some of the Palestinian refugee camps. For example, one respondent described an Islamic center in Souf Camp as well as clinics that treat people for a modest fee (and sometimes free of charge).²¹ Another respondent highlighted activities carried out by the Charitable Islamic Center and Jarash Orphan Center that include: scholarships for university students, monthly stipends (around 100 Jordanian Dinars (JD)) to poor and needy families as well as food packages and clothes during winter and Eid. Recruitment into the MB and other political Islamist groups takes place across a range of venues including Qur'anic learning centers, mosques and engineering colleges at universities. Meanwhile, a number of television channels and programs perpetuate the MB's existence through logos, stories and reports on their achievements, series, music and even movies. This led to the observation among MB supporters that political Islam has grown in popularity, particularly given greater opportunities in the wake of regional revolutions in 2011, and that this will manifest itself in upcoming elections held in Jordan.

"There were many people against political Islam in general, especially Egyptian political Islam. But after the revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, they had many victories. And victory unites people. In Jordan they believe in these ideas. The Muslim Brotherhood had many victories in Egypt. Muslims believe in the unity of the nation. And as a community, we believe that it is everyone's victory. In the next elections you will see that many Muslim parties will win in parliament."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

There are opposing views on whether the MB as a religio-political group is a positive or a negative.

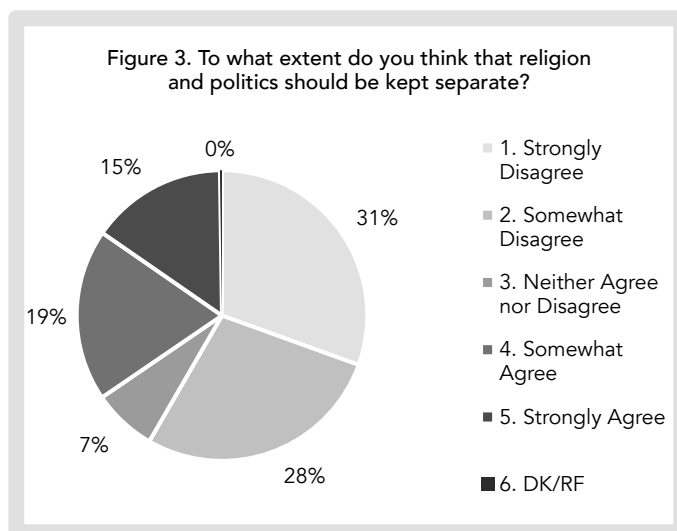
Those respondents either wary of and/or opposed to the MB complained that it was an organization that exploits religion for political gain. For example, one described how the MB President in Jarash, Sheikh Sleiman Al Sa'ed, accused the government of exceeding its legal remit. Another claimed that MB candidates for elections had accused opponents of getting drunk and of not being committed to either Islam or the country - IAF candidates include Issa Rawashdeh, Sheikh Sleiman Al Sa'ed, Professor Mahmoud Banat and Professor Mohammed Al Khawaldeh. A third respondent agreed, accusing the MB

²⁰ "The Muslim Brotherhood has a wide spread here and this is due to the nature of the people. They love religion and they think that these groups help keep religion." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

²¹ "The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan is a political group. They want to reach position-related gains and in order to get them they walk with the youth, and they build health clinics and bring doctors who treat people for cheap fees. For example, a visit costs two JD while it costs 10-15 JD at a private doctor." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

of only wearing the 'garment' of religion.²² A fourth complained that the MB and IAF tried in July 2016, and in previous years, to persuade the government to suspend the Jarash Festival on the basis that music and dancing is haram, particularly when it features female singers not wearing sufficiently modest clothing over their hips and chest. Indeed, the MB has claimed that the festival allows unacceptable levels of mixing between boys and girls. The General Secretary of the Jarash IAF branch, Naser Al Otoum, even asked the General Iftaa' department to release a fatwa denouncing the festival as haram. Despite disapproving of the MB's stance on the festival, respondents acknowledged that a significant tranche of the public sympathize with this MB and Salafist request.

One reason why those opposed to the MB feel so strongly is their belief that religio-political parties have had their chance, for example in governing Egypt, and have shown what a failure they are in practice. These respondents concluded that the Jordanian public has grown wary and tired of religio-political alternatives, forcing MB members to be more defensive and conciliatory about their political objectives. Nevertheless, supporters of the MB and respondents acknowledged that there are many in Jarash who contest these allegations and believe that it is right and proper for religion and politics to overlap. For example, they argued that involvement of God in politics is always beneficial and adheres closely to Qur'anic guidance. Indeed, 34 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 59 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that religion and politics should be kept separate (see Figure 3).



"Today we do not speak about the political composition of the Ba'th Party, because it is a failed experience, and the Islamic [parties] and Socialists have also failed. This failure was not immediately apparent to us, because when we say the Islamists failed in Egypt we feel as if we are humiliating ourselves, and the same with the failure of the Ba'th party in governing Syria. But we see these failures clearly today. So those that are party affiliated now say, "I am a Ba'athist but a moderate one", or "I am a member of the Islamic Front that is religious but I guide Jordanians toward moderate religion." What is different is that these people practice their beliefs but they are not politically charged religious beliefs anymore."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

²² "As for the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas in the West bank and Gaza and elsewhere, they have political goals that don't have anything to do with religion. They wear the garment of religion for political aims but these groups are far from practicing Islamic Sharia." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

The Muslim Brotherhood can lead, albeit indirectly, to support for VEOs.

Most respondents rejected the idea that the MB has direct links with VEOs such as JN and ISIS, explaining that the organization is motivated primarily by political gain and that it understands the importance of supporting the country and institutions including the Royal Family. Likewise, many believed that MB members (especially the leadership) are educated and aware of VEO risks. As such, they maintained that cases of MB involvement in violent extremism are rare and perhaps exaggerated by the media and/or are the product of the government cracking down too harshly. Nevertheless, a few felt that religious political parties such as the MB are extremist in the general sense of the term, and that this is inevitably a stepping stone toward VE.²³ For example, one respondent claimed that the MB encourages, albeit in an indirect manner, sectarianism and the idea of Sunni victory over Shias, particularly within the context of the Syrian conflict. Likewise, another claimed that the MB encourages youth to feel deep opposition toward Israel and support for the Palestinian cause. A third believed that the MB introduces youth to the idea of religious leaders and duty to carry out jihad, even in a violent manner. A fourth believed that the depth of political zeal within the MB means that members can easily be convinced to channel their energy into other directions such as VE. For example, one respondent described a school friend who transferred from the MB to a VEO fighting in Syria, particularly after receiving education on fatwas issued by Ibn Taymiyyah.²⁴ Another described a friend whose religiosity drove him to join the MB and then later to go and fight in Syria with JN, although he returned after only seven months or so.²⁵ In this case, the respondent pointed out that ISIS did not exist at the time and that there was much focus on, and general support for, JN as it was closer to the border with Jordan and more religious than the FSA, making it an obvious choice for those with a religious background seeking to join the Opposition.

Focus: Joining the MB can lead to VEO membership.

"I had a friend at school, from my area. At that time I was attracted to the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2010/2011 I was studying at a school of Palestinian refugees – there were many people with Palestinian origins. And at that time it was the war on Gaza, and the Muslim Brotherhood supported Gaza. And as a young community we tend to be attracted to war and ideology. It is planted in us ever since we're born – to be brave and courageous – that's why it is hard to resist it as a teenager. I had a friend who adopted the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. We used to go together. He got higher marks at high school, and went to study engineering at the university in Tafiela. And

²³ "We haven't seen the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan participate in any extremist act but still everyone fears the religious political parties because any religious party is extremist by nature. And even when women join, their approach becomes really religious extremist." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

²⁴ "People who go there [to fight in Syria with VEOs] belong to political Islamic organized groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafists, jihadists or the Liberation party [Hizb ut-Tahrir]. Different people join from all classes. Some of them are even educated. Mostly they are middle class." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

²⁵ "There was one guy who was into religion and what is happening in Syria, that we need to make Islam 'victorious' for 'our Syrian brothers' and that we are Sunnis while they are Shia etc. He decided to go to Syria for jihad. He was between 33-34 years old and he was married but I'm not sure if he had kids or not. He went to Syria at the beginning of the events – so in 2011 or 2012, but he didn't stay long. He returned to Jordan. He was there maybe for seven months and then came back to Jordan." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

from there, along with other students, he travelled to Syria to do jihad. And the last thing I heard about him was that he got killed."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

There is disagreement on whether the Muslim Brotherhood is amorphous or structured.

Those respondents who were critical of the MB complained that they found it difficult to categorize the group – some believed it was predominantly a political organization, whereas others highlighted its social or religious aspects. This is partly because the MB reportedly operates across many different groups. For example, one respondent claimed that Hizb ut-Tahrir has clear MB leanings, particularly in Zarqa, while another singled out the Islamic Action Front (IAF) as the face of the movement. These groups undertake different activities that can therefore impact on public perception of the MB. For example, one respondent mentioned IAF breakfast events for members at their Jarash headquarters during Ramadan. Another drew attention to the Islamic Center Organization for its Qur'an memorization courses aimed at children, as well as the provision of health clinics where patients pay as little as one JD to see specialists who will even help with free referrals to the Islamic hospital in the Al Abdali area of Amman. A third example is the Jarash Camp orphanage center on the main road opposite the Salah Al Dein Al Ayoubi mosque; which works in helping orphans and the poor by providing them with monthly salaries as well as food and clothes. A fourth example includes training courses for women in sewing and embroidery. A fifth example involves restoration campaigns for houses damaged by poor weather conditions, as well as help in preparing camp shelters for winter. Likewise, the MB has successfully operated across many demographics, although several opponents complained that the MB preys on the weak, unemployed and/or those with social problems. In contrast, those supportive or more tolerant of the MB insisted that the group has a defining political leaning and affiliation that makes it impossible for members to support violent extremism. As such, even if MB members become involved in protests or demonstrations, they are there to change, rather than outright remove, the political system.

"The Muslim Brotherhood that we have in Jordan – its members are the Jordanians, they are the children of our society, from the rural areas, the cities, the villages, from its refugee camps, and thus they are aware of the political situation in Jordan, about religion, ideology, and society, the belief system and behaviors of Jordanian society. So, if we are speaking about these youths, we are speaking about people that are party affiliated, that hold political viewpoints, that have a political ideology. That is why it is not easy to convince them of any idea or to poison them with any ideas...Yes they can refrain from participating in elections, both municipal and/or parliamentary, but that is a political stance; their choice to boycott could be to illustrate their disapproval of the election law or the law for political parties or the municipal laws, or in general it can be a rejection or objection to the laws of the state and the foundations of the state."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Those critical of the Muslim Brotherhood accused its leaders of being unclear on VE or even supportive of it.

Respondents opposed to the MB often found it hard to identify the organization's real leaders, complaining that this makes it hard to establish the organization's official policy toward VEOs. Indeed, one conclusion was that the MB embraces political ambiguity so that it can exploit its position to the full.²⁶ For example, one respondent described how Hamam Said, a MB leader, refused to comment on whether ISIS was a terrorist organization and instead condemned the government for imprisoning Deputy Leader of the MB and former General Secretary of the Islamic Action Front, Zaki Bani Rashid, for 18 months after he criticized the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and its decision to ban the MB. The inference was that the government's decision was in itself an act of terrorism. In addition to the lack of transparency, opponents also felt that a number of MB leaders have seemed at least sympathetic of VEOs. For example, one singled out local MB figure, Member of Parliament Ali Al Otoum, describing him as both well-educated but highly polemic, particularly on the back of claims that he relied heavily on votes from camps. The respondent accused him of being a religious Islamist hardliner with little proper perspective and unwilling to compromise with others around him.²⁷

"He [Zaki Bani Rashid] is one of the Brotherhood's leaders. He posted something about the UAE on Facebook and then was sent to prison. He criticized the UAE on Facebook after the UAE banned the Muslim Brotherhood and called the UAE a sponsor of terrorism and then he was sent to prison."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Salafist groups are a potential conduit to VEO membership.

Respondents confirmed that Salafist groups are present in Jarash, although they are more prevalent in nearby areas such as their alleged center in Zarqa.²⁸ Salafists have historically existed in Jordan since the introduction of Salafist thought in the 1970s and 1980s, reportedly by Sheikh Albany. Since then the movement has enjoyed success, particularly within certain demographics. For example, one respondent believed that Salafism is more deeply entrenched in areas of higher poverty, unemployment, lack of religious awareness, and where there are a greater number of Palestinian refugee camps. A second agreed and named Souf Camp in particular, explaining that Salafists (and MB members) invite locals to religious circles and classes at their houses as well as offering free 'omra' trips. As with the MB, there was disagreement over whether Salafism is a positive or negative force within the local community. For example, one respondent insisted that Salafists create dangerous social division, recalling how a Salafist

²⁶ "If extremism hurts their goals they will stay away from it. They are smart as well, and if they feel that this direction will affect their position with the government or the state that they are in, they will stay away from it temporarily or superficially." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

²⁷ "He [Al Otoum] is a religious hardliner. He's extremely religious to the point that he is living the time of the dawn of Islam, not our time." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Islam)

²⁸ "Salafist Jihadists are dressed up in certain clothing, they don't sit in public, they have their rituals and their gatherings and their private society and their biggest gatherings are in southern Jordan and Zarqa; they have a large influence in these areas." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

from the Souf area became increasingly disgruntled with his financial condition and began to meet and preach with others in a similar condition. The Salafist's wife has reportedly not heard from him for eight months and her family has encouraged her to divorce him. Two other respondents described how Salafists hold private programs and sessions, often at night, with a third adding that one such program is called 'Night's Darkness'. They did not have details on what happens at these workshops although one claimed that they illegitimately call for jihad. Others expressed suspicion of Salafist activities held via certain organizations, such as the Kitab and Sunna organization, accusing the movement of hiding its agenda behind acts of charity to those in need.²⁹

However, other respondents insisted that true Salafism, sometimes referred to as Salafist Quietism, is deeply opposed to VEOs. As a result, they claimed that violent Salafism was not the 'real' Salafism, but rather a version that has been spawned by other social, political and economic concerns.³⁰ These respondents also pointed out that the Salafist movement has won large mainstream support for its good deeds – including steering youth toward prayer and moderation. As such, they felt it deeply important to distinguish between moderate Salafists and takfirist Salafists, with the latter referring to those who accuse anyone of blasphemy for not following the Qur'an to the letter. Despite the differentiation, however, some Salafists are unable to discern the difference and so are more easily co-opted into groups such as ISIS.³¹ This is partly because, according to one respondent, Salafists indiscriminately take on any recruit without steering his subsequent ideological direction of travel. Another agreed and felt that one VEO tactic may therefore be to disguise its recruitment approach as Salafist in nature.³² However, a final group of respondents insisted that Salafists were knowingly involved in VEO recruitment. One even directly claimed that children from Salafist Qur'anic centers go to train and fight in Syria seeing as it is impossible to do so in Jordan. Another agreed and asked why it is the case that some VEO fighters are Salafists but none are Sufis, Ataris, Motazilis or Ibadis – i.e., from other religious dominations.³³

²⁹ "It [Kitab and Sunna] is a Civil Society Organization that uses the helping of poor people as cover to spread extremist Salafist thought. They are spread around Jarash and they don't show themselves. They have a number of students who are supported in the name of helping the poor, and they have kindergartens and schools – religious ones." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

³⁰ "This Salafism is not the real Salafism because the real Salafism is something else, and those that work for the Salafists in the protests and demonstrations in Zarqa when the sheikhs attacked the public security forces, and those that call for the legitimacy of Daesh...are rare." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

³¹ "I feel like the Salafists have the most [VEO] support and they are strict with their ideology. They try to criticize all those before them. I was with the Muslim Brotherhood and I spent a lot of time with Salafist Quietists. Many are very strict about what they are doing. They see themselves as the righteous ones and that everyone else is wrong, and this creates an issue because it's like 'I am right and what do you know?' and this is one of the reasons for extremism." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

³² "I consider any group carrying a weapon a recruiting group. In Jarash I sometimes hear about the Salafists, but I'm not sure. I heard from some guys who were recruited in Jarash by the Salafists. I expect most youngsters get recruited by imposter Salafists." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

³³ "I mean the Rimony guy who killed in the training center, he was a student of Ramadan Jallad. He attended classes with him and he's one of the sheiks here in Jarash. The security forces questioned him without receiving any answer, because he won't confess to anything. So why don't we see a Sufi who fights with Daesh, and why are they all Salafists." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

"I had a friend once that had the Qur'an memorized and he was also an imam and followed the Salafists. After a while he left them and started to follow the Da'wa [Quietists] because he felt like they represent religion and follow it. He then later left them and became independent, and one time he sat with a sheikh from the Da'wa and he told him 'it's too bad that the efforts of the Salafists and the Da'wa get lost. Why don't they work together and gain more knowledge and then preach to people, not just learn and not preach or preach without teaching'. The Salafists are very strict in religious interpretation and understanding. If they decided to work correctly and if the state didn't reject or renounce them, and if society then accepted them, then they would have a more positive effect. Currently, they are not very well liked and you hear a lot of stories about their sheikhs being put in prison"

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

Focus: Salafism can lead to VEO membership.

"I went to a funeral at the Sowaileh area: the guy was 20 years old and died in Turkey when he was studying there. As I was at the funeral I sat with the father who knew his son was with ISIS and blew himself up along with some Syrian officers. Chechnyan clerics were at the funeral and ministers too. It was fine for the father to say that his son was with ISIS. You can meet him. His name is Jamal Ashab Sowaileh Shishan. He [the son] was studying mathematics at the Jordanian University and decided to finish his studies in Turkey and they brainwashed him. He called his father a week before his death and told him he will be carrying out an attack on Syrian officers in Raqqa. The father told him "So what should I do for you?" The father is a simple man. Unemployed. In my opinion, where there is too much religion there is extremism. The guy was very religious but the family was moderately religious. His father couldn't control him and no one from the family could. And step by step ISIS got him into Turkey under the false claim that he was finishing his studies and then he went to Syria to be recruited by ISIS and he blew himself up and became part of them."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Each VEO has a supporting political movement.

A small number of respondents suggested that it was easy to distinguish between VEOs by the way that each has a supporting political movement to help it with its objectives. For example, one claimed that the leftist Socialist Jordanian party supports ISIS, while the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists support JN. Meanwhile, West Bank groups (and the wide West Bank public) in Jordan support Hamas. Another argued that VEOs have, over the past years, clearly prioritized political objectives over religious ones. For

example, he believed that whereas JN and ISIS spoke of the need to confront Shia Muslims and protect Sunni Islam, both organizations were more interested in securing land and oil resources.³⁴

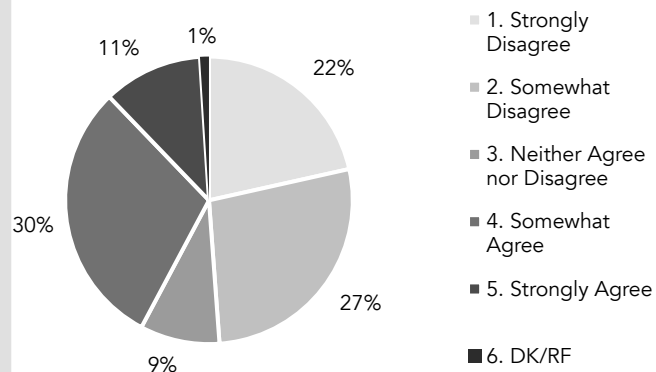
"There is a Jordanian man [Amjad Qourshah] who was asked on a live TV show; he was asked what he thinks of these groups [VEOs]. He kept avoiding an answer. Then he was asked: "Is ISIS terrorist?" He said: "We are all terrorists". He was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and he is a well-known university professor. He used to defend Jabhat Al Nusra in his lectures."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

There is a need for political reform, but it is important to distinguish religious political groups from VEOs.

A few respondents complained that individuals seeking wealth, rather than improvement of the country, now dominate modern domestic politics. They believed that this phenomenon has contributed to a sense of public frustration with the political system, although one respondent acknowledged that it is also the fault of the electorate for voting for this type of leader. Another complaint was that the political system remains nepotistic and/or fails to appoint the right person into the right position. As such, 41 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 49 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the government interferes too much in controlling political parties (see Figure 4). In either case, there was a strong call for political reformation as the foundation for campaigns to undermine the appeal of VE and VEOs. One respondent even called for the establishment of a Ministry of Political Development to oversee this process. Specifically, by challenging these groups to clarify their political platforms, it will become easier to expose the weaknesses in their vision. One respondent further noted that it is important to distinguish between JN/ISIS and other Islamist opposition groups such as the Islamic Action Front, explaining that no one really knows the leaders of the former while the leaders of the latter have political experience and pedigree. As such, a political approach to the problem of VEOs will be even more effective.

Figure 4. To what extent do you agree that the government interferes too much in controlling political parties?



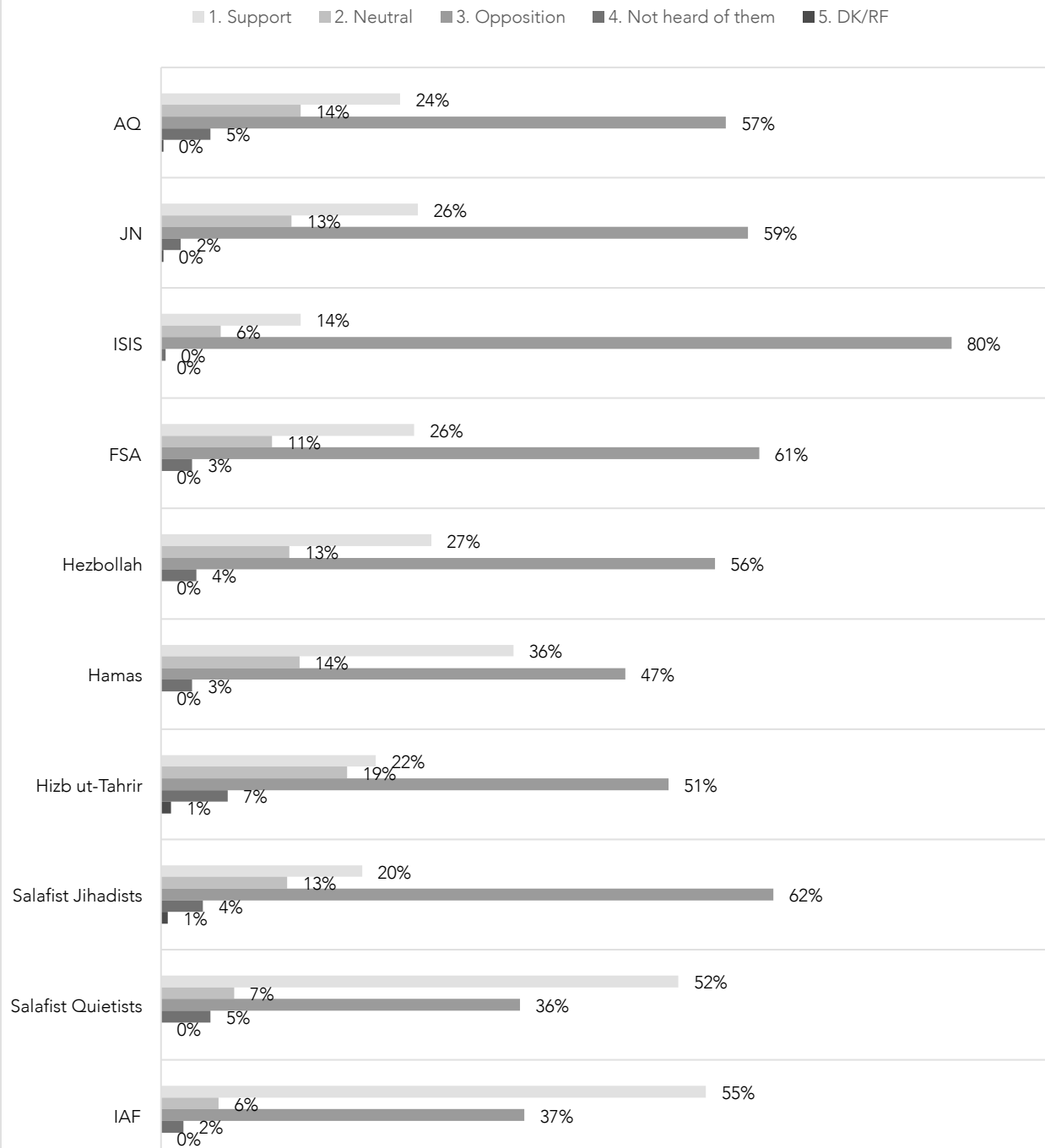
"If today someone asks the question "who is the leader of Daesh?" some names would be mentioned like Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi, but nobody knows exactly who Baghdadi is. But if we ask "who is the director of the Islamic [Action] Front in Jordan or in Egypt" the answer will be an

³⁴ "I think that these [VEO] groups are fighting over land and government. Daesh for example are trying to take control over the lands that have petrol, so they are only trying to fulfill their political objectives. None of them care about Islam or Muslims or even care about Syria." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

individual that is well known, and whose ideology and origins are known, because at some point he was probably a member of Parliament or public association. It is very important to distinguish between when we are dealing with something that is known versus the unknown."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Figure 5: To what extent do you think there is support or opposition for the following groups in your community?

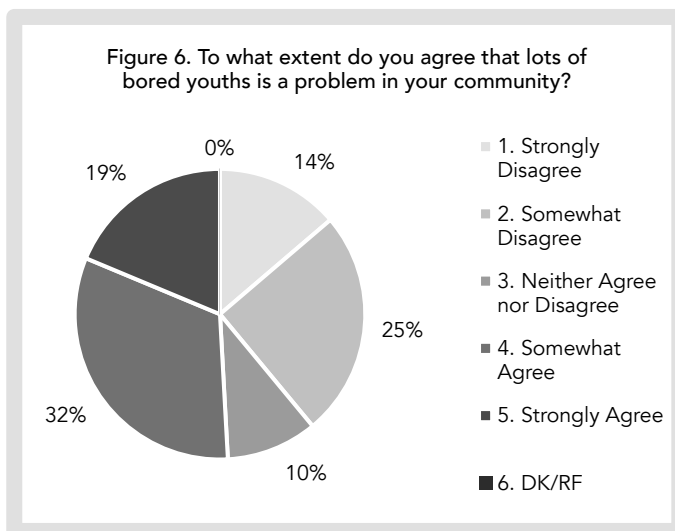


3.0 BASIC NEEDS DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

3.1 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

High unemployment numbers are of concern.

The vast majority of respondents cited the worrying level of unemployment as one of the key causes and contributors to both extremism and violent extremism.³⁵ They explained that unemployed individuals face high barriers to finding a partner and getting married, as well as looking after other members in the family. They are also more likely to suffer from boredom. The resulting physical, mental and spiritual malaise makes the unemployed easier to manipulate and recruit than those with alternative ways of generating wealth and other means of fulfillment. In fact, 51 percent of Jarash respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 39 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that bored youths is a problem in their community (see Figure 6). The problem is particularly acute in Jarash, with one respondent claiming that it has the highest unemployment rate in the Kingdom. Another respondent claimed that in every household within Jarash there are now three or four unemployed members with few goals or ambitions given the difficulties they face in finding jobs.³⁶ Another highlighted Palestinian refugee camps in Jarash, such as Souf Camp and Jarash (a.k.a. Gaza) Camp, as being areas of greatest concern.³⁷ Another agreed and explained that it was an issue of dignity and that men without rights or access to their own land or job opportunities to look after their families will inevitably seek alternatives such as VEOs rather than face despair. Employment concerns have also led to mainstream violent confrontation with authorities. For example, one respondent noted recent protests in Theban (Madaba) where youth gathered and threw stones at members of the Armed Forces in frustration at the lack of jobs. As a result of this concern, respondents called for concerted efforts to be made across the sectors. This included improving the role of religion (and mosques), education and even health in



³⁵ "We have violence now because of the lack of job opportunities, and poverty, and not putting correct plans to counter poverty and unemployment. No one likes to be violent." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash),

³⁶ "Economic reasons, meaning lack of job opportunities leads to extremism, as no one can find a job. For example, I have two kids who finished a four year university degree for nothing – they don't have jobs." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

³⁷ "There is poverty and unemployment, which creates a fertile environment for extremism that can be taken advantage of by extremists." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

maximizing work opportunities and work ethic. However, it is noteworthy that respondents differentiated between the government and the King for these failings.³⁸

"It [violent extremism] is 'the' problem at this time and mainly it's because of the economic aspects, because unemployment is increasing. My area has the highest unemployment rate in the Kingdom and its one of the marginalized areas – that is one of the most important factors that influences youth [unemployment]. We [youth] want to get out what we are keeping inside of us, the way we are living, this terrible life. I don't have any specific stories but just look at the numbers. Unemployment in Jordan is now 14 percent and in Jarash it is worse. If we want to look at it politically it's pretty comfortable. It's not like the government is limiting freedoms. On the contrary there is a lot of back and forth, so politically it's not a problem, but being unemployed is more important and economic crisis is more important."

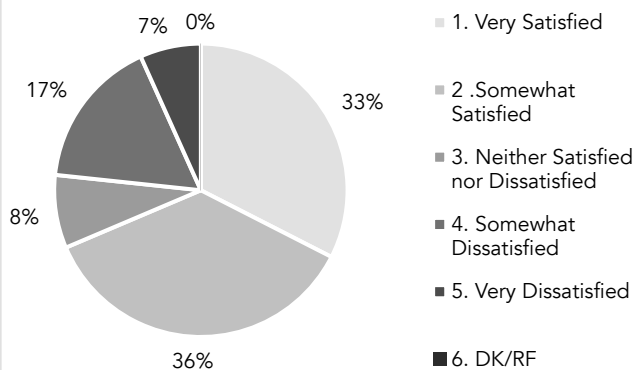
(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

There is a mismatch between education and employment, which has come under greater strain amidst globalization.

69 percent of Jarash GQ respondents reported being very or somewhat satisfied, while 24 percent reported being very or somewhat dissatisfied with access to education in their local community (see Figure 7). Nevertheless, a number of respondents complained that the Jordanian curriculum, and that of the whole region, was in need of reform, explaining that several subjects taught at school were not useful within the majority of workplaces. For example, one believed that History and Arabic Language were pointless. He argued that VEOs have been able to exploit the disillusionment of these students when they are unable to find work. Another agreed and

believed that there are over 1.25 million boys living on the street across the region who could become extremists because they lack jobs and money due to their poor schooling, and who are seduced by the idea of carrying weapons. Indeed, a common complaint was the perceived mismatch between the skills provided in Jordanian schools and universities, and the requirements of the local and national job market. For example, one respondent noted that globalization (and not just phenomena such as the influx of Syrian refugees) has made it easier for qualified workers from nearby countries to take Jordanian jobs. In particular, most of the Middle East region is coastal. This means that it is relatively easy for workers in one

Figure 7. To what extent are you satisfied with access to education in your local community?



³⁸ "I blame Jordan for not doing a lot for its youth, as it has not provided any work for them, meaning I blame the governments and not the Leader. The governments must wake up and find a solution for the unemployment issue."
(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

country within the region to travel to another. Furthermore, it means that there is a relatively narrower range of job sectors, and so workers must compete within a more restricted job space. This generates frustration, stress and unemployment.³⁹ Another respondent agreed, but placed greater blame on the capitalist mentality of Arab employers, explaining that they are less willing to give individuals jobs unless they can guarantee much greater profit margins. This greed has again placed strain on job seekers to appear more attractive.

"This is the problem of education in Jordan, you study for four or five years then you find out that your field is not required in the job market. Daesh has managed to attract a lot of guys because they have a lot of money, and they have managed to create a strong media presence to win over the support of many people, and promised to provide them with work, and that it wants to make them live safely. As for Nusra and Al Qa'ida, we stopped hearing about them because Daesh took over."

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Some jobs are more desirable, and oversubscribed, than others.

Many students teach in private schools, rather than remain unemployed, as a way to gain experience and find future jobs. This is particularly true of women, even though salaries for private school teachers do not exceed 200 JD. This is partly because private school teaching tends to end at 14:00 - one respondent explained that conservative culture disapproves of women working late into the day, or of women working with men. Examples of popular schools include: Burma Elementary Mixed School, Halawah Elementary Mixed Girls School, Nour Al Salam Islamic School, Nafeesah Bent Al Hasan Elementary Mixed School, Zain School and Kindergarten. Nursing is another popular job for women, especially given the existence of hospitals such as the Jarash Government Hospital and Alsafa Hospital. One respondent added that women nurses are also in short supply outside of Jordan, particularly in Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia. The equivalent for men is being a doctor, with salaries of around 500 JD per month. A third area of popular employment is engineering, partly because those who graduate enjoy high social status in Jordanian society. In fact, there are so many engineering graduates that several respondents claimed that supply far outstrips demand. This has led to lower engineering graduate salaries, higher unemployment and underemployment, and more graduates working in manual labor, catering and the retail sector.⁴⁰ The same is true of accountants, with many forced to work as cashiers in restaurants, supermarkets or malls. Finally, one respondent observed that pilots also enjoy great respect and have starting salaries of 1000 JD per month, although he also admitted that very few pilots come from Jarash given the expensive education that it requires. As for least desirable jobs, one example was working as a waiter in a coffee shop. Salaries are low, there is not much vacation, workers often work weekends and

³⁹ "The policies that are followed by the government and the regimes in the Arab states are the compost that feeds this extremism. All these reasons should be fought through policies created by specialists, to create job opportunities for the youth...and before you provide him with a job make him ready for the job." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

⁴⁰ "Currently, the number of engineering graduates is very high compared to the needs of the Jordanian and Arab markets. This has increased the percentage of unemployment among engineering graduates, and salaries are fairly low and start at 350 JD only. Many engineering graduates work now in clothes stores and restaurants." (Female, 29, Student, Jarash)

evenings, and they rarely get health insurance or social security from employers. Another example was being a taxi driver, with one respondent complaining that drivers are often exhausted and never know if they will be able to earn enough money from one day to the next.

A lower education level is not necessarily a predictor of VEO sympathy.

There was strong disagreement about whether those with poorer education were more susceptible to VEOs. As for those who agreed, one reason put forward was that those without schooling lack the opportunity to earn a living and so are lured toward VEOs by the promise of financial gain. Another reason was that those with lower levels of education are less able to mount a convincing argument against the reasoning and narratives advanced by VEOs. Such respondents felt that this was particularly true in the case of religious education. Nevertheless, other respondents rejected the existence of a correlation between lower education levels and propensity to engage, and sympathize with, VEOs. They noted, for example, that there have been many well-educated individuals with graduate and post-graduate degrees who have been targeted by VEOs or who have demonstrated sympathy with their ideology. This is partly because these individuals remain unemployed, and their unfilled expectations generate particularly strong levels of frustrations and anger toward the status quo. In fact, some respondents argued that it is better education, when coupled with higher unemployment opportunities, which contributes more to involvement in VEOs than poor education. An alternative explanation advanced by one respondent was that those with higher education levels are still ideologically uneducated. The respondent remained convinced that until programs tackle religious ignorance across society, educated individuals will continue to join VEOs as much as uneducated ones.⁴¹

"I think there is a high percentage of the 2,000 fighters that are educated, that is what I estimate. So unemployment plays a large role. When people are educated and cannot find a job, then money can tempt them. The members of these [VEO] groups are a mixture, some of them are religious, some of them are bloodthirsty, but economic factors are often present. I heard that Daesh gives 600-700 Dollars for every operation or battle, and they also provide loot among other things."

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

Eloquence and age of teachers confer credibility and legitimacy.

