

## Drivers And Barriers Impacting Propensity Toward Violent Extremism

### MADABA: TARGET LOCATION ANALYSIS



*Youth protesters in Dieban District, Madaba governorate.*

November 2016

*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

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0 ISLAMIST AND VEO SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Support for VEOs .....	5
2.2 Support for Political and Non-Violent Islamist Groups.....	13
<b>3.0 BASIC NEEDS DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Education and Employment.....	17
3.2 Utilities and Services .....	24
3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt.....	26
<b>4.0 GOVERNANCE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1 Central and Local Governance .....	30
4.2 Law Enforcement .....	37
4.3 Human Rights and Civil Liberties.....	41
<b>5.0 PSYCHOSOCIAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....</b>	<b>47</b>
5.1 Locus of Control.....	47
5.2 Religious Values, Attitudes and Beliefs.....	54
5.3 Exposure to Crime and Conflict .....	59
5.4 Exposure to VE and Perceptions of VEO Threat .....	69
<b>6.0 EXTERNAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....</b>	<b>73</b>
6.1 Perceived Impact of Foreign Relations .....	73
6.2 Perceived Impact Of Foreign And Domestic Interventionism .....	78
<b>7.0 COMMUNICATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS.....</b>	<b>85</b>
7.1 The Role of Violent Extremism Propaganda.....	85
7.2 The Role of the Media .....	87
7.3 The Role of Violent Extremist Narratives .....	89

---

## List of Acronyms

AQ:	Al Qa'ida
CVE:	Counter Violent Extremism
DI:	Depth Interview
DK:	'Don't Know' (GQ Answers)
EU:	European Union
FSA:	Free Syrian Army
GQ:	Guided Questionnaire
IAF:	Islamic Action Front
ISIS:	Islamic State in Iraq and Al Sham
JAF:	Jordanian Armed Forces
JD:	Jordanian Dinar
JN:	Jabhat Al Nusra (Al Nusra Front) <sup>1</sup>
MB:	Muslim Brotherhood
MP:	Member of Parliament
RF:	'Refuse to Answer' (GQ Answers)
UK:	United Kingdom
VE:	Violent Extremism
VEO:	Violent Extremist Organization

---

<sup>1</sup> 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

Madaba is not known as a center for violent extremist organization (VEO) support. Indeed, the vast majority of respondents condemned VEOs like Al Qa'ida (AQ) and the Islamic State in Iraq and Al Sham (ISIS) as "perversions of Islam" and avowed that Madaba has never significantly contributed to their ranks – a claim that was supported by research. That said, there are a number of factors that have the potential to increase violent extremism (VE) in Madaba. According to respondents, mass unemployment, a lack of domestic investment and economic and political injustice are all issues that anger residents in Madaba. They contended that the government's inability or unwillingness to attend to these problems has led to rises in crime and drug abuse in some of the governorate's most marginalized communities – like both the eastern and western portions of Madaba City – and they warned that, together, these factors stand to increase propensity toward VE.

Respondents acknowledged that the government has a vested interest in tackling the problems that everyday Jordanians and Madaba residents face – problems like poverty and unemployment. However, they believed that, as of now, little is being done to enact meaningful reforms that could ease tensions in Madaba. In fact, some respondents claimed that often, the government exacerbates Madaba's VE risk. For example, in June 2016, twenty unemployed men in Dieban – a town just 22 miles south of Madaba City – took to the streets to protest the lack of jobs in their community. They reportedly erected a tent in the town square and remained there for days, fasting as they demanded government attention. And though respondents claimed that the men had not violated any laws, security forces intervened and arrested the protestors. Needless to say, their treatment was not received well by respondents, who often referenced the incident from a negative perspective.<sup>1</sup>

While instances like these are rare in Madaba, the fact that they do happen – and have resulted in such outrage among respondents – should be a point of concern. With that in mind, respondents cited Jordan's nepotistic political establishment as one of the primary reasons why nothing is being done to help them, and why so many in places like Dieban are growing angrier by the year. Indeed, they were concerned that wealthy individuals connected directly or indirectly to members of Parliament are preventing progress on issues ranging from unemployment to democratization – a highly appealing concept among locals.

Research indicates that the youth in Madaba – that is, those aged approximately 15 to 25 – are disproportionately affected by unemployment and poverty. Considering that this age group alone constitutes some 20 percent of the total population of Jordan, it is important that their demands are heard, lest they seek personal fulfillment elsewhere, or join VEOs in search of revenge. It is well known that VEOs like ISIS often use the Internet and social media to contact and secure the loyalty of disaffected youth. But other Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which was blacklisted by the government in 2016, also stand to benefit from the disenfranchisement of young people. With that in mind, the government must tread carefully in the coming months and years. As respondents indicated, it must tackle wealth inequality in Jordan and bring private investment to Madaba, while making it easier for young people to prosper in school and to live engaged lifestyles in their home communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> "The young men who protested in Dieban – they were treated like terrorists, just for speaking out. The government should be ashamed. Their behavior has no place in Jordan." (Male, 75, Retired, Madaba)

## 2.0 ISLAMIST AND VEO SUPPORT

### 2.1 SUPPORT FOR VEOs

**Most locals condemn the actions of VEOs, but some make exceptions for those involved in the Syrian conflict.**

On the whole, respondents condemned the actions of major VEOs. They were appalled by the atrocities committed by ISIS, and asserted that support for AQ and Jabhat Al Nusra (Al Nusra Front) (JN) remain low throughout the governorate. However, Depth Interviews (DIs) suggested that, in some respects, locals' opinions of certain VEOs are more nuanced. For instance, while some respondents defended the regime of Bashar Al Assad, saying that peace and stability in region depends on the dictator's ability to quash VEOs in Syria and to rein in sectarianism in his country, most denounced Assad for humanitarian reasons. Moreover, they held the Syrian regime responsible for many of Madaba's economic woes, claiming that, as a result of the war, trade with Syrian companies has stopped, thereby worsening unemployment in the governorate. As such, the fact that some VEOs – such as JN – are deemed legitimate oppositional forces against the regime appears to have mitigated some respondents' negative opinions of those groups.

**Although AQ once enjoyed a degree of support in Madaba for its opposition to Western powers, most now oppose the group largely due to its supposed willingness to attack Muslims.**

Several respondents argued that, because it portrayed itself as a defender of both Islam and Muslim communities, AQ once enjoyed not only renown in Jordan, but also respect for its actions against Western powers.<sup>2</sup> However, many suggested that support for the group has long since dwindled and is likely to fall even further in coming years. These findings were supported by quantitative data, which held that while 30 percent of Madaba Guided Questionnaire (GQ) respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support, 65 percent said that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to AQ in their community (see Figure 1). Apparently, the group lost much of its support when it changed its strategy from one of defense to one of offense. One respondent maintained that though it was lauded by many in his community, AQ's decision to attack the US in 2001 "brought destruction on the Middle East" and thereby weakened the group's appeal throughout Jordan in the long run.<sup>3</sup> Another respondent echoed his view, explaining that now, after so many years, he was not sure if anyone at all supported AQ, while others were left wondering if the group even still exists.<sup>4</sup> Overall, respondents' chief complaint was that, though it was once a great force of resistance to Western hegemony, AQ seems to have lost sight of its original purpose of protecting Muslims. For example, one man condemned the VEO for its role in the 2005 hotel bombings in Amman

---

<sup>2</sup> "At a certain point in time, Al Qa'ida had some support here in Jordan because they were fighting against the United States, which is considered the first enemy of Islamic societies. They were famous and well respected for what they did for Islam and the *Ummah*." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>3</sup> "Al Qa'ida used to teach and protect religion, and they used to defend the rights of certain people. But I think it deviated from its original goals when they attacked the US – if they actually did it. Many supported them for it, but that action brought destruction on the Middle East, and none of us will ever be the same." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>4</sup> "I don't think Al Qa'ida has any real support anymore. Many of us are not sure if it even exists at this point." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

(which killed and injured many Jordanians)<sup>5</sup>, noting that, where people loved the group before, they hate it now.<sup>6</sup> That said, a few respondents conveyed a continued sense of reverence for AQ, believing the group to be more of a resistance force than a radical terrorist group.<sup>7</sup> These views were rare however, and were often contained within broader statements concerning the ways in which the group has erred by committing acts of terrorism in Muslim countries, rather than in Western countries alone.<sup>8</sup>

*"In the era of the Soviet Union, a lot of people supported Al Qa'ida here. After they attacked America, sentiments for the group varied. Some condemned their killing of innocent people, while some loved them for their opposition to America. Now, I don't think anybody supports them."*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

**Though the vast majority of residents disapprove of JN, some sympathize with the group for its opposition to the Assad regime in Syria.**

While 17 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support for JN in their community, 73 percent reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to the group (see Figure 1). Accounting for the notable minority of sympathy recorded here, some respondents differentiated between the acts of JN and other VEOs, saying that recently, the group has gained some measure of support for both its split from Al Qa'ida and its opposition to the Syrian regime of Bashar Al Assad.<sup>9</sup> Several affirmed this, saying that, in some cases, JN's resistance to both Assad and ISIS make the group seem less extreme than other VEOs.<sup>10</sup> Others stressed that although opinions on the group differ from person to person, most people are more likely to consider the group a resistance force than a terrorist organization.<sup>11</sup> That said, given the lack of evidence suggesting that JN has pursued any propaganda

<sup>5</sup> Fattah, Hassan M. and Michael Slackman 2005. '3 Hotels Bombed in Jordan; At Least 57 Die', The New York Times, November 10, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> "In the beginning, it fought nobly, but, by necessity I think, it changed its strategy. Many people say Al Qa'ida has lost its way, and I agree with them. When they carried out the hotel bombings in Amman, they were doing wrong, and a lot of people hate them here because of it." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>7</sup> "I don't have a problem with Al Qa'ida because all they want to do is to free the people of their country, Afghanistan, from the Americans. That seems reasonable to me, not radical." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>8</sup> "I don't think Al Qa'ida is a radical group. They are fighting to defend Islam. I'm not sure about Nusra, though. Al Qa'ida doesn't have a name anymore, and that's their problem. They've lost their way. But in their day, they did not attack Muslims; all their explosions were in the US or Europe." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>9</sup> "I believe that Nusra is on one side while ISIS and Al Qa'ida on a different one. They are different groups with different goals. Nusra isn't so bad because it cooperates with the Free Syrian Army against Assad. They broke with Al Qa'ida, so they can't be that bad." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>10</sup> "In Dieban, people prefer Nusra to any other group, since it is fighting against Shias and Alawites. In terms of how extreme the groups are, Nusra is probably thought of as the least extreme because Assad and ISIS fight them." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>11</sup> "Views on this issue differ from one person to another, but Jabhat Al Nusra did not announce the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate and it has been fighting Assad's regime since the beginning. Therefore, it is a non-terrorist movement defending its land for the sake of freedom and liberation from the tyranny that has ruled the country for

campaigns inside Madaba or successfully recruited fighters from the governorate, it unlikely that JN enjoys any material support among residents. Indeed, remarking on what sympathy the group has gained in the governorate, one man held that locals neither agree with the group's ideology, nor support it with money or men. To him, the main centers of support for the group are in the north of Jordan, specifically in Irbid, where, after every battle, citizens rally on the Internet in support of the group. Others suggested that the group's size and successes – that is, in comparison to ISIS – as well as rumors of infighting may be factors deterring residents from joining the group's ranks.<sup>12</sup>

*"Nusra is getting a lot of sympathy here because it is fighting [Assad], who is killing his own people and forcing them to leave their country. But the support people have for Nusra is limited to opinion only. We do not agree with their ideology, and we do not support them economically or with men. Our support comes from believing their news over their enemies' news. As you get closer to the north of Jordan, you will find more Nusra supporters. After a battle between Nusra and the regime forces, you will see on Facebook that most of the comments are in support of Nusra, and all of that support comes from the north, because they are closest to the fight."*

*(Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)*

### Local support for ISIS is low.

Believing in the VEO's promises of defending Islam and establishing an Islamic state, some Madaba residents reportedly held favorable views of ISIS when the group first gained prominence in 2014. However, these initially positive opinions appear to have changed drastically since then, as the overwhelming majority of locals expressed explicitly critical views of the VEO. Indeed, 82 percent of GQ respondents agreed that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to ISIS in their community, while only nine percent indicated that locals support the VEO (see Figure 1). The primary reason given for increased opposition toward ISIS concerns ISIS's use of extreme violence, which respondents described as indiscriminate, causing the deaths of many innocents across the region.<sup>13</sup> Specifically, respondents decried the VEO's actions, which are targeted at Muslims and non-Muslims alike, as 'blasphemies', carried out by a 'terrorist organization' that has 'nothing to do with Islam'.<sup>14</sup> According to many respondents,

the past years. ISIS kills innocent people, but Al Nusra fights against armed forces." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>12</sup> "Nusra and Ahrar Al Sham have a lot of internal problems, so how can anybody support them? Nusra is not as strong as ISIS. ISIS ruined Iraq and Syria; Nusra has done nothing compared to what ISIS has done." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>13</sup> "ISIS does not get a lot of sympathy here anymore. We see in the media that they do not differentiate between old men and young, women and children – they kill them all. We also know now that they rape women, so I'm confident that the people all hate ISIS and wish it defeat." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>14</sup> "When ISIS first emerged, people started saying it was a movement that would liberate Islamic thought and will defend Islam and build an Islamic state. But recently, after they started killing innocent people in Iraq and Syria, and the Yazidis and Kurds and others, everyone realized that ISIS is a terrorist organization, not a religious one, and that Islam has nothing to do with it at all. Now we know that it is an extreme group and we consider whoever supports them a terrorist. Everyone in Madaba is convinced that it has nothing to do with Islam." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

public condemnation of ISIS skyrocketed following ISIS's brutal murder of Moath Al Kasasbeh, a Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot who was captured and burned to death by the group after his aircraft crashed over Raqqa, Syria.

*"After they burned Moath Al Kasasbeh alive, ISIS lost support here. In the beginning, they declared the Caliphate and portrayed themselves as Sunni protectors, and a lot of people here supported them – but not anymore. Our eyes were opened to their blasphemies. Now we know that they have nothing to do with Islam, and that they kill Shias and Sunnis. Now we know that what they do is bad for our religion."*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

Although some consider the FSA a legitimate resistance force against the Syrian regime, the group remains unpopular in Madaba, and many believe it undermines Jordan's Syrian interests.

Quantitative findings suggest that the Free Syrian Army (FSA) is relatively unpopular in Madaba. Indeed, although 32 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support, a majority (57 percent) reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to the group in their community (see Figure 1). That said, DIs revealed numerous reasons for local support or sympathy with the FSA. Many respondents for example, pitied Syrians who are suffering amidst ongoing conflict in their country, and therefore respected the various groups working to bring an end to what they consider a bloody and tyrannical regime. With that in mind, groups opposing the Assad regime were often defended by respondents as being resistance forces, rather than terrorist groups. Several respondents expressed this view, claiming that the group's mission is not necessarily to spread extremism, but to resist the Syrian regime and restore peace and stability to Jordan's northern neighbor.<sup>15</sup> However, it must be noted that groups fighting the Syrian regime did not receive universal praise among respondents. On the contrary, many claimed that supposed resistance forces in Syria are ultimately undermining Jordan's regional interests, including economic ones. They argued that, despite any good intentions, these groups are prolonging a war that local residents – and supposedly many Syrians – desperately wish to end. Considering that respondents were much divided in opinions over the FSA, it is likely that strong views from either side could become problematic in the near future, possibly causing confrontations in some of Madaba's most diverse and/or marginalized neighborhoods. While those who condemn the FSA are unlikely to intervene in the Syrian conflict, those who believe the group to be a moderate resistance force could potentially be inspired to travel to Syria to wage jihad.<sup>16</sup>

*"I'll be honest, I think that the forces in Syria who are fighting the regime are pursuing a noble cause. But they might not be helping matters. We need the regime to win because it is our only hope for stability and an economic future in Jordan." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

<sup>15</sup> "I do not consider the Free Syrian Army a terrorist group. Its mission is not to spread extremism; its mission is to resist the oppressive Syrian regime." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>16</sup> "Hamas is the only popular group here, other than perhaps some of the more moderate groups like the Free Syrian Army and Ahrar Al Sham. The reason for this is that both groups fight against Assad and Hezbollah. So I think that if a Jordanian is to go to one of these groups, they will go to one of them." (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)



Though there are reasons why Hezbollah could be popular in Madaba, the VEO's support for the Syrian regime can explain why it is generally opposed.

58 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to Hezbollah in their community, while 32 percent said that there is 'strong' or 'some' support for the group (see Figure 1). Coupled with local hostility toward Israel, Hezbollah's reputation as a legitimate counter-Israeli resistance force along with its close ties to Hamas may partly explain these figures. Indeed, it is evident that respondents were more likely to support VEOs that are engaged in confronting Israeli regional operations. Therefore, despite their status as a Shia group in support of the Syrian regime, Hezbollah's resistance to Israel's occasional interference in Lebanon throughout the past three decades has likely contributed to the group's support in Madaba. Additionally, its support for Hamas has undoubtedly helped the group's repute. That said, and in consideration of Hezbollah's role in Syria, it must be noted that respondents were divided on whether Assad should be supported or opposed (6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations). Thus, those rejecting Hezbollah may have done so on the basis of their objection to the Syrian regime. One individual articulated as much, noting how Hassan Nasrallah, the popular Secretary General of Hezbollah, lost much of his support in Madaba after siding with Bashar Assad in Syria.

*"Nasrallah's popularity was very high in 2006, but he lost most of his popularity after joining Bashar in Syria. Nasrallah was popular and loved when he was defending all Muslims – Sunnis and Shias – and fighting against Israel. His popularity decreased after joining Bashar, since he clearly turned against the Sunnis and defended only Shias and Alawites."*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

Locals believe that Hamas is a legitimate resistance force, and many voiced outright and unabashed support for the group.