When asked to comment on why individuals change their minds and join VEOs, respondents highlighted the high impact that eloquent speakers have on local youth. Others emphasized how age was another important factor – notably, they maintained that older speakers are more influential than younger ones. These findings were particularly prevalent in the case of religion but also applied to the school and university environment, with respondents conceding that professors were often convincing because of their age and status rather than their true level of knowledge. Examples of respected teachers include Sheikh Mohammed Noah Al Qudah (ex-Minister of Youth and son of the late Grand Mufti), Dr. Khaled Al

⁴¹ "There are those in the front lines of Daesh who hold doctorate degrees and engineer degrees – that is why we need to separate between the academic world and ideological studies. When we talk about ideological ignorance, I am not referring to illiteracy but rather being ignorant about the origins of religion, ignorance in the instruction of religion, ignorance regarding the acceptance and rejection of others." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Karki (Head of the Royal Office and President of the Jordanian University) and Sheikh Ali Qadri. These and others are listed in further detail later in this section.

"I think that in general there are some individuals in Jordan that are more open-minded in terms of religion, society, and culture, and they rely on religious sources, and here I am referring to both Islamic and Christian sources. And we can consider Sheikh Mohammad Noah Al Qudah to be an influential individual. Because he is trusted among the people, and this trust is based on the trust in his father. They are a religious family that are moderates, and the language that he uses is familiar to Jordanian youth. Also Sheikh Ali Qadri is someone that can clarify things in Jarash."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

There is a need for religious education reform.

Many respondents highlighted the need for religious education reform, denouncing interpretations of Islam that call for violence and calling for a religion that supports the concepts of peace and moderation as the true guarantors of security. For example, one claimed that the Islamic religious curriculum has a unit dedicated to jihad that impacts greatly on children.⁴² Another condemned the way Sharia is taught in colleges, explaining that it focuses too heavily on terminology and discussion of concepts (such as monotheism) rather than practical implementation.⁴³ Although respondents felt that religious institutions and leaders must take responsibility, many also saw this as a governmental duty. For example, one acknowledged the efforts of King Abdullah with the creation and publication of the Amman Message in 2004, which called for tolerance and unity across the Muslim world. Another pointed out that the King's efforts have also been international, recalling attempts to convince victims of attacks in Russia that VE was not the same thing as Islam. Nevertheless, such efforts do not detract from the ongoing need for the government, particularly through the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, to provide more guidance and training (see section 5.2 Religious Values, Attitudes and Beliefs).

"At the time of the war in Chechnya, there was terrorism and extremists from Al Qa'ida went to a school named "Bislan" and killed 300 children. The killers were Arabs and Africans. 90 children survived the attack and were invited by the King to visit Amman. I was a witness to that: 10 years ago the King received them and told them about his peace mission. I remember that there was a sudden power cut and they got scared thinking there was an attack! But they were informed about the mission and that Islam is not what did that to them."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

⁴² "The Islamic religion curriculum has a unit that only talks about jihad. These children who read these books are teenagers. They become excited. This is positive because it gives them a push forward toward jihad. I wouldn't blame anyone for extremism." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

⁴³ "Our god ordered the sons of our Prophet Ibrahim in Sura Al Anbiyaa: "And we made them leaders, guiding [men] by our command, and we sent them inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers." So here, even praying came second to deeds. But instead everyone is deliberating because we have a low cultured society, a very low culture." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Focus: The need for better religious classes.

"We have a problem: our society is very emotional. Our problem is that our society is empty-headed, and our youth are like an empty glass – you can fill them up easily with anything, and it's easy to convince them that there is no correct religion in our society. Why? Because in the old days there was a different education system: the student used to go and learn with scholars and took six Qur'an classes, along with the origins of religious jurisprudence and Hadith and ideology. The religious classes that are being taught now to the Jordanian student are very weak, and don't help him to answer questionable things. It's shallow and consists of information that doesn't give immunity to extremist ideas. The student moves from school to university, and it's easy to influence him with ideology (and it's possible for him to flip as well and become an atheist). So the Salafist guys say that it's forbidden to ask, you just surrender your brain to this sheikh. But this is not right, in our religion we should ask and question."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

There is a need for general education reform.

Many respondents also believed that Jordan needs wider educational reform. For example, one complained that the Ministry of Education has not hired the necessary people to update the History curriculum since 1989. Another felt that schooling lacks life skills and places too much emphasis on memorization by rote, instead of encouraging debate and discussion.⁴⁴ A third complained that in the current curriculum students are not taught to accept others, including those of other religions, and that this risks aggravating intolerance and discrimination. Other complaints also included harder Baccalaureate exams, a more challenging curriculum in general, tougher exam corrections and the banning of trivial items in exams such as fountain pens and ink. For example, one respondent complained that a neighbor's daughter failed her exams because she was unable to answer the exam questions with the uncomfortable ballpoint pen provided. More widely, respondents complained that students learn subjects that are useless and/or graduate unable to implement their skills. This leads to unemployment and disillusionment with the state system. Due to all of these observations, many agreed that one of the most important intervention points for dealing with the educational issue is at high school, before graduation.

Focus: The need for a better curriculum.

"A student carries a 10 kg backpack to school, does not understand anything, and returns not understanding anything either. So we have turned them into ignorant generations. The high school exams are difficult and there is toughened surveillance of high-school students...they destroyed the

⁴⁴ "It's the same thing in schools, and in education: we are in utmost need to bring in a lot of life skills for people. Meaning to bring debating skills. You shouldn't just memorize everything without thinking and understanding. Our curricula, our concepts and Islamic definitions should be taught properly so that the elementary and high school and college students understand them." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

structure of high-schools!! Today in Jordan, and these are statistics I say in front of all the world, we have more than 200,000 "terrorists", meaning students who have failed at high school, are roaming the streets, and are aged between 18 to 23 years. Because the Minister of Education has failed them, the policy of education has failed them, so students start to have strange ideas and this leads to terrorism. There is no salary, job or shelter. A boy starts thinking: "my country is not good, why has my country oppressed me?" and he starts having strange thoughts, and anyone can change his ideas... There are students including my son, who is not a big fan of education. He has failed high school four times, and is chased by the Minister of Education because he wants him to learn other things. Thus, we have created a radical generation."

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

There are good academic speakers to help with CVE efforts focused on students.

Respondents believed that there are a number of academics and other thinkers that can help reach out to disgruntled students. Examples include Dr. Mohammad Rateb Al Nabulsi, Bassam Omoosh and Dr. Ziad Kilani, praised for their clarity of message and ability to address a range of people from simple families in public spaces to university graduates. For example, one respondent recalled a few seminars and a festival held in Jarash in 2014 under the title 'Life becomes Beautiful', where Al Nabulsi talked about the role of the family as a basis for countering extremism. Respondents agreed that there is an ongoing need for such people to explain confusing concepts that VEOs have managed to exploit. For example, one claimed that many Jordanians are unsure about the rights, procedures and doctrine that underpin divorce. Additional religious, social, political and other leaders identified by respondents as useful in CVE efforts include the following:

Table 1. Influential Academics.

NAME	DETAILS
Mohammad Hdieb	President of the Al Aqsa Center in Souf Camp, which is a cultural sports club. He is a member of parliament who has shown great interest in the youth, partly because he himself comes from a poorer background.
Najah Al Azzeh	Member of the Women's Center in Souf Camp and member of parliament. Volunteer and social researcher interested in awareness sessions with youth of the area. Focuses on gender roles and barriers (e.g. Feb 2016), early marriage and violence against children (e.g. Jan 2016). She is considered close to the people because she is educated and from the local community.
Nuha Al Qatama	Head of the Women's Center organization, encouraging youth initiatives, teamwork and spreading awareness. For example, in August 2016 the organization celebrated students who scored excellent grades in the Tawjihi exam (high school final exam). In May 2016 it focused on campaigning for women's right to work.

Mahmoud Hamdan	Member of Save the Children responsible for several children, youth and parent campaigns. He has conducted debating sessions on domestic violence and early marriage (e.g. Mar 2015).
Kamal Mustafa Shehab	Secretary of the Jordanian Red Cross Jarash branch. He has an MA in economics and has led campaigns on spreading awareness on violence, terrorism and extremism. Reportedly enjoys youth respect and in Dec. 2015 led a seminar on community violence.
Sami Khaled Bayan	MA in media, works with a number of communities and international organizations on developing and building local youth (e.g. activities with the Red Crescent and USAID). Lives in the Jabal Al Akhdar area of Jarash.
Hisham Al Banna'	Director of General Affairs at the Jarash municipality and lives in Jabal Al A'tmat in Jarash. Works on spreading awareness of wrong interpretations and use of religion. He is also a poet who has written about terrorism and extremism.
Mohammad O'oun	Lawyer from Jarash who lives in Wadi Al Deir street on the road to Souf Camp. He lectures in organizations, schools and tribal guesthouses on Islam, modernity, moderation and extremism. He is highly popular in Jarash for being an active leader in youth religious awareness programs.
Sheikh Sultan Al Odwan	Leader of the Odwan tribe and President of the Faysale football team.
Salah Al Wallaby	A former Minister of Media, praised for his use of vernacular and ability to engage with people on many levels.
Abdel Fattah Kayed	Head of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called the Daem Center, praised for holding workshops and disseminating material against hate speech. In addition, the NGO has worked with youth and their parents to improve understanding and how to report risks in advance.
Marwan Al Masher	A former Minister of Foreign Affairs, praised for his knowledge, political wit, popularity and ability to influence.
Ziad Al Manaseer	A businessman praised for protecting the domestic workforce, with one respondent claiming that he employs 70 percent Jordanians in his companies unlike other businessmen who hire foreign workers.
Prince Hassan	Praised for his knowledge and involvement in establishing scientific and Islamic colleges worldwide. ⁴⁵ Known also for speaking well at conferences on global peace, counter extremism, and economics, with one respondent quoting him for saying, after the Ruqban bombing (Mafrag, June 2016): "This homeland is my homeland, its earth is my earth, and I won't let anyone hurt it."

⁴⁵ "I believe a lot in the royal family. Prince Hassan is also an individual that is loved by the people. People are fond of his words and he has peaceful ideas which the people are comfortable with." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

King of Jordan	Praised for his eloquence, straight talking, profound thinking and ability to address all Jordanians.
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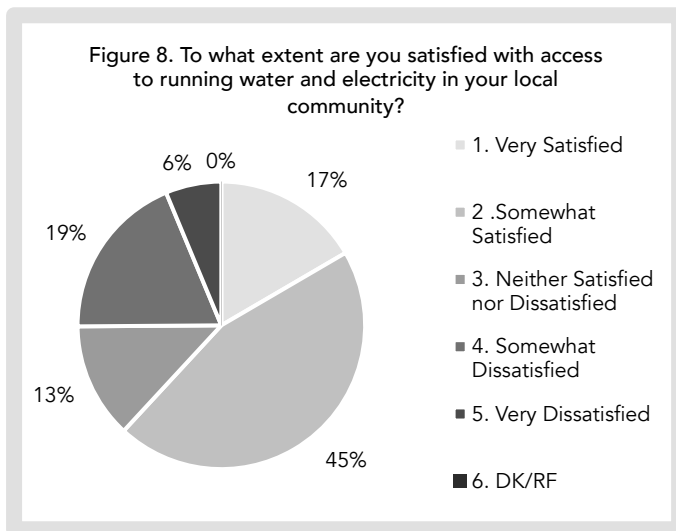
"Since he [Sheikh Odwan] is the President [of the Faysale football team] he is very well liked by Jordanians and we can maybe use him and sports activities to combat extremism by recruiting youth from all the impoverished areas and registering them in clubs and conducting tournaments. This is an activity I recommend since the youth love sports. We could also conduct activities in the Southern Theater and lectures, seminars for youth and Friday sermons."

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

3.2 UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Some areas of Jarash suffer from poor water supply while the electricity supply is adequate but could improve.

Respondents confirmed that some parts of Jarash suffer from the poor delivery of government utility services. For example, many areas lack water in the summer. Souf Camp, Jarash Camp, Muqbila village, A'sfour village, Kufur Khal village, Bleila village, Sakib, Al Rahmaniya village, Tal'at Al Ruz village, Al Mansoura town, Al Jazaza village, and Majdal village in the Barma district all suffer from a lack of water, with houses sometimes only receiving a supply for one day each fortnight.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the city of Jarash, Barma town and Mastaba all have a better supply of water (approximately once every three days). Despite the problems, several respondents felt that the



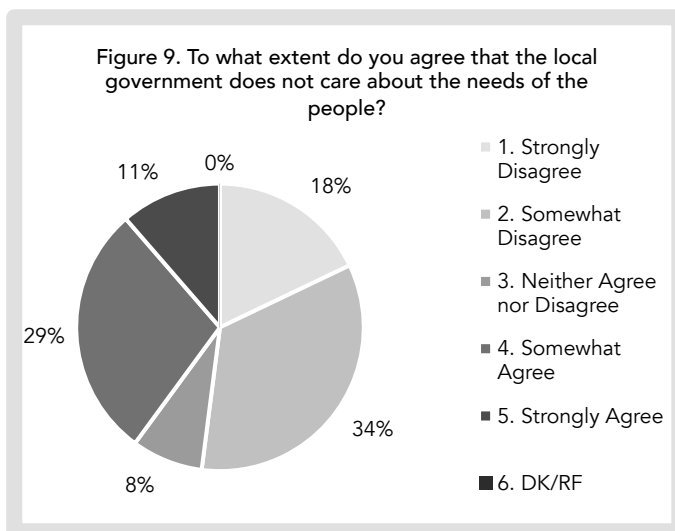
water situation in their province is relatively better than other areas in the country, due to the fact that there is only moderate summer heat. Furthermore, there are a number of water springs that many citizens use for watering crops or other non-drinking domestic uses. Meanwhile, respondents confirmed that electricity is available in all parts of Jarash, particularly at locations of strategic value such as tourist sites. The supply not only reaches all houses in these areas but also the main roads in the form of street lighting. However, some streets in rural villages such as Muqbila, Jaba, A'sfour, Marsa', Juba, Tal'et Al Ruzz, Al Rahmaniya and Al Raya do not have street lighting and, as a result, locals rarely go out after 19:00. Poor paving of roads and sidewalks exacerbate the problem, which also discourages inhabitants from travelling in the dark. Overall, 62 percent of Jarash GQ respondents reported being very or somewhat satisfied, while 25 percent reported being very or somewhat dissatisfied with access to running water and electricity in their local community (see Figure 8).

The Government of Jordan must use its resources better to provide services.

A number of respondents complained that the government should work harder to provide the services needed to stimulate a better economy, society and improved employment opportunities. For example, one insisted that other governments employ thousands of engineers in their Ministry of Religious Affairs to assist in planning and supervising projects on land endowments. By contrast, in Jordan the focus is too small-scale and limited to single mosques or churches on an ad hoc basis.

⁴⁶ "The inhabitants of Bin Abi Taleb Mosque in Jarash Camp still suffer from constant cutouts for long periods for drinking water, especially in the summer in elevated areas, where the pumping of water is weak." (Female, 26, Student, Jarash)

The respondent believed that better use of land endowments would rapidly decrease unemployment and improve social stability. Another respondent criticized the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs for not providing imams with enough training and guidance to give clear enough sermons. A third lamented the low number of open spaces for children and families. Although local governments were not openly criticized, data showed that many of the complaints relate to a desire for their improved performance. For example, 40 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 52 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the local government does not care about the needs of the people (see Figure 9).

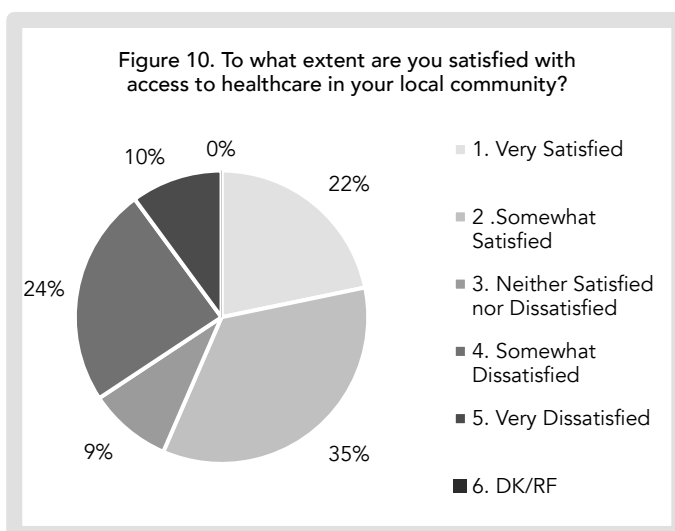


"There are no places for families and children to go out. There is an old park (Jarash Park), It is located in the neighborhood opposite the Lubaba bint Al Hareth school. It is one of the oldest parks in Jarash. It is visited by families and children because it has safe playing grounds for children, although there are broken facilities. There is another one in Jarash city center. The rest of the districts and villages have no safe places for the children to play, that's why they spend their time on the streets."

(Female, 28, Student, Jarash)

The Government of Jordan should improve the health centers.

57 percent of Jarash GQ respondents reported being very or somewhat satisfied, while 34 percent reported being very or somewhat dissatisfied with access to healthcare in their local community (see Figure 10). There are approximately 28 health centers in Jarash governorate, but respondents claimed that most are in bad condition. One common complaint was the lack of nursing staff and specialized doctors, especially heart doctors. Another was that there are many medications that are available only at certain times in the year. This means patients must either buy these medicines from private pharmacies (if they can afford it) or wait until they become available in the health center pharmacies.



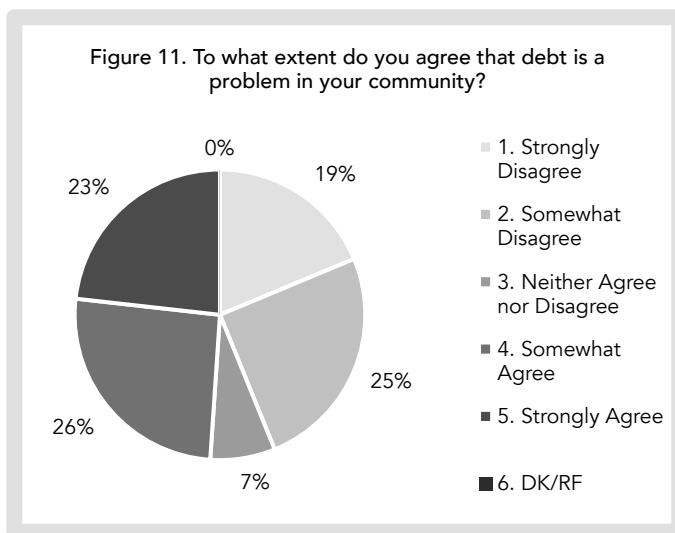
"I have been going to this center [Jarash health center] for more than two years. I suffer from chronic diseases including high blood pressure and diabetes. Sometimes months pass until I am able to get proper medication, and when I ask the doctor about this he replies that this is the only option I can present. When I ask the doctors about what to do they advise me to not change my medicine, so who should I believe? If one member of my family gets ill, the health center has no specialized doctors, especially in the evening, when emergency cases are transferred to hospitals."

(Male, 60, Retired, Jarash)

3.3 ECONOMY, HOUSING AND DEBT

Jordan has relatively worse economic woes than some other countries in the region, which is increasing vulnerability to extremism.

Respondents felt that Jordan is suffering from worse economic troubles than many other countries in the region including Qatar, Saudi Arabia and even Algeria, with the most common indicator cited as annual income. Even in the case of countries with comparable annual salaries – for example, one respondent named Morocco – there were complaints that the government does not ‘share the pain’ of its people as much. This has created a distance between the population and authorities that individuals, anti-government groups and VEOs have been able to exploit. For example, one respondent described heavy protests and demonstrations in 2013 following the decision



of Prime Minister Abdullah Nsoor to reduce subsidies on gas and gasoline. Reflecting widespread economic hardships, 49 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 44 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that debt is a problem in their community (see Figure 11). A large number of respondents referred to the weak economy as a key reason why extremism and violent extremism have gained traction in Jarash and the country more widely.^{47 48} More specifically they felt that poverty, or rather relative poverty and associated problems such as unemployment, facilitates the mutation of extremism ideology and thought into action. For example, one respondent attributed the recent shooting of an intelligence officer in Irbid to poor, religious men lacking gainful employment.⁴⁹ Another claimed that attacks against police in Theban (Madaba) were likewise due to a sleeper cell consisting of young men with financial and employment difficulties. Indeed, one respondent quoted a saying attributed to Ali, the Prophet’s cousin: “If poverty was a man, I would have slain him”, claiming that governmental failure to address the lack of economic opportunities for the average Jordanian has

⁴⁷ “If economic crises continue in the nation, people will begin to go toward these [VEO] groups. Even if I don’t care about religion I will start to follow these groups for economic reasons, it’s better than living in a deteriorating economic situation. It might push our youths to go and fight in higher numbers, to forget about life and the high cost of living and the absence of jobs here.” (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

⁴⁸ “Mostly what motivates people is religion and money. These [VEO] groups provide their members with large amounts of money, they create a heaven on earth for them; they give them money, power, women and cars.” (Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

⁴⁹ “Some groups of young religious men; poor, perverse and unemployed, receive these wrong ideologies, like what happened in Baq’a. It was not an individual criminal act; it was affected by the Kharijite ideology. There was communication with an extremist group, which helped an idea become an action - the shooting of an intelligence officer - and this happened in Irbid.” (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

clearly contributed to the spread of extremism. Another respondent argued that even suicide bombers are motivated by financial gain – in this case for his/her family.⁵⁰ However, by the same token, respondents argued that it would be relatively easy to defeat extremism – that by addressing economic woes, individuals would become more inoculated and VEOs would either disappear or reduce in strength to a point where they would pose negligible risk. In terms of the actual compensation provided by VEOs, figures varied considerably. For example, one respondent estimated around 400-800 USD per month, whereas another claimed 1,000 USD per month. A third put the figure at 1,500 USD per month for fighters and even as high as 5,000 USD per month for highly skilled individuals such as oil engineers.

"I hear in the news that Daesh pays high salaries for its fighters. They come to you when you are broke and say here this is 400 USD, even knowing that the foreigner who joins them gets 800 USD according to what I've heard from some of TV channels, as a salary. But when someone who can't find food to eat suddenly finds 400 USD a month he will worship the demons! He goes along with them and turns extreme."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

Economic woes drive, but do not necessarily cause, extremism.

Although VEOs exploit poverty as a means to recruit members, respondents were also careful to point out that economic woes in themselves are not initiators of extremism.⁵¹ As such, being poorer does not push the vast majority of individuals to seek active involvement in VEOs. Rather, it provides fertile ground for VEOs to plant the seed of extremism or opportunism. For example, one respondent noted the high level of VE sympathizers in colleges, highlighting how it would be impossible for these to exist if travel along a VE pathway was purely based on economic issues. Another described knowing a JN recruit who had enough wealth to hold his wedding at his house, owned several cars, and whose uncle was involved in Jordanian politics. A third named Member of Parliament Mazin Al Dala'in, whose 23-year old son, a medical student, joined ISIS in July 2015 and carried out a suicide attack in Mosul three months later. A fourth described a local married man who had a baby girl and ran a money exchange company, and who joined ISIS.⁵² In fact several respondents felt that poverty can even prevent individuals from engaging with VEOs, as they cannot afford to take time off from earning their livelihood to join one.

"The economic status doesn't make a difference, all Muslims are the same. The West pictures Muslims as farmers and barbarians. But engineering colleges are filled with Salafists and Muslim Brotherhood. They do not focus on race. And I think if we generate official statistics on jihadists, we will find them 50% Palestinians and 50% Jordanians. I am sure." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

⁵⁰ "Because they pay his family, this is their way. I don't have much background but I believe that there is no one that goes and kills himself without guaranteeing his family at least." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

⁵¹ "If you want to know if those with low-income are angry at the society then the answer is that it's not really related, but sometimes it makes a difference." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

⁵² "One of the guys who went to Syria, he's a manager of a money exchange company in Jarash, and his financial situation is very good, and he has a small baby girl and he left the house. His wife was surprised when he called her from the border. He told her: "I am going with Daesh, pray for me". (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

Conflict in Syria and Iraq has generated mixed views on refugees.

Overall, respondents expressed mixed views on the impact of Syrian refugees in the local community. For example, 47 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 45 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that inequality between Jordanians and Syrian refugees is a problem in their community (see Figure 12). In terms of positives, the influx of Syrians has increased the amount of business and money in circulation when Jordan's economy needed it most. Likewise, Syrians have undertaken jobs that Jordanians were not prepared to do, such as working in restaurants and bakeries.⁵³ Respondents expressed similar sentiments about Iraqi refugees, many of whom arrived in the aftermath of the 'liberation' of Iraq. Since then, trade with Iraq has faltered, compounded by higher oil prices and reduced transportation.⁵⁴ However, respondents insisted that local goodwill and a desire to help Iraqis prevail. For example, one described Iraqis as 'brothers of the same blood', while another observed that tribal ties connect both countries. Nevertheless, many respondents felt that refugees have had a negative influence. For example, one believed that over two million Syrian refugees have entered the country at a cost of over two billion JD. Others argued that Syrian refugees have not stayed in their camps but rather spread across Jordan, including into Jarash, in search of employment. As they have been willing to work for less pay and for longer hours, they have taken jobs away from locals.^{55 56} One respondent also claimed that Jarash is one of the least economically powerful governorates, with average household income lower than most. Furthermore, local schools are filled with Syrian children, as are markets, health clinics, cafés, etc. Likewise, respondents complained that refugees have rented all of the accommodation available, which has helped push up rental fees. This has held locals back from moving homes and has made it unaffordable for many youths to marry and move into new homes. Overall, 48 percent of Jarash GQ respondents reported being very or somewhat satisfied, while 44 percent reported being very or somewhat dissatisfied with access to affordable housing in their community (see Figure 13).

"The conflict in Syria has had a greater impact than the Iraq invasion; because first, the number of displaced or refugees from Syria is double the number from Iraq, much more than double actually, and here the real problem starts. They wanted to live outside of the Zaatari camp; many came to Souf thinking they would return. At first, they were living in our homes, but later they wanted to have their own accommodation, so the first thing that happened was that the landlords raised the prices of rents to become, for example, 250 instead of 150. This has made the economic situation bad, as our youngsters want to get married and need places to rent. Also, the houses that were vacant have become occupied, and there's no place for someone from the area to move. The large number of

⁵³ "Syrians work in everything: they have opened restaurants and bakeries and poultry shops. But they haven't damaged job opportunities because not many Jordanians accept working in these areas." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

⁵⁴ "The Jordanian economy was hit hard because the Iraqi regime was one of its biggest supporters; the global surge in oil prices has pushed our economy and budget deficit even deeper into the mire. The next generation will definitely suffer the current economic woes due to the fall of Baghdad." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

⁵⁵ "Syrians are okay with half the pay the Jordanian gets when it comes to jobs, where employers can easily hire ten Syrians for the price of five Jordanians...they're the winners!" (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

⁵⁶ "The price of all apartments has risen, and those that work in restaurants and companies and stores are abusing this; the owners of a business hire a Syrian for 150 JD instead of a Jordanian for 300 JDs!" (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Syrians has reached a point where if you enter any shop, or bakery or restaurant, you find a Syrian. A Syrian works for half the wage of a Jordanian, and this has made the employers employ Syrians and not Jordanians."

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

Figure 12. To what extent do you agree that inequality between Jordanians and Syrian refugees is a problem in your community?

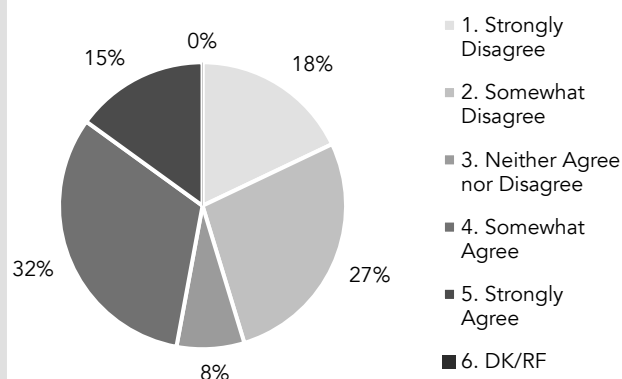
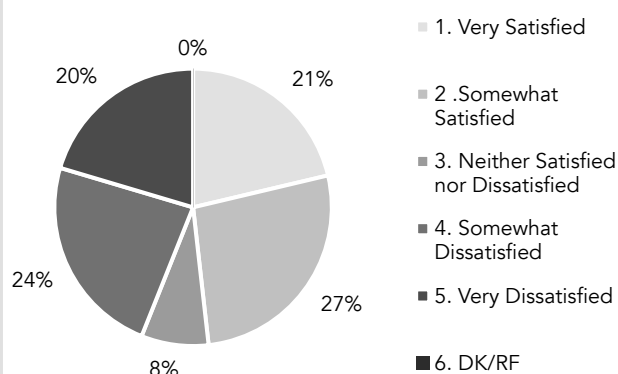


Figure 13. To what extent are you satisfied with access to affordable housing in your local community?



There is loyalty to the King but desire for a government that attracts better investment.

Most respondents differentiated between the government and the monarchy, declaring that there is extreme loyalty and support for the latter regardless of attitudes toward the former. One VE sympathizer even described the King as his current Khalifa. He explained that even if opposed to the King's decision to support NATO and fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria, he is duty bound to follow that decision as a good citizen and as a good Muslim. Another respondent agreed, and pointed out that the King's Amman Message called for moderation and people obeyed.⁵⁷ The 'air-gap' between the monarchy and the government is highly beneficial in that it enables the monarchy to appear apolitical to some degree and to criticize the incumbent government when it needs to bolster support among the opposition at if it poses a potential threat. One salient example of the tendency to blame the government rather than the monarchy was public disapproval with the government for not bringing back better economic opportunities from the various diplomatic missions undertaken by Ministers accompanying the King abroad. Another was anger at reduced subsidies – again deemed the fault of the government and not the King in the eyes of many. One final respondent also added that the King has an intelligent strategy of not

⁵⁷ "And most importantly, the leader of the country, the King and head of state, is someone who rejects these ideas [VE] and doesn't encourage them. In his Amman Message he ordered moderation in daily life and politics, and this made people aware of the issue." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

speaking often and that this ensures the attention of the whole country when he does become involved in matters.⁵⁸

Focus: Inoculation through better foreign investment.

"The King needs governments that can draw paths and goals. Let me give you a simple example: the King goes to Singapore but I don't see, for example, after a month or two or three or even a year or two any projects in Jordan that can benefit the Jordanian people. A square mile in Singapore is equal to a thousand kilometers in the Arab world in terms of potential return! In terms of education, economy, politics and justice, all of these visits are just wasted talk! Why doesn't the Jordanian government representative with the King return with a bag full of proposals? Why doesn't he bring an academy from there to here? It is not just the government but also the private sector. It should help in bringing true investments. What I see is that a lot of our investments are just noise going to waste! If the government worked on treating the reasons behind extremism, we could make it a success in universities, but if we stay the way we are and don't close the doors of extremism in Jordan, it will get chaotic. It is like when we vaccinate children to protect them from disease, if we think that extremism is a disease, we need vaccines now!"

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

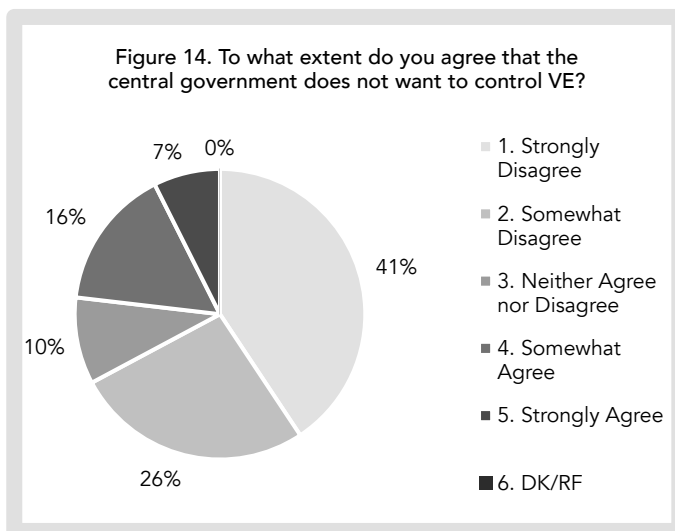
⁵⁸ "His Majesty the King has a huge fan base. He doesn't hold many speeches but he has a presence, so when he does speak to the people, we always react and listen. He is famous because he is the King and people love the King and listen to what he has to say, and all his speeches are effective and influential on all Jordanians." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

4.0 GOVERNANCE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

4.1 CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Government of Jordan wants to tackle VE.

Most respondents were unable to provide detail on the CVE efforts undertaken by the government. However, those able to comment described activity in a number of areas and insisted that the government wants to tackle and control the problem. Indeed, 23 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 67 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the central government does not want to control VE (see Figure 14). One example was that the government has established rules regarding the provision of financial donations, such as the need to register and provide information on the beneficiary. Likewise, one respondent recalled a series of paid three-month training programs for graduates, and praised the initiative for tackling local youth employment problems. Other examples are described in fuller detail in the paragraphs below.



The Government of Jordan has tackled VE across the media in an appropriate way.

The majority of respondents were not aware of explicit government CVE efforts across mainstream media. However, most did not feel that this was problematic. For example, one believed that this was a purposeful government strategy, explaining that if the government draws too much attention to VE and VEOs then members of the public will become more tempted to learn about them and become involved. As for those respondents who were aware of government CVE efforts, two mentioned a series of TV adverts designed to raise awareness. These typically featured influential clerics who encouraged Jordanians to think more critically and to avoid blasphemy,⁵⁹ and have appeared on the Al Ru'ia channel. Finally, one other respondent described how the government has gently been guiding others to do its work and carry its message, aware that these alternative messengers, such as religious men, scholars and politicians, will enjoy greater credibility and legitimacy within their circles. Despite the softer approach to mainstream media, several respondents maintained that the government has been involved in serious

⁵⁹ "I noticed them [CVE adverts] on Jordanian TV but there are not many. I don't know their names. It was a couple of months ago or more, and it affected people, yes, in terms of making them think and avoid blasphemy." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

efforts to secure and monitor social media across the Internet.⁶⁰ Although they lacked specific examples they claimed that this includes shutting down websites, online fora and other web pages.

"I believe that the state's role is to guide, to guide CSOs, youth organizations, religious platforms, and educational institutes (whether universities or colleges or schools). And it is clear that everyone is interested in this. Seminars have been held on issues related to Islam and moderation in religion and in Islam, the Amman Message, guiding youth to discuss and debate the rejection of violence and extremism, using debate as a tool to defend issues, using peaceful means and a democratic approach. I think this was very successful. Even in the media some scholars and local politicians have appeared to speak about Daesh, and they have posed questions that portray the truth to the Jordanian people. But the state and formal media are not enough because there is always a trust barrier between the people and the media."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

The Government of Jordan has tackled VE by monitoring and controlling mosques, but also through discussion.

The official religious direction of the Jordanian state is Ash'ari Sufism. The government ensures the continuation of this doctrine, and tackles alternatives including religious VE, through a number of activities. One is greater monitoring and supervision of mosques. For example, one respondent recalled the overt call to armed jihad made during Friday prayers across many mosques in Ma'an, until the government's subsequent intervention made this impossible. Another confirmed that the intelligence services regularly monitor suspicious mosques in Jarash – such as the one attended by former recruit Samir Al Qutoum. A second activity is better government links with influential religious clerics, including the Mufti, providing these with benefits in return for monitoring and controlling the emergence of VE. In fact, the government has a number of government-sponsored imams. However, the government has been careful to avoid accusations of interference. For example, government-sponsored imams are only obliged to follow regulations set by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic affairs on Fridays. The rest of the time they have more liberty to do as they like. One respondent even claimed that the intelligence services tolerates extremist religious ideas provided that these are not directed against the state or the monarchy.