Quantitative data suggests that, with respect to Hamas, Madaba's population is divided. Indeed, while 44 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support for Hamas in their community, 49 percent believed that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to the group (see Figure 1). That said, DIs revealed that locals support Hamas more than they do any other VEO. Most considered the group a legitimate resistance force, rather than a VEO. They admired the fact that, unlike other VEOs, Hamas has a supposed clear goal in establishing a Palestinian state, and, in many cases, they insisted that the group does not use unnecessary violence in pursuing this end. They reasoned that Israelis stole Palestine from Palestinians and so, by rights that land should be returned. Hamas, they claimed, is the only group working toward this goal. Accordingly, a few respondents believed that it is unfair to compare Hamas to other VEOs. Other respondents stressed that, unlike VEOs such as ISIS and JN, Hamas is not a Western puppet but a free agent of change in Palestine.<sup>17</sup> Again, this sentiment is likely due to the fact that Hamas ostensibly has a clear, geopolitical goal, rather than a mere religious score to settle. This, along with the group's apparent willingness to aid the sick and wounded in Palestine, has convinced many in

---

<sup>17</sup> "It's not fair to compare Hamas with these other groups. Hamas is the defender of Palestine and Gaza. It doesn't want to occupy Jordan or Egypt; it wants to defend itself and its land. Hamas is not an agent for British or American intelligence. It operates inside Palestine against Israelis. (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)"

Madaba that Hamas is a force for good in Palestine, and has likely raised the VEOs support levels throughout the governorate. One individual from Dieban asserted that, due to the perceived good that the organization represents, his son – who joined and died fighting for Ahrar Al Sham – would have joined Hamas had the borders been open to him.<sup>18 19</sup> Others echoed his view, insisting that as long as Israel occupies Palestine there will be support for Hamas. This does not necessarily indicate that many locals plan to join the group, but more that they will support them from home, while perhaps sending money and humanitarian aid whenever they can.<sup>20</sup>

*"Hamas is not a terrorist movement because it is defending its land and people against occupation forces and Zionist extremism. That's what makes them different from ISIS and other extremist groups, who are bloody and destructive. ISIS sets houses and farms on fire, and we see this. We don't see Hamas doing these things, only fighting for land that is already theirs. And that's their legitimate right."*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

### **The conflict between Hamas and Fatah may have weakened support for Hamas, though not significantly.**

There is reason to believe that the 2014 conflict between Hamas and Fatah may have weakened public support for Hamas in Madaba. Indeed, respondents explained that the historic feud – which began as a result of Hamas' victory in parliamentary elections – had a negative impact on the Palestinian cause for statehood. Considering that this is a serious issue for many in Madaba, it is reasonable to assume that internal conflicts may at least in part explain why support for Hamas as captured by quantitative findings is lower than expected. In this regard, respondents claimed that the conflict between Fatah and Hamas set the Palestinian goal of self-governance back several years – a reasonable assumption, given how the international community reacted to news of Hamas' victory. Moreover, they warned that internal conflicts of any kind distract from the real enemy, which in the case of Hamas is Israel. However, the effects of the conflict on public support appear to have been minimal; when mentioned by DI respondents, most defended Hamas. In fact, one respondent went so far as to say that, in this instance, Fatah was in the wrong, and that by rights, Hamas should head the Palestinian Liberation Organization.<sup>21</sup> While the long-

---

<sup>18</sup> "My son wanted to fight for Hamas because the events in Gaza affected him deeply. But he could not find a way there so he settled on Ahrar Al Sham in Syria. His great passion was doing good, so it didn't matter where he was, as long as he was helping someone and fighting for justice." (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

<sup>19</sup> "I believe that Jordanians don't support any group. The only group Jordanians support is Hamas. Hamas is the most popular group in Jordan, and we are convinced that what they are doing is right because the Palestinian cause is one that is very dear to us. If my son had been able to go to Gaza, he would have fought for Hamas." (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

<sup>20</sup> "We will stand with Hamas as long as Israel occupies Palestine. There is no way around that. We believe that Hamas is a legitimate group with noble goals, and we support them – if not with men, then with money and humanitarian aid whenever we can." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>21</sup> "Hamas was able to justify its conflict with Fatah. If somebody is planning to breach the peace, you have to put a stop to it. Fatah is an illegitimate organization, whereas Hamas is legitimate in its goals." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

term effects of the conflict remain to be seen, respondents and researchers alike agreed that the tensions between Fatah and Hamas do not directly impact support in Madaba. Generally, the people of Madaba respect Hamas, considering it as the one resistance movement that defends Palestine.

*"It's a shame what happened between Hamas and Fatah. I believe that Hamas was right to assume control of the government, but the way they went about it – and the way Fatah responded – was not good at all. We fear that they will not be taken seriously by the world, and that Israel will grow stronger as they struggle with each other."*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir is unpopular and likely lacks the support needed to thrive in Madaba.**

Hizb ut-Tahrir is banned in Jordan and therefore does not stage any major public events in Madaba. To that end, one DI respondent who claimed to belong to Hizb ut-Tahrir complained that, despite not condoning violence, the Party has for the most part been excluded from mainstream politics in Jordan.<sup>22</sup> Other respondents claimed that the group is widely recognized as a sectarian force in the Middle East – in part because of its violent rhetoric directed at the government and armed forces – but admitted that some locals do support the group. Specifically, Madaba Camp, or the western portion of Madaba City, which was once a Palestinian refugee camp, was cited as an area where the group may enjoy a degree of support. Regardless, it remains that Hizb ut-Tahrir likely does not have the ability (or numbers) to infiltrate security forces and establish itself in Madaba. Indeed, government outlawing of the group alone might explain its low levels of support. As such, 27 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support for Hizb ut-Tahrir, while the majority (63 percent) said that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to the group (see Figure 1).

*"Hizb ut-Tahrir is banned in Jordan because it demands the establishment of an Islamic state. They cannot be active because they are banned from any activities. Few people in Madaba even know about Hizb ut-Tahrir. As I said, most people oppose the group because it calls for the establishment of an Islamic state, but some hate it because it is against the government and does not support the army. Some in Madaba Camp may support them though, because they are very poor, and they are Palestinians."*

*(Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)*

### **Salafist Jihadists are unpopular in Madaba, most likely because locals consider them recruiters for major VEOs like ISIS and JN.**

22 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support, while 69 percent said that there is 'strong' or 'some' opposition to Salafist Jihadists in their community (see Figure 1). In some cases, respondents made no distinction between Salafist Quietists and Salafist Jihadists, referring to

---

<sup>22</sup> "The government here has a long history of opposing those who call others to Islam. We at Hizb ut-Tahrir are a moderate party – we do not condone violence – but the government has fought us every step of the way, whether it be imprisoning our youth or keeping us out of the mainstream." (Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

both simply as ‘Salafists’. Regardless, most concluded that there are not many Salafist Jihadists in Madaba, and that they enjoy little to no support. Some claimed that Salafist Jihadists, though unpopular, have been permitted to teach in some of Madaba’s mosques, most notably in Western Madaba Mosque, the largest in the governorate. However, in recent years, the government has reportedly taken to arresting every known Salafist and questioning them, since it is believed that they act as recruiters for major VEOs like ISIS and JN.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the vast majority of respondents who spoke on Salafists condemned them as terrorists, with one launching a scathing critique of the Salafist-related ideology known as Wahhabism. Some respondents even blamed Salafists for global terrorism, asserting that Salafist Jihadists operate as some of ISIS and JN’s major recruiters.

*“Salafi ideology is the same as the Wahhabi. It’s the same poison that is ripping this country and the rest of the region apart. They are the base of hatred, violence and resentment for anyone but them, and they are the source of those who have gone off to fight for Nusra and ISIS. Nobody likes them here.”*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

**Focus: A man tells of how a young man in his community who was arrested after joining Hizb ut-Tahrir.**

*“Young people tend to despair over their situations, rather than work to fix them. For this reason, they are the one group that is most at risk. I know a boy who was imprisoned last year. He joined Hizb ut-Tahrir. He had a family problem. They were poor and he came from a bad neighborhood in Mlaih. Anyway, he was very active on Facebook and was always telling everybody about his problems, and it was very clear that he had a lot of problems. He was uneducated too, so you know that played a role. As I said, he joined the Liberation Party [Hizb ut-Tahrir] and began voicing his opinions of the state, and they arrested him. I had to know what he could have been if he hadn’t joined that group, and if he had kept his opinions to himself. But then I guess he might have gone to Syria, so it’s all probably for the best.”*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

---

<sup>23</sup> “Nowadays, the government arrests nearly every Salafist [Jihadist] it can find because they are thought to supply terrorists with fresh men for battle. But it hasn’t been long since Jihadists were invited to speak at mosques around the country. Sheikh Yahya al Madayneh, a Jihadist, used to teach at the mosque in west Madaba, and that’s the biggest here in Madaba.” (Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)

## 2.2 SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL AND NON-VIOLENT ISLAMIST GROUPS

While a majority of locals laud the MB as an essential proponent of reform in Jordan, some criticize the group for its exclusivity, and it is rumored to be a gateway to VE.

The majority of respondents expressed favorable views on the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Jordan, the Islamic Action Front (IAF). Accordingly, 55 percent of Madaba GQ respondents indicated that the group receives ‘strong’ or ‘some’ support from locals, while only 36 percent believed that it faces opposition (see Figure 1). Specifically, numerous residents described the IAF as a legitimate political party that works within the frame of Jordan’s political system in an attempt to reform society.<sup>24 25</sup> In this context, one respondent explained that many locals turn to the MB out of dissatisfaction with the government’s policies, believing that the group is “a legal opposition party in government.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, several DI respondents gave credit to the group for their rejection and denunciation of VEOs such as AQ, ISIS and JN.<sup>27</sup> However, opinions on the MB were not favorable among all DI respondents. For example, several criticized the MB for being too exclusive by not making its resources and events available to the broader population.<sup>28</sup> According to one respondent, this puts people in poorer areas, such as Dieban, at risk of joining radicalized alternatives if they are resistant to joining to the MB itself. Another respondent lamented that MB-run hospitals are only free of charge to members, and that the group’s charities only benefit its own members. Two other respondents were even harsher in their assessment of the group, claiming that its mixing of Wahhabi Islam and politics serves as a springboard for extremism, which has the potential to push people into more radical alternatives.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, another local accused the MB – which he referred to as enemy of all Muslim communities – of being responsible for the wars in Syria and

---

<sup>24</sup> “The Muslim Brotherhood is a legitimate group and we do not fear them. They work with the government and some of their members are people in governmental positions. They are not responsible for what’s happening.” (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>25</sup> “The role of the Muslim Brotherhood is to reform society. They have an important job to do and they must do it. They must help us solve this problem of extremism.” (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>26</sup> “I don’t think that many people join groups like ISIS and Nusra and Al Qa’ida. I think that a lot of people are dissatisfied with what’s happening in this country, and that they most often turn to Muslim Brotherhood in order to oppose the state. They want to do things the legal way, and the Muslim Brotherhood is a legal opposition party in government.” (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

<sup>27</sup> “I don’t expect Muslim Brotherhood youth affiliates to join such groups. The Muslim Brotherhood refuses extremist groups and their affiliates refuse to join them. Based on what I heard from sheikhs in mosques at Friday speech, the Muslim Brotherhood warns youth about extremism. Every affiliate I know approaches religion calmly, not extremely, so I don’t see them as a problem.” (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>28</sup> “For example, they hold events but will not allow people who are not Muslim Brothers to enter. That’s not right, I think.” (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

<sup>29</sup> “The Muslim Brotherhood are highly responsible for what’s happening here and in Syria and Iraq. They are a religious stream that infuses religion and politics together, and they have adopted a Wahhabi ideology in order to appeal to certain groups of ignorant people. They don’t have to market themselves through media; everybody knows who they are, and they have sympathizers already.” (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

---

Iraq due to the promotion of its “perverse ideology” and “radical ideas” via the semblance of legitimate governance, which to him, makes it even more dangerous than ISIS.<sup>30</sup>

*“We do not like the Muslim Brotherhood because they do nothing to help people who do not belong to their group. For example, if a patient enters one of their hospitals, he will have to pay for treatment. They wouldn’t even treat him if he were dying. The charities they sponsor are also corrupt because they only benefit families with Muslim Brothers. That said, I have never heard of one of their number joining ISIS. That’s the one good thing about them.”*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

Though the MB headquarters in Madaba closed in mid-2016, party members still remain, particularly in impoverished areas where the group has a legacy of charitable work.

Despite the government’s opposition to the MB – which resulted in the closure of the its headquarters in Madaba City in April 2016 – the MB and IAF have reportedly held on to their support bases in towns like Dieban, in part because of their legacy of charitable giving there. The MB runs both a hospital and an orphanage in Madaba, which are reported to cover a large number of residents. The Islamic Center Organization on Yaffa Street in Madaba City offers both men and women access to general healthcare and dental care, while the orphanage, located just down the street, offers clothes and foodstuffs to the poor. Researchers claimed that many residents are accustomed to benefiting from these charity initiatives. Therefore, despite rumors that the MB is a gateway to extremism, and that it often aids those wishing to join VEOs, residents of Madaba’s most impoverished areas – including but not limited to Dieban, the eastern neighborhoods of Madaba City and southern villages in the governorate – may still support the group. If the government closes the charities funded by the group – which has not happened yet – these residents may have nowhere else to turn.

**Focus: A local explains how dissatisfaction with the MB can lead some members to join VEOs.**

*“As I have said before, the Muslim Brotherhood is often a gateway to extremism, one that should serve as an example to the state. Many people become dissatisfied with the Brotherhood because of the lack of democracy in the party. They brainwash people into believing a certain thing – that is, that they are right and everybody else is wrong – but, at the end of the day, they are unable to change things. And because they are unable to deliver on their promises to change things, people get tired of supporting them, and they then turn to other groups. In some cases, the groups they turn to are even more radical than the Brotherhood. There is a man from our community [of Mlaih] who joined Al Qa’ida or ISIS, and another who joined the Al Wasat Party. And, as I said, the state*

<sup>30</sup> “To me, the Muslim Brotherhood is the real enemy. We can see what ISIS does; we know that they are committing terrible acts, and that their ideology is perverse. But the Muslim Brotherhood is a different story: the Muslim Brotherhood works from within the government, and it does so openly. It openly pursues projects that push people away from civilized society and to radical ideas. It is the enemy of all Muslim communities, but it’s not recognized as that.” (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

*should learn from their example. If reform is not enacted, the people will be unhappy, and radical groups will begin to gain a foothold in Jordan."*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

### **Views on Salafist Quietists were mixed, but some respondents praised them for promoting an apolitical form of Islam.**

Views on Salafist Quietists were mixed. While 38 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that there is 'strong' or 'some' support for the group among locals, a slight majority (51 percent) indicated that the opposite is the case. It appears that there exists some degree of confusion among Madaba residents regarding the exact nature and composition of Salafist Quietists, with many DI respondents regularly confusing the group with other more extreme Salafist groups, such as Salafist Jihadists. Conversely, the majority of those who did recognize the group generally expressed favorable views of it, giving credit to the movement for its perceived promotion of an apolitical form of Islam that rejects violence.<sup>3132</sup> For example, one respondent praised Salafist Quietists for their efforts in "spread[ing] awareness" by organizing classes and seminars on religious topics ranging from the significance of prayer to the dangers of VE.

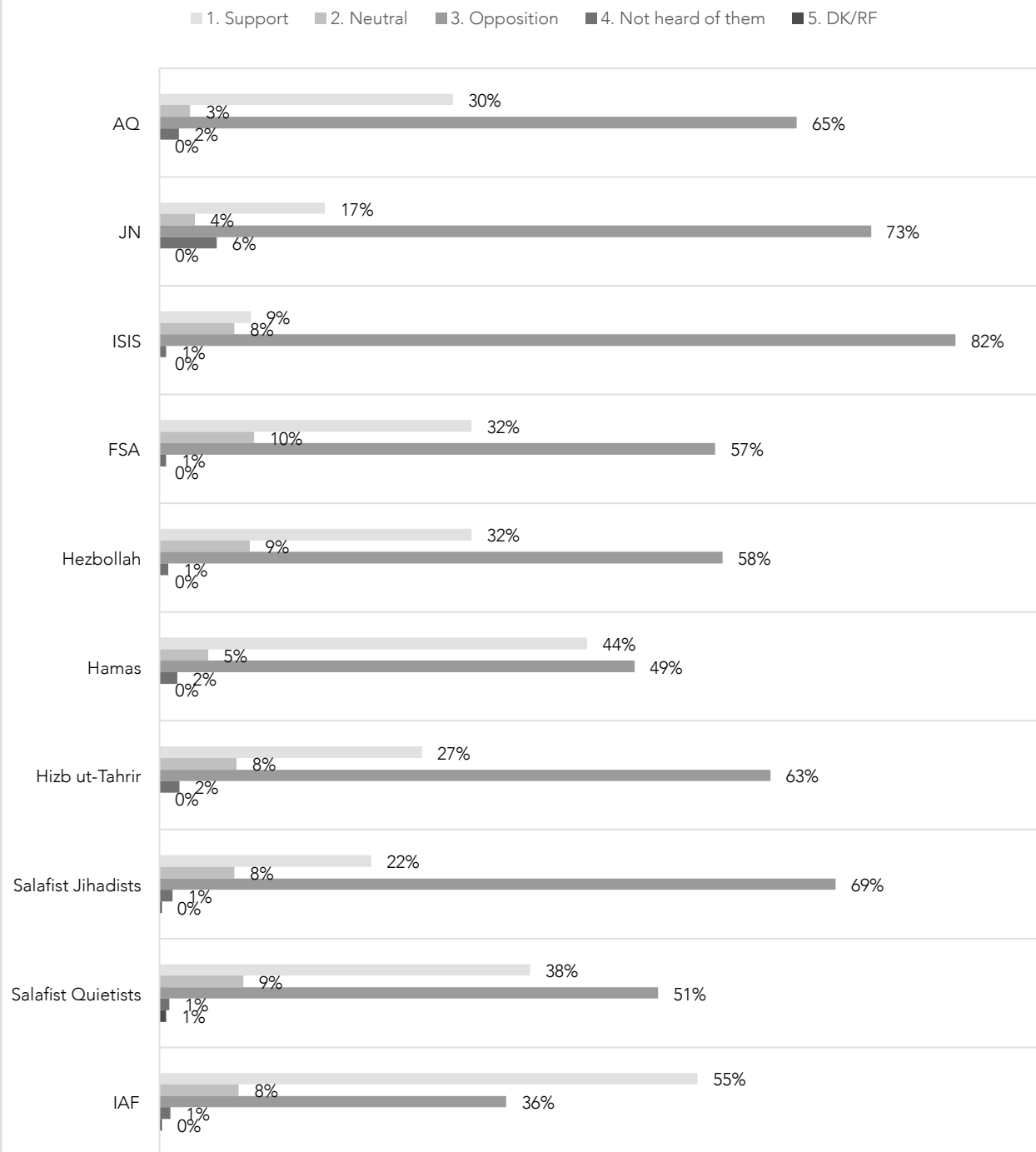
*"[Salafist Quietists] are people who invite to Islam and they spread awareness on Islam. They go to people's houses and invite them to attend religion classes at the mosques – classes on several topics, like prayer, Ramadan, and extremism. They are not a threat because they know that Islam is against killing. They are good because they work against terrorists."*

*(Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)*

<sup>31</sup> "I don't think the Salafist Quietists are bad. They teach people about true Islam and do not condone violence or any form of political activity, and I'm sure that. If they were asked, they would agree with the Liberation Party [Hizb ut-Tahrir]." (Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

<sup>32</sup> The [Salafist Quietists] have nothing to do with extremism. They only teach our people to pray and to fast, and they don't promote any political activity. (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

Figure 1: To what extent do you think there is support or opposition for the following groups in your community?



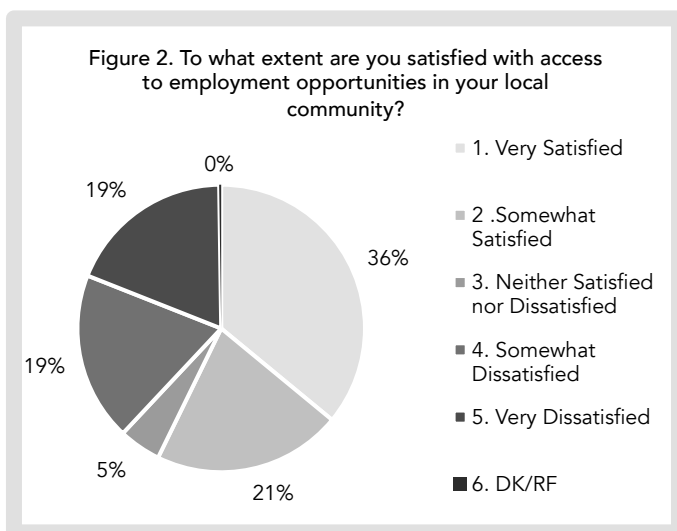


### 3.0 BASIC NEEDS DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

#### 3.1 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

High unemployment is a problem throughout Madaba.

A majority of Madaba GQ respondents (57 percent) reported being 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied with access to employment opportunities in their community, although a significant 38 percent said that they were 'very' or 'somewhat' dissatisfied (see Figure 2). In fact, the latter was the dominant opinion among DI respondents. All of Madaba's legal industries – such as agriculture and tourism – have suffered in recent years, in part because of scarcity of resources, the ongoing Syrian conflict and a lack of domestic investment. Rural areas are reportedly suffering the most, with available employment being insufficient to satisfy the needs of the area. For example, one respondent – a tribal leader from Dieban – bemoaned the paucity of employment opportunities provided by a garment factory in Mukawir, a village just 22 miles south west of Madaba City. He lamented that the factory, operated by the Jordan River Foundation – an organization chaired by the queen of Jordan, which aims to improve the economic and social well-being of Bedouin women and children – would be good for the local community, as well as the entire governorate, if only it employed more than just 430 people. Such complaints were echoed by many respondents living in rural towns and villages across the governorate. Understandably, these individuals have grown restless as, year after year, more young residents leave home for Amman or other places in search of stable jobs.



*"The problem is this: there are no places for young people to be employed here, so why would they stay? In Madaba, in a very remote area called Mukawir, there is only one garment factory called "Al Safi," and it can accommodate no more than 430 people. There are about 100 well-trained men working there, and the rest are women and a very small number of young people. The result is that a great number of individuals and families are depending on the National Aid Fund, which supplies families with only 180 JDs (Jordanian Dinars) per month."*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

High population growth, diminishing resources and a lack of domestic investment have spurred Madaba's unemployment crisis and are deemed potential threats to the security and stability of the region.

The population of Jordan is expected to grow steadily throughout the century, with current growth rates standing at roughly 2.2 percent.<sup>33</sup> Geopolitical factors, including refugee migrations into the country, are currently supporting this growth, placing enormous strain on the already depleted resources of poor districts and towns. Together with an absence of domestic investment in Madaba – of which many respondents complained – diminishing resources and population growth could be viewed as a risk to peace and stability in the governorate. Respondents claimed that most of the economic development in their country takes place in areas close to Amman, the result being that, over time, population growth has outstripped job creation locally. Should the government not act, this will continue to place heavy pressure on rural areas of the governorate. With no jobs, and no guarantee of jobs in the near-future, citizens are migrating to other parts of the country and, in some cases, speaking out in protest. Several respondents noted that in June 2016, the unemployed took to the streets of Dieban, a small town 22 miles south of Madaba City. The protestors reportedly erected a tent in the town square and demanded jobs from the local and central government. Security forces intervened, but their involvement appears to have had a negative impact on the situation: reportedly, protests in the town turned into riots and resulted in the burning of several buildings, including the home of Gendarmerie Department Director Lt. Gen. Hussein Hawatmeh.<sup>34</sup> Tellingly, protestors cited the government's failure to fulfill its promise of founding an agricultural academy in the town as one reason for the demonstration. This highlights the governorate's problems stemming from a lack of domestic investment, and serves as a warning sign of the popular dissent that can ensue.

*"Dieban is a moderate town. We are not extremists – I would even say that we are invulnerable to extremism. But we will not turn a blind eye to injustice. Our people are suffering from a lack of jobs. We can barely feed our families! That's why those young men protested – not because they were terrorists, but because they were hungry for work. Too long has the government not helped us."*

*(Male, 75, Retired, Madaba)*

Respondents considered a university education essential to finding a well-paid job, but many university graduates cannot find work.

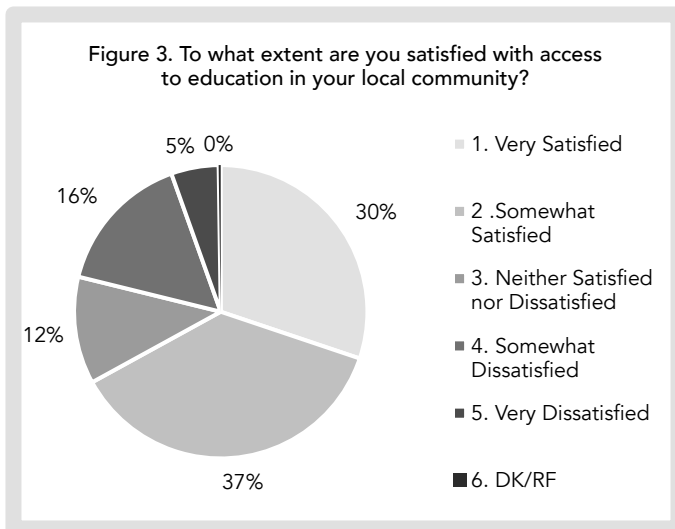
While 67 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that they were 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied, only 21 percent reported that they were 'very' or 'somewhat' dissatisfied with their access to education in their community (see Figure 3). That said, DI respondents exhibited a great deal of disagreement over whether local education is wholly beneficial. Several respondents complained that, despite earning higher degrees at universities – such as the Princess Sumaya University of Technology in Amman, which focuses on IT and electronics – many graduates are unable to find jobs suited to their expertise or training. Official government studies substantiate such claims, showing that in 2016, 50.9 percent of the unemployed

<sup>33</sup> World Population Review 2016. 'Jordan Population 2016', World Population Review, September 20, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Hussein, Rana 2016. 'Government reaches deal with Madaba town protestors', The Jordan Times, June 26, 2016.

population in Jordan held at least secondary qualifications, and that the unemployment rate among those with bachelor degrees was 20.2 percent higher than that of any other education level.<sup>35</sup>

Accordingly, some respondents expressed concerns that local graduates, unable to find a job in Jordan, will be obliged to move to other parts of the Middle East in search of employment. Others worried that graduate frustrations could lead them to take up with VEOs in Syria for financial gain – a promise that groups like ISIS have reportedly used to their advantage. One respondent stressed that VEOs often look for skilled labor to complete missions for them. She said that a friend of hers – a media developer – was unable to find a job in Madaba after graduating from university, and that, upon learning of his skill set, ISIS offered him a lot of money to join the organization. She imagined that to also be the case for many other students across the country.<sup>36</sup> Others echoed her concerns, and some maintained that, for many who are educated but still cannot find work, radical Islam is often the “substitute” for government aid.<sup>37</sup>



*“You know, it doesn’t really matter that a lot of young people in Madaba go to school and get their degrees. Almost 2,000 people here who have bachelor degrees are unemployed. 300 who have PhDs are unemployed. My question is this: what will these people do if they can’t find a job? Will they sit at home and starve? No, they will either go abroad in search of a better life, go to Syria to join a group there or start groups of their own at home.”*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

<sup>35</sup> DOS 2016. ‘The Unemployment Rate in the First Quarter of 2016’, *The Department of Statistics*, April 26, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> “Terrorists look for people who can do favors for them. My friend was a media developer, unemployed, here, so it’s possible that they wanted him because he could do a lot for them, unlike somebody else who had no training or skill.” (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>37</sup> “Many areas support radical Islam, and here’s why: when there are men and women with bachelor’s degrees still searching for job opportunities after 10 or 15 years, we start looking for a substitute for the government that is not helping us. Many times, the substitute is Islam.” (Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

**Focus: An old man reflects on the government's mistreatment of unemployed protestors in Dieban.**

*"Let me tell you about what happened in Dieban. There were about 20 unemployed men, and they were so poor that they could not buy a pack of cigarettes. How could they with no job and no hopes of finding one? Well, these young men built a building and staged a sit-in for 58 days, protesting the government's lack of investment in the area and its unwillingness to help our communities. They did this for 58 days before they were arrested. The official statement said that these men were part of a gang of outlaws, but I knew them myself. They were a group of gentleman who did not mean the government any harm. All they wanted was a job. They didn't care about ISIS or Nusra; they didn't care about jihad in Syria. No, they cared about their homes, and they were punished for it. This is not a good situation. Those men were doing a good thing for their communities and the government made them look like radicals. Now, the government will be lucky if those same 20 men don't become radicals, because that's the next step. What do we have to do to get the government to listen to us?"*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

**There are concerns that expensive fees may be dissuading students from attending university, inducing them to seek alternative education from non-violent Islamist groups or even join VEOs for financial gain.**

A few respondents expressed alarm that higher education in Jordan has become so expensive in recent years. They worried that, if poor students cannot afford to go to school to earn higher degrees or qualifications – a near necessity in Jordan's skilled job market – the unemployment problem in Madaba might grow exponentially, further fueling VE in the area. One respondent asserted that this is a recent problem for the governorate; he lamented that while higher education in Jordan had been free for years, recent government policies have made university attendance a pipe dream for some youths. He articulated concern that those who cannot afford higher education will have a more difficult time finding jobs, and that their eventual frustrations may lead them to take up with groups like the MB – who offer free education or training in exchange for membership. However, it is unclear whether the MB or other non-violent Islamist groups have any established schools in Madaba. And some respondents believed that even if they do, many locals would refuse to attend, adding that educational scholarships are widely available.<sup>38</sup>

*"The liberal economic policies of this country – which were brought by the West – have ruined our culture. To my mind, this begins and ends with education. Education was free before, but now it's so expensive that only the rich have a chance of earning a tertiary degree. Now the poor have no way of getting a decent, secular education, so they turn to the Wahhabi incubators, like the Muslim Brotherhood, in hopes that they will educate them. What they end up doing however, is pumping*

---

<sup>38</sup> "I don't think education plays much of a role. It's true that education is not for free in Jordan, and that it can be very expensive depending on how poor a person is, but there are scholarships that make it possible for most people to go to school, if they want to." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

*them full of religious extremism, not educating them at all.”*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

### **Most men in Madaba desire jobs with private companies, but there are several obstacles to private sector careers.**

Respondents indicated that the most popular jobs in Madaba are private sector jobs – such as in the banking, potassium, phosphate, and electrical industries – simply because they pay more than lower level public sector jobs. However, they claimed that oftentimes locals fail to pursue careers in the private sector, in short, because the potential payout sometimes does not exceed the sacrifices an applicant must make in order to secure a job with a private company. First, most companies have yet to move into Madaba; therefore, in most cases, applicants must relocate to Amman, where jobs are at a premium. Second, most private companies only hire applicants in possession of advanced degrees (or training) and a significant amount of work experience – a combination that few in Madaba possess. Third, even if locals secure their desired jobs, respondents claimed that there are few short-term advantages to having a job with a private company. Indeed, they complained that at around 200 JD per month, starting salaries are low and almost entirely insufficient to provide for their daily needs. Given all of these obstacles then, most locals opt to remain in their hometowns and pursue classic professions that can earn them the money they need. If they do pursue an advanced degree, it is most likely in teaching, a profession that guarantees flexible hours and decent pay. However, if they do not pursue a career in teaching – which presumably, is most often the case – they settle for other careers, such as nursing and sales. The problem of job shortages remains however, and time and again, respondents called for more domestic investment in Madaba to increase the number of well-paying jobs available.

*“I’d say that most men want jobs with private companies. The reason is that they have the potential to pay you a lot of money if you stay with them. The only problem is that starting wages are low – most start at 200 JD – so that it’s almost impossible to earn a good living. Then they always want you to have experience and training, and many here do not have time for that.”*

*(Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)*

### **Locals are divided in regard to religion’s role in a modern education.**

Respondents were divided in regard to religion’s role in a modern education. While some believed that religion has no place in the classroom and suggested that the Ministry of Education work toward secularizing Jordanian schools in increments, others stressed that schools in Jordan are already void of religion, and that further efforts to secularize could worsen the problem of VE in Madaba. They contended that secularization has rendered many young Jordanians ignorant of religious teaching, making it difficult for them to resist VEO messaging. Moreover, they emphasized religion’s role as a moral compass equal to the study of language, economics, business and the natural sciences, and affirmed that it remains the key ingredient to any counter violent extremism (CVE) effort – especially among the youth, who lack an

ideological reference point.<sup>39</sup> However, it must be noted that those in favor of keeping religion in schools often indicated that there are limits to what is acceptable religious learning. Indeed, they acknowledged that if religion is to be the centerpiece of a modern education in Jordan, its use in schools must be supervised by the state, since special interest groups could otherwise pervert the teachings of Islam and thereby hinder efforts intended to minimize VE. A few believed that this is already the case. They claimed that, because it promotes Wahhabi teachings, the MB – which operates a number of schools throughout the country – is responsible for “creating a whole generation of extremists”. The group has reportedly done this by importing its own teachers, who have advanced strict interpretations of the Qur’an and Hadith, thereby increasing propensity toward VE.<sup>40</sup>

*“If schools taught religion more, they might be able to convince some young people not to join ISIS, since students would be learning true Islam and would therefore not be at risk of believing what ISIS says. Right now, the West sponsors programs that keep religion out of schools, so what we see is that, year after year, our students are learning less and less about religion, and that’s making it difficult for them to resist groups like ISIS. We must remember: here, religion is just as important as other subjects.”*

*(Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)*

**Locals admit that education in Madaba has improved in recent years, but they call for the Ministry of Education to be consistent in its approach.**

Several respondents conceded that the quality of education in Madaba is improving, and that efforts to combat VE within schools are gaining ground. Indeed, one respondent claimed that recently, the government has sought to reform the educational system in a number of ways and for a number of reasons. For example, both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education have begun to focus on universities, and particularly the curricula of said schools. Their aim here is to eliminate any apparently incendiary material – such as the work of Ibn Taymiyyah – from students’ reading lists in hopes of eradicating VE in and around university campuses. Considering that university violence is on the rise in Jordan, and that over 2.5 percent of the Jordanian population is enrolled at university, respondents generally believed this to be a good initial measure toward reducing VE in Jordan. Furthermore, in efforts to ensure that teachers are in fact discouraging VE, the Ministry of Education has sponsored training programs, not only in Madaba, but throughout Jordan. These programs – such as the one held in Hneina (Madaba City) in May 2015 – are not directed at teachers alone, but at every interested person in the

---

<sup>39</sup> “Out of everybody who is unemployed, the youth have it worst. They haven’t received the right religious education required to look at ISIS and say: ‘No, that’s wrong’. They have no ideological reference, so when they’re faced with mass unemployment, they can’t take a stand. They are easily the most susceptible people in Jordan, and the government should consider them first before anybody else.” (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>40</sup> “The Muslim Brotherhood and their collaboration with the Wahhabi power structures laid the foundation for Jordan’s problem with extremism. They have been running the education system here for a long time and have changed teachers and curriculums to indoctrinate young people. And now they’ve created a generation of extremely religious people. For this reason, if religion is to be a part of our schools, it should be run by the government.” (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

---

community.<sup>41</sup> In addition to acquainting locals with the best way to deal with VE – which seemingly includes reporting suspects to authorities – such programs also discuss how unemployment, poverty, and domestic abuse can increase propensity toward VE. Not only that, they also instruct teachers and community leaders on how education, whether religious or secular in nature, plays an important role in protecting Jordan’s most vulnerable from VEO messaging. That said, respondents’ only qualms with such initiatives was that they tend to be fleeting. That is, their organizers come into town for a weekend seminar before disappearing for months – or even years – without returning to follow up on their instructions to participants. In that context, locals called for the Ministry of Education – and by implication, the government – to be consistent in its efforts at training teachers and community leaders.<sup>42</sup>

*“The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education are doing a lot to reform our educational system here, and I think they are right to focus on universities. They’re editing the curriculum across Jordan and getting rid of the books that could cause some to riot on behalf of Islam, and they are monitoring students closely to see how they receive it.”*

*(Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)*

---

<sup>41</sup> “The government is focused on rehabilitating teachers at schools and universities, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. This was done through rehabilitation courses in humanitarian development.” (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

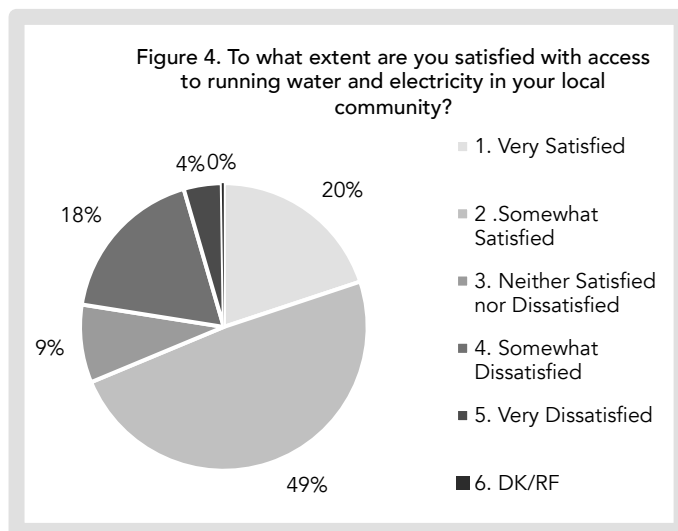
<sup>42</sup> “The government does some good – but they never follow through with their plans. If they really want to fight extremism they must do what needs to be done. There is no question: if they are going to host programs on education in Madaba, they need to do it on a regular basis, not every few months.” (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

---

### 3.2 UTILITIES AND SERVICES

**Some areas of Madaba do not have good access to running water.**

Generally, respondents did not comment on their area's access to running water and electricity. However, quantitative findings revealed that only 22 percent of Madaba GQ respondents were 'very' or 'somewhat' dissatisfied with access to running water and electricity in their community, while the majority (69 percent) said that they were 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied (see Figure 4). Nonetheless, respondents claimed that despite overall good water services and reliable electricity, a number of communities throughout the governorate suffer from a lack of these services. In particular, Madaba district was cited as lacking in these areas. Indeed,



both the eastern and western blocks of Madaba City were named as areas where flaws in local infrastructure have led to problems with citizens' access to water. With some 30,000 inhabitants, the eastern portion of the city is densely populated. In addition to overcrowding, residents reportedly struggle with weak and leaking wells and polluted water. And since neither the Water Authority – which is headed by the central government – nor local officials have been able to help them, they have turned to buying their water from private sources and storing it in tanks atop their roofs. This practice is incredibly expensive and therefore unsustainable given the general poverty of the area. Despite this, research produced no evidence to suggest that measures are being taken to improve the situation. On the contrary, circumstances appear to worsen every year. Indeed, more recently, other communities such as Af'nān village, situated just outside the seat of the governorate, have also come to suffer comparable problems.