The government has also undertaken 'softer' initiatives such as sponsoring discussions and debates among youth to raise religious awareness. One of the most salient examples is the Sending Moderation project organized by the All Jordan Youth Committee (AJYC) and financed by the King Abdullah Development Fund. The project started three years ago and began with debating sessions on various economic and cultural issues. After one year, it grew to include debate on counter extremism. These sessions have typically been held at AJYC locations – of which there are 11 across the governorates and two in Amman. A session often involves 50-70 participants including experts on politics, religion and ideology, as well as generally influential individuals that have a national agenda or work on national

⁶⁰ "I do not know and I have no knowledge about this issue, but I believe that the Internet overall is alright and monitored; it's not easy for terrorists to communicate over the Internet. Although, as I said, I have no information and the security services are more knowledgeable than me." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

interests. Several respondents claimed that the AJYC has involved young people from all backgrounds across the governorates. One also pointed out that many of the AJYC will be future leaders in municipal and national bodies. As such, preparing these individuals and building their skills and experience is a good investment.

Focus: The All Jordan Youth Committee.

"For example, there is the All Jordan Youth Committee (AJYC) by the King Abdullah Development Fund, which has worked on guiding youth aged 18-32 years old and raising awareness among them about civil society and religion. There is one program – 'Sending Moderation' – they organized that involved discussion sessions and lecturers with various political, religious and media personnel present. The lectures were held for Jordanian youth in 15 areas across the Northern Desert, Central, and South. It was a complete program on rejecting extremist ideology, respecting the opinion of others, accepting others, how to communicate with teachers in schools, with parents at home, with siblings, using a language that allows for open discussion, how debating tools are used to convince and express our views, rejecting forms of expressions that may harm others, or harm society, how not to insult others, even on religious issues we must be open to debate as it is written in the holy Qur'an: "invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

The Government of Jordan has tackled VE via education.

A small number of respondents were able to provide detail on how the government has attempted to tackle VE and VEOs through improvements to the school curriculum and through better engagement with teachers. For example, one noted that police in Jarash have held a number of workshops with youth in the area on the subject of terrorism, and the role of students in protecting the country against this danger through greater awareness. Likewise, there have been attempts to improve teachers' reporting of domestic violence and violence in universities, although one complaint was that the lack of financial incentives has meant that few people have engaged with these programs. One respondent also claimed that the government has led awareness campaigns and lectures at schools. However, despite these examples, there was a sense that more could be done, particularly in terms of reforming the curriculum and interfacing with religious teachers (see sections 3.1 Education and Employment, and section 5.2 Religious Values, Attitudes and Beliefs). Likewise, respondents called for the better provision of training through computer workshops, English language workshops, life-skills, volunteering and generally any activity that will help youth feel that they are making a useful contribution to their community, to their families and to their own growth and future career prospects.⁶¹

⁶¹ "Say I paint a wall in a community in a city, or in a refugee camp or village, then I will tell the people of the neighborhood that we need to maintain its good condition, then I will be convincing because I contributed to cleaning and to doing something good for the community. It will portray me in a good light." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

"There was a project for every teacher to make a report. We, and a group of teachers, met with a group from the gendarmerie forces and the police and the intelligence services, so that we could talk about it more, and discuss how to report these cases, and how to distinguish extremists. But it was nothing more than that, just creating more awareness because an issue like that needs financial support. Anyone who wants to contribute to it has to have a personal benefit in doing that."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

The Government of Jordan has tackled VE through better intelligence sharing.

Respondents, including those who begrudged the government's propensity to liaise with Western counterparts, praised the effectiveness of the Jordanian intelligence services, and maintained that the country is fundamentally secure. Contrary to the claims of oppression made by VEOs, respondents declared that the Jordanian authorities are respectful of suspects, preferring to try and persuade them through argument and then heavy monitoring and supervision, rather than through abuse.⁶² A few acknowledged that the effectiveness of the government has driven VEOs and their members 'underground', making it hard for average members of the community to know for sure the scale of the problem. A final respondent also claimed that the government has an effective policy for dealing with those fighters who want to return to Jordan. Although the respondent could not comment further, he claimed that it involves close communication with the recruit's family and with the recruit spending a period of time in prison.

"We only fight them with our intelligence. The Jordanian intelligence unit is able to get information about these groups, and it provides NATO with this information. They give them names and numbers of people. Jordan is a safe and stable country, and what we are doing is more than enough. These groups are hiding but the government can find them. The government can find them inside Jordan. These groups are currently hiding in cities, in houses of course. That's why it's hard for a normal simple person like me to specify where they are."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

The Amman Message provided good foundations for the country's CVE stance.

A small number of respondents recalled the importance of the 2004 Amman Message, a signed statement calling for tolerance and moderation. The statement was an initiative championed by the King and issued by 200 Islamic scholars from over 50 countries. In particular, it attempted to tackle three questions – who classifies as a Muslim, under what circumstances can a Muslim be called a non-believer, and what is the legitimate process for issuing fatwas. The respondents claimed that the effort was

⁶² "It is true that the government protects citizens from terrorism and it has all the information on terrorism suspects, and monitors anyone with a fishy profile, and it has succeeded in resolving those issues. They do not come and arrest him from the beginning and beat him up. On the contrary they take him in and tell him what wrong he is doing, and they try to fix him. And they don't put him in jail. Then slowly they keep an eye on him and the people who work with him. But if they see that he can't be treated and put back on the right track, they send him to court." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

successful and forward thinking. For example, one claimed that the Amman Message clearly established that only specific scholars have the qualifications to deliver fatwas, which members of ISIS do not. Indeed, another respondent lamented the fact that the national and international media does not cover the Amman Message and its ramifications more comprehensively.

Government needs to generate more public buy-in to CVE efforts and boost its CVE engagement in the religious space.

Respondents praised the efforts of the Jordanian security services in keeping the country stable and secure given the profound problems taking place on all sides outside of the country. Nevertheless, one repeated recommendation was for greater collaboration and coordination between the law enforcement bodies and the public. For example, several respondents felt that more work could be done on improving youth engagement in CVE efforts, including a stronger partnership with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in the building of an 'early warning' system whereby young men and women take part in informal surveillance of mosques, unions, schools, universities clubs and other meeting points. This should necessarily entail a better identification of, and partnership with, opinion leaders in each of these.⁶³ Another recommendation was for the government to conduct an exhaustive study by interviewing the families of all of those who have joined VEOs, and then making the results available so that other parents are more aware of the same happening in their own families.⁶⁴ A third recommended project was the creation of a multi-disciplinary team working across local government, central government and the Royal Family, and with specialists in economics, politics, education and religion, to convene and implement a commission to investigate the role, if any, played by government in inadvertently oppressing prospective recruits and driving them toward VEO membership. Finally, several called on the government to find solutions to economic and employment issues as a basic step to help steer youth away from extremism.

Despite the government efforts and achievements within the religious space, a small number of respondents felt that more must be done. For example, one respondent, an imam, complained that religious institutions have yet to address the 'wound' of spreading violent extremism. As well as questioning the success of the security forces and their level of awareness of the extremism problem, the respondent alleged that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs even employs extremist preachers. The respondent concluded that the government either doesn't care enough about addressing the issue or is too ignorant to take the necessary steps. This includes simply putting greater effort into empowering certain religious leaders so that they can challenge the ideology of extremists face-to-face with Qur'anic verses and Hadith.

"The danger is very close, and the reason behind it is that there are a lot of extremist preachers in the mosques. As for the shortcomings of the government, part of it is ignorance and lack of knowledge. But they should fight this thought from the start, and also there are people from the intelligence services or other officials who, when they see you talk about these groups, think that

⁶³ "[We] need a number of ministries and groups that can form a specialized committee with the aim of guiding worship places and keeping extremists away from the clubs, universities, etc." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

⁶⁴ "The government should carry out a study that explains why each person went there [abroad to fight with a VEO] and what his goal was. The government should get help from each person's family in these studies, so that they and other people can understand their sons more and deal with them better." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

you just want to fight. So far I don't know anything about them countering extremism. I challenge them: there is no strategy, and it's just words on paper. They don't understand where extremism comes from. I always say: "If you want to kill mosquitos drain the swamp", it's better to treat it from the beginning, rather than coming to the guy after his brain is already filled with Daesh thought."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

"Extremism is a product of the failure of the state and governmental policies toward its people! There are a lot of policies that exist in these states. These policies don't serve people, and thus extremist cells appear aiming to reach what these categories are forbidden from, in any society and not just in Jordan."

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Perception of central government care is good but claims of corruption and nepotism still spurs support for VEOs.

Several respondents described Jordanians as highly tolerant and enduring of certain political issues. For example, one claimed that Jarash has been without ministerial representation for over 15 years and yet nobody complains. Nevertheless, respondents also admitted that Jordanians can be highly sensitive about certain other issues easily exploited by VEOs. One of the clearest examples is the claim that government is corrupt and/or nepotistic. A second is that the government is neglecting its duty to provide better economic and employment opportunities to youth. A third is that the government is opposed to reform, enabling those opposed to the government and the monarchy to accuse these of being oppressive and extremist themselves. Indeed, although a majority felt the central government cares about the needs of the people, over a third felt differently. Specifically, 35 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 56 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the central government does not care about the needs of the people (see Figure 15). Likewise, 54 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 40 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that government officials are corrupt (see Figure 16). The sensitivity of Jordanians, both generally and to these types of narratives in particular, led to the frequent observation that tackling VE and VEOs relies not only on military solutions, but also on discourse and intellectual discussion – especially among the youth in places such as schools and clubs. In fact, often respondents believed that discussion and enlightenment was the only sure way to provide a long-term solution to the spread of extremism in all its guises.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ "Lectures indeed have a big role: awareness lectures. Through lectures we build ourselves. I suggest a bigger drive for awareness from the government. Civil society institutions can also help in the change, although the leaders of these institutions must have knowledge. Not everyone can be a political activist without finishing sixth grade. We want educated leaders, because the whole world relies on science and scientists." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

Figure 15. To what extent do you agree that the central government does not care about the needs of the people?

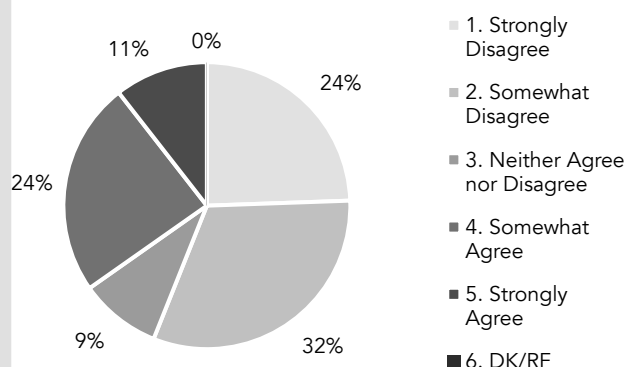
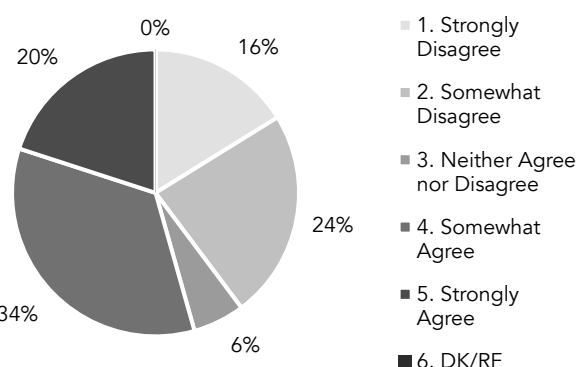


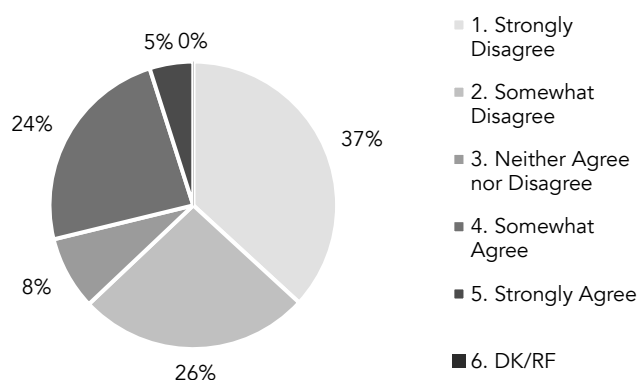
Figure 16. To what extent do you agree that government officials are corrupt?



The government has the power to counter VE, but has yet to properly understand the issue.

Overall, 29 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 63 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the central government does not have the power to control VE (see Figure 17). Nevertheless, a few respondents believed that one of the reasons that VE continues to pose a threat to stability in Jordan is that the government has not managed to understand the issue well enough. For example, one respondent complained that the government confuses VE as a cause rather than a symptom. Specifically, the government must understand that socio-economic failures (such as ongoing unemployment for overqualified youth) will inevitably generate frustration and disillusionment. Another respondent agreed, but identified the core problem as being an over-reliance on talking about the problem of VE without a willingness to do anything about it – an inability to move from discussing concepts toward taking action. A third commended the government for its security fight against VEOs, noting the lack of attacks on Jordanian soil, but expressed concern at its failure to fight extremism intellectually.

Figure 17. To what extent do you agree that the central government does not have the power to control VE?



"We in Jordan are suffering from our governments who do not know the reasons of extremism. We take a group of concepts and talk about them and say this and that, and we say it's a reason but it's a cause. If we understand why extremism exists in people, the ones we are always angry at and accuse of being extreme and criminals in society, if we find out why this man is extreme, we will get rid of the problem." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

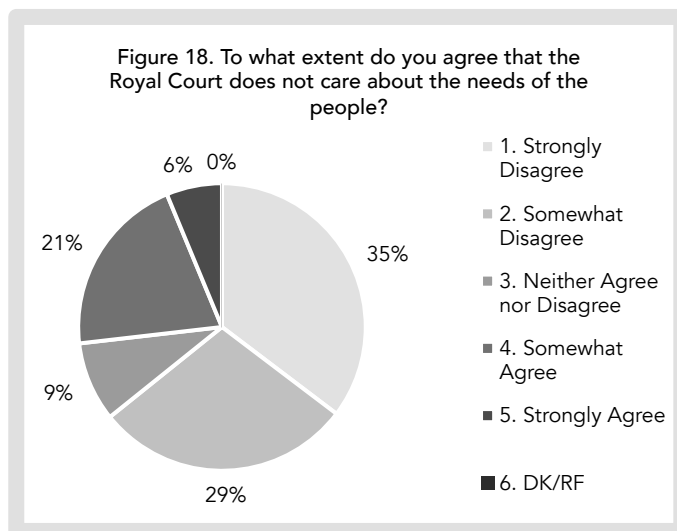
The Royal Family enjoys support.

The vast majority of respondents expressed heartfelt support for the Royal Family – particularly the King. They described his role in paternalistic and even divine terms, referring to the depth of his concern for other Jordanians and his descendancy from the Prophet. Indeed, 27 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 64 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the Royal Court does not care about the needs of the people (see Figure 18). Many also highlighted the importance of the King’s position as an apolitical leader, monitoring and supervising political and non-political groups and their powers. This resulted in many respondents

clarifying that their criticism of the government should not be taken as criticisms of the King. Likewise, his followers pointed out that King Abdullah, and not VEOs, should be responsible for religious decisions and declarations such as jihad. Finally, several attested to the wisdom of the King in activating and relying on Jordan’s security forces to keep the country stable and safe while neighboring countries have collapsed or struggled. This is particularly with reference to the early years of the conflict in Syria when many youth were attracted to VEO ideology out of emotional desire to help the Syrian Opposition fight the Assad government.⁶⁶

There are calls for a national rehabilitation program.

Overall, 55 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 36 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that returned fighters should be imprisoned (see Figure 19). Research pointed to the existence of a national rehabilitation program.⁶⁷ However, a few respondents, either through ignorance or lack of faith in existing approaches, still called for one to be implemented. For example, one insisted that imprisonment is not sufficient as it is not an effective deterrent. Indeed, it may even trigger further violence, as evidenced in Baqa’a where the attacker had been imprisoned over allegations of sympathy toward ISIS before subsequently attacking Jordanian security personnel in an act of revenge.

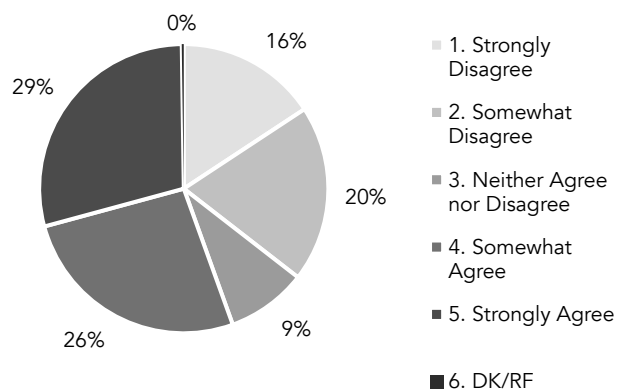


⁶⁶ “People sympathized [with VEOs initially] and wanted to defend and support Syrians, and the youngsters started joining groups, and having very big ideas. But the wise policy of His Majesty the King, and the big administrators in the State and the Army prevented the country from this great danger.” (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

⁶⁷ “A person told us a story of a Jordanian young man, in his twenties, who travelled to work in Bahrain, and he came back to Jordan with extremist ideology and a beard. After that he travelled to Syria and joined ISIS. When he regretted his decision he connected with his family and the Jordanian government to come back. And now he is back and safe, after spending some time in jail in 2015.” (Female, 26, Student, Jarash)

Some respondents called for such prisoners to remain in jail. Meanwhile, other respondents placed greater importance on reform and rehabilitation sessions, with particular focus on religion and ideology.⁶⁸ These should involve lectures and discussions. For example, one respondent called for open discussion on which group recruits want to join and why, explaining that the variety of groups and motivations is often confusing even for those who decide to go and fight. Such clarification will point to a proper CVE response - a recruit motivated by finance should be better helped to find a job, while one that is motivated to undertake jihad should be better helped to understand how the best form of jihad is helping parents at home. Another strategy would be to highlight how many non-Muslims are members of VEOs and that, because non-Muslims can't find jihad, this brings into question the motivations and religious credentials of the VEO in question.

Figure 19. To what extent do you agree that returned fighters should be imprisoned?



"It is not possible for a non-Muslim to be convinced of jihad and to fight in the name of Islam. If it is the case that Muslims are practicing jihad against one another, then what are non-Muslims doing there [in VEOs]? And why? And what is their ideological role? And why? Some of them do not even speak or understand Arabic...and they have not received any religious education in their country. That means they are not there for real ideological or religious reasons. Some of the speeches by the Syrian regime have stated, between the lines, that these groups have been sent to fight each other and create a fitnah."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Focus: Former fighter manages to semi-integrate back into society.

"One individual called Soleiman – I think his full name is mentioned in one of the interviews – from Sakib and a member of the Ayasara tribe refused an interview with me. This individual went to join a VEO in Syria but since returned. He finished his first year in university studying engineering at the Hashmi University in Zarqa before joining JN in Syria in 2012. After one year [in 2013] in Syria, he called his parents and asked them to implore the GID (Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate) to bring him back from Dara'a. I heard this individual's story from a fellow student of the individual"

⁶⁸ "We are in need of reform institutions that can raise awareness on the values or traditions of religion. I think we have reached this point, and there are discussions that are ongoing and these might be convincing. "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best." [Sura 16:125]." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

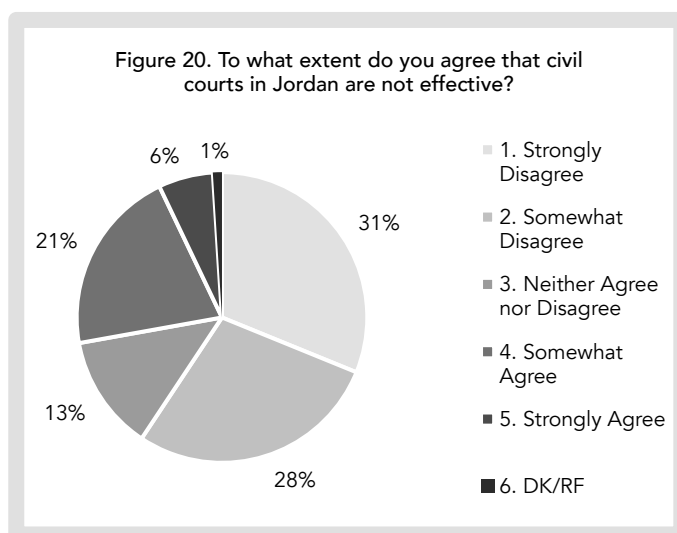
in question. Before he left for Syria, he demonstrated a commitment to Islam. He prayed and fasted in accordance with the five pillars of Islam. The fellow student suggested that the individual meet a group of people attending a mosque in Jarash on a weekly basis. This was during his studies. While studying in Zarqa, he was still living in Jarash – he had a car and drove to Zarqa – and so attended mosque there too. Since returning, the individual has tried to forget his experience in Syria and says he doesn't want to talk about his travels. Maybe he is scared of the mukhabarat. There are indications that the individual was accepted back into society. For example, his father and mother urged the tribe to forget about their son's experience. However, nobody respects him for what he did. When he returned, he told his friend that there is no jihad in Syria – that VEOs are killing women and children."

(Male, 33, Researcher, Jarash)

4.2 LAW ENFORCEMENT

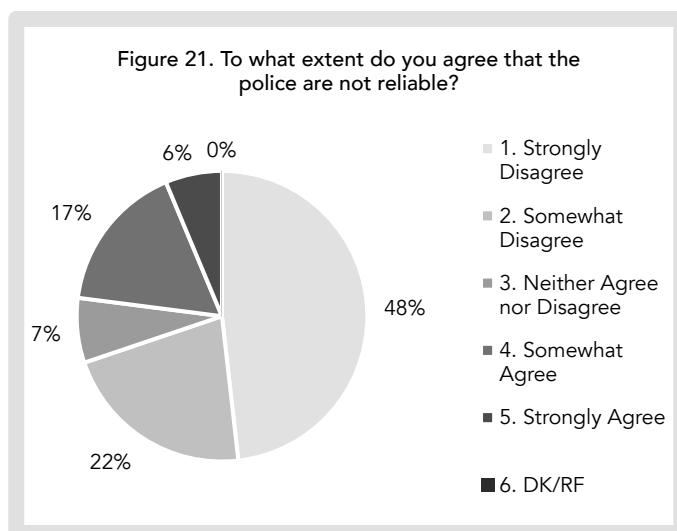
Local law courts have respect.

Respondents explained that there is only one main court in the governorate, located on Ajloun street in the city of Jarash. The court deals with a range of issues, from citizen disputes to tribal issues to commercial complaints. Respondents claimed that the court is highly effective and efficient, with an appropriate number of skilled judges and administrative staff. Likewise, those who commented on local law denied that there was any bias within the system, insisting that there is transparency and equality. For example, they denied that any one clan or tribe controls justice. Overall, only 27 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 59 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that civil courts in Jordan are not effective (see Figure 20). There is also an Islamic court, located in the main street of the city, near the Almutanazah roundabout opposite the Islamic cemetery. The court deals with social issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and custody cases. Meanwhile, cases involving serious crime are usually transferred to Amman or Irbid.



Police have local respect although there is room for improvement.

The Souf Police station is found opposite the Musab Bin Omair Mosque in Souf town, while the Jarash main police station is on Bawabet Amman street of Jarash City. There is also a Gaza Camp Police station at the entrance of Jarash Camp. Respondents confirmed that the police behave in a largely respectful manner. In return, the majority of respondents trust the police and believe that they are able to preserve the stability and security of the city at all times of the year, especially during the Jarash International Festival that occurs in July every year. Overall, 23 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 70 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the police are not reliable (see Figure 21). Furthermore, many families – except those living in the camps – have a relative working for the police in some way. As such, the local community supports and knows those responsible for their security. Finally, the police reportedly patrol and work hard to maintain stability although one respondent observed that the police find it hard to patrol the



camps and that they have been overly aggressive at times. In fact, 21 percent of Jarash GQ respondents agreed, although 79 percent disagreed that they or their family had directly suffered from excessive police authority (see Figure 22).

"But in the camps it is hard for patrols to enter because the streets are not wide enough. Also in the case of some fights, sometimes the police are late to arrive. And when they arrive they use tear gas, which leads to suffocation for some people. Also sometimes the police patrols tease young men who do not have their IDs with them and treat them as suspects. And in many cases people have been sent to the police department of Jarash just because they have forgotten their IDs at home."

(Female, 28, Student, Jarash)

Figure 22. Have you or your family directly suffered from excessive police authority?



There are incidents of positive collaboration between the public and security forces.

Respondents were overwhelmingly confident in the ability of Jordanian security forces – particularly the Armed Forces. For example, only 16 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 79 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) lack the ability to keep Jordan safe (see Figure 23). Exactly the same numbers felt the same about the degree to which JAF behaves in a respectful way (see Figure 24). Respondents provided a number of examples where there has been successful collaboration between the Jordanian public and the country's security forces. For example, one insisted that the March 2016 raid against alleged ISIS fighters in Irbid would have resulted in disaster had it not been for the good level of awareness among citizens and law enforcement bodies. Likewise, respondents claimed that they would willingly inform the Police and intelligence services on individuals they knew involved in VE activities – although a few admitted that this would not be easy in the case of close family relatives.

Figure 23. To what extent do you agree that the JAF lack the ability to keep Jordan safe?

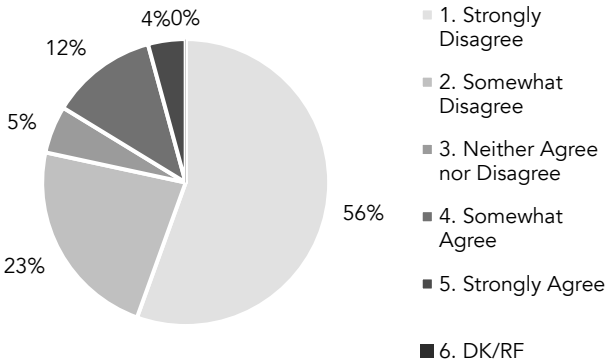
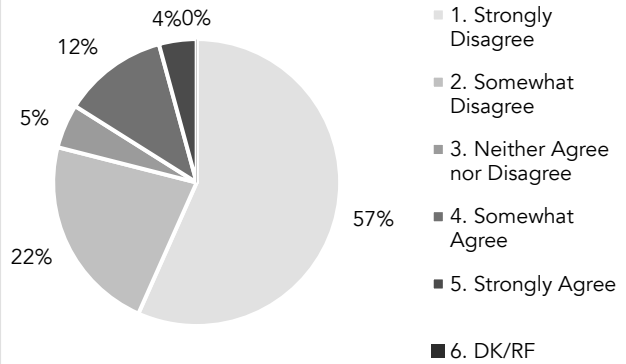


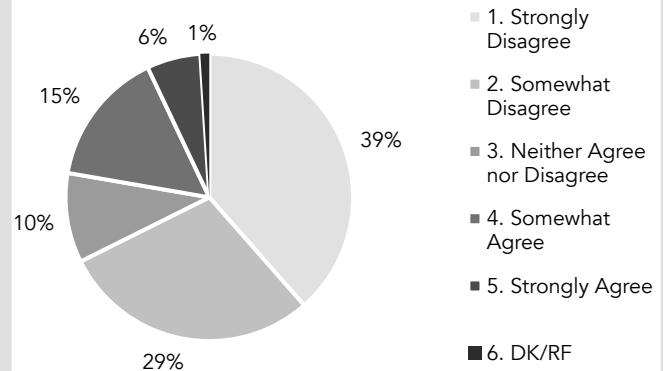
Figure 24. To what extent do you agree that the JAF do not behave in a respectful way?



Amending the anti-terrorism law has not necessarily proved beneficial and there are calls for open review of legislation.

One of the most important aspects of the 2014 amendment to the anti-terrorism law was expanding the concept of terrorism in the third article. Under the new definition, an act that could harm the government's relations with counterparts is considered an act of terrorism. Furthermore, the government now has the power to prevent that act immediately from continuing to take place. One respondent felt that the ambiguity in this definition has enabled the government to include many activities that should not fall under the same category. Although the same respondent felt that this was more due to the government's over-eagerness to tackle VEOs, and not out of a wish to stamp down on opposition political movements. Another respondent also reported hearing that Jordan has recently announced a new governmental strategy to counter terrorism, including the retraining of clerics and imams at mosques, explaining that religious discourse is highly significant.

Figure 25. To what extent do you agree that the government uses its anti-terrorism laws as an excuse to control others?



Overall, 21 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 68 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the government uses its anti-terrorism laws as an excuse to control others (see Figure 25). Those respondents who were less confident in government law claimed that there should be a review of legislation and the judicial system in general. For example, one respondent recalled a similar

past initiative and praised its success.⁶⁹ Another agreed and complained that the government today plays lip service to the concept of democracy and yet imprisons individuals for several months if they speak out of turn. Another felt that the constitution itself requires reform, with one example being the placement of more power in the hands of the people to establish new laws. The respondent highlighted ex-Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali as an appropriate person to lead this project, praising him for his principles, education, awareness, experience, foreign relations and connections to the King's father. Other individuals named include Samir Habasneh (former Minister of the Interior),⁷⁰ Dr. Ali Hrouf (Head of the University of Ma'an and a member of the Independent Election Committee), Dr. Bassam Omosh and Dr. Abdullatif Arabiyat (these last two are politicians and academics with religious credentials known for their modern Islamic interpretation that has proven popular with local youth).

"Our societies do not have legislative rooting...the Salafi thought is developing like Darwin's theory. It starts with disagreeing with the issue of difference, it develops to not accepting difference, although in religion it is accepted, then it develops into hatred and not answering greetings from others, and we have clergymen who won't greet back anyone who disagrees with them, then they move from hatred to blasphemy. It's a snake and you feed it every day or two. The biggest example is the story of the guy who found a snake on the ground, he wanted to help it, but the snake bit him."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

There is disagreement on how tough the law should be on civilians and institutions such as the press.

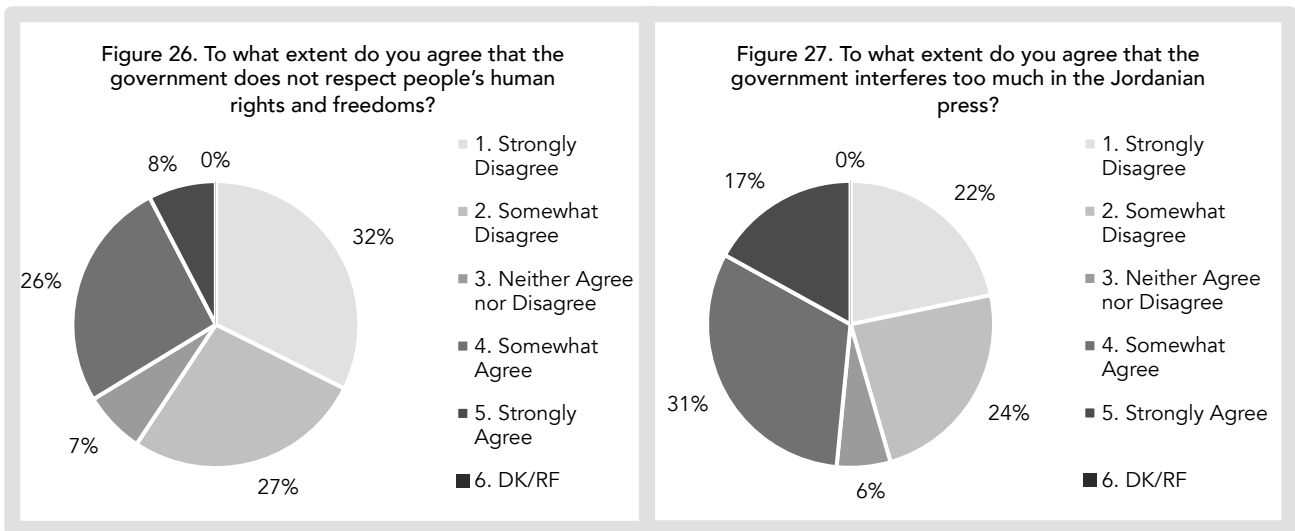
Overall, 34 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 59 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the government does not respect people's human rights and freedoms (see Figure 26). As such, most felt that there is a positive and constructive relationship between the government and civilians. Nevertheless, the fact that over a third of respondents disagreed should remain a point of concern. In terms of qualitative data, only a small number of respondents commented on how the toughness of the law has driven civilians toward violent extremism. Yet even these respondents, and sometimes the same respondent, tended to hold conflicting views. For example, one pointed out that the Assad regime's crack down on civilians has helped fuel membership and support of VEOs. Nevertheless, he confessed support for the idea of a very tough government stance if it means keeping the country stable.⁷¹ For example, he expressed approval and even gratitude for the execution law in Jordan,

⁶⁹ "We all remember five years ago we had a national discussion panel...that is the best way and most important approach to reach the citizens and for citizens to put forth their recommendations regarding the laws." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

⁷⁰ "You have Samir Habashneh who was a minister of interior affairs. I don't look at his position as much as I look at the marks it left. Even if you sit with him a lot you will never find a bad thing to hold against him. Samir is well known for his problems with the Muslim Brotherhood, that's why he gained my respect and a lot of people's respect." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

⁷¹ "In Syria, before, it was forbidden to express your opinion toward the government; the Shabiha would get you, they were the intelligence officers in Syria, they would arrest you for 20 years without a court. This made the people

maintaining that it scares away dangerous extremists including civilians who had previously demonstrated in support of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. Similarly, respondents held mixed views on whether the government interferes in domestic media, and whether this is a positive or negative phenomenon. On the one hand, respondents expressed concern at the role played by the media in sensationalizing VEO activities. On the other hand, they opposed the concept of a government that was overly totalitarian. This conflict also appeared in quantitative findings. For example, 48 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 46 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the government interferes too much in the Jordanian press (see Figure 27).

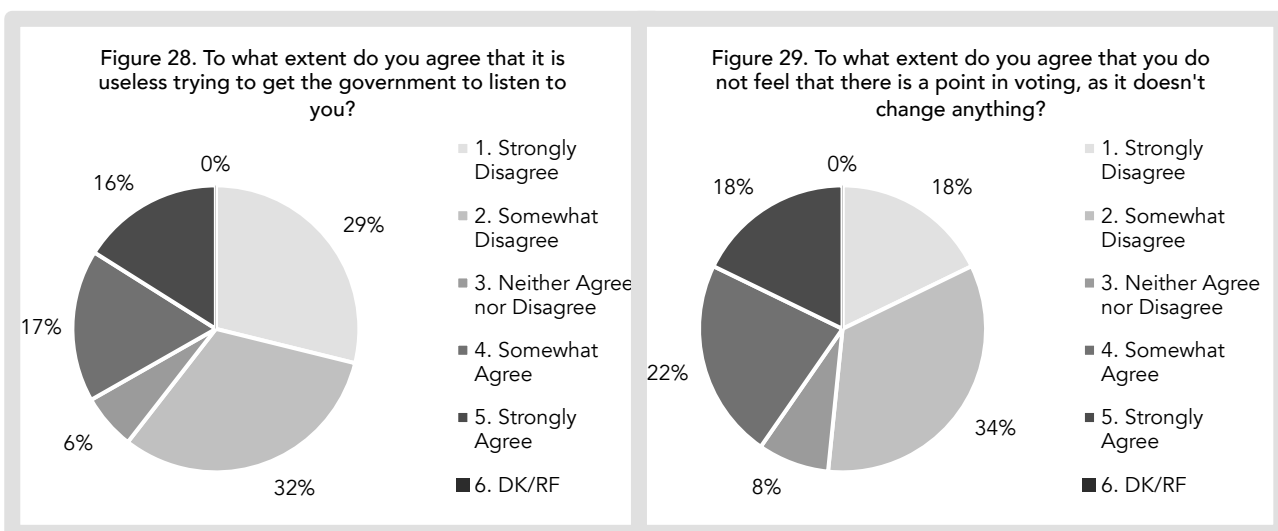


angry. But I am with the regime, I support a government that oppresses its people in order to keep the country safe.”
(Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

4.3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

A sense of injustice is a powerful driver of VE and VEO sympathies.