**Small villages in Madaba often go without electricity for days, but plans to unite the electric grids of Jordan could solve their problems by 2018.**

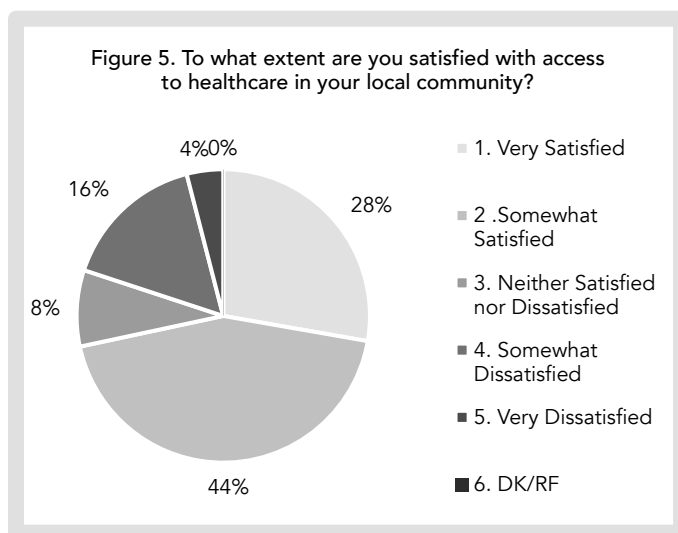
Respondents indicated that although locals' access to electricity has improved in recent years, certain communities still experience electricity shortages on at least a semi-regular basis. These communities tend to be small towns and villages on the outskirts of larger cities like Madaba, and some suffer more than others. For example, while villages like Af'nān (north of Madaba City) struggle only with weak currents that dim the lights, others like Al Jrina reportedly experience weekly shortages as a result of faulty electrical plants. As with all communities in Madaba, these places receive their electricity from the Jordanian Electric Power Company (JEPCO), a private corporation in possession of 5,600 main stations and substations with a total of 11,000 miles of underground and overhead lines in Amman, Zarqa, Madaba and Al Balqa. In a national effort to improve electricity supply and efficiency, the company is scheduled to connect to the



grid operated by the National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) in 2018.<sup>43</sup> Until then, small communities in Madaba will likely continue to struggle with inadequate electrical supply.

**Though the healthcare industry is growing in Madaba, there are still not enough hospitals to meet demand.**

Respondents reported that there are three public hospitals in Madaba – Al Mahabba Hospital in the western portion of Madaba City, Al Nadim Hospital in the eastern portion of the city, and Princess Salma Hospital in the north-eastern quarter of Dieban district – and that together, they are capable of serving the bulk of the governorate’s population. This view is consistent with quantitative findings, which revealed that while 20 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported being ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ dissatisfied with their access to healthcare, the vast majority (72 percent) reported being ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ satisfied (see Figure 5). Respondents explicitly



recognized the benefits these hospitals provide to local communities. Indeed, they claimed that the healthcare industry in Madaba is booming, and that taken together, Madaba’s hospitals have become key sources of employment for a growing number of Jordanian university graduates, in part due to an ever-growing demand for healthcare in Jordan. That said, in some cases this demand for healthcare outpaces both the supply of healthcare providers and the industry’s boom. In particular, Al Nadim Hospital was cited as lacking the necessary staff to treat all of its patients. Respondents stated that because there are not enough doctors to go around, the hospital is often forced to either treat all patients together in a large hall, or outsource them to the other two hospitals – a scenario that could result in additional discrepancies in healthcare quality, along with a decline in overall effectiveness.

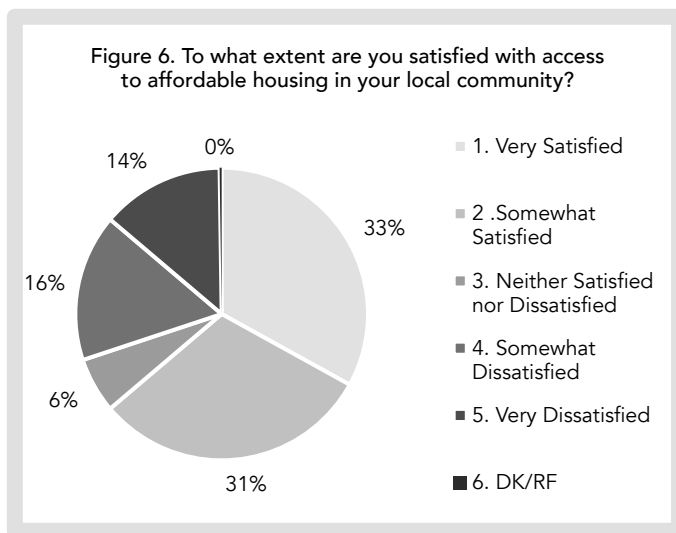
<sup>43</sup> Energy Pedia 2015. ‘Jordan Energy Situation’, energypedia.info, 2015.

### 3.3 ECONOMY, HOUSING AND DEBT

**As everyday expenses grow, many in Madaba are struggling to afford essentials.**

Generally, the economy in Madaba is defective, but a combination of factors – ranging from unemployment to a lack of domestic investment to a high sales tax – make the economy in certain sub-locations worse than in others. That said, the best and worst of Madaba’s economy can be found in Madaba City, the most populated area in the governorate. Here, most residents are able to find jobs; however, finding quality jobs is not always a guarantee. Most desirable jobs are located in the nation’s capital, so if they wish to remain in Madaba, locals must, in most cases, settle for low-paying jobs in the public sector (see section 3.1 Education and Employment).

Moreover, respondents indicated that in addition to earning low wages, locals must cope with a high sales tax of 16 percent and ever-increasing property taxes. These factors they claimed, make life difficult for some. Other respondents agreed, explaining that as prices and taxes increase, survival is becoming more difficult for residents of both the city and countryside.<sup>44</sup> One indicator of this is local reactions to housing prices in the governorate: while the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (64 percent) reported that they were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ satisfied, 30 percent said that they were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ dissatisfied with access to affordable housing in their community (see Figure 6).



**Locals fear that residents of Madaba’s poorest communities are at risk of becoming radicalized.**

Researchers claimed that, in addition to both the eastern and western portions of the city, the communities of Al Faisaliya and Af’nan village (north-west of Madaba City) and a large portion of Mlaih district are some of Madaba’s poorest neighborhoods. With high unemployment and poverty, insufficient services and deficient infrastructure, citizens in these neighborhoods are increasingly turning to crime in order to feed their families. Indeed, in the absence of quality jobs, the sale of drugs has become a common way of earning a living in these areas, and in some cases, gun crime has become commonplace (see section 5.3 Exposure to Crime and Conflict). With that in mind, respondents feared that residents of these marginalized communities could be convinced to join VEOs in pursuit of financial rewards. Furthermore,

<sup>44</sup> “The people here are really feeling the effects of the bad economy. Prices are going up and the government is imposing more taxes all the time, even though they know that the people can’t pay because they don’t have jobs. It’s hard to survive in this kind of environment, let alone thrive.” (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

they worried that even if they do not join VEOs, disenfranchised citizens could radicalize within their own communities, setting off a scenario similar to the conflicts in Iraq and Syria.<sup>45</sup>

*"There are a lot of psychological and social pressures here, and that might make people, especially young men, go somewhere else to find their lives. The problem is this: when they leave, they go in search of money. That means that they often go where the fighting is, because that's where the money is."*

*(Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)*

The conflicts in Iraq and Syria have ravaged Madaba's economy and thereby increased propensity toward VE.

Respondents acknowledged that Jordan has never been a rich country, but they were confident that as a direct result of the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, things have worsened for Madaba's residents in recent years. Indeed, they claimed that because Jordan has closed its northern borders and ceased almost all trade with Iraq and Syria, more locals are now in poverty than ever before. Not only that, they insisted that prices are rising, consumer spending is falling and businesses are not growing or employing locals – all supposedly a consequence of conflict across the border. The reason for this is that both Iraq and Syria have long been two of Jordan's most important trade partners, capable of providing the country with essential commodities at low prices.<sup>46</sup> For example, before the closure of Jordan's border with Iraq, Jordan was accustomed to receiving half of its needed oil free of charge and the other half at discount rates. Now however, the country is forced to rely on other sources to supply its energy needs. This has caused commerce to slow dramatically, and has reportedly forced employers to cut jobs in order to save money,<sup>47</sup> thus harming businesses, consumers and citizens. Conflict in Iraq and Syria has damaged Jordan's economy in other ways, too. Before borders were closed, many towns in Madaba depended on a steady stream of tourists visiting their communities before or after exploring major sites such as Petra. Now however, tourists have stopped coming in such large numbers, partly as a result of border security issues, but also because tourists are afraid that what is happening in Iraq and Syria may spread to Jordan.<sup>48</sup> Understandably, respondents worried that the poor economy in Jordan could drive up crime

<sup>45</sup> "I worry that those who are unhappy in Jordan could start to cause trouble here. If they don't have jobs, what's to stop them from turning Jordan into a war zone like what we see in Syria and Iraq?" (Female, 30, Program Developer, Madaba)

<sup>46</sup> "We were affected economically by what's happening in Syria. We stopped importing and exporting from Syria, and that hurt Jordanian businesses. Everything we had was from Syria, like clothes and food. Now we have to turn elsewhere and rely on foreign aid." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>47</sup> "The economy has slowed tremendously as a result of what's happening in Syria and Iraq. For instance, before the borders were closed, we were getting free oil from Iraq, and many businesses that provided us with goods were stationed in Syria. Now, all the borders are closed, so commerce from those countries is almost non-existent. It's almost impossible to find a job in Madaba nowadays if one does not have connections." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>48</sup> "The crises in Iraq and Syria affected tourism in Jordan. Now people do not travel throughout the Middle East anymore, and people certainly do not want to be near where all the fighting is taking place. Jordan is not far from Syria, so most people would rather stay away. We have places like Petra and Ommqais – places that people from all over the world want to see – but they are not being visited. Part of it is that the borders are closed, but part of it is

rates and increase propensity toward VE in Madaba. They believed that VEOs might use the ailing economy to their advantage, exploiting residents' fears and insecurities to reinforce their own ranks.

*"What's happening here is most likely happening because of the wars in Syria. Businesses here are not doing well because they are no longer able to trade with Syrian companies, and that means more people are unemployed and living in poverty. To my mind, it's only a matter of time before people have enough of this bad economy and leave for other, better places. Or worse, they could take up arms or join these groups [VEOs]."*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

**Focus: A local man explains the full effects that the wars in Iraq and Syria have had on the economy.**

*"Jordan has been a poor country from the beginning, but after the conflicts in Syria and Iraq started things got worse. Iraq was one of the countries that was supporting us economically – they helped poor areas like Mlaih, and they were good to us. A lot of our sons went there to study because they had been given scholarships, and the Iraqis gave us cheap oil so that the government didn't have to raise prices on us. The same with Syria. Now, the poorest among us are even poorer than before. The farmers were particularly affected, since Syria was a market for our tomatoes and vegetables. It's been terrible these past few years, and now that the borders are completely closed things stand to get worse. This has made it very difficult for Jordan to fight extremism effectively. The country doesn't have the resources that some of our neighbors have, so we have to rely on their kindness in order to keep the people happy."*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

**Locals acknowledge that national debt is high and problematic, but are less concerned about personal debt.**

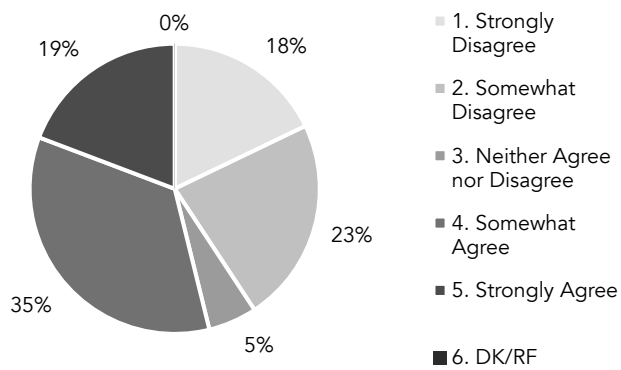
Several respondents identified Jordan's public debt as a problem. One respondent for example, felt that in terms of financial responsibility the government has cheated the nation. That is, at the same time as public debt has increased, funding to all government departments, as well as funds that would have been distributed to small towns and municipalities to rebuild local infrastructure, has been dramatically withdrawn. The same respondent contended that rather than opposing the government's actions of taking out more debt, most locals have waited until it is too late to complain.<sup>49</sup>

that people just don't want to be caught up in fighting, and they think there could be fighting in Jordan, though there isn't. They would be very safe here." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>49</sup> When Abdullah Ensour took over as prime minister, nobody cared about his vision for Jordan. And they should have cared because, while he was in office, indebtedness increased from 18 billion JD to 35 billion JD over three years. That means that the budget for departments was cut drastically, and the budget for municipalities fell as well. Now we can't do anything in Madaba. Dieban, my local community, is drying up and nobody cares! (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

Others feared that the government's outstanding debt will lead to price increases that the population will not be able to stomach given the general weakness of the country's economy. They feared that together with rising unemployment and poverty, these price increases could anger those in Madaba's most marginalized communities. Meanwhile, locals appear relatively less concerned about personal debt levels. For example, while the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (54 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 41 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that debt is a problem in their community (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. To what extent do you agree that debt is a problem in your community?



*"We are in debt – we owe the central bank almost 35 billion JDs. The government is trying to raise prices in order to fix the budget but, as we know, that plan will not work well. We are poor here in Dieban; if prices rise, we won't be able to feed our families because we won't have jobs. That's when things will get really bad. Watch: people will take to the streets, and it will be like opening the door to radical groups."*

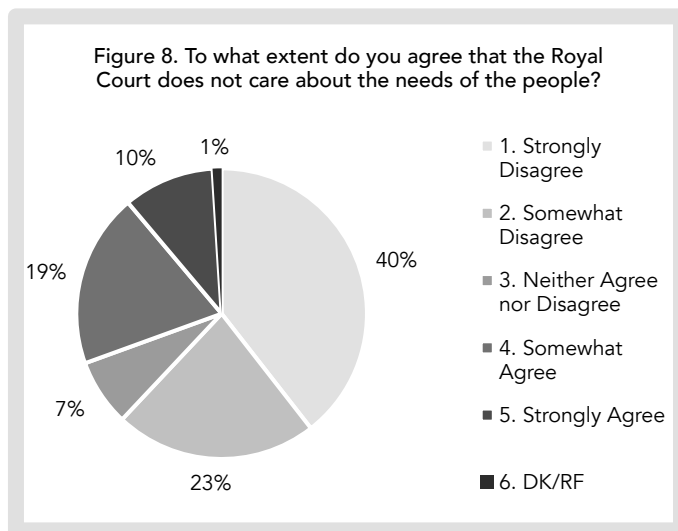
*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

## 4.0 GOVERNANCE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

### 4.1 CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Local views on the Royal Court of King Abdullah II are mixed, and some reported that the king does little in the way of helping their community fight VE.

Respondents' views on the Royal Court were mixed. Indeed, while 63 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that the Royal Court does not care about the needs of the people, 29 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed with the statement (see Figure 8). DIs revealed that most locals feel warmly toward the king and respect him as both the head of state and a descendent of the Prophet. Time and again, they recognized the king as a force of opposition to VEOs and expressed appreciation for his response to national tragedies, such as the murder of Jordanian Air Force pilot, Moath Al Kasasbeh in January 2015.<sup>50</sup> However, they were not afraid to voice some criticisms of the king and his court. Indeed, one respondent, a tribal leader, said that while the king enjoys a great deal of influence over his subjects, he has not used this influence to reduce radicalization in Madaba. The respondent argued that a visit from the king to some of the poorer neighborhoods of Madaba could ease growing tensions in those areas and therefore lower the risk of them becoming centers of radicalization. Thus, he lamented that the king has not visited Madaba for some time. Another respondent – an elderly resident of Dieban whose son joined Ahrar Al Sham after being driven by economic injustice in Syria – complained that “the government is made up of thieves who have stolen the resources of Jordan”. He criticized members of the Royal Court for “protecting their own pockets, not the interests of the Jordanian people,” and expressed disapproval of Queen Rania’s purchase of a million-dollar dress.<sup>51</sup>



*“Jordanians do not listen to anybody but King Abdullah. It is possible for him to establish conferences and to visit the areas in Jordan that are struggling the most. Many people would come*

<sup>50</sup> “The king is loved here. He fights ISIS and forbids them to come here. And whenever something happens here, he mourns with us and sees that justice is served. Take his reaction to Moath’s killing as an example.” (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>51</sup> “The people who protest are the protectors of this country, and they are protecting it from the same people who are meant to protect us. The government is made up of thieves who have stolen the resources of Jordan. They are protecting their pockets, not the interests of the Jordanian people. Recently, I heard that the queen bought a dress for one million JDs. If she wants to buy such a dress, we shouldn’t know about it because all it does is make us angry. All it does is make us distrust them.” (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

*out to hear him, and many people would listen to what he has to say. But so far this has not happened in Madaba."*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

Though a majority of locals believes that the government cares about the needs of the people, many criticize it for neglecting them.

While the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (61 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, a large percentage (31 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the central government does not care about the needs of the people (see Figure 9). At the same time, views on the local government were mixed, with 48 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreeing and 47 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreeing that the local government does not care about the needs of the people (see Figure 10). Given this, it may be reasonable to assume that although locals may favor the government in theory, they may not in practice. Though some respondents were confident that the government has a plan for alleviating the issues arising from the Syrian conflict, as well as a scheme for combatting VE in Jordan, many lacked faith in the government's willingness to solve problems that they considered important. In fact, most believed that as things stand, the government is working against its own efforts to fight VE. For example, one respondent claimed that with the ongoing economic crisis in Jordan, as well as daily instances of judicial injustice throughout the country, the government may very well be driving otherwise loyal citizens into the ranks of groups like ISIS, which often promises its fighters better lives in its strongholds.<sup>52</sup> Others echoed his view, claiming that where it exists, religious extremism is a result of economic and judicial marginalization, and that the government "cooperates" with terrorists when it refuses to fix the country's most pressing problems such as joblessness and abject poverty. In short, they believed that oftentimes, people who are in financial difficulty feel that they have nowhere to turn but to radical groups, and they do so, not because they are radical Islamists but because they desperately need relief and feel that the government will not help them. Witnessing the government's inability or unwillingness to act on their behalf has reportedly caused some residents to distrust the state in nearly every way – even when it comes to fighting extremism in their own communities.<sup>53</sup>

*"Religious extremism is certainly a very real problem for Jordan. Radical groups are incubated in poor and marginalized social circles – the same ones that suffer from unemployment and poverty. People there have nowhere to turn but to extremist groups, sometimes solely to get some financial support in these hard times. The way I see it, the formal political establishment in Jordan cooperates with these groups, though not in an obvious way. The government cooperates with terrorist groups when it refuses to fix the problems of its people – problems like unemployment and poverty."*

<sup>52</sup> "It seems that the government is making it easy for extremist groups to gain a foothold in the country. I know that seems to be the case here in Mlaih. With the present economic crisis, marginalization of certain places and injustice here, it is possible that groups like ISIS could gain some support. People have no hope to improve their lives and that makes the risk even worse." (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

<sup>53</sup> "The people do not trust the government, so when they come to town to preach to us about awareness, we do not take them seriously. They don't care about us. How can we trust them?" (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

Figure 9. To what extent do you agree that the central government does not care about the needs of the people?

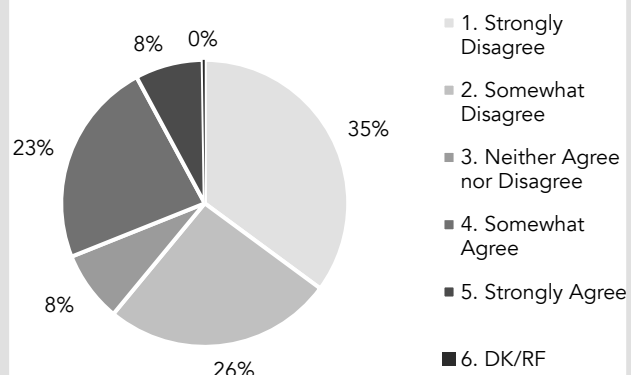
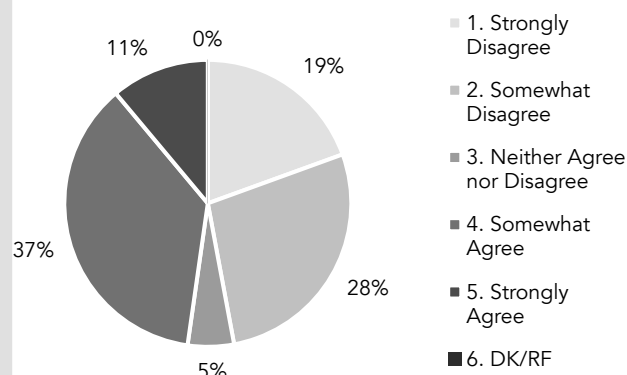


Figure 10. To what extent do you agree that the local government does not care about the needs of the people?

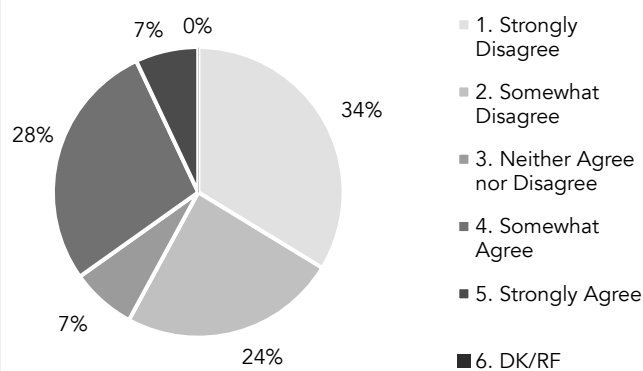


**Locals urge the government to focus its CVE efforts on the most economically marginalized communities in Madaba.**

A majority of respondents believed that it is in the government's interests to control VEOs by slowing, and eventually stopping, the spread of VE in the country. Furthermore, most had confidence in the government's commitment to doing so. Indeed, while only 35 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the government does not want to control VEOs, 58 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed with the statement (see Figure 11). Nevertheless, respondents did voice some grievances, urging the government to take stronger action. The chief concern in this respect was the way in which economic neglect in Madaba might increase propensity toward VE.

One respondent, a tribal leader, remarked that sometimes people in Madaba wish for ISIS to invade Jordan, not because they sympathize with the VEO's mission and actions, but because they seek retribution against a government that is failing to solve their most pressing problems as a nation – problems like poverty. The same respondent went on to complain that despite Madaba's high levels of poverty, there is little evidence that the government intends to provide assistance. He suggested that if the government would only focus on bringing development projects to "the slums of Jordan" and the rural

Figure 11. To what extent do you agree that the central government does not want to control VE?





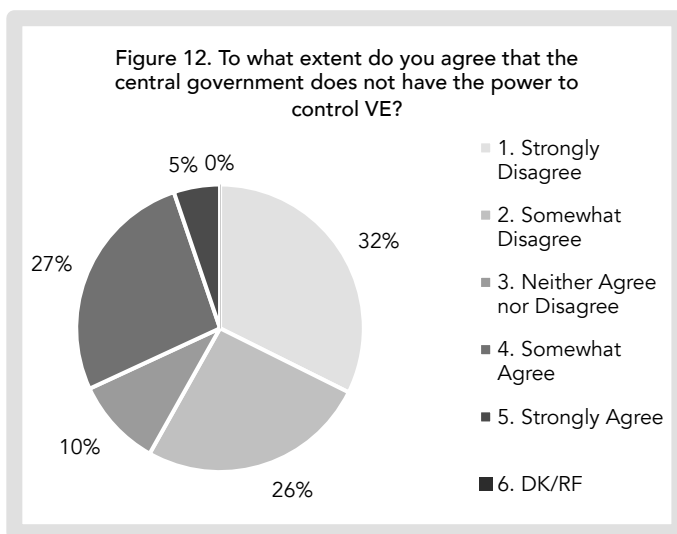
towns and communities, it could create lasting growth that might save the next generation of youth from becoming violent.<sup>54</sup> Others similarly suggested that the government should do a great deal more to ensure the wellbeing of future generations. They argued that if the government really wants to help its people, it must make education the focus of its plans, while promoting active lifestyles in the poorest communities (such as Dieban in the south of the governorate) and taking steps toward improving the economic situation in those areas (see section 3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt). Furthermore, they insisted that local government has a responsibility to cooperate with the central government in this effort.<sup>55</sup>

*"Sometimes people say that they wish Daesh would enter Jordan. They don't say that because they sympathize with their cause, or because they like them in any way, but because there are real problems here in Jordan that the government isn't dealing with. We have a lot of poor people, especially here in Madaba, and we do not see that the government is doing anything to help them.*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

While most locals believe the government can control VE and VEOs, they worry that it occasionally exacerbates tensions in the governorate and increases propensity toward VE.

Although only marginally, the majority of respondents believed the government is capable of controlling VE and VEOs in their community: while 58 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that the government does not have the power to control VEOs, 32 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed with the statement (see Figure 12). Respondents considered the security forces, including the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), to be Jordan's greatest weapon against VEOs. The existence of such forces throughout the governorate was deemed to guarantee long term peace and stability in Madaba, including in some of the governorate's most troubled neighborhoods. What worried respondents however, was the government's questionable ability to handle issues that might directly increase propensity toward VE. For one, the government's relationship with its people was a chief concern among respondents, and one that many



<sup>54</sup> "The government should do more for its people. It should focus on the slums of Jordan and on the rural parts of the country. We need lasting growth in these areas if we are to save the next generation of youth, and we need lectures and workshops if we are to save this generation." (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

<sup>55</sup> "The local government should be working with those in Amman to implement more programs to convince people to stay here and be content with their lives, rather than leave and fight in Syria. I don't know how they can convince the people, but maybe they should conduct more lectures, or conduct programs to teach young men what to do with their time so that they can get a job." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

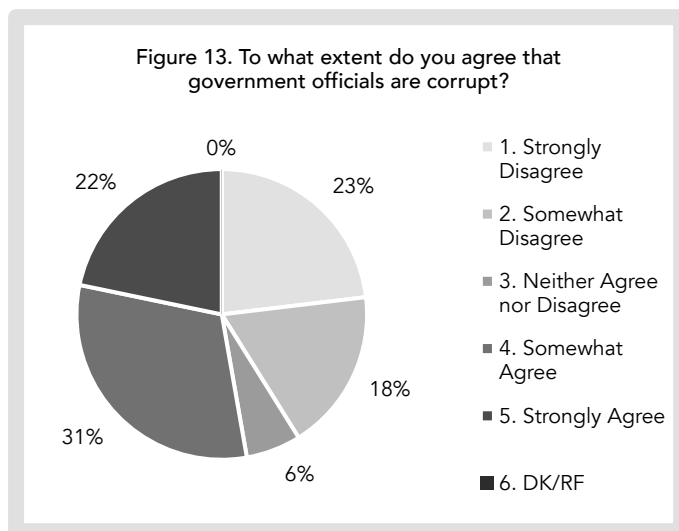
believed the government is failing to sufficiently address. For example, one respondent recalled protests breaking out in Dieban, a rural area in the south of the governorate. Reportedly, the protestors were objecting to the government's lack of investment in the area before government forces intervened inappropriately.<sup>56</sup> This – the worry that government actions often negate its own efforts to combat extremism – was a worry propounded by many respondents. They argued that if the government refuses to listen to the demands of the people – demands for economic and political reform, in addition to an increase in government investment in local projects that will produce jobs – all the security support in the world will not stop frustrated citizens from taking up arms. To that end, these respondents worried that, given the government's track record, things could get worse in Madaba before they get better, and that VEOs could gain a foothold in some of the governorate's more marginalized neighborhoods.

*"There is a lot going on here, and I'm not sure that the government has the capabilities to handle it. It is too divided. On the one hand, it must work to improve the living standard of its citizens by improving the economy, while on the other hand, it must keep terrorists out and keep the opposition happy but away from power. I don't see this happening."*

(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

**Most locals believe that the government is corrupt and lament the lack of meritocracy within Jordanian culture.**

A narrow majority (53 percent) of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that government officials are corrupt, while 41 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed (see Figure 13). According to respondents, a central grievance in this regard is that for too long, the government has sponsored liberal economics – a system that many believe has made Jordanians with connections to those in power extraordinarily rich at the expense of the lower classes. To this end, some argued that by



<sup>56</sup> "I tell you this: calling people terrorists or treating them like terrorists, just because they sit on the sidewalk demanding a job is basically pushing those same people to extremism. This happened in Dieban not too long ago. 20 men were labeled outlaws because they were protesting the lack of jobs here. The government's response was terrible. I feel that they are pushing the youth away when they should be making sure that they have no reason to resort to extremism." (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

imposing harsh taxes on the public while cutting taxes on corporations and capitalists, the government has encouraged political, if not religious, extremism.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, respondents argued that now more than ever, the nepotistic culture in Jordan is making it harder for poor Jordanians with no connections to make their way in life. One respondent cited an instance in which the son of former Jordanian Prime Minister, Abdullah Ensour, acquired a high-paying job, complaining that as long as personal connections continue to trump merit there will never be justice in Jordan.<sup>58</sup> Overall, respondents believed that such enduring inequality has caused a sizable portion of the public to distrust their government, and they worried that if it persists, extremism in the country will continue to proliferate. To many, the natural solution to this problem is increased transparency on the part of the government, as well as a gradual move toward democracy.

*"I think it's very important for governments to pay attention to the way in which they are suppressing people's freedoms. They need to re-evaluate their policies and relationships with their citizens, and they need to ask themselves why they exist in the first place. They need to ask: 'What is our goal as a country? What do we stand for? What won't we stand for?' And they need to ask those [questions] together with their people through popular referendums, because it's very dangerous when the people have a different philosophy to their governments. The Jordanian government really needs to work on this one thing I think."*

*(Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)*

**Some residents feel that the West has too much influence on the central government, and that its influence is not always used positively.**

Though the influence of Western countries was almost always cited as a negative, most locals did not appear to link their government's supposed corruption (see above) to the West. Indeed, 63 percent of respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that the central government does what the West says, while only 26 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed (see Figure 14). That said, some respondents did not hesitate to blame Western countries for some of Jordan's other problems, as well as for some of their own government's shortcomings. A few respondents for example, believed that the West is intentionally using its influence to keep Jordan in a weak and unstable position, much like other countries in the region. The decline of what respondents' termed "leftist" political parties, such as the Jordanian Democratic People's Party, was cited as proof of this. Respondents argued that for decades since King Hussein ended the suspension of political parties in 1989, such parties had enjoyed significant public support, in part for their endorsement of social change that could have benefited many of the country's poor.

---

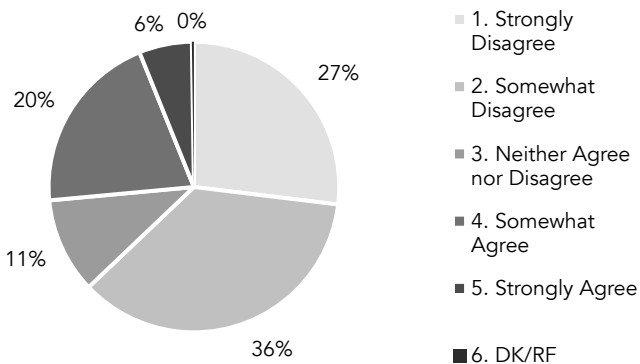
<sup>57</sup> "The government created this extreme atmosphere. It has allowed these groups to grow stronger in Jordan. At the same time that it has been oppressing freedoms, imposing more taxes, creating parliaments that don't represent the public, and creating laws that serve big companies and capitalists, it has ignored the simple citizens of this country. Now there are a lot of poor people in Jordan, not just in Madaba, and they are the easiest targets for extremists. No, you cannot convince me that the government is fighting extremism because it has not shown that it has done anything to lessen the appeal of extremism; instead, it has made it worse." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>58</sup> "We will not have justice here as long as the son of Abdullah Al Ensour is getting paid 25,000 JDs, while any other's is sitting on the sidewalk with his hand out for money. The people will not tolerate it forever." (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

---

They claimed that now however, those parties are once again being silenced in favor of tribes loyal to the king, for which some blamed the West. An additional accusation leveled at the West was that it seeks to make Jordan into a terrorist haven. Although the majority of respondents did not hold this view, most agreed that the absence of alternative political parties has had a dramatically negative impact on the country. For example, they believed that in recent years – and perhaps more so since the government’s clampdown on opposition parties in Parliament, such as the MB – there has been no room for dissent in Jordanian politics. Several claimed that this reality has compounded the problem of VE in Jordan, leading otherwise loyal citizens to adopt hardline or “sectarian” stances on cultural and political issues.<sup>59</sup>

Figure 14. To what extent do you agree that the central government does what the West says?



*“We’re seeing something happen in Jordan – or rather, we’ve been seeing something for a long time – and that is the gradual decline of the leftist parties that spoke for freedom, secularism, enlightenment, and fair distribution of wealth. Nowadays, there is no place for opposition in this society, which is a very dangerous thing considering that a portion of the public has shown itself to be receptive to Wahhabi ideology. We’re sitting ducks basically, and the government isn’t doing anything. We’re too tangled with the US and the West. Whatever America or the West wants, it gets. It wants Jordan to become a home for these terrorists and has therefore discouraged reform and the existence of opposition parties here.”*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

<sup>59</sup> “The nationalist and leftist parties were destroyed over time. What’s left is a mere skeleton with no active role or influence in Jordan. There is a political void in which the people have no political life whatsoever. They know that what they think doesn’t matter, and that they could be fired from their jobs or worse for speaking out against the government. So over time they have grown tired of it. Now they have developed a tendency for sectarianism based on religious stance, and that’s dangerous. It means there is no room for dialogue and resolution, and it’s destroying our economy, the social life here and even the psyches of the people.” (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

## 4.2 LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Locals warn that law enforcement, while necessary, is not enough to combat VE in Madaba.