Respondents agreed that one of the most powerful drivers behind VE and joining a VEO, and therefore a key narrative used by VEOs, is a sense of injustice. This can derive from a number of origins including perceived restrictions on freedom, unavailable opportunities to gain wealth, foreign and/or domestic government interference, abuse of Islam etc. In terms of rights and civil liberties, one of the most salient examples of perceived injustice was government corruption and/or nepotism. For example, one respondent insisted that this is what ultimately drives an opponent of the government to take action into his/her own hands.⁷² Another key example of perceived injustice is the lack of employment opportunities, with this subsequently triggering other attitudes and behaviors related to involvement in VE, including grudges, feelings of inequality and despair, long periods of free time and increased exposure to social media networks featuring pro-VE material and messages. A third was a sense of marginalization and neglect at the hands of the government. Although a majority felt that accusations against the government were unjustified, significant tranches of respondents expressed sympathy with claims of state injustice. For example, 33 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 61 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that it is useless trying to get the government to listen to them (see Figure 28). Likewise, 40 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 52 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that there is no point in voting as it doesn't change anything



(see Figure 29).

There are a number of CSOs that could help with CVE efforts.

Respondents identified a number of CSOs and other organizations that could help with CVE efforts. For example, one highlighted the value of the Mostaqbal Society for Sustainable Development, maintaining that those who work there are committed to improving the situation of the community and that on one

⁷² "This [corruption] makes people sick, and makes them go and search for opportunities in life, and they end up believing that belonging to jihad could make them get rid of the reality they are living in." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash).

occasion the organization successfully prevented a young individual from joining ISIS. Another singled out the East-West Center for Development in Amman, explaining that this CSO has worked closely with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and has provided debates and guidance to imams. Not only do these CSOs play an important role in tackling violent extremism directly, but they reportedly also help individuals realize their value by simply asking them to voice their opinions and then steering them away from extremism more generally.

"It [Mostaqbal] is a new society with enthusiastic young people who carry out activities in Jarash. They fight terrorism and secure the country, spread ideas on goodness, love, and peace. They invest in the youth, whose energy should not go to waste. They wish people all the best. They always hold dialogues and sessions for the youth. A young person can express their opinion and everybody respects them. Once a young man said that he would like to join ISIS but they talked him out of it and that is an achievement."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

5.0 PSYCHOSOCIAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

5.1 LOCUS OF CONTROL

A sense of mercy initially drove Jordanians to join VEOs.

A number of respondents insisted that the type of individual recruit who joined a VEO at the start of the conflict in Syria, was very different from the type who joins one now. Specifically, they maintained that at the start of the conflict large numbers of Jordanians felt pity and anguish at the harsh treatment suffered by ordinary civilians at the hands of the Assad regime. As such, initial recruits enjoyed widespread support and respect for their sense of selflessness when they agreed to join any Syrian Opposition groups – VEOs included. Likewise, many religious clerics approved of their decision and maintained that their fight and sacrifice were noble forms of jihad. As many of these initial recruits found comfort and support from Islam and its doctrine, JN was a natural choice and the vast majority gravitated to this organization. Respondents pointed out that when ISIS emerged, it too downplayed extremism in favor of support against the Assad regime. It has only been during the course of the last three years that these groups, aided by media portrayal, have come to represent brutality and violent opposition to locals and the international community alike. As such, respondents felt that new or recent recruits cannot be categorized in the same way as earlier ones. Indeed, a few debated whether early recruits had done anything wrong at all. One respondent further added that a flawed generalization of all recruits makes it harder for earlier recruits to return to Jordan as they know that they will face penalties, although the same respondent admitted that success, power and status have also contributed to reluctance for recruits to return.

"He [former recruit] was feeling religious, and he was feeling for humanity, that these religious Muslims were being targeted, and that the Syrian army was dealing brutally with the people. So he wanted to go and save the Muslims and Islam. More than anything he wanted to fight the Syrian army, and to fight Bashar. So he went because he was angry more than because he was tempted by anything. Yes they get 1,000 USD a month to join the battles, but at that time he went because he was enthusiastic and it was religion and humanity more than any other factor that drove him."

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

Jordanians are emotional, which can partly explain VE tendencies, although many VEO supporters are less sensitive to collateral damage.

A number of respondents felt that violent extremism was a manifestation of a tug-of-war between various personality traits shared by Jordanians. One of these is cultural susceptibility to becoming emotional, with several claiming that a readiness to feel sympathy, frustration, anger and sorrow inevitably pushes citizens toward attitudinal and behavioral change.⁷³ Two catalysts of this process are the religiosity of

⁷³ "Most of the [VEO] perpetrators are in their youth, the majority of them, and the language which they use is very emotional. And they focus on a particular problem. And when a youth is suffering from poverty and unemployment, or when society as a whole suffers from this, then it will believe that these problems are an outcome of oppression,

citizens, and/or the lack of informed and credible leaders (such as clerics) to act as an effective barrier.⁷⁴ However, at the same time, respondents claimed that Jordanians treasure their own beliefs and are naturally resilient to the idea of others being able to influence them. For example, one maintained that Jordanians are neutral out of an inbuilt desire to benefit from all opportunities possible. He admitted that the VEO tug-of-war ends up with some individuals attracted to extremism, but believed that a desire to kill and destroy comes later and that no Jordanian immediately wants to get involved in such brutality. As such he supported the view of VE influence pathways that start, for many, without any appetite for violence despite sympathy for extremism in general.

Meanwhile, discernible in the small number of respondents who sympathized with VE and VEOs was a lower sensitivity to the idea of collateral damage. For example, they often explained that jihad requires sacrifice and that just like any other revolution or war there will be victims. For example, one respondent agreed that ISIS should never have executed Moath Al Kasasbeh but also placed blame on the government for getting involved in the Coalition, explaining that a more effective way to tackle VEOs would be to starve them of the oxygen provided by confirming conspiracies such as collusion with the West.

"Sheikh Samer, a long-devout Sheikh, is still a young man of 40 years old, went out to fight against the regime and against "Daesh" and against Shia, and went to fight with the Al Nusra Front, leaving four sons and wife and a family. And the reason for him going out there for "jihad" is joining these groups out of sympathy with what happened in Syria, and he is still there, and now is an Emir (Prince) in Dara'a, a general Mufti, so I heard from his family. He was a religious person and all the region testifies to his manners; he was a respectable school teacher, educated and an intellectual, teaching religion. But the only thing he did wrong was to express his feeling about the duty to fight in Syria!"
(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

Less questioning individuals make better recruits.

The vast majority of respondents confessed that they did not know individuals who have been recruited into VEOs. Nevertheless, many were adamant that a key characteristic of potential recruits is the way they do not question what they are told. For example, one respondent concluded that 'idiots', particularly those who are culturally ignorant, are the most easily influenced – including with cash. By contrast, those in the more educated classes require more time and effort to sway. However, another argued that unquestioning engagement in a VEO is not a class issue and cited the example of an acquaintance who

and a result of negligence and marginalization, and that the solution is the Islamic State, which stands for equality and justice." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

⁷⁴ "I consider it [VE] the most important issue because it's a threat to Jordan and the Arab countries, because our people are emotional and could accept extremist ideologies. According to my knowledge, they [VEOs] are trying to use societies that don't have a lot of religious scholars to infiltrate – this is the fear in Jarash and Jordan." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

joined JN in Syria out of commitment to a romanticized image of himself as a handsome, religious liberator of oppressed Sunnis.⁷⁵

"Being an idiot is a main characteristic because he doesn't argue. He is like a machine – fill him up and let him go, fill him with fire or water or anything else you want. By an idiot, I mean being ignorant, with no culture. Such a person only knows how to eat, drink and sleep without discussing or arguing. It is not easy for VEOs to target those with higher levels of education; they need some time to win over people at this level. But people who are ignorant have no culture and they don't cost much. With an hour or two and a few hundred dollar bills it will be ok."

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Focus: Unquestioning loyalty to an ideal.

"I heard stories from neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia, one by a Saudi himself, who mentioned a murder within a family. It is the infamous story of "Takfa Ya Saa'd" where the killer murdered his brother-in-law and his cousin, despite being raised with him since childhood. He killed him because he was a security officer, and violent extremists brainwashed him with a notion that every security officer, as well as police and army officer, is a secret agent and infidel! Another story is about the man from Baqa'a camp who killed five Jordanian youths because they worked with the intelligence services, which he believes is non-religious. This way, the killer believes he is approaching God despite the fact that he commits Muslim-on-Muslim murder. Islam is in fact about tolerance, by which you cannot hurt a tree or demolish a church...so how could it legalize the killing of a Muslim or a human? The killer believes that whatever happens to him is his destiny unless he finds someone who can get him out of this mindset. That's why the religious leaders are important."

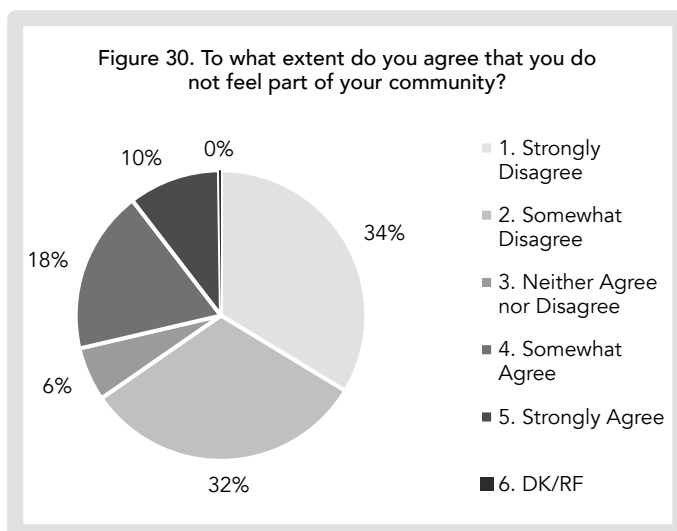
(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

⁷⁵ "The main influence was that he was committed. Although he watched action movies, he didn't miss group payers. He fasted every Monday and Thursday, and when you looked at his clothing and his handsomeness you thought that he was a model. A good looking guy with cool clothes and if there was any tech equipment released in the market, he would buy it, and any new clothing he would buy it." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Social integration is a preventative measure.

Many respondents praised Jordanian society for its strong sense of unity and solidarity. For example, one rejected the idea of social outcasts joining VEOs on the basis that there are not many homeless people and that the strong family core prevents members from 'slipping away' to join VEOs. Other respondents agreed that Jordan's society is strong, but still felt that some members end up marginalized. For these, one of the key measures necessary to avoid the spread of VE is better social integration. In particular, they felt that young men need to develop the sense that they are included in decision-making and that their opinions matter and are respected. Proposed

examples ranged from involvement in group sessions on how to improve the neighborhood and community, to greater empowerment of young men to lead their own families. Specifically within Jarash, respondents noted that the community is more rural or semi-rural, and that this cultivates higher levels of social integration compared to the relative anonymity provided by urban areas. Nevertheless, it is a point of concern that although the majority of respondents felt part of the community, a significant number did not. Specifically, 28 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 66 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that they do not feel part of their community (see Figure 30).



Involvement in VE is a shortcut to attaining status.

A few respondents pointed out that reduced employment and economic opportunities, and the resultant feelings of frustration, make it harder for youth today to achieve status. For example, one believed that members of the lower or middle classes find it impossible to marry or move upwards into the higher classes. This has reportedly generated antipathy toward those better off as well as a desire to find shortcuts to attaining higher status levels. Engagement in VE provides one such shortcut, with those involved winning fame and renown. One example was Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, described as a social reject and drunken hooligan who rose to prominence and won authority and status, not least because the US highlighted his VE role in Iraq.⁷⁶ Likewise, respondents felt that membership of a VEO provides a sense of victory, whether moral, religious or physical, that generates a sense of comfort in the face of perceived abuse from the West, the domestic government and other 'perpetrators'. One claimed that victory was

⁷⁶ "Someone like Zarqawi who was not known, and then suddenly he appears on international TV stations. He was socially forsaken, went to war in Iraq and found an appropriate environment, personal power, and the ability to speak. He discovered he was suitable for a certain leadership and became famous. Can you imagine being someone marginalized by society and then America starts mentioning your name!" (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

even the fundamental attraction behind martyrdom, lamenting how extremists do not realize they are victims of VE until it is too late.⁷⁷

"Someone talked to me a while ago and told me that someone from the police force asked a poor guy with a master's degree who couldn't find a job, whether he had found a job yet. The guy told him no! The policeman then told him to become a hooligan with influence, and doing this was a way to get status."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Parents and other family relations have an ability and responsibility to intervene.

A majority of respondents felt that the family unit plays a critical role in preventing members from engaging in VE pathways. They explained that parents are the first line of defense and are responsible for ensuring that children grow up honest, happy to communicate with their parents, with a sense of direction and able to integrate into society.⁷⁸ By the same token, respondents believed that coming from a broken family, or from one that does not communicate adequately, are two major indicators of increased susceptibility to VEO recruitment. In some cases, parenting is to blame for these failings, although respondents also pointed out that they can result from unexpected or unavoidable events such as divorce or the death of a parent. In either case, respondents agreed that parents should take more steps to try and avoid pitfalls were possible. This includes monitoring how much money children have, ensuring that communication takes place within the family, and observing how children behave (including mosque attendance habits). In discussing the relative importance of the two parental roles there was disagreement, but most believed that mothers are closer to their sons than fathers and so CSOs should engage more with women. As for whether parents do already take action against their sons joining VEOs, views were mixed. But for the most part, respondents insisted that fathers are prepared to report their children to the security services and renounce them if they successfully go to fight in Syria for a group such as ISIS.⁷⁹ For example, one explained that it was a principal of his to sacrifice one person (including a close relative) rather than be held responsible for sacrificing two people (the relative and a victim).

⁷⁷ "The so-called jihadists don't know they are victims yet. I have heard a few testimonies from some of them, believing they are doing jihad to reach the pinnacle of Islam and seeking one of two goals – victory or martyrdom – in order to claim the highest ranks of Muslimhood." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

⁷⁸ "Parents need to take responsibility. I have children myself, and a wife. And I know my son's behavior, and where he goes and hangs out. When he comes home, I can tell from one strange word that there is something fishy, and I ask him where did this word come from, and I keep an eye on him. And at the neighborhood level, if I see one new person in the neighborhood, I will ask him some questions and keep an eye on him too." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

⁷⁹ "If an individual goes to fight, he will be renounced from the family he is from, and if there are cases they are kept under control by the family itself, and the community. There has been more than one case in Jarash where the families informed the authorities: the father literally picks up the phone and calls the intelligence services and says my son has the intention to go to Syria and join Daesh, or group 'X', and that they noticed a difference in him – in the way he dresses." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

The next line of defense involves close relatives, responsible for providing intellectual and even religious guidance to younger members.⁸⁰ The third level of defense is the extended family, with one respondent comparing it to an intelligence network and highlighting its value in keeping tabs on potentially errant sons or daughters. However, once more parents play a key role in monitoring and vetting friends, and in ensuring that relatives are also carrying out their supervisory role.⁸¹ Respondents further maintained that families play a critical role in reintegrating former VEOs into the community and society. The vast majority of families do not actively encourage members to join VEOs and most felt that it was unjustifiable for families not to report relatives recruited into VEOs to the security services. However, a few acknowledged that family members can be reluctant to report it. There are several reasons for this hesitancy. First, some fear what will happen to their relative. Secondly, some families feel ashamed and do not want to recognize the problem. Finally, in some cases, although families can play a better preventative role, powerful VEO narratives of rewards in paradise and support to members' families make it hard for them to dissuade their relatives from becoming or remaining VEO members.

"The father of a family is largely responsible for his daughter and son. If I saw my son coming back late at night three or four times, I should ask him where were you my son, where did you go and what did you do. He should be followed and you need a sort of family intelligence network to help make him guarantee his allegiance, because otherwise after a while your son will be society's son and not yours...so the family has the biggest role to play, although some say that school and education have an even more comprehensive role to play."

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Sometimes friends are more able to help than family.

Although most agreed that parents play a fundamental role in monitoring their children and noting any change toward engaging in VE and VEOs, a few respondents also noted the important role played by peers. Specifically, they acknowledged that young men often confide in their friends more than their relatives. Likewise, some young men who have embarked on a VE pathway did so due to the influence of a colleague or peer.⁸² However, respondents expressed mixed feelings when asked whether they would report their friends. Although some insisted they would inform the nearest Police station, others acknowledged that they would first try to dissuade their friends and avoid shaming them by involving the authorities.⁸³

⁸⁰ "Family is the cornerstone of society. Families make the individual and the individual make a family. I give them 50 percent of the blame." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

⁸¹ "One of the golden rules about parenting is to make sure the children are surrounded by a safe environment — good friends, not bad ones. Unfortunately, a lot of children have negatively influenced their friends, exploited them and even introduced them to radicalization. This is an unfortunate reality that we are dealing with right now. Thus the first line of defense is definitely the family and parents." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

⁸² "A friend is very important, he either keeps you safe with him or puts you in jeopardy, and you fail and might become an extremist. I don't like to give names but there was a 13 year old who was recruited by his friend, and to your surprise, his friend is 10 years older than him." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

⁸³ "You go back and talk to him and discuss with him once and twice and thrice, if you don't succeed, then you inform on him. Now the Jordanian state laws punish anyone who supports these groups." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

"The role of friends is also very important, if someone doesn't have a family, then he will walk with anyone, and an extremist or a member of these groups will befriend him and convince him with his ideas. But I still first blame the family. We have to understand the reasons that cause these people to join. The family and friends must advise the person and talk to him."

(Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

Significant deviation in normal behavior is a good predictor of extremism.

A few respondents had direct and personal knowledge of individuals joining VEOs. These described how recruits became increasingly extremist due to a combination of factors rather than due to single causes. As a result, many concluded that there is no single template for engaging and progressing down a VE pathway. As well as highlighting the importance of contextualizing factor strength, this finding also implies that there is value in identifying 'symptoms' of increasing extremism, rather than just focusing on factors themselves. One of the most salient 'symptoms' is significant deviation in normal behavior, with examples in the paragraphs below.

Increased isolation and seriousness are significant deviations in normal behavior.

Research identified several key examples of significant deviation in normal behavior. One is the tendency of recruits to become increasingly isolated.⁸⁴ This includes reduced leisure activities with long-established friends and a tendency to stay at home but without interacting with the family as much as before. Another example is increased seriousness, with respondents explaining that recruits stopped joking and became more earnest and even critical. This often coincided with new and regular condemnation of supposed improper Islamic practice observed around them.⁸⁵ These traits also often tap into strong pre-existing feelings of pride, confidence and self-belief that encourage the individual to feel justified about their changing character. For example, one respondent described how a recruit, prior to his engagement in VE, would travel to a girl's house, accompanied by friends, and directly ask her for a relationship rather than entrusting his family to ask on his behalf according to custom. A final example is an increased sense of helplessness and despair, with one respondent explaining that such a person will hardly care about killing or being killed.

Focus: Married, educated, sporty and wealthy enough father joins JN.

"I met him [recruit] in Saudi Arabia at the beginning of 2009...a guy from his tribe [Bani Hassan] introduced me to him. The nature of his work was heavy machinery, selling and buying through the Internet. [He had been working in Saudi Arabia] before me for four-five years. He's a medium built

⁸⁴ "We heard of a story about our family's friend, that his son and daughter joined a terrorist group in Syria in 2014. They went in the name of religion. They were isolated for a long time at home, and then they left their house without their parent's knowing. After investigations, the family knew that they joined a terrorist group." (Female, 26, Student, Jarash)

⁸⁵ "He started saying this and that is Haram. For example, we would eat at a restaurant, and when there were leftovers he would say this is Haram; this is wasting food, although before we used to eat and he was never like that." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

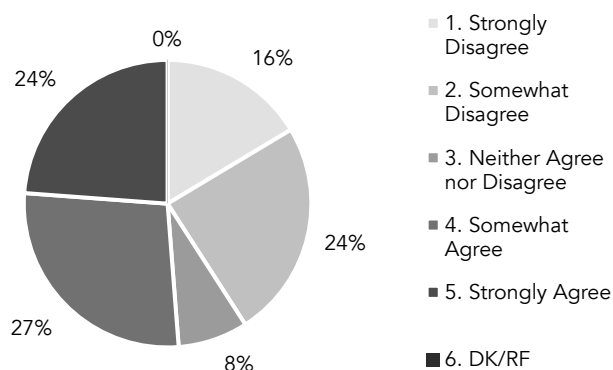
guy, good looking, concerned with a certain prestige in life and he looks well off. He went to Syria in 2011 at the beginning of the revolution; let's say when the crisis started and when other forces intervened in Syria. [He had been] married for about nine months, his wife was pregnant, he was very happy with her pregnancy. Then he started taking notice of what Al Nusra Front was doing: in one of our gatherings he showed us a video clip of Al Nusra breaking into the building of the military intelligence in Syria, and the people who did it, speaking about seeing the virgins in heaven and that they are promised Paradise. [He followed their news on YouTube] although this guy used to follow foreign and Indian films, and he used to call us to come watch movies with him as soon as they hit the screen, which was something new for us. He practiced his life normally and was a sportsman of the first degree, playing soccer and volleyball. He started showing signs of religious commitment: he was worshipping more and his solitude increased, and we spoke with him in his house. He told his friend that he wanted to go to the company in the UAE. He sent his wife to her family house, although the distance between their houses is close. He started slacking in his job, although he made a lot more money than his colleagues. After two weeks, he sent a message to our friend telling him 'Forgive me, I'm now in Syria'. The guy started crying and when I asked him what was wrong he told me there's something you will find out later, and he hid it away from me. Two to three weeks later, [we discovered that he had] liquidated all his work in the company, taken the money, put a sum of money aside for his wife and gone to Syria through Turkey. During that time the Persians or Iranians had entered the war and the killings of Sunnis had started. He said that he had chosen the best course for his wife and the best course for himself. His wife and her family, and his family in Jordan were shocked. His wife fainted because he didn't look like he was about to do anything. He told her to forgive him and name his son Abdullah."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

VEOs adapt to the needs of the recruit, offering tangible and non-tangible rewards accordingly.

A few respondents concluded that it was not possible to identify the factors that push individuals to become engaged in VE and VEOs. They explained that VEOs instead focus on being flexible and adaptable so that they can accommodate a diversity character types and cater to a range of motivations that might lend themselves to support. For example, one respondent claimed that a potential recruit may have a weakness for women and so the VEO will highlight how membership will lead to marriage.

Figure 31. To what extent do you agree that the people who work the hardest are never rewarded the most?



Meanwhile, another individual may feel marginalized and so the VEO will highlight the sense of camaraderie it can offer, etc.⁸⁶ Respondents agreed that the promise of rewards can prove highly tempting to VEO recruits, especially those who feel marginalized or disempowered within mainstream society. As such, it should be of concern that 51 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 40 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the people who work the hardest are never rewarded the most (see Figure 31). The rewards provided by VEOs are often materialistic in nature and break down into two sub-categories. The first involves financial wealth (see section 3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt). The second entails access to women and sex. For example, one respondent highlighted the attraction of Jawari, women slave markets and jihad *Nika* (jihad wives).⁸⁷ Another described hearing how an attacker in Saudi Arabia had a license plate on his car that spelt out '72 virgins'. Non-materialistic rewards can prove equally, or even more, influential. The most salient example is the possibility of attaining high status within a VEO – either religious or military. With this comes the possibility of even achieving world fame and becoming an icon for the VEO and its battle. Other non-materialistic examples include the promise of heaven, becoming a martyr, helping deliver victory to Muslims over infidels, etc.

"I remember the story of the licence plate: HOR 72, a Saudi number plate for the guy that carried out the terrorist act in Saudi Arabia. And you know in Jordan people cannot get married and so they begin to imagine the virgins in heaven. I mean that there are many guys like him, that really are attached to the idea of heaven and virgins around them and stuff like that. It's very effective and attractive; if you tell someone: 'I will get you married to a blonde woman', it's tempting."

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

⁸⁶ "They know anyone's weaknesses, meaning if there's someone who looks for women and pleasure, they will give him that. Or if there is someone looking for money, they will give him that. They will give their people what they want." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

⁸⁷ "I personally heard the Minister of Women's Affairs in Tunisia say that more than 700 Tunisian girls have gone to do jihad nikah for Daesh in Syria, so men know about these things and VEOs will-promote these stories obviously." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

5.2 RELIGIOUS VALUES, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Increased religiosity, but not religiosity itself, is a concerning deviation in normal behavior.

Religiosity itself did not emerge as an indicator of higher propensity to join a VEO. However, some of those who joined VEOs were people of a highly religious nature. For example, one respondent spoke of an acquaintance always concerned with religious causes, including recruitment into the MB, before later joining JN.⁸⁸ Other recruits were not always religious but suddenly became more so. Those around them described a significant deviation in normal behavior and an increased tendency for the recruit to see events and circumstances through a more religiously critical lens, including denouncing the behavior, morals and ethics of others. In some cases, this new sensitivity may appear concerning by Western standards but within the Jordanian context appear quite acceptable. For example, one respondent described how a colleague became incensed at Assad regime attacks on mainstream Sunni women in Opposition areas of Syria. In others, the sensitivity may appear extreme even by Jordanian standards. For example, the amplified desire to seek out religious messaging with pro-extremist narratives and content – such as a sudden increase in mosque attendance, particularly for sermons that highlight the perceived ‘evils’ of the West and/or Shia Islam against Sunni Islam. In either case, the sensitivity leads to feelings of humiliation, frustration and a belief in the need to fix an aberrant version of Islam (see below).

“The Friday sermons contained talk about Shias and the incidents of Syria. He used to sit with very religious guys from Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and Arab expats who were there, and they rejected what's happening there – the killing and bombing and raping, and the thing that most affected him was the raping of women and mothers. From frustration to insult to humiliation, he felt all that. He used to say that we are Muslims and Arabs and we should stand together against the Shias, and it was apparent in his speech. He talked about it a lot in two or three gatherings. We started getting bored of him, not that I don't care about the issue, but I mean the Syrians brought this on themselves: you revolted and you don't know the consequences, you couldn't remove the regime and opened up the doors of extremism, bringing questionable people from different races, and it was an attraction for these people.”

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Focus: A moderate man travels to the UAE and returns a VEO member.

“A young man who wasn't very religious, a normal young man who finished his university studies and went to work abroad in the United Arab Emirates. There, he joined a group who speaks in the name of Islam. I don't know what happened with him there, but suddenly he came back with a beard even though he was a normal man. He became very strictly religious, and then he travelled to Syria and joined Jabhat Al Nusra. He was shot there, and was sent from Syria to Turkey for therapy.

⁸⁸ “He was very concerned with the Brotherhood. He always tried to recruit people to come and join the Muslim Brotherhood, to work with him and take part in the activities, and he was always excited to serve the religious cause, even more than the Brotherhood itself.” (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

He was trying to come back to Jordan, but they dealt with him and he was arrested for months. This story happened a year ago. He was normal, but after he travelled he became another person. Before he graduated from university he used to drink; he even had a fight with some people while he was drunk and was arrested. And he wasn't raised on Islam."

(Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

VEO recruits feel they are fixing an aberrant version of Islam.

A number of respondents believed that ideology, specifically religious ideology, is one of the core factors contributing to engagement in VEOs. Ideologues tend to come in two types, and although both support the idea of a caliphate and dying for God in a violent manner, they are differentiated in terms of their awareness. The first type typically includes individuals who are capable of providing informed (albeit highly subjective) arguments as to how Islam has strayed from its rightful path. The second type, more common, involves individuals who lack sufficient information to back up their arguments. These are also convinced by the need to correct a 'bad' version of Islam but are reacting more out of emotion than structured reason.⁸⁹ This is evidenced on occasion by different interpretations of jihad. For example, some VEO recruits are able to provide a coherent religious argument as to why jihad can take the form of violent struggle against non-Muslims. However, others are less religiously inclined and fight opponents such as the Assad regime for being oppressive, drawing from mainstream support for its removal. Another example is the overzealous condemnation of certain Islamic practices as Haram. For example, one respondent complained that extremists ban the tradition of silently addressing God when entering a mosque before talking to anyone. A third example is defying existing clerics and other Islamic groups that do not agree with extremist ideology and denouncing these as blasphemous.⁹⁰

Focus: Moderate cleric faces opposition from JN supporter.

"One time a guy from the public became more religiously committed, and became a Qur'an memorizer, and started to call people toward Salafist thought with a dry and tough style. He used to pass by me and not answer my greeting. And when he knew someone who was a bit of a rascal inside a mosque he would leave it and believed that person was an infidel. If you asked him: Is that person an infidel? He would say: "No he is an innovator and you shouldn't pray behind an innovator." One time a guy saw me and told me Oh sheikh, you and that guy are in disagreement. I told him it's normal. Of course that guy is now with the Nusra Front, a judge or something. Anyway, the person told me that he didn't see anything wrong with the person who didn't like me. I told

⁸⁹ "Sometimes emotions guide us. Usually if we look at extremists, they make themselves as if they are knowledgeable about religion and you find that they and their group of friends pretend as if they know about ideology, and this is what leads the group." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash).

⁹⁰ "They [VEOs] try to make them hate the other Islamic groups – that they are blasphemous and do wrong things, and that we are the sole surviving sect, and that we are on the path of the Prophet's companion, and the others are not on it. So because this guy doesn't have a real basis to counter these ideas and terminologies, they start influencing him from the beginning." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

him: "Go and tell him that you believe what I do and see what he says." He went and told him and he said: "May god forgive you, you are this and that", and he insulted me and wanted to fight me and stopped greeting me. The problem is that extremism serves the enemies of Islam. The one who wants to fight Islam doesn't consider the Qur'an and the Sunna, he just talks about certain actions and events. For example, he gives you an example of Muslims cutting heads off. Unfortunately, a large number of Muslims started to believe in Daesh, but I ask where did they come from? People say that they came from the United States and Iran, but no, Daesh came from the Sunni movement, with texts that they wrongly interpret as right."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

VEO recruits differ in terms of their level of compromise.

Respondents felt that some VEO recruits were willing to make much more compromise than others over their ideology. For example, some embrace any way by which Islam can be 'corrected', including crime and violence, and see joining a VEO as a means to achieve this. However, although others also support the idea of a corrective process, they feel reluctance or guilt about the means to achieve the end. This second category describes individuals who go to fight in Syria and reach a 'dead end' and become uncomfortable or disillusioned with their decision, and yet unable to reverse it. One respondent claimed that this has led to greater opportunism and/or conflict within VEO fighter ranks, as evidenced by the way Jordanian fighters have crossed over from ISIS to JN, or vice-versa.⁹¹ A second added that public ignorance about these differences in type of recruit makes it virtually impossible to reintegrate former fighters back into mainstream society.

The authorities monitor religious extremism, but can improve their efforts.

Respondents agreed that the government has a responsibility to monitor religious extremism – both in mosques and other unofficial places of worship. They explained that there have been cases of extremist preaching and grooming, including in Jarash. The Government has largely been successful in tackling this phenomenon to such a degree that many doubted that any recruitment was taking place in mainstream mosques. Nevertheless, respondents felt that more could and should be done. For example, one criticized the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs for not appointing imams for the many mosques that don't have them, as this has allowed such mosques to empower untrained and extremist preachers. A second agreed and claimed that the intelligence services in Jordan still fail to monitor all the mosques and imams because there are so many of both. A third claimed that members of the intelligence services stand out and that imams are always aware when they are present,⁹² especially as many mosques in

⁹¹ "As a Muslim I cannot judge anyone. Each one of them follows a sheikh. ISIS follows the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah, but I do not see that there is a difference between them. These people live in the mountains and are tired. Sometimes they make mistakes, and they fight with each other. We heard about many people who left ISIS and joined Al Nusra, or vice versa." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

⁹² "The GID members are not inconspicuous in mosques. It is obvious when they are not present in the mosques. The imam can always tell when the GID is present in his mosque. The GID monitor introduces himself as such to the imam." (Male, 28, Student, Jarash)

Jarash are small. The respondent explained that this allows mosques too much forewarning, enabling imams and their congregations to avoid government suspicion. A fourth complained that even if sermons do not encourage extremism, they do not actively discourage it. Furthermore, he felt that many sermons are full of incorrect facts and interpretations. A fifth complained that vastly undereducated imams are still in charge of mosques.⁹³ A final respondent claimed that religious clergymen dressed in ultra-conservative attire are still able to hold unofficial gatherings that can lead to recruitment. Proposed solutions often centered around the provision of better government-led guidance and training (particularly through the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs) to imams and other religious figures.⁹⁴

"There are many mosques close to one another. For example, in Sakib there are two mosques located adjacent to one another. In Muqbila, there are six mosques when one mosque would suffice for the village's population. Because the imams cannot work 24/7, they have a replacement occasionally. The replacement imam is registered and put on a list that is then sent to the GID and Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. The GID has a list of names of the imams who are already appointed by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. They are doing their best – for example, mosques were always open but since the end of 2012 there has been a regulation that they must be closed 15 minutes after prayer. But the GID can only do so much."

(Male, 34, Researcher, Jarash)

Focus: Inoculation through better foreign investment.

"The preachers that we have in Muqbila in Jarash and elsewhere are all preachers who refer to Prophet sayings that are not true, and when a preacher mentions one he says it was agreed upon. What does it mean: 'agreed upon'? The Qur'an has millions of Hadith, and in each verse there's a Hadith. We are in need of speeches that are not done for the sake of five or six JDs paid to the preacher who makes them. He should present a written sermon for the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs every week. Every sermon should be written in context and if it's not useful it should be rejected. All contexts that are not aligned with the goals of the nation should be rewritten. This is not state direction – states don't direct. The rule between the state and the preacher is the Qur'an and the Sunna. We have a Muslim Minister of Religious Affairs and our King is descended from the Muslim Al Bayt family. We don't need to give preachers reasons; we just tell them that this or that context is wrong, so that my mind doesn't flip at the next Friday prayer for the sake of five JDs!"

⁹³ "I go to a mosque where a sixth grader is preaching. I am not generalizing, but this is mostly what is happening. The government should tighten control over this and put more effort; meaning it should change the way it follows up on the preaching and the religious approaches being shared." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

⁹⁴ "The sermons we hear now, we don't understand anything. Most of the content is generalization, it's nothing that really grabs you. I mean the Ministry of Islamic Affairs should guide them and train them and make them more aware as well. Only CSOs work with imams and mosques." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Religious extremism feeds off lack of awareness and moderation.