Many respondents believed that without the cooperation of local police and the armed forces, terrorist “sleeper cells” would run free, committing acts of terrorism and enabling VEOs like ISIS to gain a foothold in areas of the country that are already under strain, such as some towns and villages in the south of Madaba. Therefore, they overwhelmingly agreed that it is their duty to society to report instances of VE to security forces in their communities.<sup>60</sup> However, in most cases respondents suggested that law enforcement alone is an inadequate response to VE. For these individuals, tightened security without comprehensive political reform would make Jordan nothing more than a police state, and would therefore exacerbate the governorate’s VE problem. They argued that in order to completely eradicate VE from Jordan, the government and its people must strive together to enact meaningful economic, cultural and political reform. The understanding here is that at the same time as security efforts are boosted across the country, the government must tackle unemployment by bringing economic projects to some of Madaba’s most disadvantaged communities. Simultaneously, the government, together with citizens, must endeavor to make Jordanian society more democratic by eradicating nepotistic practices, alleviating income and wealth inequality and ensuring that free speech is a guaranteed right throughout Jordan.

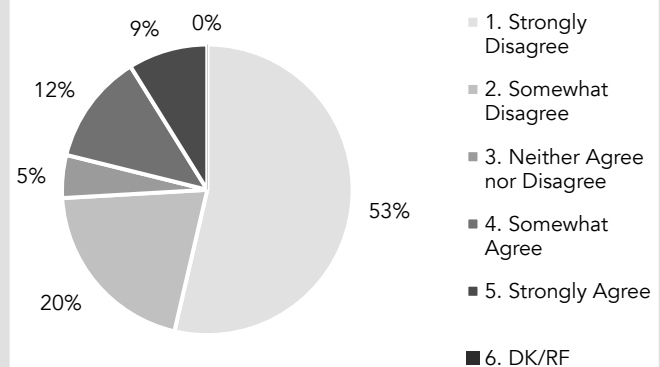
*“Security is not just police work and intelligence; it’s economic, cultural and political. The security forces are good at what they do, and we respect them for that, but they could fail. Then where would we be? No, to face this problem properly we must change the economic and social policies of this country.”*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

### The vast majority of locals feel that they can rely on the police in their community – as long as they do not abuse their power.

Most respondents believed that local police are able and willing to respond appropriately not only to security threats to their communities, but also to everyday emergencies and domestic disputes within their jurisdiction. This perspective is supported by quantitative findings, which revealed that the vast majority of Madaba GQ respondents (73 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that the police are not reliable, while just 21 percent ‘strongly’ or

Figure 15. To what extent do you agree that the police are not reliable?



<sup>60</sup> “If I cannot stop a man from joining one of these groups, it is my duty to inform security.” (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

'somewhat' agreed (see Figure 15). Some attested to the fact that police activities, though often mysterious to everyday observers, have been successful in the past. One respondent explained that to the relief of family and friends, the local police in her community worked with intelligence services to bring a girl who had joined ISIS back home to her family.<sup>61</sup> Others talked of how the police regularly go out of their way to maintain the safety of their communities. Several respondents believed that ever since the university riots of 2013, police have increased security at schools and universities, such as the American University of Madaba.<sup>62</sup> This, they argued, is an improvement that has increased their faith in police. That said, respondents did not unequivocally appreciate the police. In fact, some were more than willing to cite ways in which local police forces have failed their communities. For example, one respondent claimed that the police often monitor the homes of those related to VEOs recruits.<sup>63</sup> Others highlighted that rural communities – which are in some respects most prone to VE – do not benefit from an adequate police presence.<sup>64</sup>

*"I know the police are wanting what's best for us, and they do a great job protecting our homes and sorting out everyday disputes. We trust them because they are our sons and our brothers. We do not fear them because we know that they have a vested interest in the welfare of our towns."*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

### Respondents cited no problems with local courts, which appear relatively effective.

There is one magistrate court in Madaba governorate. It is presided by a single magistrate who hears cases involving misdemeanors and minor crimes for which the sentence is two years or less. In addition to these duties, magistrates are responsible for civil cases where the finances at stake do not exceed 750 JD, as well as cases of eviction and trespassing. There are also two Sharia courts in Madaba that work alongside the magistrate courts. However, Sharia courts are distinct from magistrate courts in that they are governed by Islamic law and handle cases involving child custody, marriage, divorce and inheritance, in addition to cases involving *diya* (blood money) and Islamic *waqfs* (endowments made to religious,

---

<sup>61</sup> "There was a girl from Madaba who joined ISIS in Turkey. I don't know the details of her story, but I think they connected with her through social media, and they agreed that she should leave Jordan and go to Turkey, and that one of the men in the group would meet her and take her to the set location. Her parents, realizing that she was gone, informed the police, and the police used their secret ways to search for this girl, and then got her back." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

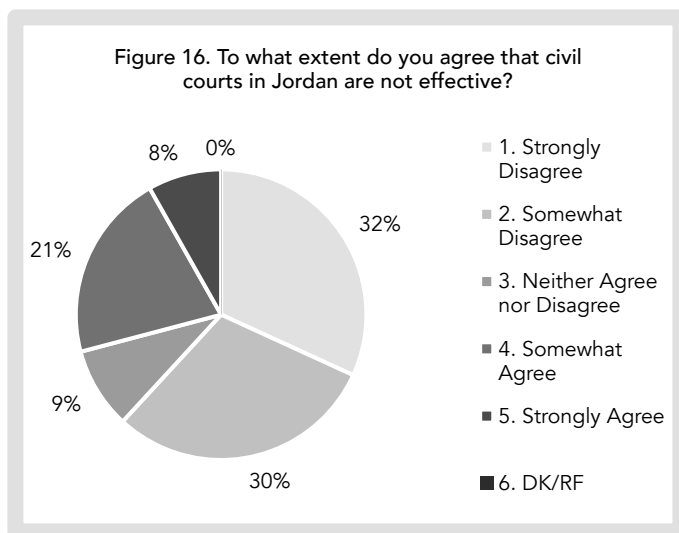
<sup>62</sup> "Security efforts at universities have been increased. Now, not only are students monitored closely, they are required to show a form of ID before entering the university grounds at all. This is balanced with more extracurricular activities to make the students happy and to take their minds off of how things have changed." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>63</sup> "People here feel sorry for the family that has a child who joined extremist groups. We feel sorry that they lost their children and we fear for our own families. The police on the other hand, do not feel sorry. After a member of a family joins, the police will monitor their house and the whole street. Once an area loses someone to extremism, it will never happen again because the police will have it on lockdown." (Female, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>64</sup> "Rural areas are not monitored by the government as well as they should be, and so these groups [VEOs] have a better chance of thriving out there." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

educational or charitable institutions). The majority of cases heard by the Sharia courts involve Muslims exclusively, but can also include cases involving Muslims and non-Muslims if both parties consent to the authority of the court. Respondents said little about the operations of the courts.

However, quantitative data suggests that overall, locals have no issues with how they are administered. Indeed, while 29 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, the majority (62 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that civil courts in Madaba are not effective (see Figure 16). Some respondents substantiated these findings with assertions that, due to the location of the courts – and particularly the one criminal court, which is located in the Palace of Justice – local trials are rarely postponed in Madaba. That said, certain cases are likely to have weakened the courts' popularity among locals, perhaps accounting for the 29 percent of respondents who held negative views of the civil courts. For example, in June 2016, 20 unemployed men were arrested for protesting against unemployment in their community, for which respondents overwhelmingly condemned the actions of the government.



*"There is one court of First Instance in Madaba. It is located in the city of Madaba and it handles criminal cases such as trespassing. There are two Sharia courts that deal with religious matters, as well as common business between Muslims – such as feuds where blood money is needed and marriage. These are located in Madaba and in Dieban. Most people are pleased with both the criminal court and the Sharia courts, but more so with the criminal court, since it is located next to the Palace of Justice. Unlike in some areas, trials are never delayed and justice is always served there, so people do not complain."*

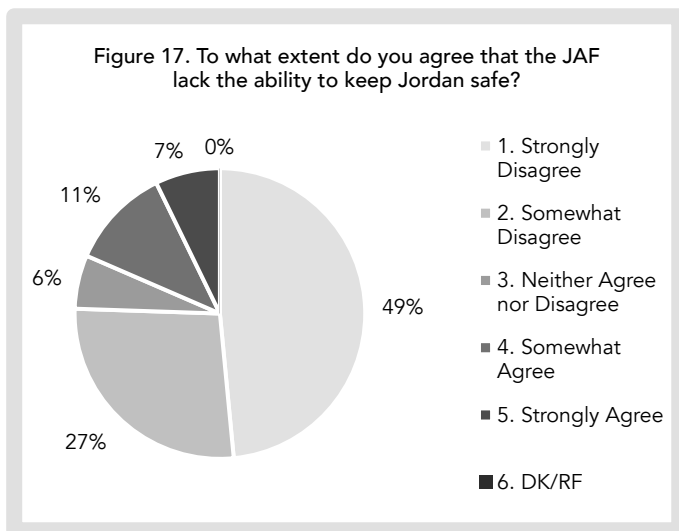
*(Female, 38, Lawyer, Amman)*

Though the vast majority of locals believe that the JAF has the ability to keep them safe, some are concerned by recent border incidents and rumors of security failures to apprehend terrorists.

Most respondents expressed confidence in the JAF's ability to defend them. In fact, while 18 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 76 percent disagreed that the armed forces lack the ability to keep Jordan safe, with 49 percent 'strongly' disagreeing and 27 percent 'somewhat' disagreeing (see Figure 17). Thus overall, respondents were proud of Jordan's armed forces. Indeed, they often compared Jordan's security to that of other countries and concluded that, Israel excluded, Jordan has the best security forces in the region. Some cited citizens' willingness to cooperate with armed forces

as one reason why the country remains unrivaled in this field.<sup>65</sup> Others highlighted the JAF's success in discovering, exposing and apprehending terrorist "sleeper cells" and weapons smugglers – particularly at the border – as proof that the country is safe from VE.<sup>66</sup>

However, it was on this point that respondents were divided, with some expressing alarm at the discovery of such crime so close to their homes. Unlike their neighbors, these respondents refused to gloat about Jordan's success in preventing the infiltration of VEOs into the country. Instead, they viewed an increase in criminal activity at the borders as proof that VE is on the rise and may one day overwhelm the JAF. According to these individuals, it is only a matter of time before a terrorist slips into the country undetected, establishes a recruitment base and/or commits a large-scale attack on civilians. One respondent for instance, pointed out that his son, who joined Ahrar Al Sham and died near Aleppo, was never apprehended or even questioned by security forces; instead, he was able to travel unimpeded from Jordan to Lebanon and then into Turkey, where he convened with those who had recruited him.<sup>67</sup> To many locals, security breaches like these serve as reminders that, despite the state's precautions at the border, they are never truly safe from terrorism and VE.



*"I believe terrorist groups like ISIS do pose a threat to Jordan and to Dieban, and we can see that threat in recent attacks on our country, such as the attack on the borders. Our security is very good here, but the terrorists have succeeded one or two times, and we have had to bury a man from Dieban because of it. He worked protecting the border and died defending his country from these extremists."*

*(Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)*

<sup>65</sup> "You know, I don't expect anything to happen to Jordan. The people work with the armed forces and not against them, so I think that whatever happens in Syria will have a minimal effect on our country." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>66</sup> "Evidence shows that Jordan is a successful country in countering terrorism. We have a strong security force here. The last thing that happened was in Irbid, and the government managed to eliminate a terrorist cell they had discovered there. We never experience any of that in Madaba; we are peaceful people who reject terrorism." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>67</sup> "My son left Jordan for Syria legally. He went from Jordan to Lebanon to Turkey by plane, and his journey began at Queen Alia Airport. What comforted me was that he had a contract with the UNRWA – or at least that's what he said. I believed him because he was my son, a good boy and a good Muslim who cared about people. Security never stopped him, so it seems that they believed him too." (Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)

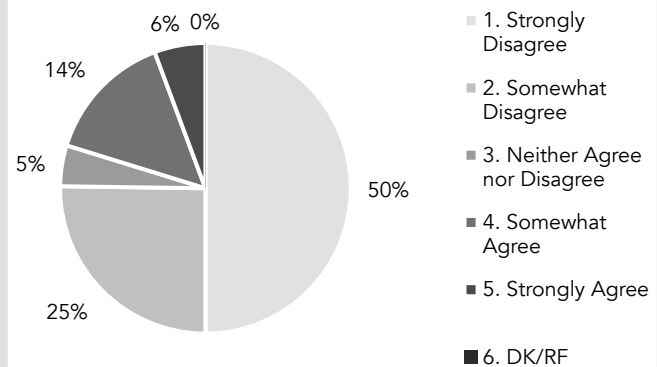


### 4.3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

**Locals respect the authority of the armed forces and police, and deny that they abuse their power.**

In discussing law enforcement, locals often referred to the JAF and police forces synonymously. Accordingly, overall opinions on their behavior were closely corresponding: while 20 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 75 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that the armed forces do not behave in a respectful way (see Figure 18). Similarly, while 26 percent of Madaba GQ respondents agreed, 74 percent disagreed that they or their family have directly suffered from excessive police authority (see Figure 19). Unsurprisingly then, most respondents denied that the police overstep their authority and deal roughly with those in their custody, emphasizing that while the government does not care about locals, the police do since they are themselves members of the communities within their jurisdiction. Moreover, respondents insisted that the police are dutiful at all times, and that people should recognize this.

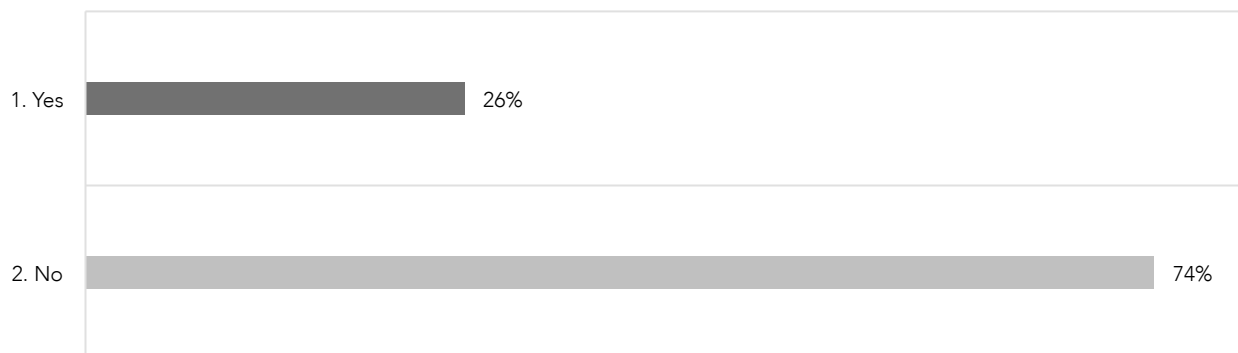
Figure 18. To what extent do you agree that the JAF do not behave in a respectful way?



*"The police are good people – our family members. Here, we all know that if you do something wrong you get arrested. That's how it's supposed to be, and we don't fight that system."*

(Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

Figure 19. Have you or your family directly suffered from excessive police authority?



There are signs that the relationship between citizens and security forces are under strain in some of Madaba's most marginalized communities.

Despite overall respect for the police and a general belief that security forces do not abuse their power, respondents described numerous instances of excessive police authority and abuse from the armed forces occurring in Madaba. Specifically, they indicated that the relationship between security forces and residents in some of Madaba's most marginalized communities is fragile. For example, locals from Dieban – a small town of roughly 13,000 to the south of Madaba City – claimed that in July 2016, police and unemployed protestors clashed in the streets. The protestors, who had erected a tent in the city square, were arrested and charged with disturbing the peace, but some respondents considered their treatment prior to the arrest as harsh and unwarranted. For instance, one witness maintained that a few days before the arrest, police attacked the protestors in the street. This affair – though settled by the government, which subsequently offered the protestors jobs in Amman – has caused some, particularly in Dieban, to lose all confidence in the police.

*"The government's propaganda works with simple people, which is no doubt the majority of the population. Its big message is safety and security. Supposedly, people will feel safe and secure if they see security agents on the streets, but I think that's nonsense. I for one felt more secure when security agents left Dieban. They caused a disaster here when they arrested those young men who were protesting, and they made a lot of enemies that way."*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

Locals believe that if relations between citizens and security forces worsen, so too will VE in Madaba.

Several locals decried the aforementioned treatment of unemployed protestors in Dieban, and warned that should relations between citizens and security forces worsen, so too will the VE problem in Madaba. They claimed that oftentimes, young people – and especially young men – who experience injustice at home go on to live lives of crime, not because they wish for such a life, but because they are made to feel that crime is their only option. According to most respondents commenting on the issue, a young man's inclination toward criminal activity after experiencing police brutality is limited to petty crime such as theft. However, some imagined the results of police overreach to be much worse. For example, one respondent claimed that in his experience, if a young man is arrested and treated badly – as in the case of the unemployed protestors – he will in turn begin to think badly of his situation at home. He argued that in this case, petty crime is the least of Jordan's worries, since instances of police overreach could ultimately push victims to develop extreme political, social and religious views. If this is true, Jordan's prisons could be home to thousands of potential extremists. Therefore, monitoring police behavior – especially in economically marginalized areas of Jordan such as Mlaih – should be an important component of local CVE efforts, as should improving the relationship between citizens and locally based security forces.