Several respondents declared that VE ideology exists in Jordan due to the lack of objective reasoning and religious awareness. For example, several placed the blame on religious teachers for failing to inculcate a better sense of judgment in the followers they lead. They explained that this makes it easy for sectarianism and other forms of religious discrimination to take root. Such respondents called for greater internal monitoring and control by clerics and followers alike. Other respondents believed that the core issue is that there is too much emphasis on preaching and telling others what to do, and that there is a failure simply to live Islamic teachings.⁹⁵ These argued that there should be Islam (in its true and moderate sense) visible in the homes and the streets, rather than just in mosques and schools. For example, one explained that religious teaching in schools never inspires students and contributes to apathy and/or disinterest in learning anything other than the most cosmetic elements of Islam. Despite these problems, respondents took pains to emphasize that the number of clerics involved in VE activities is tiny to non-existent, particularly following greater monitoring by the Jordanian authorities. For example, one explained how, at the start of the conflict in Syria, many clerics advocated martyrdom. However, over time this rhetoric has dramatically reduced.⁹⁶ Another believed that religious clerics have increased self-censorship in the wake of the murder of Al Kasasbeh, finally cognizant of the damage done by VEOs 'cutting and pasting' interpretations of verses of the Qur'an for their own benefit.⁹⁷

"In fact we are living extremism of another kind, which is the complete lack of understanding of religious issues. Most of the population is not knowledgeable about religion. I mean that we don't have a lot of information and we think that the Shia are non-believers or that Sufis are non-believers; it's so easy to convince us of such things, and we can observe this in Friday sermons when the sheikh calls the people and everyone repeats "Amen" – even if he is praying for us to die we are saying "Amen". One problem is the lack of knowledge. When we were students in school, we never liked the Islamic Education lessons. We didn't care about them; we never got excited about them, and this creates a sense that religion is not very important. When we look at the way things are now, we see how true this is. So it is very important that we learn about our religion and know that Daesh are the Kharijite, that they are terrorist because our religion in fact says this."

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

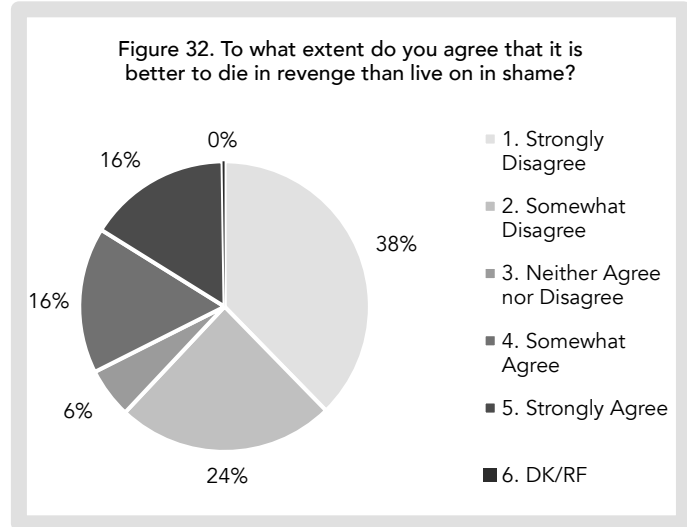
⁹⁵ "The place for religious devotion is in people's houses and streets, but now religious devotion is not in the right place. We want a correct comprehension and interpretation of religion. We don't want any on-the-side interpretations of religion." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

⁹⁶ "Sheikhs in general [attracted attention] and this topic of martyrdom was highly promoted and people still like to listen to it: jihad, religion being victorious, the return to our lands. All of this affects people and most Friday sermons were like that. Now things are different, but at that time everyone was focused on this topic." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

⁹⁷ "When someone says that this religious reference was provided by so and so, it's because these groups [VEOs] use parts of religious scriptures by some religious scholars – they cut them up and use them for their own objective, they take only parts and copy it." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

There is ambiguity over the meaning of jihad.

Respondents acknowledged that there still exists confusion, ambiguity and contrasting interpretations of the meaning of jihad. For example, some argued that it refers to a Muslim's general wellbeing and his/her duty to self-improve. Others felt that jihad was more of a physical struggle but should only involve fighting when a Muslim community or population is forced to defend itself. Finally, at the most extreme end of the spectrum, were those who believed that jihad is a proactive call to arms to fight religious opponents of all faiths, including other non-Sunni Muslims. This last interpretation draws heavily from the idea of sacrifice and martyrdom to please God and reach Paradise. Each interpretation of jihad borrows from Qur'anic and other Islamic texts and interpretations. However, ambiguity still exists in each. For example, one respondent noted that the Prophet reportedly said: "Martyr's houses are hung from God's throne", but expressed frustration over not knowing whether a martyr was the person who carries out a suicide bombing or the person killed by a suicide bomb. Another quoted Qur'an Sura 8 Verse 60: "And prepare against them whatever you are able to in terms of strength", asking whether this refers to legitimate authorities or even VEOs. Mixed religious interpretations of jihad and related concepts such as revenge can easily combine with cultural values such as a desire to avoid shame and disrespect. As such it was a point of concern that 32 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, although 62 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed, that it is better to die in revenge than live on in shame (see Figure 32).



"I do not have a problem if they go. What's important is that they are fighting. We all have to go fight; we are an Islamic community, we have to do jihad. The prophet said: "Heaven is forbidden to anyone who never thought of jihad". In Jordan you cannot remove jihad from the rules of the Islamic community. But as Jordanians we have to go with the flow, we cannot attack but we can defend."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

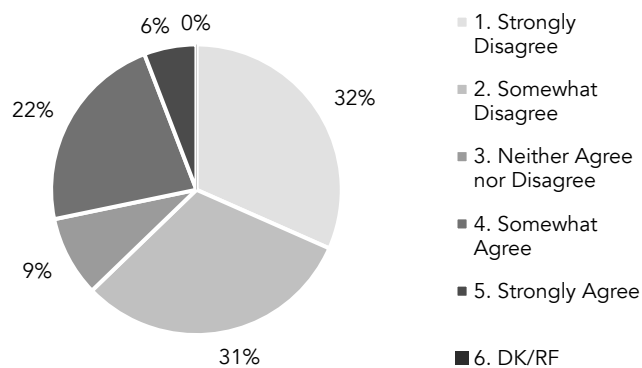
Extremist interpretations of jihad clash with nationalism.

Although 28 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, 63 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that religious extremism is a problem in their community (see Figure 33). One of the core points of friction on the subject is the way that more extreme interpretations of jihad find it harder to reconcile religious duty with nationalism. Specifically, the former prioritizes affiliation to Islamic identity,

while the latter prioritizes Jordanian unity. Those respondents more sympathetic of extremism and VE tended to denigrate nationalism by associating it with loose morals.⁹⁸

Some even claimed that the nationalistic philosophies of men such as Michel Aflaq (a Syrian philosopher who helped found Ba'athism) and Moammar Gaddafi (former dictator of Libya) were responsible for triggering the emergence of Islamic extremism, although one stressed that former nationalist movements were still better than the liberalist ones advanced by today's politicians in Jordan. However, those more supportive of nationalist ideologies argued that much as only the Prophet could decide when to call for jihad, this responsibility now lies solely in the hands of the King of Jordan. Such respondents saw those undertaking jihad without permission as akin to traitors working outside of conventional society for their own gains.

Figure 33. To what extent do you agree that religious extremism is a problem in your community?



"During the Prophet's time, he was the one who announced jihad, and now in our time the King announces jihad. Anything outside of that is outside of the law, and you become an outlaw and an extremist. Here in Jordan, support reaches the Muslim Brotherhood and gets directed to Gaza not Syria, and it is done via the provision of capital and trade. Jordan has become a crossing area for extremism, not a factory."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Some respondents claimed that Jordanians are not prone to moderate thought.

A common local saying is 'don't be Hambali' to those who are showing extremist thoughts and ideas. Indeed, the majority insisted that Jordanians in general reject extremism in all forms. Nevertheless, a small number of respondents felt that it was not in the Jordanian nature to embrace moderate Islam. For example, some blamed a natural propensity for Jordanians to become emotional about issues (see section 5.1 Locus of Control). Others blamed the education system (see section 3.1 Education and Employment), while others felt that those who support moderate Islam are enemies of both extremes – those who are religiously extreme and those who are secular. Indeed, one respondent even quoted Sheikh Abdullah bin Beih – possibly the Saudi Arabian cleric – who reportedly said: "Jordan gets uncomfortable with the moderate". The same respondent explained that a number of Jordanians, especially youth, have become atheists because of the excesses of the violent Islamist minority; in particular, they see a correlation between civil backwardness and Islam. Another respondent agreed, and described how a few years ago a sheikh refused to pray over his deceased father, accusing him of being

⁹⁸ "It [nationalism] was trying to plant in them morals against their morals. Most of the nationalists used to hang out at bars and get drunk, and their morals were very far away from Islam." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

an infidel.⁹⁹ A final respondent claimed that many Jordanians possess the works of writers such as Ibn Taymiyyah, who is highly popular across Jordan, and that it was only after the rise of ISIS and their appropriation of his works that people began to associate him with extremism.

"Sheikh Mohammad Ghazali says: 'Three quarters of atheism in the world is due to people who make others hate religion'. In the middle ages they used to say we want to hang the Pope with the bowels of the priest. Now they say we want to hang the world with the sheikh's beard. It's the same thing. In the middle ages scientists went out against the church due to its hate speech and now the youth are saying that the reason for Muslim backwardness is religion: why? Daesh uses the Sunna and the Qur'an, but no Daesh member has understood them. For example, a few days ago, someone said that Islam was spread by the sword, and he recited verses of fighting in Sura Al Tawba. I told him these verses are consistent in a certain place and in certain situations and it's not for you to take the verses like you take medicine in a pharmacy – you should understand Qur'an and the Sunna from the right people."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

There are shades of extremism.

Although some respondents felt that Jordanians are not 'programmed' to be moderate, they nevertheless insisted that this does not equate to more sympathy for VEOs. The gradation implied by these respondents was visible in quantitative data. For example, 73 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 22 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Sharia should be the only source of law (see Figure 34). Likewise, 75 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 21 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that only Islam can guarantee justice (see Figure 35). Although such findings seem quite extreme, the same respondents were careful to distance themselves from sectarianism, oppression, Takfirism and violent Islam. For example, 62 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 28 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that all people should be free to practice whatever religion they choose (see Figure 36). Meanwhile, only 24 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 72 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Muslims should avoid interacting with Non-Muslims (see Figure 37). Indeed, only 20 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 72 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the practice of Takfir is justifiable (see Figure 38). Likewise, 23 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 68 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that violent jihad in Europe is justifiable (see Figure 39).

⁹⁹ "There's a story that happened with me, when my father died five years ago, he didn't pray and he wasn't religious, and in his funeral a sheikh came and refused to pray on his soul and said that he is an infidel. I do not believe in these religious leaders." (Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

Figure 34. To what extent do you agree that Sharia should be the only source of law?

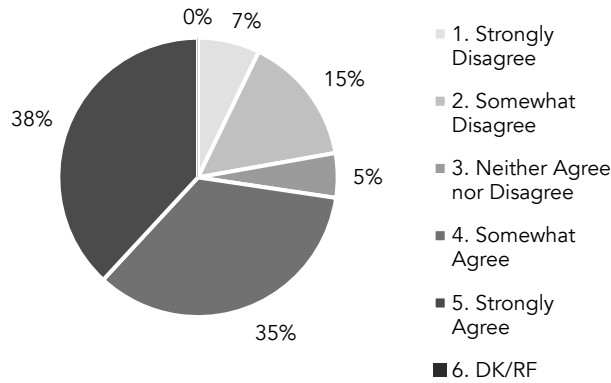


Figure 35. To what extent do you agree that only Islam can guarantee justice?

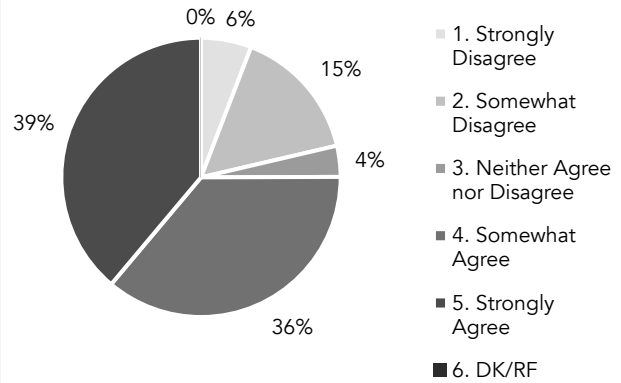


Figure 36. To what extent do you think that all people should be free to practice whatever religion they choose?

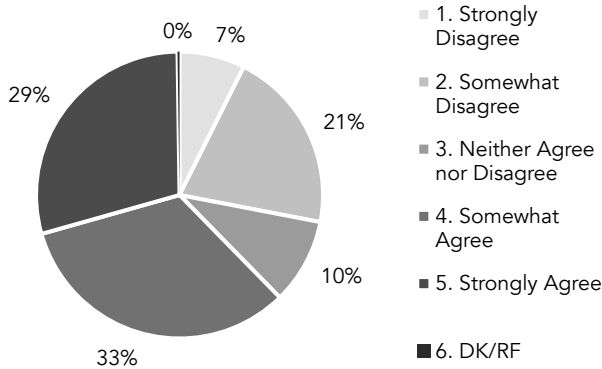


Figure 37. To what extent do you think that Muslims should avoid interacting with non-Muslims?

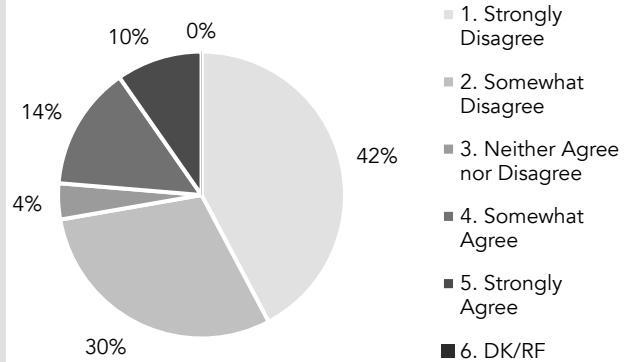


Figure 38. To what extent do you agree that the practice of Takfir is justifiable?

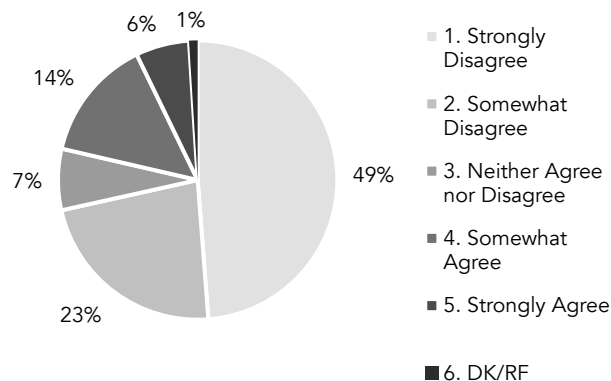
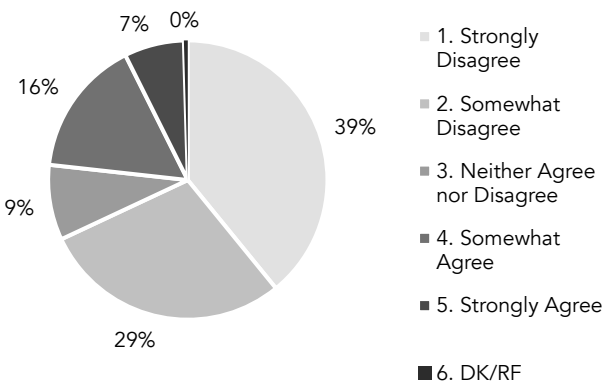


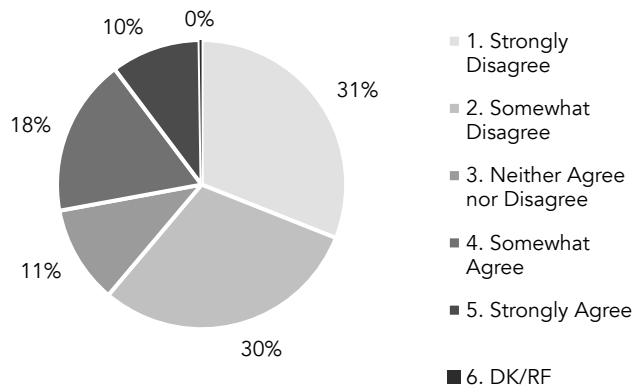
Figure 39. To what extent do you agree that violent jihad in Europe is justifiable?



Sectarianism is a new, but powerful, driver of VE.

A number of respondents felt that one of the core issues driving regional tension and conflict is sectarianism. The majority blamed either Saudi Arabia and/or Iran, explaining that these countries have hijacked religious values to progress their political agendas. Regardless of its provenance, respondents agreed that sectarianism is a relatively new phenomenon, imported into Jordan and later spread by ignorant mosque clerics. As such, most remained opposed to the idea of violent sectarianism. For example, 28 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 61 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that violent jihad against Shias is justifiable (see Figure 40). Several respondents pointed out that sectarianism has also created a fundamental weakness in VEOs. Specifically, one of the strongest reasons Jordanians reject VEOs is the perception that it is contrary to Islamic belief for Muslims to fight other Muslims.¹⁰⁰ Those who support this view believe that any differences between VEOs are irrelevant and that all groups should all be placed under the same category if they encourage such inter-fighting. Nevertheless, respondents agreed that sectarianism remains a powerful potential instigator of violent extremism. Two even concluded that

Figure 40. To what extent do you agree that violent jihad against Shias is justifiable?



¹⁰⁰ "I say that anyone who takes up arms and fights against the Muslims is not a Muslim himself. I'm not claiming it a "fatwa", but such a person is far from Islam, and all these cliques [VEOs] we put in the same category." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

sectarianism has brainwashed youth into believing that Shia Muslims present a greater threat than Zionists.

Focus: Foreign, imported sectarianism is to blame for the emergence of VE.

"It was only in 2004-2005 that we began to hear about Sunni versus Shia. Before that this didn't exist. It was known that some people were Sunnis and some were Shia, and people would be careful but it wasn't a matter of hatred – Sunnis hating Shia and vice versa. Then the mosques started to speak badly about Shia, saying things like: "The brutal Shia". I heard many Friday sermons in Jordan about the danger of the Shia, that they are more dangerous than the Jews, and they are the biggest enemy, and that they hate Sunnis. It caused people to be cautious; Sunnis became afraid of Shia, and felt that we need to get rid of them. So when these conflicts emerged as supposedly sectarian conflicts, it is as if good will win over evil, and that the sheikhs are right, and the Shia are this and that. So these conflicts have confirmed what we were hearing."

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

VEOs have made a strategic mistake by focusing on Muslim countries, leaving them open to accusations of sacrilege.

A number of respondents believed that one of the biggest mistakes made by VEOs such as ISIS and JN is that they have based themselves and their operations in Muslim countries. This has resulted in damage and suffering to fellow Muslims, which has proved deeply unpopular with many Jordanians. For example, one respondent asked why VEOs were no longer engaged in the struggle to liberate Palestine. Specifically, he reasoned that an 'Islamic State' should not be declared in Syria but rather in an area that threatens the existence of Islam. The respondent further added that he did not support ISIS, but that divisions, fatwas and attacks on Muslim soil were shaking the very foundations of the Arab region. He concluded that declaring jihad in Syria was pointless or even counter-productive. Such an attitude has also fuelled conspiracy that Israel and its allies are behind the modern phenomenon of violent jihad on Muslim soil. In addition, VEO violence against fellow Muslims has sparked comparisons with disreputable regional movements of the past. One respondent, an imam, described how VEO beliefs and actions should be compared to those of the *Kharijites* – Muslims who rebelled in the first century of Islam against the authority of Caliph Ali and later challenged the Caliphate for several centuries. The respondent explained that some Kharijites developed a highly radical ideology, and that this approach is similar to that used by VEOs such as ISIS – for example its brutality against other Muslims in Syria. The respondent further explained that ISIS and the Kharijites applied Islam according to their own understanding and not according to the understanding of Islam and its followers, which is in itself a blasphemy.

"What has Daesh done? It takes the prophet's biography and they memorize the Qur'an and read the Sunna. But the Prophet said of them that: "They read the Qur'an without being faithful, you look at them and they say what the best of the people say." The people who came out in the era of Ali bin Abi Taleb, do you believe that they are Muslims or not? They took from the Qur'an and the Sunna, but they committed blasphemy against the Prophet's companions, using texts because they didn't agree in their understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunna...That's why dear sir Sheikh

Abdullah Bin Beih says that extremist thought in Islam will not be treated unless within Islam itself with the same language they understand."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

There are a number of influential moderate clerics who could be used for CVE.

There are around 276 mosques across the governorate. The public has built many of these at their own expense. As such, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has not assigned a preacher to most. For example, only 188 mosques have Friday sermons and 65 do not have a house imam or muezzin at all. However, this is not to understate the influence of existing clerics. The growing influence of religious leaders can be seen in domestic and even international politics. For example, one respondent observed how even political leaders outside of Jordan frequently have important religious figures next to them at conferences or when announcing a significant event or celebration, as witnessed during the Arab Spring.¹⁰¹ For this reason, respondents further acknowledged the value of reaching out to youth through religious leaders. One added that this is the way VEOs operate, although he admitted that this was an impression based on television reports more than first-hand experience.¹⁰² Those interviewed identified a number of influential moderate clerics that they believed should be used in CVE efforts, typically because of the cleric's high level of respect among youth and/or the wider community. Examples include the following:

Table 2. Influential Moderate Clerics.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Omar Bani Mustafa	Moderate Islamic Ash'ari Sufi preacher at Sheikh Yousef Al Otoum Mosque in Souf town. Also known for his lectures (hosted in the AJYC in Jarash close to Bawabet Amman traffic light) to youth on embracing people from other religions and rejecting Salafism. Also praised for his CVE Facebook postings and Twitter tweets. He is sponsored by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.
Ayman Al Turkmani	Salafist but moderate preacher at A'icha Mosque in Souf Camp. He is also the head of the Preserving the Qur'an Organization (see below). The mosque is considered to be important because it is one of the few mosques to have a preacher for Friday prayer. Known for talks on religious matters related to prayer, fasting, and other good social behavior.

¹⁰¹ "They [clerics] address the mind, the emotions and the way we think. A government relies on these people, especially in wars and events where he has a big say in things. Like the Arab Spring: governments called on the clerics and asked them to preach about certain topics because they had a very influential role." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

¹⁰² "According to what I hear sometimes, on TV channels, in certain areas they [VEOs] are interested in the youth. There are areas across the Arab world where they contact clergymen and leaders, and through them they deliver their messages." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Mohammad Banat	Works in the Islamic court in Jarash, specifically on wedding contracts. Praised for giving couples lectures on the importance of marriage, love and cooperation before they marry.
Sheikh Sulaiman Alsa'ed Alkhalf	Former (1993) Parliamentary member for Jarash and former member of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. MB member and political candidate running on the IAF list. Islamic moderate known for his calls for reformation and fighting corruption. Eloquent and respected speaker, and preacher at the Al Hashmi Mosque located in the middle of Jarash City. He lives in Rimon town in Jarash Qasabah and was a regular participant and activist in the Hirak demonstrations that called for political reform in Jordan.
Sheikh/Dr. Mohammed Noah Al Qudah	An ex-Minister of Youth and son of the late grand Mufti, known for his eloquence in Qur'anic recital and for being a highly influential figure – including among the youth. ¹⁰³ He was also noted for his efforts in preaching the importance of individual responsibility to guarantee the safety and security of the country via sermons and messages including those posted on his Facebook account. ¹⁰⁴
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Beih	A Mauritanian scholar who signed the Amman Message and holds various positions including the Presidency of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. ¹⁰⁵
Others	Abdul Karim Khasawneh (Grand Mufti of Jordan), Sheikh Safwan Adeibat, Sheikh Ali Al Qadri, Sheikh Soleiman Al Jablan, Al Habib Ali Al Jafari, Sheikh Osama Al Azhari, Sheikh Sayed Fudah, and Sheikh Yusuf.

In addition to the more famous religious leaders, respondents also pointed out that local clerics play an important role in identifying and countering the spread of VE. For example, one imam acknowledged that many parents approach him and express their concern about signs that their son might sympathize with VEOs. In fact, some parents even confess approval of their son's recruitment and seek guidance on the matter. The respondent lamented the fact that he is only able to deal with these cases on a one-by-one basis.

"Religious leaders in Jarash are acting as positive and as effective leaders; they do not hesitate to show the truth of Islam and Hadith because they are the only ones able to confront radicalization with incident to incident, verse to verse, Hadith to Hadith. If one sheikh talks about a verse legalizing

¹⁰³ "I have few remarks on his character but he can interpret the Qur'an very eloquently. A lot of young people follow him; even some were calling to appoint him Prime Minister. He can convince thousands of people." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

¹⁰⁴ "Sheikh Mohammed has delivered more than one sermon to talk about safety and security in the country, and how it falls upon each person. This was a few months ago. He has done these speeches all over the kingdom and it's on his Facebook account." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹⁰⁵ "He [Beih] has undertaken global efforts. He is a proper man and a proper scholar with all the sense in the world. He has experience with extremist groups and the beauty in his speech is that it's public and not private." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

murder, he obviously knows the reason why it was revealed and who it addresses, or whether it is a general or private rule. In fact, some are doing an excellent job. I personally know Sheikh Omar Bin Mustafa, who is enlightened and clever; we have both participated in many workshops in many places. He talks about Kharijites who use religion in an inappropriate way. Sheikh Suleiman Al Saa'd, a former PM, also speaks moderately. I have heard positive things especially about Sheikh Omar because he's young and influential, he uses accurate language and he's beloved by the youth; I believe he's doing well. There could be many people likewise, but these are the only ones I know."

(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

There are a number of influential moderate clerics who have had a relationship with VEOs.

Respondents agreed that there are examples of influential clerics who have joined extremist groups and/or demonstrated sympathies with VEOs. Three example profiles are provided below:

Table 3. Influential Moderate Clerics with Ties to VEOs.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Samir Al Otoum	A religious (not tribal) sheikh from Souf that was one of the individuals to join JN. He left in September 2012. One of his students, Abd Al Azziz Al Otoum (also from Souf), joined in March 2013. Both are from the Al Otoum tribe and are now judges for JN in Syria. Abd Al Azziz Al Otoum was unemployed and his father was paying his fees to Samir Al Otoum. Samir Al Otoum was employed by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and occasionally preached at the mosque. He is a follower of the Hambali school of Sunni Islam, and is known to have condemned Hanafi Sunnis as <i>kafir</i> . He advanced about such ideas in the mosque, not during the Friday <i>khutbah</i> (sermon) but at gatherings before and after main prayers, as well as during Ramadan.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Abu Musab Al Harasheh	Local Imam from the Harasheh tribe who preaches at the Muqbila Mosque (Muqbila's main mosque), and is suspected of promoting extremist ideologies. Few believe that Al Harasheh has driven anybody to join VEOs in Syria and there is no evidence he has explicitly advocated for jihad in Syria or condemned the state's participation in the international coalition against ISIS. However, he uses phrases from the Qur'an referring to 'apostates' and locals call him Abu Musab Al Jarashi as a way of comparing him with Al Zarqawi. In Ramadan 2012, between Taraweeh prayer and Isha'a prayer, Al Harasheh delivered a five-minute khutbah (sermon), as is typical during Ramadan, in which he denounced the army as kafir. He criticized the Jordanian army for having fought alongside the US against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Al Harasheh now gives a weekly lesson in a Qur'anic center connected with Muqbila Mosque. There are concerns he is spreading Salafism despite being employed by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. He also teaches Islamic culture and religion at the Vocational School in Jarash – the only such school in Jarash. This school is large, with 40-50 students per class, and around 200 per year. The students are aged between 16-18 and it is free to attend. The government decides the curriculum for this lesson but classes are not monitored, so there are fears Al Harasheh may be diverging from the state syllabus.
Ramadan Al Jalad	A sheikh (but not imam) associated with a mosque, who gives lessons either in the mosque or in a close circle within his own home. He reportedly has many followers and resides in Al Qiteh in Jarash Qasabah, between Jarash and Ajloun. He has reportedly been spreading extremist ideologies at least since 2011 and continues to do so freely because he is not actively opposing the state. Many consider him a Salafist Jihadist and follower of the Hambali school of Islam. There are suspicions that Ramadan Al Jalad was the person who recruited Samir Al Otoum and Abd Al Azziz Al Otoum.
Samir Al Otoum	A religious (not tribal) sheikh from Souf that was one of the individuals to join JN. He left in September 2012. One of his students, Abd Al Azziz Al Otoum (also from Souf), joined in March 2013. Both are from the Al Otoum tribe and are now judges for JN in Syria. Abd Al Azziz Al Otoum was unemployed and his father was paying his fees to Samir Al Otoum. Samir Al Otoum was employed by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and occasionally preached at the mosque. He is a follower of the Hambali school of Sunni Islam, and is known to have condemned Hanafi Sunnis as . He advanced about such ideas in the mosque, not during the Friday khutbah (sermon) but at gatherings before and after main prayers, as well as during Ramadan.

There are popular religio-social organizations.

Respondents mentioned a number of religio-social organizations popular with members of the local community for organizing a range of activities. One example is the Qur'an Preservation organization, which gathers female students and mothers to give them religious classes and classes in memorizing the Qur'an. It also offers help to orphans and the poor. In October 2014 the organization opened up the Al

Kutta Qur'an complex, which contains two Qur'an centers - the Abdullah Bin Abbas Qur'an center for males, and the Khadija Bint Khuwailed Qur'an center for females. The center is located in Jabal Al A'tmat, behind the park in Jarash City Center. The organization also signed an agreement with the Association of Engineers in June 2016 to cooperate on social and cultural programs. Specifically, the Association of Engineers will offer facilities, such as exhibition halls, for future activities.

"The Jarash Cultural Forum conducts lectures in its own building [located by the bus station] that gives people the opportunity to meet political elites. People from other districts come to visit this place – from Mustaba and from Kafkafa [close to Irbid]. The Jarash Cultural Forum has a Facebook page and advertises events here. It also publicizes events through phone calls."

(Male, 32, Researcher, Jarash)

5.3 EXPOSURE TO CRIME AND CONFLICT

Crime is low but there is a link between petty crime and violent extremism.

Overall, 28 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 64 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that crime is a problem in their community (see Figure 41). Likewise, 20 percent of Jarash GQ respondents agreed, while 80 percent disagreed that they or their family had directly suffered from crime (see Figure 43). Nevertheless, several respondents traced a link between petty crime – particularly drug consumption and alcoholism – and violent extremism. There were two schools of thought on this link. The first was that those engaged in petty crime demonstrate a proactive desire to engage in VEO activities. For example, one respondent claimed that criminals with pending court cases opt to join VEOs and fight abroad as a means of escaping jail. Another believed that criminals suffer from a sense of guilt and that they join VEOs because these offer an attractive way to obtain divine redemption. Meanwhile, the second school of thought argues that those involved in petty crime are vulnerable and reactive to VEO messaging that successfully exploits their moral weakness and ‘influenceability’.¹⁰⁶ For example, one respondent felt that those who incur high debts through gambling and other illegal activities are more likely to join VEOs not because they desire to but because they realize there is no other way to generate income. As such it is concerning that 33 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, even if 60 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed, that drug abuse is a problem in their community (see Figure 42). A few respondents explained that drugs such as Joker, Captagon, and Thinner (often sniffed by children to get high) are prevalent in camps and make users weak and vulnerable to VEO approaches. Regardless of the differences between the two schools of thought, respondents agreed that higher-level criminals often seek symbiotic relationships with VEOs. For example, one claimed that VEO operatives disguise their activities through drug-runners, although he refused to provide further comment or evidence.

“The criminal gangs and the hooligans, and the people wanted by the state, are the ones used by VEOs to get new recruits. Those are the people who know where the extremists might dwell, because criminal society is homogeneous. They use the fact that these criminals hate the state to communicate their ideas. Some of the youth who went [to join VEOs] had criminal cases against them, and they joined so that they wouldn't be put in jail here. They [VEOs] use everything to reach their goals”

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Focus: Political versus social terrorism

“One time I met an individual that is a supporter but he was not a member, and if I consider his behaviors and his ideas, he is far from religion. One time he came to me and he was angry, saying:

¹⁰⁶ “It [extremism] got through to poor people, people who are unemployed and inclined to go off the rails and consume drugs and alcohol. Terrorism is the meeting-point for the perverse from all nationalities.” (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

'These non-believers are robbing us', because the police had given him a ticket because he didn't have headlights on his car and he was going home at night. Yet, at the same time this man took things from the hospital to sell so he could get money. He got them for less than 50 JDs but he wanted to sell them for 200 and he began to justify that it was right because they gave him a ticket even though the ticket was only for 10 JDs and he made a profit with those products – more than 400 percent profit. When you begin to justify stealing by saying that the others are non-believers, this behavior is far from religion or Islam. This person would also be really happy about killing and blood; I would see him watching videos of executions and killing.'

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

Figure 41. To what extent do you agree that crime is a problem in your community?

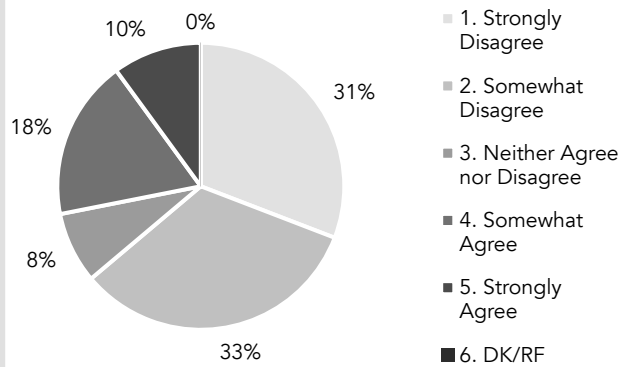


Figure 42. To what extent do you agree that drug abuse is a problem in your community?

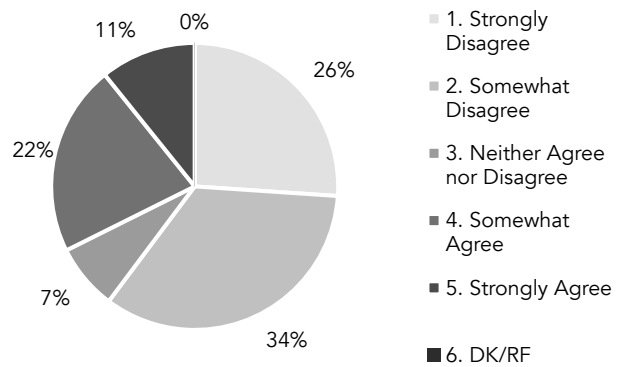
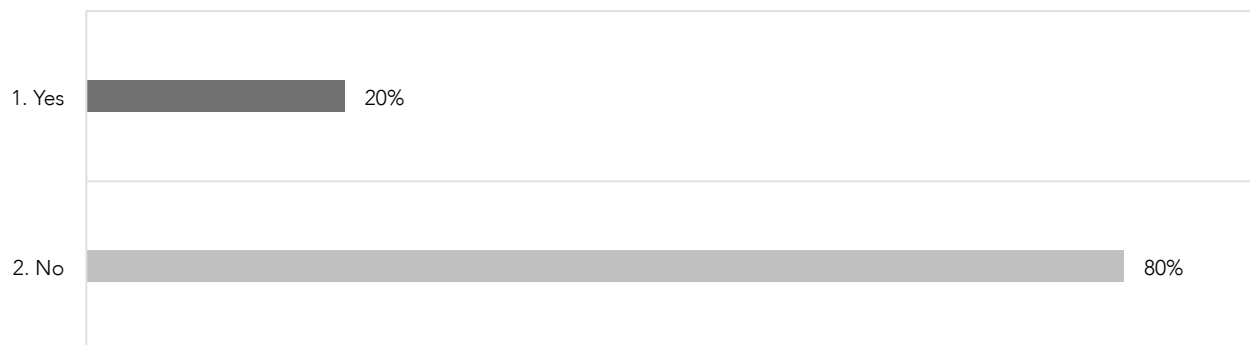
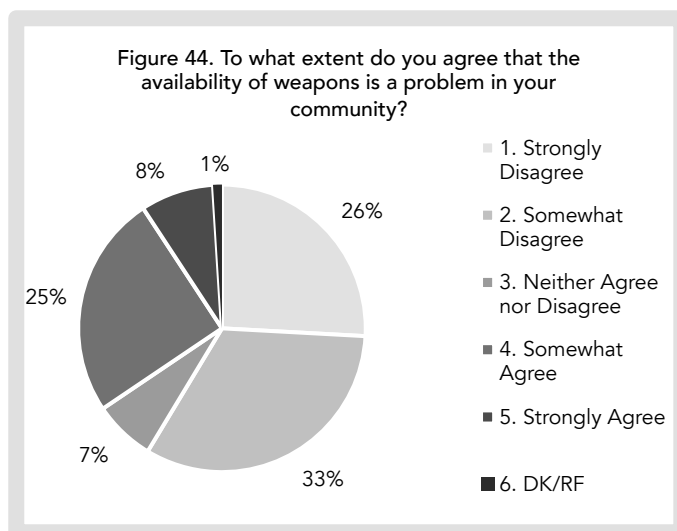


Figure 43. Have you or your family directly suffered from crime?



There is not concern about the availability of weapons.

The vast majority of respondents did not identify the availability of weapons as a threat to security within their community. Nevertheless, a few observed that weapons have exacerbated the damage caused by a number of past social tensions and conflicts such as inter-tribal disagreement. Likewise, a few pointed out that VEOs could, and previously had; take advantage of weapons to inflict greater suffering on civilians. A small number of respondents further interpreted the availability of weapons within the context of police or armed forces brutality. As a result of these beliefs, although the majority still felt that the availability of weapons did not pose a problem, a minority disagreed. Specifically, 33 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 59 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the availability of weapons is a problem in their community (see Figure 44).



There are a number of tribes in Jarash.

Respondents mentioned a number of large tribes and clans in Jarash. Tribes play an important role in dispute resolution, addressing social needs of members and even politics – for example they hold meetings before any national parliamentary elections and vote to nominate a member as a candidate for elections. Often, specific locations are home to a specific set of tribes. For example, one respondent observed that tribes in the Brma area include the Al Dbesah (largest tribe), Al Hanatleh, Al Shurman, Al Awneh, Al Faifeh, Nsour, Al Fraihat, Al Khuzai, Al Balawneh, Zreiqat and Athamah. More widely, across the governorate, the following were identified as the most influential tribes:

Table 4. Influential Tribes

NAME OF TRIBE	KEY LEADER(S)	IMPORTANCE OF TRIBE
Otoum	Ahmad Dandan Al Otoum (previous PM)	Probably the largest tribe in Jarash. Present in Souf town in Jarash Qasabah. A big tribe that has many Sheikhs, Mukhtars and former PMs (such as Huda Al Otoum, Ahmad Mustafa Al Otoum and Ahmad Dandan Al Otoum).

NAME OF TRIBE	KEY LEADER(S)	IMPORTANCE OF TRIBE
Qawqaza	Ali Salman Qawqaza (Head of Jarash Municipality). Dr. Youssef Qawqaza, (previous Director of Jarash Hospital)	Probably the second largest tribe in Jarash and source of a number of important members (see leaders in column to the left).
A'fifi	Jamal Al Afifi (Mukhtar of the tribe)	Its members are reportedly wealthy and many are traders and investors in the local community.
Zteima	Ali Al Salameh Abu Hatem Al Zteima (Mukhtar of the tribe)	A large tribe with many sheikhs and Du'a that gather in local and other locations including A'sfour and Al Rashaydeh villages in Qasabet Al Karak.
A'yasra	Omar A'yasra, (Mukhtar of the tribe)	A popular tribe as it has a large number of youth that often gather in Sakib town in Jarash Qasabah. It also commands much respect for its high percentage of educated members, engineers, doctors and academics.
Zo'bi	Mohammad Al Nakhlawi Al Zo'bi (Mukhtar of the tribe)	Contains a large number of traders and businessmen. Also one of the tribes with the most governmental institution leaders, previous parliament members and ministers. These often gather in Nahleh town in Jarash Qasabah.
Rawashdeh	Hussein Majli Al Rawashdeh	An important tribe known for its high number of educated leaders. The tribe is found in the city of Jarash.
O'deibat	Dr. Atef O'deibat, (previous Minister of Labor)	An important tribe known for its powerful and educated leaders who have helped solve various tribal problems.
Al Harahsha	Mufleh Al Ruheimi (previous PM)	Many youth members work in the army or police. The tribe also has a large number of government employees and has historically been a political power broker.
Zreiqat	Mohammad Zreiqat (previous PM)	The tribe has produced a large number of previous political leaders, and has historically been a political power broker.

Tribal loyalties can contribute to insecurity.

A few respondents believed that tribal identity can impact negatively on security. For example, several claimed that exaggerated tribal loyalty could antagonize differences with other clans. This can lead to aggression, marginalization and discrimination. For example, in June 2016 fighting took place between Al Otoum and Al O'deibat tribes in Souf town, obliging the security forces to use tear gas. In June 2015, a

fight broke out between members of the Al Qaisi and Al Azza families, which led to the death of a young man from the former. Likewise, in August 2013, there was confrontation in the Al Jofeh Mount area between the Zreiqat from Jarash and the Al Taybeen from Amman, which led to two deaths and eight injuries (see case study below). A few months earlier, in March 2013, students at the university of Jarash broke out after previous tensions between the Zatma and Otoum tribes. A coffee shop suffered damage and several employees were injured. The security forces surrounded the university, closed the main road between Amman and Irbid in the university area, and intervened using tear gas. Respondents acknowledged that VEOs could exploit such tensions. One even acknowledged that tribal loyalty could also dissuade members from reporting other members involved in VEOs to the government and its security services. Nevertheless, respondents concluded that other places, such as Zarqa, were worse than Jarash for engagement in VEOs, with one explaining that Zarqa is home to over 100 tribes. More widely, a few identified an increase in extortion, gun and knife crime, often attributed to the lack of employment and other financial opportunities, as evidence of a growth in violent extremism and a drift away from moderate religion.

Focus: Tribal Conflict: Zreiqat v. Al Tayebeen.

In August 2013, there was confrontation in the Al Jofeh Mount area between the Zreiqat from Jarash and the Al Taybeen from Amman. Two Al Zreiqat members were killed and eight were injured in fighting that included the use of guns. In November 2014, a truce was signed after the head of the general security and previous vice Mazen Basha Al Qadi, Amjad Al Qadi, Sheikh Deif Allah Al K'eiber, Kheir Allah Al A'qrabawi, Sheikh Talal Madi and a large number of other sheikhs and leaders from the Bani Khaled tribes visited Al Zreiqat's Diwan. The Jaha [diplomatic tribal visit] was accepted by the Zreiqat tribe headed by previous vice Dr. Mohammad Al Zreiqat, in the presence of many sheikhs and leaders local to Jarash, including previous Minister Atef O'deibat, previous Minister Adel Bani Mohammad, Al Basha Mohammad A'tmeh, Basha Ali Al Nawasra, and previous vice Sheikh Sleiman Al Sa'ed. After discussing the incident [which lead to the death of Firas Hassan Hamed Al Zreiqat and Barakat Ali Hamed Al Zreiqat and the injury of Khalifa Ali Hamed Hassan Zreqat, Mohammad ali Hamed Zreiqat, Ra'ed Hassan Hamed Zreiqat, Mohammad Fahmi Khalaf Zreiqat, Mo'tassem Khalaf Zreqat, Fathi Mohammad Hassan Zreiqat and Yousef Khalaf Zreiqat] a truce was agreed, which included the Al Tayebeen giving a specific amount of money to the Al Zreiqat tribe.

(Female, 34, Researcher, Jarash)

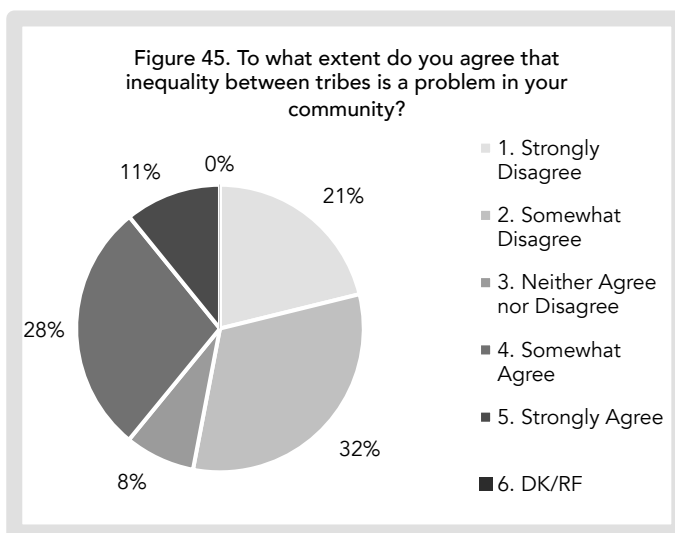
Tribal loyalties can also contribute to security and help deter VE.

Despite cases of increased tension, respondents maintained that tribal affiliation could also contribute to greater local security. For example, the aforementioned clash between the Al Qaisi and Al Azza families was swiftly resolved by a Jara and then truce agreed by both sides. Likewise, a few months earlier, in November 2014, a car accident led to the death of a young man called Ahmad Salim Al Shwayat. The situation was again quickly resolved through the involvement of tribal leaders that included Dr. Ahmad Al Qudah, Dr. Ahmad Al Annab, lawyer Ma'en Al Khaza'i Al Freihat, Dr. Hussien Al Rabab'a and Dr. Mahmoud Al Shwayyat (brother of the deceased). The fact that tribes can improve safety as well as

worsen it led to mixed views, but the majority agreed that tribal inequalities are not of great concern. Specifically, 39 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 53 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that inequality between tribes is a problem in their community (see Figure 45).

Likewise, several respondents believed that despite the modernization and urbanization of Jordanian culture and society, tribal unity still exists, particularly in areas such as Jarash. This has forged a strong sense of tribal loyalty that can act as a barrier to VE and the strengthening of VEOs.¹⁰⁷ For example, several maintained that tribal affiliation helps improve the effectiveness of monitoring and supervision of members.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, the fear of shaming others of the same tribe, for example by attracting the attention of the security services, discourages residents from considering joining a VEO.¹⁰⁹ For example, one respondent insisted hearing stories of how families disown their sons

for joining a VEO, or of how families encourage their daughters to leave their husbands if they become recruits. Thirdly, one respondent noted that tribes tend to be highly nationalistic and that this conviction does not sit well with VEO ideology. For example, one respondent described how the Baqa'a attacker sought refuge in a Bedouin area but was later captured there, claiming that this was evidence that citizens had reported him to the authorities.¹¹⁰



"For me, I consider extremism a passing affair in Jordan, and not an essential part of Jordanian society. As for Jarash it's scarce, I see it as individual, personal actions that don't express the opinions of the community, a province or a state. The main reason is that the people of Jarash are tribal people, they have a racist tribal mindset. Tribal zeal doesn't allow anyone from the tribe, whether they are intermixed or not, to be extremist. They consider it a shame on the tribe."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹⁰⁷ "Everyone sees it [VE] as wrong; we are a society based on clans and all Jordanian clans are against violent extremism, we respect each other and the majority has good morals." (Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

¹⁰⁸ "The villages are very tribalistic, so if you live in such a neighborhood and they are all your uncles, if someone new comes they will not go unnoticed. It will be clear and obvious but in the refugee camps it is each to his own." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

¹⁰⁹ "He [recruit] will influence others around him in the future, and for people this is a red line; they won't accept it. Tomorrow he will also make the security services suspicious of the tribe." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹¹⁰ "Even if a strange car enters a neighborhood, if it stays for one or two or three days the people make a call to inform the authorities. If we check statistics of incidents reported, we will find very many. We also have the Security Protection Forces, which can be informed about any case, so there is cooperation among everyone because we all believe in security for all, for all Jordanians." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

There is the possibility of luring back VEO members and using their families in CVE.

Most respondents did not comment on the possibility of bringing back existing VEO members into mainstream society. Although a few respondents believed that one of the greatest problems facing recruits who have left Jordan to fight in Syria is that their families have forsaken them and do not wish to have any more to do with them. It was not clear whether this was out of shame or out of a genuine opposition to the actions of their son. One insisted that recruits face such ostracization that even their own mothers are prepared to report and disown them.¹¹¹ However, those who believed that it is possible to reintegrate returning fighters into society highlighted the importance of offering financial incentives so that VEO fighters know that there is an opportunity waiting for them when they return. These respondents argued that it is hard to incentivize returns to Jordan when the only outcome that awaits fighters is punishment. Another reason for encouraging fighters to return was to ease some of the strain under which the police, Army and intelligence services find themselves. Respondents explained that chasing and apprehending fighters involves much more effort than waiting for them to turn themselves in of their own volition. Another added that security within the physical domain is only one form of security. There are additional types, such as social, cultural and health, which also impact on an individual fighter's decision about whether or not to return from abroad. As such, the respondent called on a raft of incentives and not just promises that those who return would not face tough punishment. Finally, a few respondents mentioned the benefits of using the fighters, and/or their families, to engage in face-to-face discussion with local youth as an effective CVE strategy.

"I would bring anyone who has a brother or sister or husband or wife that has gone to Syria to fight. I would get them together, and then select a group of them to tour schools and tell people the tragedy that happens, and how their heart aches for their sons while their sons are not caring for them. You should benefit from those people! [Meanwhile], if you want to bring people back, you have to excuse them, rehabilitate them, and put them with social and psychological doctors, then reform them religiously and put them under the supervision of their authorities."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹¹¹ "One man went for jihad in Syria. He was doing his PhD. His father always used to tell him to stay away from jihad and give him advice. The son kept telling his father he wanted to go for jihad in Syria and the father did not believe his words. He tried to stop him. But when the father is 65 and the son is 40, it is difficult. He tried a lot to convince him, and he didn't believe he would actually do it. Suddenly, he calls him from Syria. And until today, the father says he is a huge mistake and his mother has forsaken him." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

5.4 EXPOSURE TO VE AND PERCEPTIONS OF VEO THREAT

Violent Extremism poses a low threat.

Many respondents claimed that VE and VEOs do not pose direct threats to Jordanian society, and that there is a general national consensus to rid and renounce all kinds of extremism, whether in universities, tribes, or even within the state. Part of the reason for underemphasizing the threat of VEOs is that very few individuals, or their friends and relatives, have actually become engaged in VE activities. For example, although 21 percent of Jarash GQ respondents agreed, 79 percent disagreed that they or their family has directly suffered from violent extremism (see Figure 46), with many Depth Interview respondents arguing that even those who suffer from violent extremism are referring to knock on effects such as reduced tourism. As a result, most believed that if VEOs do operate inside the country it is in the form of a series of sleeper cells unable to generate widespread traction. For example, one respondent quoted an estimate by the Minister of Political Development (Khaled Kalaldehy) that originally 5,000 Jordanian fighters went to Syria, but that support for AQ and ISIS dramatically fell after the murder of Jordanian Air Forces pilot Moath Al Kasasbeh. Another pointed out that since 2009 there have been about five attacks with most being low level.

Figure 46. Have you or your family directly suffered from VE?

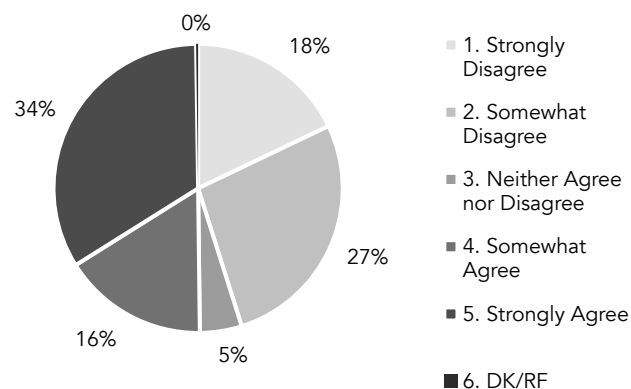


Violent extremism still poses a threat.

Despite perceptions that the threat level of VE remains low, VE attacks have evidently impacted on Jordanian society. Furthermore, even if the large-scale spread of VEOs in Jordan seems unlikely, respondents expressed concern about the potential threat that groups such as ISIS pose to the country. For example, 50 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 45 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that ISIS is a threat to Jordan's national security (see Figure 47). One of the most frequently mentioned incidents was the June 06 2016 attack on the Jordanian intelligence services at Baqa'a Camp.

A second was the June 21, 2016 suicide bombing that killed seven Jordanian soldiers outside the Ruqban refugee camp on the border with Syria.¹¹² Given such events, respondents acknowledged that sleeper cells pose a constant and ongoing risk that not even military intervention can resolve. This led to a common observation that although the security forces are able to prevent some attacks from taking place, there is a need for a more holistic and non-military approach in the longer-term. Note also that there was distinction between religious and violent extremism, although the two are linked in the minds of many. For example, one respondent, an imam, believed that there is a 'return' to religion, particularly among the youth, and that this is often misplaced enabling religious VE narratives to generate sympathy and support.¹¹³

Figure 47. To what extent do you agree that ISIS is a threat to Jordan's national security?



"Extremism is basically a group of sleeping cells; one leading to the creation of another. They are always there, no war can dismantle them. not even military defense, but rather thinking and persuasion. I am in favor of soft security, but the security and military are not enough. Say you have an extremist before you, you should face them with intellect, dialogue, evidence, persuasion and the return to the right religion."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Some parts of Jordan are seen as more susceptible to VE than others.

Respondents claimed there are some areas of Jordan where people are more susceptible to VE than others. For example, frequent mention was made of Zarqa, Ma'an and parts of Amman. Several respondents also highlighted Palestinian refugee camps (especially Baqa'a, Wehdat, Irbid, Souf and Jarash (a.k.a. Gaza) camps). They provided several reasons. First, they felt that camp dwellers were often in greater need and had less to lose by joining VEOs. For example, many lack job opportunities and/or are forced into 'free businesses' - markets, vegetable shops, and mechanic shops - because they cannot find jobs in the private or public sector. Secondly, some believed that recruits from these camps are more likely to feel victimized and marginalized, and therefore more sympathetic to VEO narratives. For example, many families in Gaza Camp do not own a national identity number, which means that they do not have Jordanian citizenship and so cannot be treated by, or educated in, government institutions.

¹¹² "[VE] is increasing. We saw the operation that happened in Ruqban two weeks ago, when the car exploded on the border with Syria and seven or eight individuals died, heroes of the Jordanian army. And this indicates that terrorism is near and its increasing." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

¹¹³ "Now the religious awakening is very strong in the Arab world, if it's not placed on the correct path it will transform to extremism." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

Gaza Camp also reportedly has poor sewage and other infrastructure. Thirdly, a few respondents believed that VEO activity has been able to continue in camps by disguising itself as drug crime, which is prevalent in camps and relatively unmonitored. Finally, some believed that camp dwellers were naturally more immoral and prone to crime and antisocial behavior, including engagement in VEOs.¹¹⁴

There was some disagreement over whether VEO recruits come from more rural or urban areas. For example, some respondents believed that individuals with a VE mindset exist across the country and that it is incorrect to fall for the stereotype of poor, uneducated, anachronistic villagers being more supportive of VEOs than their modern urban counterparts. However, others insisted that rural areas – such as Muqbila village – feature lower economic, education and employment levels, which make them more susceptible to VEO recruitment. Respondents also mentioned Souf and Sakib most often as areas with the highest concentration of extremists. For example, one explained that the latter has a higher concentration of disillusioned youth and Salafist preachers who have previously claimed that the government is not committed to Islam and the application of religious punishments.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, although the government has worked successfully to curb overt displays of support for VE, respondents maintained that people still continue to talk to each other in private about concepts such as armed jihad.

"I see cities such as Zarqa, Amman, Irbid and Jarash more prone to sending jihadists and more inclined to support the jihadist ideology. This reminds me of a sentence that Al Thawahry said which you can find on the Jihad Engineers website. Western Muslims think that jihadists in the east are people who live in villages; while in reality they are modern people. And most of the statistics and studies from the same website say that 40-50 percent of Jabhat Al Nusra and ISIS are engineers, and that most of these engineers are people who live in the city."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

There is a difference between political and social extremism.

Respondents believed that there is a difference between political and social extremism, and that these differences can explain the conflicting opinions about what drives individuals to engage in VE and VEOs. In particular, social extremism entails carrying out serious crime for material gain. Here, ideology and politics play little part. Instead, the rejection and renouncement of others derives from a denial that there is any value in discussing or recognizing alternative ways of thinking or behaving. Religious extremism and the refusal to have a debate on issues such as moderation and tolerance sit under this definition, as do wider antisocial behaviors. By contrast, political extremism seeks to improve access to privileges of macro-economic significance such as a country's resources. Here, the ideology of power and control reigns. Respondents subscribing to this theory further explained that VEOs exist as a bridge between the two

¹¹⁴ "I didn't mean Jarash Camp or Souf Camp in particular because I am not well-informed. But the camps are prone [to VE] because they are areas with low levels of service and where people don't get their rights as citizens. The proportion of poverty, adultery, immorality, theft, unemployment is great. So I think the camps are possible hubs for extremists." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

¹¹⁵ "Because they have people who call for Salafi thought, and are more widely spread than any other area in Jarash. An example of that is the high number of preachers that they have there. I believe there is extremist and Salafi thought in Sakib." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

types of extremism – they understand that it is possible to recruit more easily from among the pool of social extremists and so often cloak their attempts in social, microeconomic and religious messages. Nevertheless, their leaders also understand that social extremists are potential tools that serve the politically extremist aims of governments and individuals who wish to use them as proxies. Although most agreed that political extremism was not a problem inside Jordan (particularly after the murder of Al Kasasabeh), there was disagreement on the threat posed by social extremism. Some respondents felt that there was a general consensus to rid the nation of social extremism in all its guises, whether at universities, in mosques or within tribes, starting with the successful imposition of rule of law. However, others disagreed and felt that social extremism is growing unchecked because the government and the international community is too busy focusing on political extremism and VEOs.¹¹⁶

Focus: Political versus social terrorism.

"Terrorism at the community level has nothing to do with politics, meaning that there is someone who is unemployed, someone who doesn't have any money, someone in need, and the state is not taking care of him. I can't find any institution to hire me and I don't have any prospects, so I resort to theft. This is the first type [social terrorism] and especially involves people in the 18-23 year age group. For example, a young man from my tribe, Al Otoum, was living in an old lady's house, renting from her as he was studying at the university. He robbed her...she is an old lady living alone... and almost choked her to death. And he stole a car, laptop, money, a TV, telephone, etc. That's what I mean by terrorism for material gains! As for political terrorism, this is the great terror we all talk about it. It is the terror in our schools and universities and books. It is related to political issues. For example, what has happened in Iraq has happened for economic and political reasons - the distribution of resources and the distribution of positions."

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

Jordanians are alert and vigilant to outside threats, but less aware about internal threats.

Most respondents claimed that Jordanians are not overly concerned about external VEOs taking root in the country. They provided a number of reasons, ranging from confidence in the security services to belief in the level of public vigilance.¹¹⁷ For example, one cited the raid on alleged ISIS militants in Irbid that took place in March 2016 as evidence, and claimed that many more civilians and members of the law enforcement bodies could potentially have been killed. However, a number also acknowledged that there is a risk of homegrown terrorism emerging – not just through the appearance and strengthening of domestic VEOs, but also due to the actions and influence of 'lone wolves' that are hard to predict and control. For example, one insisted that the June 2016 attack on Jordanian intelligence officers was the

¹¹⁶ "[Social] extremism works to break down foundational ideas, it works to destroy moderate ideas and that is why it gets into principles, not just ideas. So if we want to get rid of extremism, we need to get to the source, we need to get to the source of the problem not just resolve the problems that arise from it. Because treating security problems is just treating the problems that are an outcome of extremism, but today we need to fight the ideology itself, to remove extremism in all its forms and by any means." (Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

¹¹⁷ "Our apparatus is special in the region and the real security officer is the citizen." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

work of a single or small number of individuals rather than a group. Another expressed concern that VE has become so ‘atomized’ that there are even VEO supporters within the Armed Forces, explaining that the spread of extremism is through ‘individual efforts for individuals’. Despite these concerns however, it should be noted that the majority of respondents regularly confessed that they had no idea how recruits, even those known to them personally, had moved from sympathizing with to joining VEOs. They maintained that the VE process takes place in secret and that even those who did have knowledge were reluctant to share it. For example, they felt that relatives of recruits were too ashamed or afraid to tell others, while the security forces and wider Government do not have a culture of sharing such information with the public. By extension, a majority of respondents was also unable to speak with authority on what measures are effective in actually stopping potential recruits from joining VEOs. For example, one researcher claimed that although he was aware of the telephone line and the government application for reporting suspicious behavior, known as Jordanian Knights, the majority of average civilians were not aware of these services. As such, when asked to comment on CVE efforts, most respondents advised researchers to talk to the security services, explaining that only they would have insight on the topic.

There is a difference between extremism and violent extremism.

Respondents differentiated between the issues of extremism and violent extremism. For example, although a few used the former in a general sense to refer to the latter, several others pointed out that extremism is just another way of saying ‘greater deviation than normal’. As such, although some extremism is negative (specifically when it involves disrespecting or marginalizing the voices of some segments of society), other forms can be positive. Respondents also disagreed on the relationship between extremism and violent extremism. For example, some felt that extremism is an ideological issue and that it is perfectly feasible to build and maintain a society that is ideologically extremist, such as banning political or religious freedoms, provided that it does not turn to violence.¹¹⁸ One overtly extremist respondent even cited the example of Nazi Germany and explained that society succeeded because all Germans shared the same Nazi ideology, and that problems only begin when parts of society embrace extremism while others do not. Meanwhile, other respondents believed that ideological extremism in any form is a precursor to violent extremism and that society must eradicate the former in order to ensure that the latter cannot arise. For example, one respondent observed how several people in Irbid had recently been wounded fighting over a kilo of Qatayef Arabic sweets. He believed that this display of extremism pointed to a more profound problem within Jordanian culture – the inability to accept or consider the will and wishes of others.

“Each person has a different religious perspective, depending on the fatwa. It depends on their perspective of justice and morals. It depends on how you believe society can be developed. For example, Hitler believed that violence and murdering Jews was good for his cause. He believed that they had to clean their race. Maybe the Islamic society needs to perform this kind of operation...like what happened in Belgium or France.”

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

¹¹⁸ “There are two types of extremism; ideological, which is not a problem because you can build a society which is normally extremist. But the problem with extremism is if it becomes armed.” (Male, 25, Self-employed, Jarash)

The proximity of Syria and the porosity of borders (especially Syria-Turkey) remain a concern.

Respondents pointed out that even if feelings run high vis-à-vis Israel and Palestine, the strength of the borders, along with the fact that Israel has effective armed forces and a nuclear deterrent, dissuades recruits from attempting to cross into Palestine and fight there. These barriers are not so effective in the case of Syria. As a result, those frustrated with the situation in Palestine are able to channel their efforts into Syria.¹¹⁹ Specifically, borders and roads connecting Jordan with Syria and Iraq are long and remain relatively porous, allowing a degree of freedom of movement. As one respondent complained, it is not possible to cover every meter of border and detect every tunnel built.¹²⁰ A number of respondents conceded that the government has invested heavily in physical border security solutions such as cameras, weapons and minefields. One concluded that approximately 80-90 percent of the Jordan-Syria borders is secure. As such, the problem is reportedly much worse across the Turkey-Syria border.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the heavy border presence means that the Armed Forces have to focus resources here rather than inside the country. More widely, respondents believed that the proximity of conflict in Syria does not only pose a threat of fighters crossing borders, but also means that it is easier for extremism as an ideology to take root within the Jordan population.¹²² Concerns about Jordan's proximity to the conflict in Syria also revolve around future governance in the region. For example, respondents felt that if the Assad regime were to suffer defeat this would almost certainly facilitate one of the major VEOs to take power given the lack of moderate opposition alternatives inside Syria. Respondents felt that this would have an undoubtedly negative effect on Jordanian stability and security, as well as the rest of the region, concluding that foreign powers will never let this happen despite their ongoing agendas.

"If the [VEO] groups control Syria and Iraq, the pressure will mount on us from every direction. If you want to protect your borders and recruit more guards, you must buy arms and this needs money, our economy will get affected. Also, if the [VEO] groups take those countries, we will lose their markets and exports will stop."

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

¹¹⁹ "He [former recruit] was into martyrdom and he liked Al Nusra, and moreover in the Arab world we love Palestine and jihad, and these things are provocative. We cannot practice jihad in Palestine so when the opportunity to do so in another place became possible, youths wanted to go there." (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

¹²⁰ "There is no country in the world can monitor its border, not the USA or Jordan or Britain, because the borders are long, around 750 KM between Syria and Turkey, and our border is desert – it's very easy to make a 50 m tunnel." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

¹²¹ "He went to Turkey for tourism, camouflaging in tourism, and from there on the border, that's what I came to understand. A group there helped him reach the border, and they told him to get to any tourist area and that they would take him from there." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹²² "Of course, it [conflict in Syria] has a lot of impact, because if I am home and there is a problem at my neighbors' house, we stay up till the morning solving it. Someone calls the hospital and contacts the civil defense, and so on. We panic till the morning and we stay up and never settle. And this is just at the household level. How then at the level of the state?" (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

6.0 EXTERNAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

6.1 PERCEIVED IMPACT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

Jordan had and has a close relationship with Syrians.

Respondents described having a close relationship with Syrians before conflict broke out. For example, many families from Jarash used to travel to Syria on vacation due to the cheap clothes and food there. Likewise, the cost of travel was low – for example the exit tax was only 15 JD per person. In addition, respondents highlighted the similarity in language, customs, history, religion and other shared cultural norms. As a result of this proximity, respondents claimed that Jordanians felt natural sympathy with the Syrian people when fighting started in their country, as evidenced by the preparedness to welcome large numbers of Syrian refugees both in Jarash and the rest of the country. Respondents insisted that locals continue to treat Syrians with love and respect. However, they acknowledged that there is increasing concern among the indigenous population relating to security issues, particularly of sleeper cells that could target Jordanians. For example, one respondent observed how, in 2012, police arrested three Syrians in Jordan for recruiting for ISIS.

There is strong antipathy toward Israel, the Syrian regime and Iran.

Jordan has historically shown strong antipathy toward Israel and respondents felt this remains the case, particularly in Palestinian refugee camps where protests and demonstrations can become particularly emotional. For example, one respondent described how, in memory of Al Nakba (May 05), refugees from Jarash Camp demonstrate, burn the Israeli flag and call for the death of Israel. Many youth outside of the camp also participate in these demonstrations. Likewise, many respondents spoke about the Syrian regime and Iran in negative terms, accusing both of terrorism and religious extremism for not accepting Sunnis as Muslims. Even those less critical of Iran refused to speak positively about the country, instead arguing that because there is virtually no relationship between Iran and Jordan, the former is largely irrelevant. Indeed, 76 percent of Jarash GQ respondents reported that Israel has a very or somewhat negative impact on Jordan, while 66 percent and 59 percent felt the same about the Syrian regime and Iran respectively (see Figure 54).

While views on the West are mixed, many Jordanians praise Germany and consider the Turkish model a success.

Respondents expressed mixed feelings about the West. For example, some remained convinced that the US wants to destroy Islam and that the UK supports the US, as evidenced by its position on Iraq and its history of aggressive colonialism. Meanwhile, several condemned France for disrespecting Islam, citing the Charlie Hebdo cartoons and ban on conservative women's dress as evidence.¹²³ Nevertheless, respondents acknowledged that many youth still dream of going to the West and enjoying the Western lifestyle. In this respect, respondents singled out the US and Germany. One for instance, claimed that people in Jarash believe that Germany is the best European country, explaining that the country has accepted many Syrian refugees and at the same time enjoys a strong economy. As such, many local youth

¹²³ "There is also a belief that France does not allow Muslims to wear the Hijab, which is a misunderstanding enforced by the media, because the ban was on the Niqab and not the Hijab." (Male, 28, Student, Jarash)

dream of moving to Germany and earning a good salary there. Also receiving praise for its approach to refugees and supposed economic success was Turkey. Respondents also applauded Turkey for managing to combine Islam, politics and economic growth.

"People in Jarash believe that America's agenda is to destroy Islam and Muslims. There is a huge amount of hate for America, particularly after they destroyed Iraq. But at the same time many of the youth dream of migrating to America because they believe it has better life circumstances and job opportunities."

(Female, 28, Student, Jarash)

Jordan has strategic importance within the region.

Respondents agreed that Jordan has strategic importance and that this is why all countries, even those fighting each other via VEO proxies, have an interest in Jordan remaining stable and secure. For example, one respondent drew attention to Jordan's long border with Israel and explained that the latter is aware that instability in Jordan would threaten its own security. Another believed that Jordan remains a last true potential ally in the Middle East for Western countries, especially those who wish to promote the benefits of combining moderate Islam with the concepts of a modern state. This conviction led to mixed opinions about whether Western intervention in Syria was designed to trigger VE in Jordan or not. And even many of those who believed that the West intends to divide the region still doubted whether this agenda would succeed in Jordan. As such, quantitative scores were mixed. For example, 46 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 45 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Western intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 48). Likewise, respondents were unsure about whether Western involvement in Jordan was a positive or negative phenomenon. For example, 52 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 41 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Western intervention in Jordan is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 49).

"Jordan is in the middle of the Arab world; it has the longest border line with Israel. If Jordan is stable and safe it balances the whole Middle East. That's why all other countries in the world support our country; if anything happens in Jordan, the whole world will interfere to protect it."

(Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

Figure 48. To what extent do you agree that Western intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan?

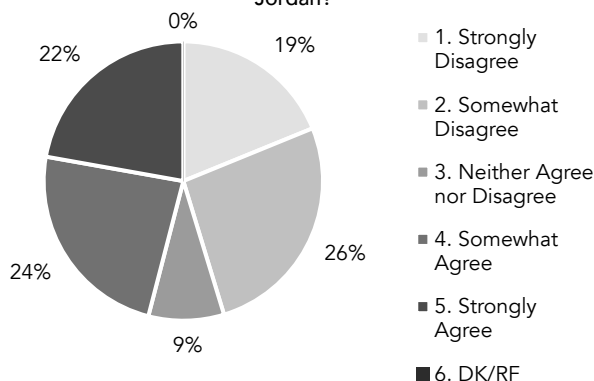
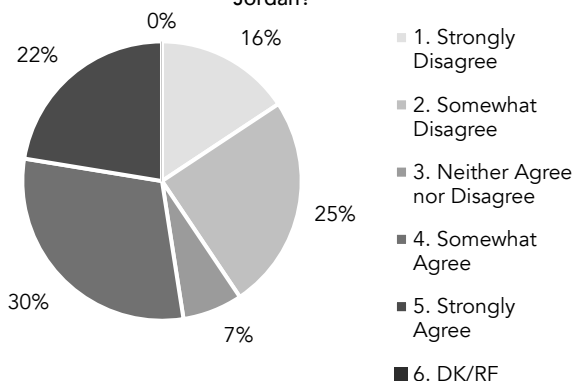


Figure 49. To what extent do you agree that Western intervention in Jordan is fueling VE in Jordan?



Jordan's support to the Coalition has increased the risk of VE.

Overall 35 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 56 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the central government does what the West says (see Figure 50). Despite this majority reluctant to succumb to a popular VEO narrative, a small number of respondents complained that the risk posed to Jordan by VE has increased since the country agreed to join on the side of the international Coalition fighting the Assad regime in Syria. For example, one claimed that the decision was followed by the sudden flooding of social media networks with various promises and threats aimed at turning people toward VEOs. Indeed, 55 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 36 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the Jordanian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 51). Likewise, although 50 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, 44 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Jordanian intervention against ISIS in Syria is justifiable (see Figure 52).