*"Many people join ISIS out of revenge for the treatment they have received here at home. For instance, if a young man is arrested and treated like a terrorist, he will most certainly become one, even if he wasn't before. The security agency breeds terrorists – it's like they are pre-determining*

*these people's fates. I fear that the protesters who are being arrested will all become extremists because of how they are being treated. It makes sense because one of the main reasons people become extreme is because they have a yearning for political justice; they want their voices to be heard, and going off on jihad is one way of doing it, even if they are leaving their family behind when they go."*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

**Focus: A local relates an instance of police brutality in Dieban.**

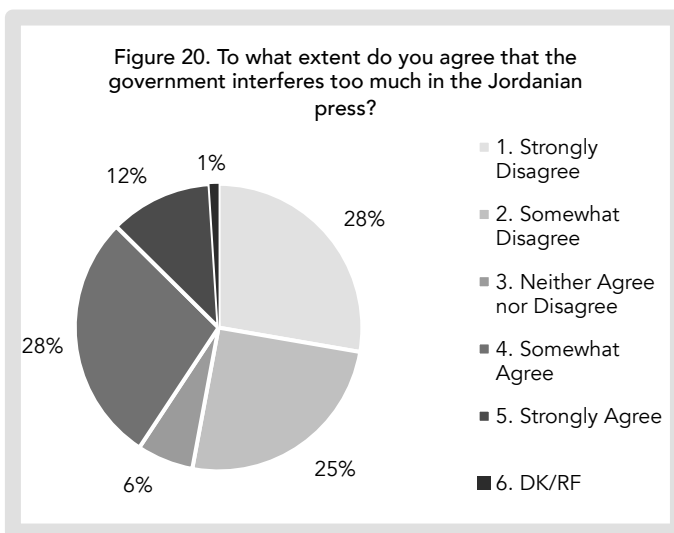
*"I saw on Facebook the other day that a few of my son's friends were saying that they were surprised that they were wanted for possessing and selling drugs, as well as for attempted murder. I knew these boys, and I knew that they were not bad, but what can you do when the police send out a warrant for somebody's arrest? I suspected that they were being targeted for associating with my son, Maher, who went to Syria to fight against the Assad regime. Well, some days passed and not much was done about it. Then, one night, I was driving down the road on my way to prayers, and I saw some broken glass in the road. I wanted to keep going, but something told me to go back and check. Well, there in the street were the young boys, and the police were harassing them! I tried to calm things down, and another person tried to calm things down, and eventually we all went to talk to the officials. We settled things that night, but then it happened again! Can you believe it? I was in a café here in Dieban and suddenly, out of nowhere, we hear loud noises and smell gas. We go out into the street to find that the boys I was telling you about were being attacked. The police were attacking them – and they had done nothing, nothing but sit on the corner wanting a job. I don't know what's going on here. They think they're pharaohs or something, or that they can treat people like trash and get away with it. I respect the police and would never fight them because they are our sons too, but they need to treat people with respect."*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

**Government interference in the Jordanian press is a topic of national debate.**

A large proportion of respondents (40 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the government interferes too much in the Jordanian press, while 53 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed with the statement (see Figure 20). It is well known that the central government in Amman monitors the news networks and papers, maintaining a tight lead on what information is and is not published. Furthermore, if its interests are compromised, there are consequences for those responsible. For example, if a journalist publishes information that is later deemed to be harmful to Jordan's relations with other states, he or she can be tried for committing a minor form of terrorism. Perhaps facilitated by the ambiguity of the law in question – which was updated in 2014 – numerous journalists have been prosecuted for their opinions, most notably after the king and queen of Jordan marched with world leaders in Paris following the terrorist attacks on the French satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, in 2015.

This incident in particular brought to the forefront the ways in which Jordan's anti-terror laws can be used to inhibit free speech. And while respondents declined to comment in depth about this, the issue has become a topic of both national and international debate. For example, Joe Stork, Human Rights Watch's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, weighed in on the situation for Al Jazeera, stressing that "Jordan's concerns over its security situation shouldn't translate into branding journalists and writers as security threats merely for doing their jobs or expressing themselves peacefully. Jordan should stop prosecuting journalists and revise its terrorism law to remove vague language used to limit peaceful speech".<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, respondents were predominantly concerned about how these laws might affect them personally.

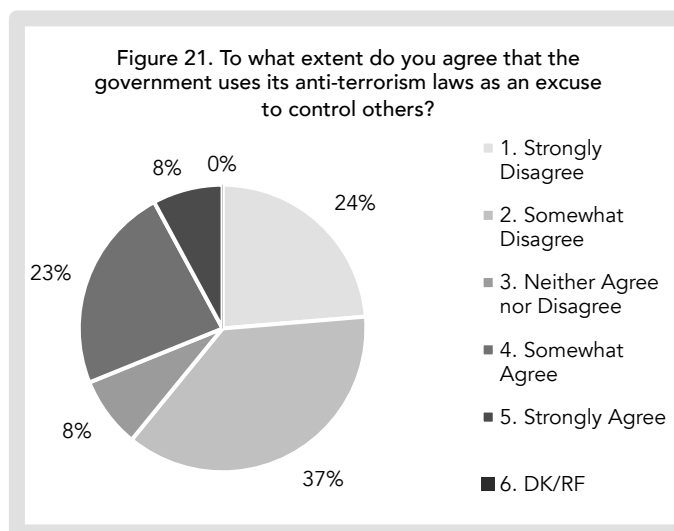


*"The government shouldn't be following people because of their opinions. If we want to stage a sit-in against Israel's occupation of Palestine, that's our right. They shouldn't label protestors terrorists for protesting, and they should respect independent media."*

(Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

Though a majority of respondents believed that anti-terrorism laws are used appropriately, some feared that they are used to silence political activists.

For some, the way in which the government uses its current anti-terrorism laws was a notable cause for concern. Indeed, while 61 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, 31 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the government uses its anti-terror laws as an excuse to control others (see Figure 21). This carries a host of implications, each one affecting the already delicate relationship between citizens and state. Some respondents lamented that citizens have become increasingly afraid of speaking out and expressing themselves fully. They feared that now, unlike any other time in Jordanian history,



<sup>68</sup> Alami, Aida 2015. 'Jordan's "anti-terror" law cracks down on journalists', Al Jazeera, August 27, 2015.

crime-prevention laws enable the government to consider and prosecute social activism as if it were inherently subversive.<sup>69</sup> As justification for these anxieties, respondents on more than one occasion cited an incident in Dieban, in which twenty men were arrested for protesting against mass unemployment. In doing so, respondents expressed outrage at the government's handling of the situation – labeling the protesters as radicals and charging them for extreme behavior.<sup>70</sup> According to most, this was exemplary not only of government overreach, but also of government infringement of citizens' right to free speech. One respondent claimed that while his generation may be willing to overlook such injustices, it is unlikely that the younger generation will be equally tolerant.

*"Today, we have so many administrative provisions under the Crime Prevention Act that you could go to jail for talking about the mayor. I'm serious! We're almost living under martial law! They think that if they scare us, we'll obey them, but I'm not so sure. My generation will turn its head to this injustice, but the younger generation won't. If things continue as they are, young people will be coming from all over to Jordan to fight for justice just as my son went to Syria to fight."*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

### **Some consider the government's closure of the MB a violation of civil rights and freedoms.**

While the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (61 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, 32 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the government does not respect human rights and freedoms (see Figure 22). Those who agreed with the statement believed that the government is interfering too much in people's day-to-day lives. Indeed, they felt that the government does not want them to express their own opinions in public, and that it has taken steps to significantly limit their freedoms. Specifically, by forcing the MB to close its headquarters in Madaba – and indeed, throughout Jordan – following the group's failure to renew its political party license, the government may have aggravated these perceptions, especially among the youth who make up a large part of the IAF's support base. Indeed, although 55 percent disagreed, a significant 37 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the government interferes too much in controlling political parties (see Figure 23). Respondents warned that a growing impression of government violations of basic rights and civil liberties might consequently increase propensity toward VE.

*"Not giving people their liberties, not allowing them to express themselves, imposing opinions on the public and shutting down political parties – the government does all that, and it's wrong. This is what makes young people think about which groups they might like to support. They become*

<sup>69</sup> "We are not made to feel like we can express ourselves here. We have to have free expression of opinion and thought. Social activists aim to benefit society, but the government often works against them by labeling activists terrorists. This is wrong." (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

<sup>70</sup> "We should be guaranteed rights to think and express ourselves the way we see fit. Apparently, the government has forgotten that we're supposed to have these freedoms. Take those young boys in Dieban – the ones who protested the economic situation in the town for 58 days – for example. The government did everything it could to label them extremists, even though everybody in town knew that they were good young men." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

*extreme and leave home because the government refuses to give them justice.”*

*(Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)*

Figure 22. To what extent do you agree that the government does not respect people's human rights and freedoms?

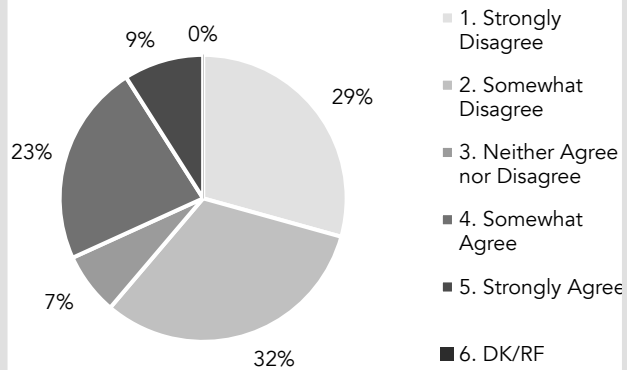
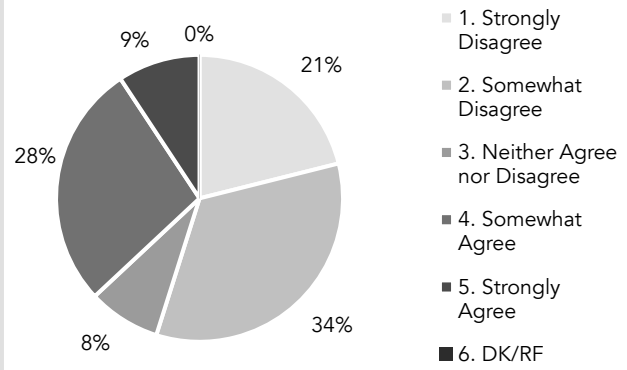


Figure 23. To what extent do you agree that the government interferes too much in controlling political parties?



## 5.0 PSYCHOSOCIAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

### 5.1 LOCUS OF CONTROL

Many respondents believed that the authorities are ignoring them, and some feared that locals might one day overcome their dependency and seek revenge against the government.

Many respondents voiced frustration with their leaders, complaining that no matter what they do, the government continues to ignore their demands for economic and political reform. This sentiment aligned with quantitative data, which showed that while the majority of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, a large percentage (33 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that it is useless trying to get the government to listen to them (see Figure 24). There is reason to believe that locals have been more than patient with the government as it scrambles to find solutions to the problems of its citizens. But there is equal evidence suggesting that, as tensions rise throughout the country, those who are most affected by the economic slowdown – like the youth – could increasingly turn to VEOs in order to better their situation in life. One respondent complained that people in his community have struggled for a long time and have yet to see a response from the government. He worried that at some point, people in Mlaih (just 11 miles south east of Madaba City) will come to the same realization as some VEO recruits: feeling powerless to improve their situations in life, he warned that otherwise peaceful citizens might seek revenge against their government. In such circumstances, any VEO presence in Madaba would become a profound threat to the stability of the governorate. Although this does not appear to be an immediate possibility for many, a considerable 31 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, while 61 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that it is better to die in revenge than to live on in shame (see Figure 25).

*"Some people cling so long to this fictional dream that they can change things when, in all seriousness, they can't change a thing. They can't fix their neighbors' problems; God help them, they cannot fix their own. And one day they realize that. One day they wake up and realize that they are powerless, and they want revenge against the establishment that wronged them and others. That's really why people join these groups, if you want the truth."*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

Figure 24. To what extent do you agree that it is useless trying to get the government to listen to you?

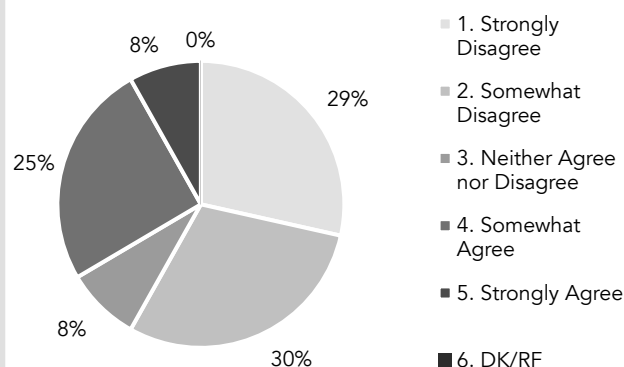
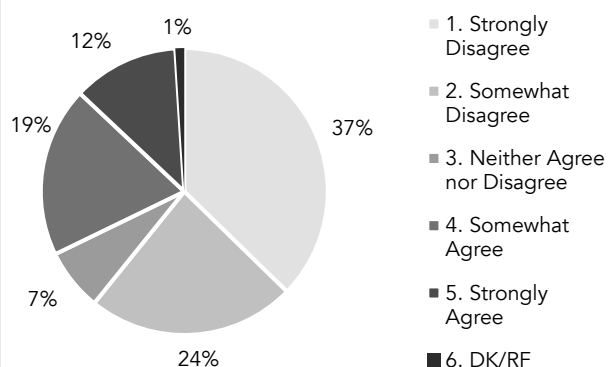


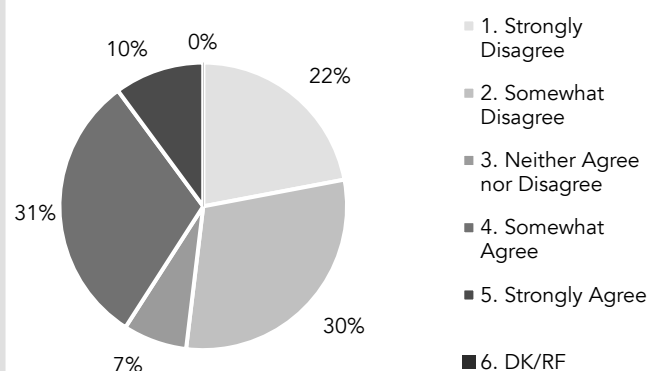
Figure 25. To what extent do you agree that it is better to die in revenge than live on in shame?



### Many locals have lost faith in the electoral process.

While the majority (53 percent) of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that there is no point in voting, as it does not change anything, a considerable 41 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed with the statement (see Figure 26). Several respondents cited this lack of confidence in the electoral process as a chief concern, noting that if citizens lose faith in their own power to change their lives through voting, they might turn to VEOs as an alternative means to achieve a desired end. This was a particular worry in regard to local youth. One respondent explained that young people in poor areas often grow up wanting to become involved in something that can benefit themselves and their communities.

Figure 26. To what extent do you agree that you do not feel that there is a point in voting, as it doesn't change anything?



However, he noted that the realization of this ambition is inhibited by a general discouragement from taking part in the political process.<sup>71</sup> Considering that the youth population constitutes roughly 55 percent of Jordan's overall population,<sup>72</sup> this is valid concern. Another respondent stressed that all locals – not just youth – should be reassured that voting and actively working together to benefit their society is a worthy cause and, in fact, the only choice they have if they truly want to avoid the radicalization of their communities. The same respondent shared a personal story to illustrate how he, a member of the People's Democratic Party in Madaba, was able to rally the people in

<sup>71</sup> "I think the youth who have grown up in marginalized communities that are void of healthy political involvement are more at risk. They want to involve themselves in something, and they want to better their situation here, but they feel like they can't do that in the legal way, and so they join these groups." (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

<sup>72</sup> CIA World Factbook 2016. 'Jordan: People and Society', *Central Intelligence Agency*, September 16, 2016.



his community together to pressurize the government into recognizing policies of proportional representation.

*"I was a member of the central committee of the Jordanian People's Democratic Party. I was appointed as the secretary of Madaba and responsible for Madaba province. I started by convincing the young with the main ideas of the party, highlighting the struggle between the Jordanian and Palestinian people. We made it our goal to liberate Jerusalem, as well as to pressure the government to establish an elected parliament. We wanted people to participate in political organizations. They need to be involved if they want to keep their children safe. We can still make change if we come together, and the people have to understand that."*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

**Locals believe that with high levels of public participation, volunteering and social outreach has the potential to improve overall happiness in even the poorest of neighborhoods.**

While 28 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that they do not feel part of their community, the majority (63 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed with the statement (see Figure 27). Nonetheless, DI respondents suggested that as a result of worsening economic conditions throughout Jordan, certain areas – particularly rural towns like Dieban and Mlaih, which are far from the richer cultural life of bigger cities such as Madaba – have experienced a reduction in community investment on behalf of local residents. This view corresponds with quantitative data, which revealed that many residents are unconvinced that their efforts will be worthwhile: while 44 percent of respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, 44 percent also 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that those who work the hardest are never rewarded the most (see Figure 28). According to some respondents, a lack of community engagement and investment leaves the most marginalized areas vulnerable to VEO messaging that could in time threaten the social fabric of the country. One respondent identified this issue as a "cultural problem", and bemoaned what he considered the failure of communities to unite in protest and capitalize on their collective potential.<sup>73</sup>

A number of respondents expressed similar frustrations, and time and again they voiced the need for citizens to collaborate in order to strengthen their communities. The most popular advice that they gave for achieving this end – that is, other than government investment in their communities – was encouraging volunteer work and outreach in at risk communities. They hoped that such activity would not only lower the risk of radicalization across Madaba, but also bring communities together in a way that will help them manage future problems more effectively. Some respondents admitted that certain communities have come a long way in terms of public engagement, although they did not specify which ones. Meanwhile, since they sponsor lectures and programs related to the improvement of Madaba's economy, civil society organizations are valuable assets to local marginalized communities. Respondents singled out the All Jordan Youth Commission in this respect, which has a local office in Madaba City and provides vocational

---

<sup>73</sup> "Jordan's problem is a cultural problem. The way I see it – and you may disagree – is that there are two Jordans. One is made up of the sheep who stay to themselves and accept their lot in life, what's coming to them, and people who don't accept theirs and try to change it. It is a cultural problem because these two Jordans never meet to discuss their problems and demand change." (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

training for young people.<sup>74</sup> The organization is also known to draw significant support for its blood drives, as well as for its programs to improve local communities. In 2012 for example, the group sponsored a program entailing courses in valuable life skills such as communication, leadership and team-building – all of which are important for the survival of Madaba’s poorest and most at risk neighborhoods.