Figure 50. To what extent do you agree that the central government does what the West says?

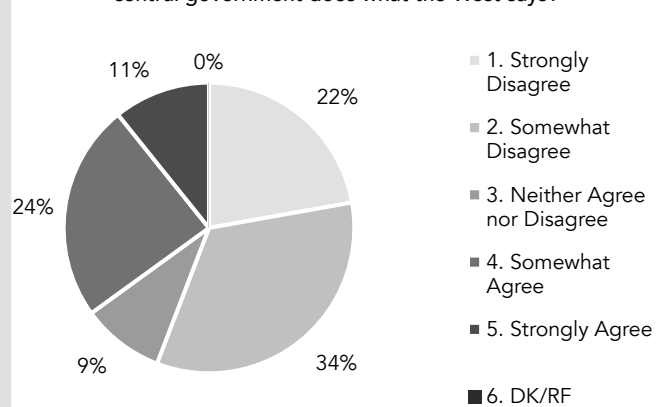


Figure 51. To what extent do you agree that Jordanian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan?

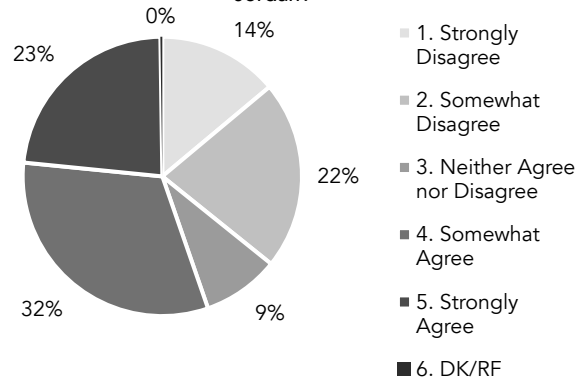
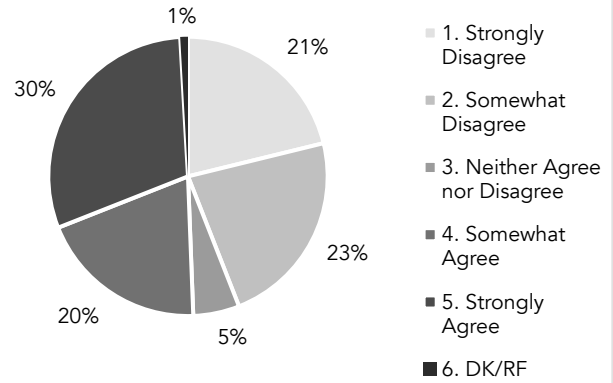


Figure 52. To what extent do you agree that Jordanian intervention against ISIS is justifiable?



6.2 PERCEIVED IMPACT OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC INTERVENTIONISM

Violent extremism is imported, not homegrown.

The majority of respondents insisted that violent extremism has been imported into Jordan rather than homegrown as it runs contrary to the culture, beliefs, and practices of society. In fact, many respondents felt the same about mainstream extremism, claiming that this too is alien to the country. They identified a number of methods by which such ideology has entered society, with each described in greater detail below. However, it is important to note that one example was transmission of messages across communication media, with the respondent maintaining that social media, as well as the more typical list of perceived government (often Western) perpetrators, should be held responsible for exaggerating, sensationalizing and generally drawing attention to the beliefs and actions of VEOs.

"It [extremism] has been imported to Jordan because of the ideology it supports. If extremism includes religious extremist groups that are nowhere near moderate, we can say that these are very far from what someone here would deem acceptable. Jordanian society is a moderate one. Jordanian society is forgiving, accepting of others, moderate, open to other societies, and that is why any ideology that opposes this has surely been imported. It is a disturbed ideology that has entered Jordan one way or another, and it's not necessarily the case that it came in via the border. It can also enter via electronic messages and social media, which creates ideas and events."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

Violent extremism stems from Colonialism.

A small number of respondents traced the origins of violent extremism to the slow disintegration of Arab countries that has been taking place for the past century and since colonial times. The most commonly blamed incident was the creation of Israel. For example, one respondent referred to a series of meetings between 1905-1907 that led to the submission of the Campbell-Bannerman Report calling for a buffer state (Israel) to divide Asia and Africa and prevent the further weakening of the British Empire. The Arab response to the creation of Israel was increased politicization and the emergence of ideas such as Arab unity and Arab nationalism. According to the narrative, colonial countries and Israel retaliated as evidenced by the conflicts of 1948 (Arab-Israeli War), 1957 (Israeli assault on Sinai), 1967 (the Six Day War), 1973 (Ramadan War), 1982 (Lebanon War), 2006 (Second Lebanon War) and others. Within this context, VEOs such as ISIS are just the latest incarnations of groups involved in this struggle. As well as the creation of Israel, blame was also placed on colonialist social policies such as the empowerment of women and changing school curricula, with one respondent even placing blame on former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for her role in encouraging the spread of new teaching material across the region.

Violent extremism in Jordan stems from the spread of ultra-conservative Islam from abroad.

Many respondents rejected the concept of homegrown violent extremism, instead claiming that it was an import from other parts of the region – notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Afghanistan. For example, one argued that although the Wahhabism movement has been a force for good in Saudi Arabia itself, the nature of the movement facilitated the birth of violent extremism as evidenced by the

emergence of AQ and its operations against Russia in Afghanistan. Another agreed and claimed that the second largest mosque in the world is in Qatar and is named after Mohammed Abdul Wahhab. A third claimed that a JN recruit became influenced by the firebrand anti-Assad rhetoric in Saudi mosques.¹²⁴ Other respondents traced the spread of the 'Kharijite' mindset¹²⁵ in Jordan to events in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. One final respondent traced the origins of VE in Jordan to the 1990 Gulf War, explaining that many of those who fled from Kuwait after Iraq's invasion were Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship. As a result, these returned to Jordan and became a wave of ultra-conservative and disillusioned refugees.

"In Jordan, extremism was not homegrown but rather imported. It invades us. It might be ideological or religious, dichotomies and aberrations from right Islam to the extremist form of Islam called "Kharijite". In Jordan, extremism was never homegrown but rather invaded the county from the region and neighboring countries such as the Arabian Peninsula and Afghanistan, to Iraq and Syria, and finally to Jordan, which is not a separated island. There is always contact with the rest of the region."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Violent extremism stems from the Arab Spring.

A small number of respondents believed that VE is a natural consequence of the Arab Spring, explaining that it became an unbridled and violent movement for change. Likewise, they claimed that people misunderstood the purpose of revolution and the meaning of concepts such as democracy and liberty, interpreting these as the right to do whatever they wished without accountability or the need to consider the impact on others. This has led to what some respondents called 'social extremism' (see section 5.4 Exposure to VE and Perceptions of VEO Threat), whereby individuals indulge in antisocial behavior without facing the same tough penalties as those guilty of terrorism. For example, many individuals imbued with the Arab Spring spirit took up religious extremist language even though they lacked the education to understand the errors of their interpretation.¹²⁶ Despite the threat posed by the Arab Spring, several respondents praised Jordan's resilience – including the King's steadfastness and anti-revolution measures – in keeping the country safe and not succumbing to the Arab Spring movement. In fact, one respondent claimed that the instability and insecurity suffered by Arab Spring countries such as Egypt, Libya and Syria has actually prevented the same from happening in Jordan. He reasoned that by extension, this meant that violent extremism was not able to grow roots in Jordanian society. To the contrary, it has encouraged greater unity and greater opposition to outside interference of any kind.

¹²⁴ "In Saudi you should know one thing, the mosque preachers are of a high level in the quality of sermons and the way they choose their words, because of their closeness to the Arabic language and the language of the Qur'an. They have a strong grip on language. Sometimes you just stand up in the mosque from excitement at their incitement to jihad in Syria." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹²⁵ An Islamic reference to conservative extremists identified by the Prophet Mohammed (and later Islamic scholars) as opposed to true Islam. The label has been used in recent times as a reference to groups such as ISIS and AQ.

¹²⁶ "When the Arab Spring began there was a fear of uneducated religious extremists. Because it is easy to brainwash the uneducated. There was also a fear of the young men who put the green or yellow bands on their heads - they are far away from religion and they don't have any ability to teach religion. This is the category we are afraid of, because they are religious extremists without knowledge." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

"The Arab Revolutions happened, the so-called "Arab Spring", and I call it the "Arab Mass Destruction" because spring comes after drops of dew and rain, but mass destruction comes after the fall of missiles and rockets. It started in Tunisia then continued in other countries, and the impact of extremism has been similar to the transmission of the revolution. Actually thank God our Lord Almighty and thanks to the Jordanian Hashemite leadership, because our leader is military more than he is civilian, we managed with our wise policies and thank God we got over the Arab Spring."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Instability abroad has caused migration and so the greater spread of VE.

Many respondents attributed the spread of VE ideology to the increase in migration triggered by instability in abovementioned countries. They complained that, on the one hand, there is no way to vet the large number of refugees that have arrived in Jordan and that surely many, as a result of what they have suffered, have become more sympathetic to VEOs as a means of defeating oppressive governments in their home countries. For example, one respondent believed that despite the efforts of the border authorities, over two million Syrian refugees have crossed into Jordan. These refugees have also overwhelmed Jordan's infrastructure (see section 3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt) including schools, markets, clinics, and places for social exchange. This has generated increased domestic frustration and some of those angered are now more open to alternative means (including through VEOs) of defeating the governments (sometimes including the government) responsible for the situation.

"Three Syrians came to Jordan as refugees, and then scattered themselves in three areas; Jarash, Ain Al Basha and Zarqa, where they managed to recruit 12 Syrians and a Jordanian. They convinced people through money, cars and houses. Five people were recruited in Jarash. They used to meet in coffee shops and public places. The people interested were arrested in May 2015 and were sent to the court attorney and were charged for attempting to join a terrorist group [ISIS], recruiting people into a terrorist organization [ISIS] and promoting terrorist ideologies."

(Female, 26, Student, Jarash)

Israel is blamed for the spread of violent extremism and, according to conspiracy, the creation of ISIS.

Respondents expressed vehement opposition to Israel and blamed it for the emergence of violent extremism in Jordan due to several factors. First, some claimed that Israel was the nation that championed the concept of violent extremism. For example, one respondent described pro-Zionist groups such as Fighters for the Freedom of Israel (also known pejoratively as the Stern Gang) and the Haganah Movement as savage 'Nazi-like' entities that were formed long before AQ and ISIS. The respondent claimed that Islamic violent extremism would never have taken root if these groups, and Israel more generally, had not pursued occupation and settlement so aggressively in Palestine. Secondly, others believe that Israeli aggression against Palestinians not only inflames feelings among the Palestinian refugee population in Jordan, but also contributes to general Jordanian and Muslim anger at

this perceived injustice.¹²⁷ Indeed, one respondent pointed out that the King of Jordan had recently identified failure to solve the Palestinian cause as the root of terrorism.¹²⁸ Finally, a few respondents believed that VEOs have managed to capitalize on public frustration at the perceived reduction in Jordanian and international interest in supporting the Palestinian cause. For example, one observed that direct negotiations have stopped since 2014, claiming that hope for peace talks are fading.¹²⁹

"The Zionist state, not Israel, is the one who has brought problems to the Middle East through its injustice to the Palestinian people, and its existence inside Palestine makes the Palestinian people feel oppressed in addition to the increase in settlements, expelling them from their land and forbidding them from praying in Al Aqsa and despising them and imprisoning them. It is an emotional point in Jordanian society, where Palestinian brothers are no less than 52 percent [of the population]. Also, Palestine and Jordan is one country, and the Israelis play this game, that this is Jordanian and this is Palestinian, divide and rule style - the colonial policy - like what happened in Sudan: the south is separated from the north."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Among the many conspiracies behind the emergence and spread of VEOs, one of the most radical was the claim that Israel masterminded the creation of ISIS. One respondent explained that, in his view, ISIS does not have any religious goals, but rather works to ensure the safety and survival of Israel by distracting people and governments. Specifically, the atrocities committed by ISIS make the world react negatively to any organization labeled as 'terrorist'. As such, Israel is able to generate international support for its cause by condemning its opponents fighting for the liberation of Palestine as terrorists. Another respondent agreed, claiming that Israel was even funding ISIS on a regular basis to ensure its continued existence, with the US providing the weapons needed. A third added that Western nations such as Britain and France are also supportive of the 'Zionist' effort.

"The Zionist movement finances them [ISIS] and they work within their goals, and the huge financing is from them, and this is what explains their holding up so far...to protect Israel and to turn people away from the Palestinian cause and make them forget it. The modern weapons that ISIS fights with are the biggest example, and the huge financing. Obama once made a mistake at a conference and said we are the ones who made Daesh."

¹²⁷ "The Palestinian cause has been without a fair solution since 1948, which creates fertile ground for terrorists to exploit. This unsolved problem of closed borders and the desire to free Palestine, all this makes a terrorist look like a liberator in their eyes and this is how extremism increases." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

¹²⁸ "I believe it was two days ago that His Highness the King talked to the ambassador of the EU (European Union) and told her that not solving the Palestinian cause is the root of terrorism. And the King is a big opinion leader." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

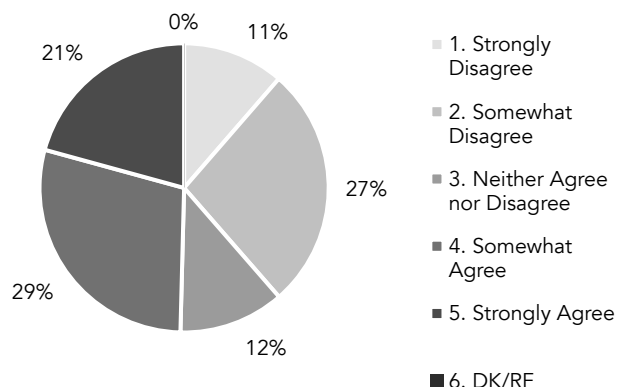
¹²⁹ "There is a growing sentiment between the Jordanians, two-thirds of Palestinian origin, that this national cause is no longer at the top of the list...This has created a state of anger and injustice among the people watching all the violations against Al Aqsa Mosque on a daily basis, with all martyrs targeted, from students to youngsters. This only fuels anger and revolt for many others, who feel these radical organizations are the final resort." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

(Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Iran is thought to support violent extremism, and even ISIS.

Another popular conspiracy is that ISIS is the product of a sectarian agenda pursued by various Shia countries or Shia populations in countries including Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Qatar, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Of these, Iran received the greatest blame. For example, one respondent described hearing about a recent video that appeared on television, reportedly approved by the Iranian authorities, which encouraged 15-year old children to meet with Qasem Suliymani¹³⁰ to encourage them to fight in Syria and Iraq. The respondent felt that the perceived threat to Sunnis by Shia extremist groups, to Arabs by Persians, and to youth by the recruitment methods of these Shia groups, represent powerful forces that encourage recruitment into Sunni VEOs.¹³¹ Within this context, respondents maintained that Saudi Arabia has led an opposition extremist Sunni movement by supporting groups such as JN and ISIS. This tit-for-tat strategy has supposedly caused an escalation in sectarian rhetoric and confrontation, drawing violent extremist groups to theaters of conflict such as Syria and Iraq. For example, 50 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 38 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that Iranian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 53).

Figure 53. To what extent do you agree that Iranian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan?



The 'liberation' of Iraq triggered violent extremism.

A variation on the abovementioned sectarian theme placed blame for the emergence of VEOs on the post-'liberation' period in Iraq. Specifically, respondents argued that the new regime in Iraq forcibly evicted many Iraqi tribes, which fled to Jordan in search of shelter. These tribal members not only impacted the Jordanian economy adversely, but also brought a strong sense of disillusionment and anger toward the Iraqi authorities. Meanwhile, the influx of refugees into Jordan meant that business in Iraq greatly reduced. This not only damaged the economic relationship with Jordan, one of Iraq's largest trading partners, but also generated hostility and frustration among those who had remained in Iraq. The net result was the emergence of VEOs dedicated to overthrowing the US 'occupation' of Iraq, particularly

¹³⁰ A senior military officer in the IRGC (Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) and Commander of the Quds Force linked with support to the Assad regime, including via Hezbollah.

¹³¹ "Also Iran has certain slogans like: 'A Sunni's bone in the grave of your father', which they consider a great insult. When I talk to you about Iran, I'm talking about Hezbollah, because it is the military arm of Iran in Al Sham." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

in the aftermath of scandalizing stories and images such as those that came out of Abu Ghraib.¹³² In a more dramatic version of the conspiracy, one respondent concluded that the Iraqi government is engaged in a long-term sectarian plan to change the country into a Shia nation by empowering groups that appear extremist Sunni, including ISIS, so that it can use these as a pretext to remove all Sunnis. The Shia conspiracy also tended to feature claims of financial support from Israel and the provision of weapons from the West. For example, one respondent found it implausible that weapons could continue to ‘fall into the hands’ of ISIS fighters without Western blessing and support.

"If you look at the news and the coordination that is happening between Bashar Al Assad's forces and the Iraqi forces, Malik basically gave Fallujah to Daesh; he withdrew the forces for political vengeance. Daesh is a group that fights on behalf of the American soldiers."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Violent extremism is just the first step in an alleged Western agenda to divide the region spiritually.

Most conspiracies describing the perceived interests of the West in the region revolve around the idea of dividing the Middle East, and specifically countries within it, in order to benefit from resources or as a way to fight proxy wars against other countries. However, one variation was the conspiracy that the West has encouraged the formation and spread of VEOs as a first step of a much grander scheme – the spiritual fragmentation of Islam. The few respondents that supported this view believed that the initial phases of media and military conflict were well underway, but that these have not truly succeeded in overcoming Islam. As a result, they believed that the West will trigger full-blown sectarianism as soon as possible. Consequently, these respondents did not believe that conflicts in Syria or Iraq would be over soon. To the contrary, they anticipated long wars for future decades. Likewise, they believed that conflicts in Syria and Iraq are proof of the conspiracy as these contain some of the most delicate Sunni-Shia divides, and are countries in which Iran can easily get involved. Finally, they feared that despite Jordanian attempts to stabilize the country, it is inevitable that the West will identify the strategic importance of making the nation fail and divide like its neighbors.

"I think, no I can assure you, that the war in Iraq has not yet started, and I also assert that the war in Syria has not yet begun. The evidence being that Iraq was occupied in 2003 and we are today in 2016, which means 13 years and the war is still raging! The West, the enemies of Islam and the enemies of the Islamic nations, fought us militarily with tanks and aircraft, and then in the media. It was simple, a soldier against a soldier and a tank versus a tank. Today, however, they have tried to make us fight based on Sunni-Shia lines, and they have succeeded with this. The master of the

¹³² "These groups [VEOs] were focused on fighting the American occupation, therefore they were welcomed with public sympathy and moral support. We used to call them mujahideen; their goals were to fight the American occupation in Iraq. We used to see pictures of the Iraqi suffering and the way Americans treated the people – for instance, the scandal of Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse touched every single Arab and Muslim...it touched everybody."
(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

country, his Majesty King Abdullah, warned of this approach in 2003 – so did the former Egyptian President Housni Mubarak, and the late Saudi Minister Sheikh Salman.”

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

According to respondents, violent extremism is due to foreign intelligence services fighting each other by proxy.

One common conspiracy is that a range of intelligence services (but most commonly those from the US, UK and Russia) are responsible for creating and encouraging VEOs as proxies to further foreign policy interests.¹³³ These make use of intermediary allies, such as Saudi Arabia, as a conduit for the spread of weapons to such proxies.¹³⁴ The conspiracy has led to the perception that foreign superpowers are involved in regional disputes not out of any desire to help a country in question, such as Syria, but as a way to carry out indirect attacks against another superpower. For example, a few respondents believed that, several decades ago, the US created and supported AQ in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a means of challenging and defeating Russian influence in the region. They reasoned that JN, which has formerly sworn allegiance to AQ, must therefore be the latest incarnation of a US-supported VEO designed to tackle Russia – this time within the Middle East. One respondent concluded that recent attacks in Turkey, such as the bombing of Ataturk Airport, were likely carried out and/or supported by Russia as a strategy to put economic and political pressure on the country to distance itself from the US and move closer to Russia. Another respondent concluded that disbanding the Iraqi military was one of the most potent ways for the US to encourage recruitment into ISIS. Specifically, Iraqi soldiers were left without pension payments and had to turn to groups such as ISIS for a source of income. He concluded that the same policy had been implemented in Syria and even Libya.¹³⁵ A third respondent conceded that the US was now engaged in fighting VEOs such as ISIS, but that this was only because ISIS had turned against its US creator. A fourth pointed the finger of blame at the UK intelligence services, citing an interview on Russia Today by a former British intelligence operative who reportedly admitted that the British had created ISIS.¹³⁶

“Daesh was brought to us by the West. Daesh is now backed by Israel and the United States and Iran, and the evidence for that is that Daesh has not fired one bullet at Israel or Iran or the USA. This

¹³³ “This was the beginning of the [VEO] groups, which were used by international intelligence bodies, Western ones and more specifically American intelligence. Their aim was to involve those groups in the cold war between the east, led by the Soviets, Russia so to speak, and the American west.” (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

¹³⁴ “I blame Saudi Arabia and the US. Just two days ago a report from the New York Times came out about the Jordanian intelligence services stealing weapons that the US sends to Saudi Arabia to the Syrian opposition, and this proves that there are weapons being sent.” (Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

¹³⁵ “Where did these groups come from? Iraq was destroyed and the USA dissolved its military. Without pension payments it was easy to recruit this army to ISIS – that is why it was so easy to take over Mosul. The same happened in Syria and they took over Raqqa and in Libya they took over Sirte.” (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

¹³⁶ “For example, today I reposted on Facebook a post from a former British intelligence officer where he says that: “‘We, the British” were behind the creation of ISIS and the war on it’. I have it on my Facebook timeline. It is from an interview with Salama Mesafer with Russia Today.” (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

is proof. Nor have they decapitated any American or Iranian or Israeli."

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

Violent extremism is considered the end result of foreign warlords doing business.

A few respondents believed that VEOs emerged as a consequence of the militarization of the conflict space in Syria and Iraq, encouraged and supervised by foreign warlords and other powerful men with economic interests. For example, one respondent claimed that the US had sent around 300 military consultants to the Syrian Opposition to fight the Assad regime, and that Russia had sent the same number or more. The respondent believed that these individuals were there to provide an image of non-militarized support, but that behind the scenes arms manufacturers were quietly encouraging these and others to continue the fighting. Another agreed and believed that even President Obama could not stop this process because of the negative impact that cessation of arms sales would have on the US economy.¹³⁷ A related observation was there were several translators and mercenaries living in Jarash who have worked with the US in Iraq. One respondent believed that their involvement in killing other Arabs or witnessing US abuses of other Arabs has doubtlessly had a psychological impact and encouraged these individuals to move closer to VEOs.¹³⁸

Supporting the Kurds increases the legitimacy of Sunni VEOs.

Although ethnicity appears to play no major role inside Jordan, one respondent believed that this is not the case outside of Jordan. Specifically, she heavily criticized the strengthening of the Kurds, claiming that there has been an agenda to provide them with their own Parliament, military forces, constitution and ultimately their own land. The respondent claimed that many Sunnis disapprove of this support and end up sympathizing with opponents to the Kurds, including VEOs. More widely, the respondent felt that submitting to Kurdish demands would set a precedent, and that other ethnic groups would follow suite and start demanding special treatment and concessions. This will lead to the fragmentation of the region, and strong internal divisions within Jordan itself.

"We should still have being Jordanian as the first form of identity, then after that I am a Muslim or a Christian, Eastern Jordanian or Western Jordanian, Sunni or Shia, Kurdish or Shishani,. These subdivisions that are happening will not succeed in any case. I mean the whole area is being re-divided now and people are looking for new solutions in Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Syria. These four

¹³⁷ "There are deals, deals hidden under the table, and above the table: what is above has been shown to the world for publicity, and there are arms companies who are in control in America and even Obama and Congress can't stop them because if they did their economy would break. Now, from where has Daesh got their weapons? Man, just yesterday I saw the news, co-operation with Daesh because it has obtained serious and developed weapons." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

¹³⁸ "After you personally use a weapon in a war zone like Iraq, then you are a mercenary who kills people for money, you become bloody and kill others. Others are coordinators and liaison officers. When you go to their [US] sites, like Abu Ghraib prison, and want to get information from the prisoners, this affects you psychologically. The translator there in the end is an Arab, he must have an ounce of dignity, and he will hold a grudge inside himself." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

countries are influential on Jordan indirectly."

(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

Violent extremism is deemed a reaction against every type of foreign interference, and some approve of extremist attacks on foreign soil as retribution.

A small number of respondents believed that VE is a response to the intensified interference currently occurring simultaneously from all the powerful countries. For example, one blamed 'the Zionist entity' (Israel) for its invasion of Palestine, the US for its invasion of Iraq, Russia and Iran for their intervention in Syria, Turkey for letting extremists across its borders, Saudi Arabia for exporting extremist ideology and causing war in Yemen (with help from Kuwait). Another explained that in the face of this collective interference and oppression, VEOs appear attractive because they give back a sense of empowerment to those who feel they are at the mercy of the control of others. A third respondent, talking specifically about Jordan, agreed and pinpointed local frustration at the West's economic control over the country. He explained that whereas Jordan was once able to sit at the negotiation table with countries such as the US, this is no longer the case and instead the country suffers from levels of debt that it cannot hope to repay. Perhaps stemming from a perception of Western complicity in regional and domestic destabilization, some respondents believed that Jordanians are far more tolerant about attacks in other countries than they are about attacks on domestic soil. For example, one admitted that many friends supported Omar Mateen for his June 12 2016 attack in Orlando, writing messages of approval on Facebook. He explained that many people dislike the US and/or believe that the US is responsible for terrorism in the first place.¹³⁹ Another argued that even if the West does not have direct responsibility, then it has facilitated the emergency of VE through its behavior within the region. The respondent explained that most people were against NATO's involvement in Syria and Iraq, and cited as evidence the number of US and British, as well as Jordanian, VEO members.¹⁴⁰

Some see VE as the result of liberalism clashing with conservatism.

A small number of respondents believed that VE is one outcome of Western liberalism clashing with local Muslim conservatism. They explained that those in favor of Western liberalism mistakenly try to impose controversial values such as women's rights (as the West interprets them) and rights for homosexuals. This polarizes individuals who see these values as an encroachment on their conservative beliefs. One respondent even accused the West of trying to buy Jordanian support for liberal values, claiming that the government was paid to sign the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child. The respondent contrasted this erosion of Jordanian culture with life under the former King, insisting that he was able to inculcate a stronger sense of national identity and patriotism by not succumbing to Western liberalism. Another respondent likewise blamed the UN but this time argued that the silence and refusal of the UN to take action against the injustices that fuel support for VEOs, or even action against the VEOs

¹³⁹ "Some people believe that America is the one who is creating terrorists, and that it is backfiring on them." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

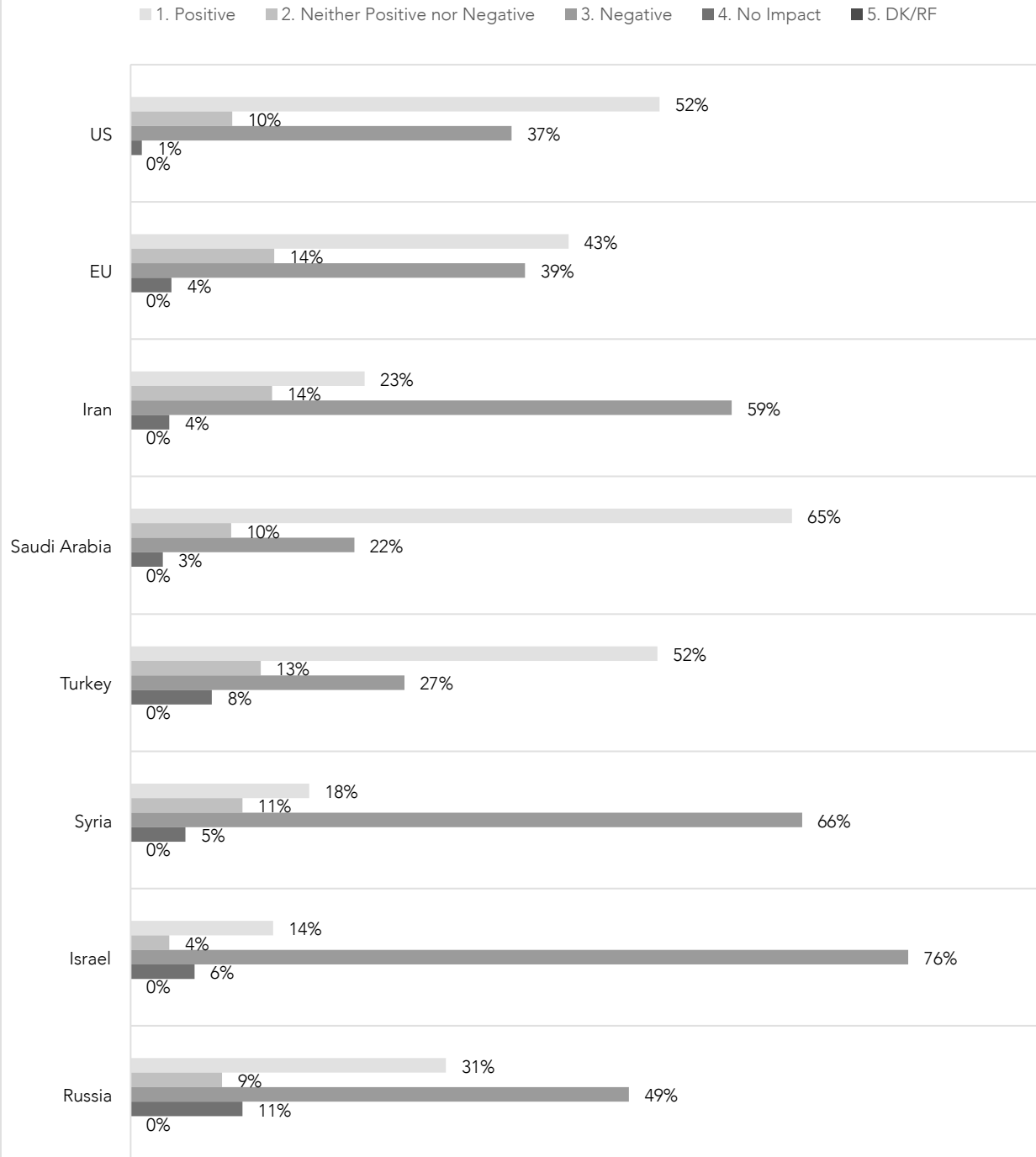
¹⁴⁰ "The people send their money, and send people to jihad, which means that they support it. I consider Jordan a supporter. As well as America and Britain." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

themselves, was in itself a form of extremism. The respondent reasoned that there was no point in having a UN Security Council if all it did was meet and discuss matters instead of taking action.

"One of the things that motivates us to jihad is that we consider it a reaction to the West. They publish their philosophy and ideas about post modernism...Gay rights, women rights to work. And the right to vote and make decisions. Most of these ideas are not familiar to us. They are not like our social standards. The sexual revolution in Europe, after the 70s, it affected us. And it is not suitable for our community or for any community."

(Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Figure 54. To what extent do you think that the following countries have a positive or negative impact on Jordan?



7.0 COMMUNICATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

7.1 THE ROLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROPAGANDA

For locals, the Internet is a means to communicate with, learn about, and become emotional about VEOs.

Respondents acknowledged that the Internet is a key medium used by recruits to communicate directly and indirectly with VEOs. They pointed out that this occurs over well-known social media Internet platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, where users are invited to click on a particular link or follow certain hashtags. Another example is ISIS's online 'Dabiq' magazine. Likewise, many pointed to the high impact of songs exhorting support for the Caliphate and for jihad, as well as emotional high-quality videos featuring symbolic acts like children tearing up their passports or videos of killings. One of the most salient examples was the movie of the killing of Al Kasasbeh, with one respondent describing it as a cinematic production made with a high-level of technology. Another pointed out the powerful song in the same video calling for jihad and killing. Note, however, that effective propaganda can even take the simple form of driving a wedge between the government and civilians. For example, one respondent recalled a video claiming that the government treats those in the south, especially Ma'an and Karak, worse than those from other parts of the country. Likewise, another video strategy is to provide visible proof of ISIS successes. For example, one respondent cited the case of a recent video detailing ISIS' entrance into the Sinai. The group claimed that the borders of God have no limits, and that it will destroy Gaza as it did Raqqa and Mosul. Several respondents also believed that the volume of targeted messaging across social media has increased since Jordan joined the Coalition against VEOs in Syria and Iraq,¹⁴¹ particularly in the case of ISIS. This greater online presence, also as a result of ISIS attacks in Jordan, has helped raise the organization's profile in comparison to competitors such as JN. As a result, 47 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 43 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the Internet/social media is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 55). Nevertheless, part of the reason why so many respondents disagreed with the statement was the belief that Internet connectivity and online VEO presence have given the public a way to learn about the atrocities committed. As such, greater online communication has also cemented opposition to VEOs and provided opportunities to exploit weaknesses in their messages and narratives. Likewise, there was real concern that the media in general exaggerates the threat posed by VEOs. In fact, this second reason was so salient that many respondents saw a strong correlation between media efforts and Internet proliferation of VEO stories. Specifically, 49 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 42 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the media exaggerates the problem of VE in Jordan (see Figure 56).

¹⁴¹ "Jordanian citizens have been targeted since then [joining the Coalition] by extreme social networks and systems, offering false temptations to this day. I have heard about many [cases], one of which is the 16-year old recruited through social networks to Turkey and then Syria. He told his parents he went to jihad. Mobilization mostly happens through social media like Facebook, Twitter; the Internet has played a huge role. The first stage probably happens on their websites, people start to follow their Twitter accounts. The procedure is systematically planned to a great extent." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

"His commitment was to religion. He was always involved in prayers, and there was a video that was released about Syria at that time with cheering by the Nusra Front as they fought against Assad. He used to watch and cry – they reached out to his emotions and his weaknesses."

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Figure 55. To what extent do you agree that the Internet/social media is fueling VE in Jordan?

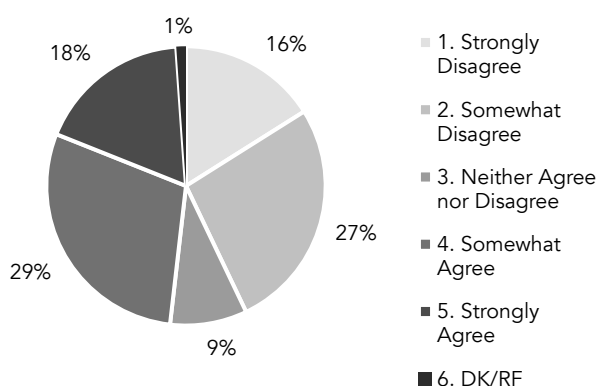
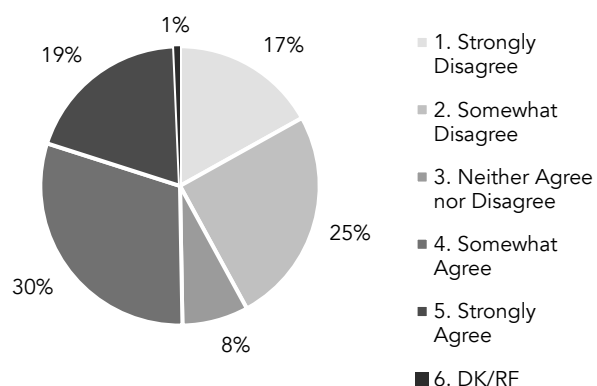


Figure 56. To what extent do you agree that the media exaggerates the problem of VE in Jordan?



VEOs use text messaging and books to spread messages.

55 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 36 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that ISIS propaganda is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 57). Meanwhile, 47 percent strongly or somewhat agreed, while 41 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that JN propaganda is doing the same (see Figure 58). Respondents acknowledged that there has been an increase in the degree of cellular-phone based VEO messaging. Specifically, two respondents noted that extremists have been using applications such as WhatsApp or Facebook to disseminate popular VE narratives such as Shia targeting Sunni Muslims and vice-versa. Some messages even incite violence with calls for 'cleansing campaigns'. One respondent added that this problem has worsened across the region, not only in Jordan, thereby highlighting the need for 'softer', cultural CVE efforts as well as 'harder', military ones. Another respondent further claimed that the VEO recruitment process involves sharing books that focus on topics such as jihad, explaining that this extremist literature is harder to track than online activity. One example is Mohammad bin Abdul Wahhab's book, 'The Nullifiers of Islam', which advances the idea that not ruling with the word of God nullifies faith, and that whoever refuses to oppose an infidel is an infidel, and that whoever cooperates with an infidel is an infidel. The book is reportedly not only taught in ISIS and JN circles but also appears in some local mosques. A second example is 'Walaa and Baraa'.¹⁴²

¹⁴² "Some of them are ready to meet you in the street and the first thing is to get the recruit committed into religion. Also you have their books that are spread around here, like the "Walaa and Baraa" book: it's a recruitment book and

"We need to work on a long-term strategy to counter terrorism and radicalization, based on development, spreading awareness, precautions before treatment, as well as justice, equality and equal opportunity, rather than military solutions, to achieve economic, social and educational development and counter extremism...I believe we still need to take military security, legislation and intelligence into consideration, but most importantly, every Jordanian should be armed by self awareness and knowledge against radicalization, immunizing a sophisticated community as ours, to keep order and diversity while planning such a strategy."

(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

Figure 57. To what extent do you agree that ISIS propaganda is fueling VE in Jordan?

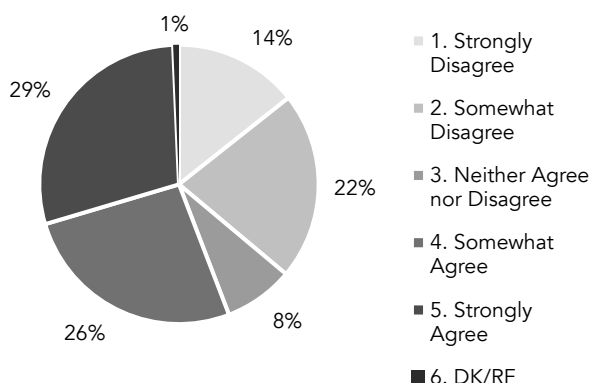
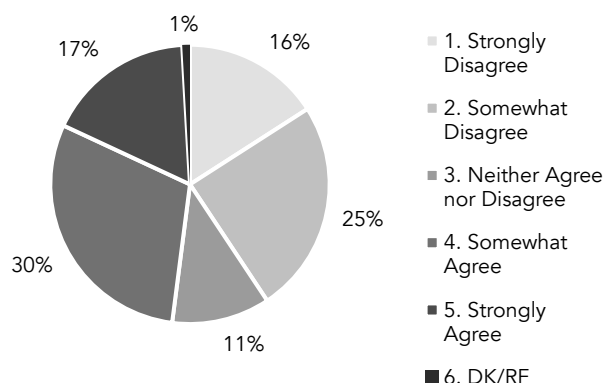


Figure 58. To what extent do you agree that JN propaganda is fueling VE in Jordan?



Efforts should be made to ban public funerals of VEO 'martyrs'.

Respondents claimed that many Jordanian fighters who join VEOs are now dead. In most cases, public funerals are not held because there is no corpse. However, there have been a small number of memorial services. Respondents were generally opposed to such events, calling on the government to ban them for being a form of pro-VEO propaganda. For example, one complained that funerals potentially glorify the concepts of sacrifice. Another conceded that the government should allow private funerals but without invitations for other tribal members and/or non-relatives. A third insisted that the majority of Jordanians rejects the idea of public funerals because they see VEO fighters as their enemies. A fourth felt that Daesh fighters killed in battle are still considered martyrs and heroes,¹⁴³ although a fifth disagreed and insisted that even family members disown their children if they join ISIS.

I have seen a lot of people recruited that way. They have a lot of ways, in addition to Facebook and WhatsApp." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

¹⁴³ "The one who leans toward Daesh's ideology or supports jihad in Syria is looked upon as a hero and a martyr. Some people see him as stupid and a fool to go to Syria, and some people are also confused. But there are still those who see him as a hero. Even his family might consider him a martyr." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

Face-to-face recruitment is the priority.

Respondents believed that VEOs prioritize face-to-face recruitment above other methods. Firstly, the dangers involved, and level of secrecy required, mean that recruiters operate on a personal basis and attempt to leave as little trace as possible.¹⁴⁴ Secondly, respondents acknowledged that Jordanian culture is based on building relationships via direct engagement. As such, although alternatives such as the Internet and contact by phone facilitate and even accelerate an individual's movement along a VE pathway, the most significant progress comes through personal interaction.

"One time something happened to my brother, even though I shouldn't tell the story. He was working in a park and when he was on a shift someone called him and told him I am your brother Abu Islam from the Islamic State. My brother thought it was a friend joking, so he asked him if things were ready and said he was going to come. The man told him: 'Yeah I am waiting for you'. After a while he asked him where he was, so my brother felt it was not a joke after all. So he talked my father and went to the intelligence offices and they interrogated him."

(Male, 32, Clerk, Jarash)

There are many public spaces for face-to-face efforts that tackle VE indirectly.

Respondents rued the lack of open spaces, observing that only Jarash Qasabah has parks and that this is a cause of frustration and anger toward the government. Nevertheless, they identified a few spaces that should be used for implementing programs that indirectly tackle VE through direct involvement by the public. For example, one respondent highlighted the public park of Jarash opposite Lubaba Bint Al Hareth School. The park is one of the oldest in Jarash and is popular with families and children as it contains safe playing grounds for children. A second is Bab Amman Park, on the northern side of Jarash city by the Jarash Roman Theater entrance. The park has an amusement park for children as well as coffee shops that serve Argeeleh, coffee, tea and juices for visitors. A third park is the Hashemite Park, opposite the monuments area in Jarash City. The park is large, clean and popular with families and youth for the coffee shops and Argeeleh. A fourth is Al Birkiten Park, at the entrance of Souf Camp. Families reportedly visit it on weekends and youth play soccer there even though it lacks a proper soccer pitch. Finally, one respondent mentioned Jadeedah Park but provided no other details.

As well as parks, one respondent singled out the Jarash town hall as perfect for youth initiatives such as those led by the AJYC, which has engaged in CVE dialogue and training sessions, and reportedly also has its own hall.¹⁴⁵ Another example was the Jarash ruins, home to the 'Wa Yahlou Al Hayat' (Life Gets Sweeter) festival, attended by various sheikhs and other notables. Although one respondent noted that extremists complain about festivals being un-Islamic, as they consider such events to be extravagant,

¹⁴⁴ "Mostly they [VEO recruiters] communicate with people face-to-face and not through the Internet. The Internet is not very safe; it is not trusted because you can't be sure who you're talking to. And we know that the government has hackers who monitor and track everyone." (Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

¹⁴⁵ "The 'Kulluna Ordon' [All Jordan] Youth Committee is doing a good job. They do dialogue sessions and trainings for the youth, and counter extremism initiatives. They have held two training programs I am familiar with from afar; the first trained thousands of youth on dialogue so that the language of dialogue becomes the daily language used, away from intolerance and violence. The second training was about moderation." (Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

distasteful and a breach of Islamic principles. Accordingly, there is a demonstration each year calling for festivals to be cancelled.¹⁴⁶ A final example of a popular location, specifically appropriate for attracting members of Jarash Camp, was a newly renovated hall in Al Burketen that is available for hire. A few respondents also cited youth clubs and cooperatives, such as Jarash Sports Club (beside Jarash Hospital) and Jarash Union Club, as popular with the local youth for soccer practice and other hobbies. A final respondent mentioned that the town has two swimming pools.

"We also have the ruins of Jarash, where they organized the festival "Wa Yahlou Al Hayat", and they invited sheikhs and a number influential people, and it was successful. In my opinion, such festivals urge people to stop extremist ideas. And for example, the new park in Bab Amman attracts people on a daily basis: it would be nice to organize events there that attract people and plant some ideas in their heads."

(Male, 53, Teacher, Jarash)

There are popular restaurants and cafés.

Respondents identified a number of popular restaurants as potential locations for engaging with members of the local public. One example is Teejon, a very old shawerma restaurant located in the market area of Jarash city center. The restaurant is a favorite with youth because of its reasonable prices (0.5 JD for a shawerma sandwich). The restaurant also has a hall for serving food. A second example is Abu Ahmad, located on the Al Qairawan roundabout in Jarash City. The restaurant is also old and renowned, and visited even by residents from other governorates. The restaurant is famous for its pastries, barbecued meat, good prices and large dining hall. A third example is Al Smadi, a restaurant in Jarash City Center renowned for its humus and falafel. It is extremely popular with the youth for its cheap prices (20 piasters for a falafel sandwich). A fourth example is the Lebanese House restaurant, located on the Jarash-Amman highway within the King Abdullah II neighborhood. The restaurant has good service, an outdoor area for children to play in and a parking lot. However, prices are expensive with one respondent complaining about the 10 percent service charge. A final example is the Sultan's Palace restaurant (a favorite with families). In terms of popular cafés, one example is Al Qairawan, located in Jarash City on the Al Qairawan roundabout. The café is popular with all ages, both men and women. However, it is particularly popular with youth as it is situated nearby the main road and has cheap prices (a cup of tea costs one JD). A second example is Ya Hala, located in King Hussein street in Jarash City. The café is also a restaurant and is known for its long history and its location nearby the market. Many youth go there to watch soccer matches although prices are a little high (a cup of tea costs two JD). A third example is Kroum Al Inab, located in Jarash City on King Abdullah street at the entrance to the market. The coffee shop has a large hall and provides games such as cards. A fourth example is Al Ree', located in Jarash City Center. The venue is a street coffee shop, meaning that it has no tables and chairs. The café is popular with youth as it is very cheap (a cup of tea or coffee costs 25 piasters). A fifth example is Viva Café, also located in Jarash City Center. The café (and many others like it) is popular with men

¹⁴⁶ "This year [2016], the demonstrators raised a slogan 'Syria burns while Jordan is celebrating'. It is mainly the MB that stages these demonstrations. Salafist Jihadists support the MB on these occasions, but they do not make an appearance as far as people can tell." (Male, 32, Researcher, Jarash)

only, partly because it broadcasts all World Cup, Spanish and English league soccer games.¹⁴⁷ Reasonable prices make it popular with youth. A sixth example is the Hashiyyah Yard, located 400 meters from Al Qairawan roundabout. Other cafés mentioned include the Green Valley Café, Sultan Castle, Sufani Café and the Net Street Café.

"People fear their sheikhs and religious leaders. There has to be awareness in mosques and religious centers, lectures and workshops. Also at sports clubs and coffee shops."

(Male, 29, Student, Jarash)

There are numerous mosques providing potential spaces for face-to-face CVE efforts.

Respondents provided the names of a number of local mosques that should be used, considering their popularity, as places of CVE engagement with the local population. One example is Hamidi Mosque, located in the center of the market and well known among locals. A second example is Hashemite Mosque in Jarash City Center, near the Bab Amman traffic lights. The mosque is famous for its location by the main market and the bus complex, as well as the restaurants and coffee shops surrounding it, making it a popular gathering point for many families.¹⁴⁸ A third example is Sheikh Yusuf Mosque, named after moderate Islamic Sufi scholar, Sheikh Youssef Otoum. The mosque is located in Souf town, opposite Qaser Alla. A fourth example is Abu Baker Al Sediq Mosque, one of the biggest mosques in Jarash Camp. The mosque is considered a meeting point for demonstrations and stand-ins, as witnessed in the 2014 solidarity march against Israeli crimes, as well as the October 2015 and November 2015 protests over Israeli insults against Al Aqsa Mosque. A fifth example is Al Shaheed Mosque in Souf Camp, famous for its location in the center of the camp, which enables all families from Souf Camp to attend. A sixth example is Nour Mosque in Souf, with one respondent claiming that its age makes it special, and that it is popular with youth on Fridays when people often spill out onto the streets to pray together for lack of room inside the building. Other mosques mentioned include the Omari Mosque in Souf and the Downtown Mosque. Note that the only mosque associated with VE is Jarash Al Kaber Mosque. This is because in 2013 the police broke up a fight between some of those in Jarash Camp and others from Al Hadadeh village (beside the camp). According to some, the imam of Jarash Al Kaber Mosque provoked members in the camp to fight jihad against the people from Al Hadedeh as well as the Jordanian police. A final respondent mentioned the value of engaging with local women at the Women's Center for Religious Affairs in Jarash.

There are many potential CVE plans that could be implemented.

Respondents recommended a range of CVE efforts. One example is the screening of emotive films that show the negative qualities of VEOs. Another is the administration of open debating sessions led by charismatic moderators, although there was disagreement over who should lead these: some

¹⁴⁷ "It is only men who attend the cafés in Jarash. There is no indication that young people have been approached by extremists or radicalized within the café environment; they go there to watch soccer matches, drink coffee, smoke shisha and play." (Male, 32 Researcher, Jarash)

¹⁴⁸ "We have for example, the Hashemite mosque in Jarash, which has a special place in our hearts, and the number of worshippers is big." (Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

respondents preferred to avoid religious sheikhs on the basis that they are boring for youth, while others insisted that religious clerics can provide valuable contributions – lists of both are found in other sections of this report. A third example is holding focused religious discussion sessions that highlight the differences between VEO religious ideology and moderate interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna. For example, one respondent suggested discussion on how the Prophet told Muslims not to kill a sheikh or cut down a tree, with careful attention paid to contrasting this advice with the activities undertaken by VEOs. One respondent called for the creation of an action suspense TV series about fighting VEOs, complaining that even though the ability exists in Jordan to make such programs, no one produces them, allowing VEOs to exploit the vacuum and depict its fighters as handsome heroes. Another agreed, and enthused that a captivating film featuring former ISIS sympathizers who changed their mind would be incredibly effective, particularly if bolstered by repeated waves of social media marketing. Finally, one respondent recommended capitalizing on local superstitions and beliefs. For example, he claimed that people believe that if a person looks a hyena in the eyes, they will dream about the animal and it will visit their house and kill family members. Another example is the local belief that there is gold buried in Jarash as it used to be a Roman stronghold. The respondent explained that the hyena could be likened to ISIS or that Jarash's gold could be likened to local resilience against extremism.

"I mean in action films, they bring youth soldiers from Daesh and portray them as Rambo; they show him with his hair on his forehead wearing camouflage and the dust around him. He appears as a handsome guy with a gun, like a video of a hero. If our youth see this image, they will get affected because our guys have no role models. Then when you tell them that there are female captives in Syria and jihad and heaven they will be influenced. I wonder what is going on when an actor like Nasser Qasabi understands Daesh and extremism more than the Arab governments: this makes me wonder. And the "Selfie" TV series left a mark; they showed that on MBC1 TV."

(Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

7.2 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

There are a number of popular television channels and programs.

Unsurprisingly, many respondents named Al Jazeera as the most popular television channel, describing it as the best source of news in the world. This became particularly evident at the start of the Arab Spring as the channel had television crews in all of the relevant countries. Likewise, many respondents named Al Arabiya. In third place came Ro'ya, popular especially with the youth for its diverse and liberal political, social and cultural shows. Finally, a few mentioned Jordan TV, with examples of popular channels including 'Yes'ed Sabahak', the Sports Magazine (broadcast local soccer news every Friday after prayers) and the 20:00 news report. Aside from these examples, respondents listed a number of popular television programs. The most important of these are summarized in the table below:

Table 5. Popular Television Channels and Programs.

NAME OF TV PROGRAM	CHANNEL	WHY IS IT POPULAR
Nabd Al Balad	Ro'ya	The program, hosted by Mohammad Al Khalidi, is particularly popular with males over 30. It focuses on political discussion with local and national politicians often holding opposing views on issues under debate, such as the elections law, election integrity, elections and women, how to deal with violence against children etc.
The Opposite Direction	Al Jazeera	The program is popular with both men and women, particularly those over 30. The program discusses political issues in the Arab region, again among guests with strongly opposed views. Respondents particularly enjoyed the tension and conflict occasionally exhibited between guests. ¹⁴⁹
Caravan	Ro'ya	A show popular with youth aged 14-30 that covers a variety of political, cultural, sports and entertainment news and events across Jordan and the rest of the world. The program airs Sunday-Friday at 10:00 Jordanian time.
Thursday Night	Ro'ya	A popular show that hosts Jordanian comedians as part of its various skits. For example, the Hadith Al Balad section invites Jordanian comedian (such as Abu Al Ghour) to join. Other sections include 'Did you know?' and 'Snap Chat'.

¹⁴⁹ "For example, the last biggest fight was in June 2015 when the topic of the episode was about Iraqi army corruption and the two guests, Ala'a Abdelkhateeb and Sarmad Abdelkareem, started insulting each other and they started to fight which made the presenter Faisal Al Qasem end the episode before it's was the proper ending time." (Male, 28, Student, Jarash)

NAME OF TV PROGRAM	CHANNEL	WHY IS IT POPULAR
This Evening	Jordan TV	A program that discusses important social and legal issues in a transparent and bold way. The show airs on Wednesday and Sunday nights, at 19:00 Jordan time. ¹⁵⁰
Sabah Al Arabiya	Al Arabiya	Popular with housewives, with special sections such as make up, beauty, fashion, health, cooking and decoration. The show airs daily and is hosted by Sarah al Dandarawi.
Other programs	Al Jazeera	The weekly 'Bila Hudoud' (Without Borders) show hosted by Ahmad Mansour, and the monthly documentary, 'Palestine under the lens', that focuses on the Palestinian cause. Several respondents also praised the channel for its CVE advertisements broadcast between shows.

There are a number of popular local Facebook sites.

Respondents mentioned a number of popular local Facebook sites. One example is the Jarash Festival page, which posts the activities held each year as part of the festival of the same name. Another is Jarash News, which lists local activities, events and opinions such as the dates for voting, candidate speeches, complaints etc.¹⁵¹ A third example is the Al Awdeh Camp page, of particular interest for those in Jarash Camp. The site posts flyers and discussions on the right of refugees to return to Palestine, and on the Palestinian cause in general, as well as posting news on activities and demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people in Palestine. The Sons of Jarash page is a fourth example, popular for its local postings on marriage, birth, death and funeral announcements. The page is known for being overtly loyal to the King, with regular postings to this effect. Finally, the Students of Al Ahliyyah Jarash private university page is a popular means of communication between current and former students, and a source of welcome advice to new students.

The media tends to scandalize and emphasize.

Respondents acknowledged that one of the problems created by the media is the tendency to label all attacks and assaults as acts of terrorism. These not only add to public fear but also give VEOs an appearance of power. For example, one respondent described how he had heard via Facebook that the man responsible for a recent attack in Irbid was a member of ISIS. He therefore concluded that the assailant was ideologically inclined to carry out the attack rather than being just a simple criminal. The media also has the power to highlight VEO activities in such a way that attracts much more attention than groups would otherwise have enjoyed. This is both a positive and a negative in that it increases public

¹⁵⁰ "In one of the episodes, Minister of Education, Amin Mahmoud and Dr. Mohammad Al Omar and Vice Reem Abu Dalbough, gathered to discuss high school degree results and the mistakes that occurred and caused a large number of failures." (Female, 29, Student, Jarash)

¹⁵¹ "Currently they have a vote on the page on the expectations of the people in Jarash as to who will win the elections. They also post complaints of the people, such as the complaints of the clothes traders about the laziness of the market." (Male, 28, Student, Jarash)

awareness of the threat but also emphasizes stereotypes that may contribute to further instability or ignorance. For example, one respondent insisted that TV programs have shown how VEOs target individuals of Palestinian origin only. Finally, one respondent criticized the way that the media intentionally inflames certain issues, particularly those of a sectarian nature, and so feeds the resentment that leads some to join VEOs.¹⁵²

"They [VEOs] target Palestinians or people from Palestinian origin. I heard about them in channels like Yarmouk TV, which is concerned with what's happening in Palestine and Gaza. There's a series called "Fedayeen". They show how people go on missions and how they make explosive belts.

(Male, 36, Civil Servant, Jarash)

Powerful individuals exploit local media, while foreign media is more professional.

Many respondents expressed doubt at the objectivity of the Jordanian media. For example, some claimed that the media was essentially another arm of government and that this makes it hard to discern what is real and what is government-led propaganda. Another believed that certain non-governmental leaders and institutions, particularly religious ones, pay the media to cast them and their ideas in a positive light. Such respondents lamented the current state of the media in Jordan, and complained that foreign –especially Western – media was more sophisticated and more influential. Consequently, they believed that it is easier for foreign states to advance their agendas than it is for Jordan. For example, one respondent noted how the terrorist attack against Charlie Hebdo in France resulted in the King of Jordan going there to pay his respects. The respondent criticized the inability of the Jordanian media to generate equal global sympathy and interest for problems and attacks in Jordan, and called for the provision of better media training.¹⁵³

VEOs know how to market across the Internet and Salafists have enjoyed exposure by foreign state media outlets.

Respondents believed that regionally, Jordan has one of the highest usership levels of the Internet and popular social media networks such as Facebook. At the same time, they felt that VEOs have become highly adept at marketing themselves across the Internet. For example, one respondent described hearing about a local 16 year old boy that had been recruited over a social media network and who left his parents telling them he had to fight jihad in Syria. Another claimed seeing a YouTube video uploaded by JN that has 5-6 million viewers. Such videos are not only impactful at the visual level, but also in terms of the music they feature. For example, one respondent claimed that a pro-VEO song has notched 500,000-1 million views. By harnessing the modern media, VEOs have gained the ability to send very powerful messages to others about their victories and beliefs, as well as the faults of their enemies.

¹⁵² "The media fuels the sectarian discourse between the Sunni and Shia, Muslims and Christians in other countries, even East Jordanian against Palestinian. Journalism and social media networks feed these problems." (Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

¹⁵³ "Our media is useless! Someone comes and reports that they caught a shami goat in Ramtha! And they consider this media! We are in utmost need of professionalism in this society." (Male, 63, Retired, Jarash)

Indeed, one respondent estimated that about half of VEO recruits were encouraged along their influence pathway by social media. Furthermore, VEOs have demonstrated a capability to hack individuals and groups involved in online CVE efforts and smear their reputation. For example, one respondent claimed that he used to write anti-ISIS posts before his account was hacked and pro-ISIS messages were uploaded instead.

In addition to VEOs, Salafists in general have benefitted from formal media outlets. Specifically, several of those respondents who felt that there was a link between Salafism and VEOs pointed out that Salafists have enjoyed a strong media presence thanks to sponsorship by foreign governments and organizations. For example, one described the appearance of Islamist preachers, held up on TV as symbols of 'good' Muslims. Another claimed that these TV channels extol the virtue of learning the Qur'an, convincing some viewers to enroll on Salafist Qur'anic teaching courses.¹⁵⁴

"Social media is promoting radicalization - big time actually, because I heard a lot of supporters have been recruited through these networks. We all know the world has become a global village and it's hard to control or even monitor every country, including Jordan - one of the top users of Facebook across the region. Even with a strong online security parameter and watchdogs, you cannot monitor each and every single Jordanian user on Facebook. I believe social media platforms have played a big role, and now everybody is talking about the war against extremism. But it is primarily an online war between social networks."

(Female, 37, Legal Assistant, Jarash)

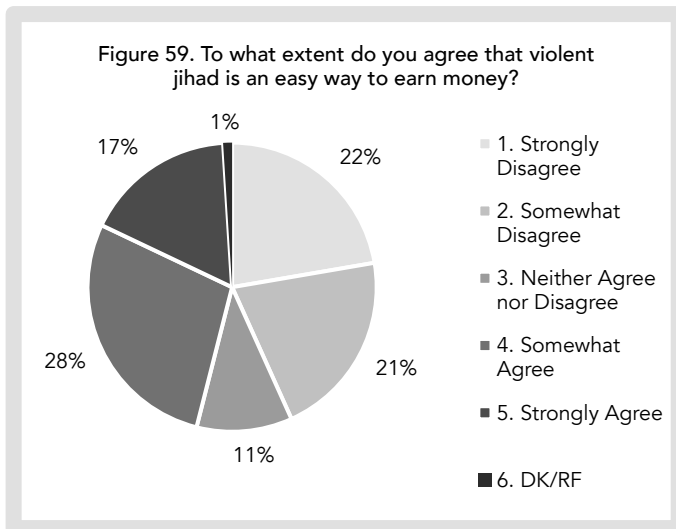
¹⁵⁴ "Also we have the media. People came to start Arab religious channels that call for Islam. Most of them preach Salafist thought, they show us Islamic figures and Islamic preachers, and show that these preachers are the good figures to abide by. Things started to spread in this way - they lured the youth with the Qur'an and the Sunna." (Male, 38, Imam, Jarash)

7.3 THE ROLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

There is a VEO narrative of economic opportunity.

Many respondents felt that one of the main reasons why individuals support and/or join a VEO is due to the way that these organizations successfully question how just and fair the current government is, given existing wealth inequality across segments of society. This approach is pursued directly, through challenging the attitude and behavior of existing authorities, and/or indirectly by promising easy access to financial rewards and other related benefits, including jobs and wives.¹⁵⁵ Although this narrative is powerful, particularly for those who are economically disadvantaged, respondents believed that such narratives do not resonate with everyone.

Several respondents also pointed out that the promise of VEO rewards presents an opportunity to the government in its CVE efforts to win back support through provision of tangible benefits to potential recruits. Furthermore, several respondents questioned whether, even if it was previously the case at the start of the revolution in Syria, violent jihad still remains an effective way to earn money given the dangers involved. Specifically, 45 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 43 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that violent jihad is an easy way to earn money (see Figure 59).



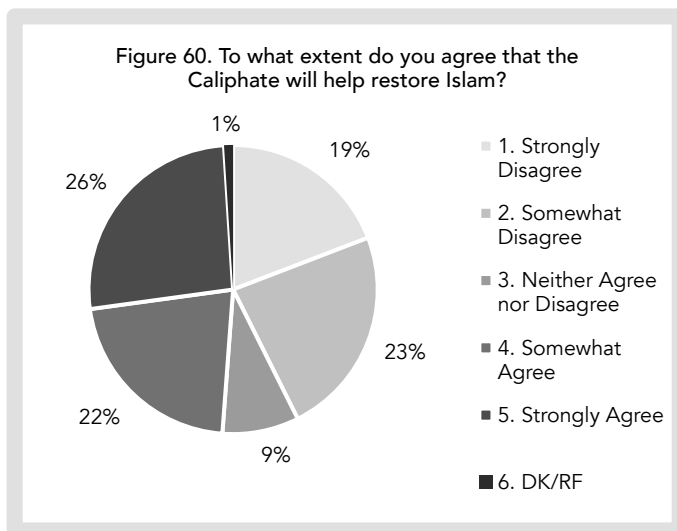
"The rhetoric that has to do with money is for those that are unemployed, and those that are impoverished, that "today we can provide you with a job opportunity", a salary, it's a very simple message and it plays on unemployment and poverty, especially because these problems are present in all societies. They [VEOs] use very powerful problems that exist in every society to promote their group. Today they use poverty and unemployment to be able to say: "Hey come and work for us and we will give you a salary", and within this there are religious messages, that jihad is an obligation, and that this is the return of Islam and the return of religion."

(Male, 30, Youth Coordinator, Jarash)

¹⁵⁵ "You also have financial temptations. Take a job if you don't have one. Take money if you don't have some. Take a wife if you don't have one. Take what you want!" (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

There is a VEO narrative of a 'new Islam'.

There was disagreement over whether or not religion is a genuine part of VEO ideology. Those opposed to VEOs argued that these groups exploit religion as a means to achieve their goals and those of their financiers. Meanwhile, those more supportive of VEOs insisted that they are focused on true religious reform. In either case, respondents claimed that part of the VEO allure is their narrative of a 'new Islam', a version that is supposedly more accurate and reflective of religion during the time of the Prophet Mohammed than the Islam of today. In particular, VEOs describe moderate the Islam of today as aberrant and blasphemous, softening in order to accommodate the needs and wishes of self-serving individuals and institutions ranging from the domestic government to the West. The VEO new version of Islam promises a return to pure Islamic ideals with less room for compromise. This narrative does generate some traction among civilians. For example, as many as 48 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 42 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the Caliphate will help restore Islam (see Figure 60). Although it should also be noted that many respondents interpreted the Caliphate as a religious system of governance to complement, and not replace, the existing monarchy and system.



As with economic narratives, there are flaws with the VEO religious narrative. For example, two inconsistencies emerge when considering these narratives alongside the VEO practices of using non-Muslims to carry out jihad and paying salaries to VEO fighters. As one respondent pointed out, although Muslims fighting jihad are allowed to share spoils of war, the original idea was for this then to be spent on helping the Muslim community and not for personal profit. There is also divergence in opinion over the degree to which – once VEOs arrive with their new form of Islam – other Muslim citizens would willingly embrace it or whether they would require thorough re-education. The former, a more extremist interpretation, sees other Muslims as part of the ignorant enemy, while the latter considers them allies and at worst in need of gentle guidance.¹⁵⁶ A second area of debate is whether a new Islam also refers to physical and not just ideological boundaries. For example, one respondent maintained that a spiritual awakening was not sufficient; there must also be a jihad (struggle) to unite the various Muslim societies and expand their area of control.

¹⁵⁶ "I don't think it is their aim to call us infidels, or to define Muslims who are not fighting with them as infidels. I think they prefer to have us on their side. They don't want to create more enemies. They do not want to fight the whole world. On the contrary, we are their strength; we support them and fund them." (Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

There is a VEO narrative of resistance against oppression.

Another powerful narrative utilized by VEOs is that Jordan and/or the Arab Muslim region is suffering from oppression. Those who make these claims identify a range of perpetrators. Specifically, some highlight the government as the 'near' enemy, claiming that it prevents greater freedom and seeks dictatorial authority, corruption and nepotism. In this scenario, the VEO interpretation of a caliphate is put forward as a supposed appropriate replacement for the government and monarchy, and justified as a vehicle for reform. This enables VEOs to position themselves as liberators and protectors of the people as well as Islam.¹⁵⁷ This is particularly true when the government decides to use the security services to crack down on VEOs, thereby appearing to validate claims of oppression against the people. Evidence suggests that some of these narratives of oppression are more powerful than others. For example, as many as 36 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, even though 52 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed, that the Jordan-Israel peace treaty is a betrayal for Islam and Arabs or (see Figure 61). Meanwhile, other VE narratives place the blame on the 'far' enemy – typically a reference to the international community with the West at the top of the list – claiming that it has an agenda to subdue and control the Arab region for its own benefit. This narrative claims Western military action (or indeed inaction) as evidence. Alternatively, VEOs suggest that the West intends to humiliate Islam and challenge its socio-religious strength. This narrative enjoys marginally more support among civilians. For example, 42 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 54 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that the West is humiliating Islam (see Figure 62).

"Religion has always been connected to the clan or race it represents. The race is the same as the religion. So Judaism was built on the philosophy of common defense, while Christianity doesn't support war. Islam does. And this is why we have jihad. And it's called jihad and not extremism."

(Male, 25, Self-Employed, Jarash)

¹⁵⁷ "They try to attack our relationship with the Jordanian leadership. But they use their idea of a "Caliphate" before anything else to attract young people. I mean an unemployed young person needs something to be passionate about. They also say they are reformists and the regime is unjust and corrupt." (Male, 58, Lecturer, Jarash)

Figure 61. To what extent do you agree that the Jordan-Israel peace treaty is a betrayal for Islam and Arabs?

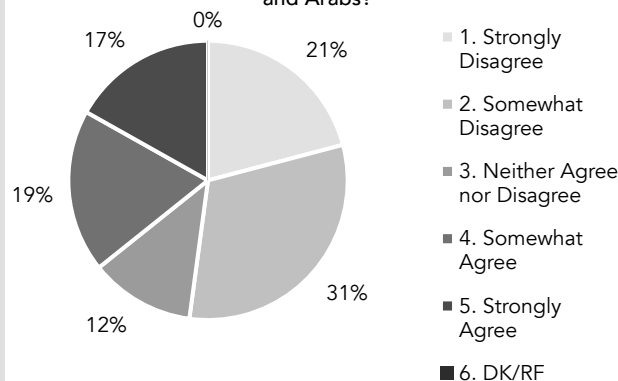
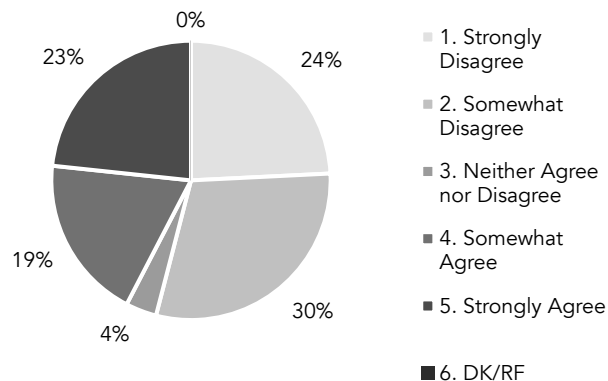


Figure 62. To what extent do you agree that the West is humiliating Islam?



There is a VEO narrative of camaraderie and heroism.

Another key VEO narrative is the promise of friendship and camaraderie. Respondents explained – as outlined in other sections of this report – that one type of potential recruit often feels marginalized or neglected by mainstream society. Such individuals find acceptance, purpose and brotherhood among other VEO members. Likewise, involvement in a VEO, particularly at the start of the conflict in Syria, provided a fast-track to achieving heroism. This applied even to average citizens approving of JN and ISIS efforts to tackle the Assad regime and defend suffering Muslims. Although public approval has since declined, the sense of adversity that comes from fighting in Syria, coupled with a VEO's apparently unwavering dedication to pursuing its objectives, mean that membership of such groups remains attractive for some. Indeed, despite public rejection of VEOs, 39 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 49 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that members of VEOs always look after each other (see Figure 63). Likewise, 43 percent of Jarash GQ respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while 46 percent strongly or somewhat disagreed that members of VEOs are skilled fighters (see Figure 64). The findings show that even if there is little behavioral support for VEOs, some of the pro-VEO narratives continue to maintain some sort of attitudinal grip over significant tranches of the population.

Figure 63. To what extent do you agree that members of VEOs always look after each other?

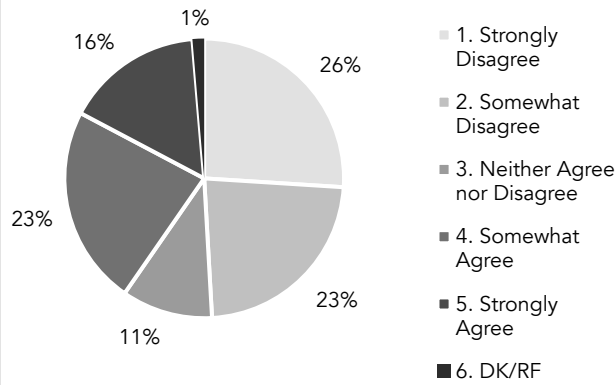


Figure 64. To what extent do you agree that members of VEOs are skilled fighters?