*“The social and economic circumstances here play a role in pushing people toward radicalization. If we want to solve this problem, we have to work toward making Jordan an enlightened society. That means getting people involved in their communities through outreach and volunteer programs. The places that need this kind of involvement the most are the rural areas where people’s needs have been neglected so long.”*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

Figure 27. To what extent do you agree that you do not feel part of your community?

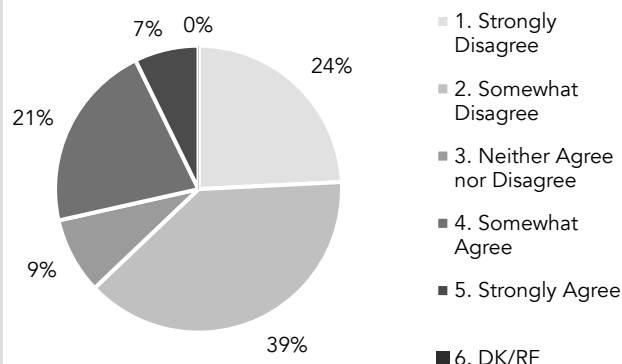
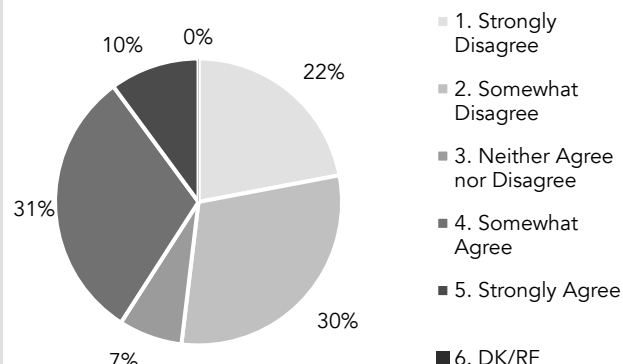


Figure 28. To what extent do you agree that the people who work the hardest are never rewarded the most?



In order to reduce propensity toward VE among youth, locals urge the government to create jobs supplemented by workshops and lectures.

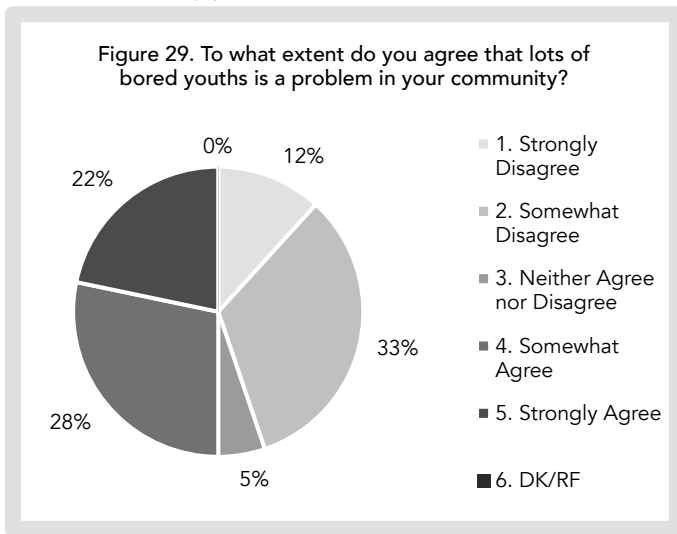
Respondents believed that the youth – specifically those aged 15-25 – are the cohort most at risk of becoming radicalized. The chief explanation proposed for this was youth disenfranchisement, which is reportedly resulting from either a lack of local activities or a deficit of employment opportunities in the governorate.<sup>75</sup> That said, when asked whether bored youths is a problem in their community, respondents’

<sup>74</sup> “Civil society institutions like the ‘We Are All Jordan Initiative’ [AJYC] hold programs and lectures on different topics such as social and economic development in Jordan. With each new project, they train the youth so that they will be successful and less likely to join terrorist groups.” (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>75</sup> “The youth are most at risk here in Madaba, and especially those living in rural areas. There are no jobs for them to take and they are very poor, so ISIS can reach out to them and recruit them by offering them money.” (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

views were mixed. While 50 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, 45 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed (see Figure 29).

This suggests that most respondents believed VE among youth to be the result of something more than a general lack of things to do in their community. In a number of communities – including the eastern and western portions of Madaba City and the communities of Dieban and Mlaih districts (south of Madaba City) – poverty and unemployment among youth were cited as recurring problems. In each of these areas, crime is on the rise and drug abuse – particularly among teenagers – is becoming more pressing by the year. To solve these problems, and to ensure that young locals do not become radicalized, respondents recommended that the government direct funds to Madaba’s private sector. This, they argued, would not only aid struggling businesses in the governorate, but would lay the foundation for more businesses to come to Madaba’s most marginalized communities. In addition to this strategy, respondents asserted that wherever possible, the government should work to involve local youth in lectures and workshops on VE, as well as volunteer work in their community.



*“The youth are affected [by VE] the most. They have no money, no jobs, and they are getting angry. The government can solve this problem by first bringing jobs to these young people, then involving the youth in lectures and workshops on fighting extremism, as well as involving them in development projects that help them achieve their goals, can be used to reach them. We need to do this everywhere – not just in the cities, but everywhere we can.”*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

**There are some local parks, gyms and sports clubs, but they are concentrated in Madaba City.**

Aside from two youth resource centers – the Hneida Female Youth Center and the Madaba Male Youth Center – that are already involved CVE efforts,<sup>76</sup> respondents claimed that there are plenty of public venues that could be used for programs and initiatives geared toward strengthening local communities. Respondents indicated that in Madaba City alone, there are two parks that could be utilized for CVE programs and workshops: Al Karama Park and Zain Bin Haretha Park. Both are known as gathering spots

<sup>76</sup> “There are two youth centers in Madaba, one for boys and one for girls. Both have large halls where workshops and lectures are held. In 2015, there was lecture at the Hneida Female Youth Center called “Protecting the Youth from Extremism,” which advocated imprisoning radicals and working to rehabilitate them. The Madaba Male Youth Center mainly focuses on tribal violence and seeks to decrease violence at Jordan’s universities. These are the only youth centers in the city.” (Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)

for youth, who enjoy playing soccer on the fields, and both are big enough to accommodate large crowds. Madaba is also home to a number of well-known cafés, gyms, restaurants and sports clubs that serve as meeting places for both young and old residents. However, as respondents noted, these venues are overwhelmingly concentrated within Madaba City. In fact, of 13 important venues listed by respondents, only one – Café Al Muhandes – is located outside Madaba City. Nevertheless, this becomes less problematic considering that most respondents did not consider Madaba City to be too far from their homes. Some of the main recreational facilities located in Madaba City are listed in the following table:

**Table 1. Main Recreational Facilities**

NAME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Abu Saif	Eastern neighborhood	A famous restaurant known as a hangout for government officials. The prices are suitable and the menu includes humus and falafel, in addition to other traditional dishes.
Alaa Al Din	King Abdullah street	A small shop where young and old residents gather to talk and drink cheap coffee.
Al Sa'a	Lover's street	This restaurant is famous for its quality, suitable prices, and location near the market square.
Al Wihda	Western neighborhood	Young and old gather to watch sporting events on television here. The club is an important part of the community, since it regularly hosts events – such as its marathon in honor of Jordanian troops in 2016 – that draw large crowds.
Classico	Lover's street	Youth regularly gather at this café to watch soccer matches.
Haret Jdoudna	King Talal street	An expensive restaurant in the city center that is famous for catering to foreigners and wealthy people from Amman.
Frankie's Hotdog and Burger	American University street	A cheap restaurant that is popular among students and locals alike. It specializes in

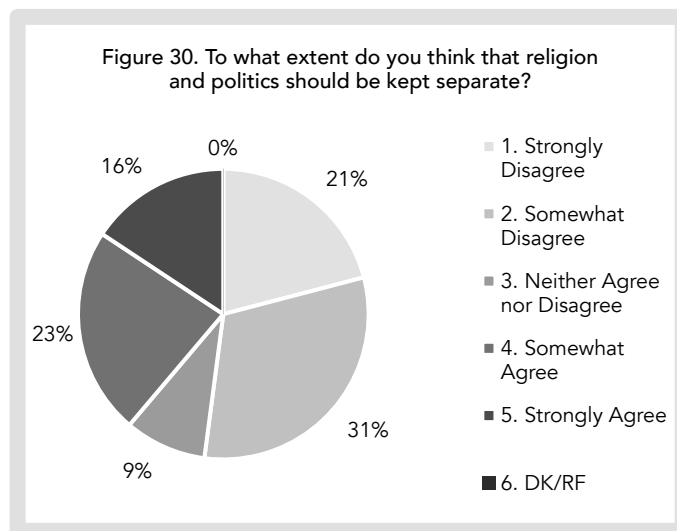
NAME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
		American food and is rumored to have the best burgers.
Panorama	Maeen street	This café is popular among young people because it sells cheap coffee and cake.
The Village Coffee Shop	King Abdullah street	This coffee shop is popular among young people, who go there to smoke and play cards in the shop's large hall.
Ziryab	King Talal street	A fast food restaurant popular among young people, who congregate in the large dining hall.

## 5.2 RELIGIOUS VALUES, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

**Most locals support religious diversity and inter-religious coexistence, and believe that religion and politics should be kept separate.**

Generally, respondents expressed moderate views on religion and its role in the world. In most cases, they believed that religion should be restricted to the mosque environment lest Jordan undergo difficulties common in theocratic states. This coincides with quantitative data, which revealed that while 39 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 52 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that religion and politics should be kept separate (see Figure 30). Consistent with the considerable minority here, respondents often condemned groups – including the MB – that are believed to be using religion and politics to promote VE. For instance, one respondent, a

retired journalist from Mlaih, linked the MB's interpretation of religion and politics with Wahhabism, calling it "a [poison] stream", and blaming it for at least part of Jordan's VE problem.<sup>77</sup> In accordance with this rejection of supposed politico-religious extremism, 62 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, while 31 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that all people should be free to practice whatever religion they choose (see Figure 31). Moreover, while 36 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 59 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that Muslims should avoid interacting with non-Muslims (see Figure 32). Respondents maintained that national stability depends on peaceful integration between the major religions. Likewise, they claimed that a cordial relationship between local Christians and Muslims is one reason why Madaba is not known as a center of VE or VEO membership.<sup>78</sup> One respondent stressed that debate is key to Madaba's success in this respect.



*"People accept people's differences here, whether it be differences in religion or race – and they respect people's opinions, too. Debate is very important, but both parties have to see where the other is coming from, and evidence should always be taken into account. Stubbornness is not our friend in this fight."*

<sup>77</sup> "The Muslim Brotherhood are highly responsible for what's happening here and around the region. They are a stream where religion and politics flow together, and those who drink of its poison Wahhabi ideology are ignorant and godforsaken." (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

<sup>78</sup> "The historic coexistence between Christians and Muslims has made Muslims more open, accepting and forgiving to others. Madaba is a province that has no hatred to others between its communities. Christians and Muslims protect each other's religions and defend it. This is the reason why we have not seen much extremism and terrorism here." (Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)

(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

Figure 31. To what extent do you think that all people should be free to practice whatever religion they choose?

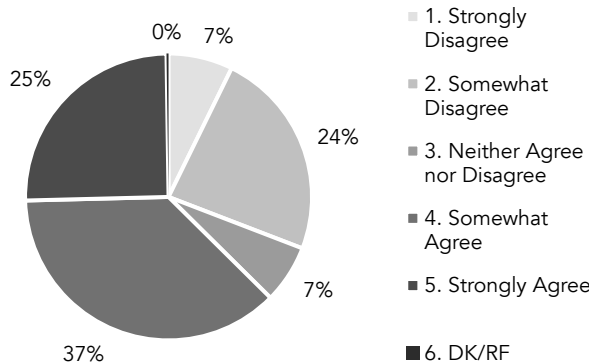
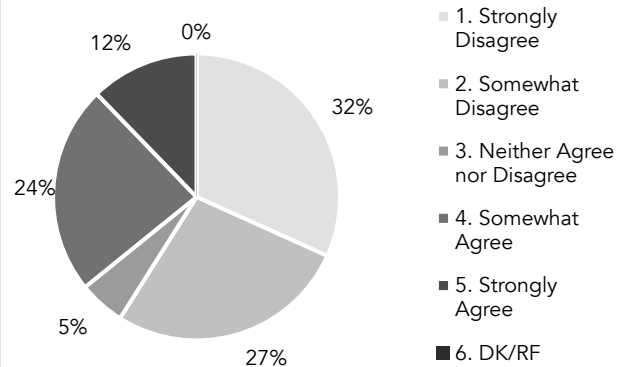


Figure 32. To what extent do you think that Muslims should avoid interacting with non-Muslims?

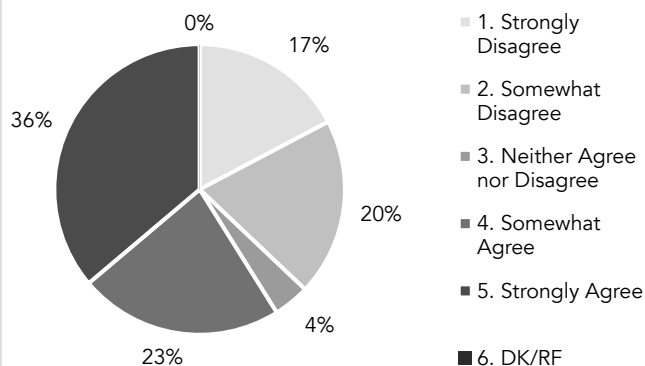


The majority of locals maintain that Islam does not allow the killing of others – except in cases of defense and injustice.

Respondents stressed that Islam is a religion of peace and condemned ISIS for indiscriminately murdering innocent people. Respondents agreed that this is the dominant view among locals. That said, while the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (59 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 37 percent 'strongly' or

'somewhat' disagreed that Islam does not allow the killing of other people (see Figure 33). Nonetheless, this does not mean that 37 percent of respondents outright advocated violence against those with whom they disagree. On the contrary, these respondents may have been reflecting a belief that, in cases of defense and injustice, Islam does permit Muslims to kill others. Substantiating this observation is the fact that many locals support Hamas and other groups that portray themselves as acting on behalf of common people – such as the FSA (see section 2.1 Support for VEOs). Defense of their religion should also be considered as a possible explanation for these quantitative findings.

Figure 33. To what extent do you think that Islam does not allow the killing of other people?



*"We see that ISIS kills innocent people, saying that they do it for Islam. That is not so. They do not represent the world of Islam. They are a perversion of our religion and we hate them for it."*

*(Female, 30, Program Developer, Madaba)*

### Locals believe that it is the responsibility of religious leaders to teach religious moderation.

Respondents recalled that in the past, several prominent imams and sheikhs in Madaba – most notably in the western portion of Madaba City – were guilty of promoting Salafist ideologies to their congregations. However, respondents maintained that those leaders have since been ousted as radicals, and that locals are fully committed to eradicating VE from their communities. With that in mind, respondents insisted that local religious leaders are now potential positive influences in Madaba. Indeed, according to many this potential has already been realized, with local imams using Friday prayers as opportunities to discuss some of Islam's most controversial issues, including self-styled Islamist groups such as ISIS and the negative realities of its 'caliphate'.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, respondents maintained that while the majority of religious leaders use their influence in this way, some – approximately 30 percent according to one respondent – do not. Reportedly, these figures, although not necessarily supporting ISIS and other VEOs, do not go out of their way to oppose them either. In any case, respondents were confident that religious leaders, supported by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, have a unique opportunity to fight VE in ways that government institutions cannot. The tables below provide basic details of some of the main mosques and religious leaders in Madaba.

*"In our area, the majority of the imams and religious speakers are employed staff at the Ministry of Awqaf. Most of them – say, 70 percent – use their influence to publicly speak out against terrorism and extremism. They tell the people that ISIS will destroy Jordan if we let them. They shift between mosques and they can reach a lot of the people that way. The other 30 percent do not necessarily support Daesh, but they don't speak out against them either."*

*(Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)*

Table 2. Important Mosques

FIVE IMPORTANT MOSQUES IN MADABA	
Name	Location and Brief Description
Al Hamad Mosque	Located near the vegetable market in the eastern neighborhood of Madaba, this mosque is popular among workers and families alike.

<sup>79</sup> "Our religious leaders are not very radical and most of their Friday prayers are against ISIS. They call them radical and say that they ruined Syria." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)



FIVE IMPORTANT MOSQUES IN MADABA	
Al Quds Mosque	This is the main mosque in Madaba Camp.
Issa Ibn Mariam Mosque	Located in Al Rashad neighborhood in northern Madaba, the mosque is popular for its imam, Sheikh Bashar Amira.
King Hussein Bin Talal Mosque	This is a popular mosque in the center of Madaba City. Shoppers often go there to pray.
Western Madaba Mosque	The largest mosque in Madaba, it is located near the Ministry of Education building in Madaba City. Members of many tribes – including the Abu Ghanam, Ghleilat, Shakhatra, Al Shahin, Al Masanda, Al Wakhyan, Al Shawabka and Al Azaydeh tribes – regularly attend services here.

**Table 3. Important Religious Leaders**

FIVE IMPORTANT MOSQUES IN MADABA	
Name	Brief Description
Dr. Hamza Al Azaydeh	Preacher at the mosque in Shuhada' neighborhood (Madaba City) and professor of Islamic sciences at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University in Amman.
Mohammad Ahmad Al Shawabkeh	Preacher at Al A'rish Mosque in Gharnata village (outside of the main city).
Mohammad Ahmad Ineiban	Preacher at the Western Madaba Mosque in Azaydeh neighborhood, the largest mosque in Madaba.
Naser Al Asta	Preacher at Tawheed Mosque in Al Nadim neighborhood.
Youssef Abu Hussein	As the Mufti of Madaba, he plays a major role in CVE efforts in the governorate, and has given many talks on religious moderation. He was also a participant in the International Week of Coexistence in 2012.
Dr. Imad Abu Qa'oud	Preacher at Al Rahman Hospital in Maeen district and respected by all who know him.

#### FIVE IMPORTANT MOSQUES IN MADABA

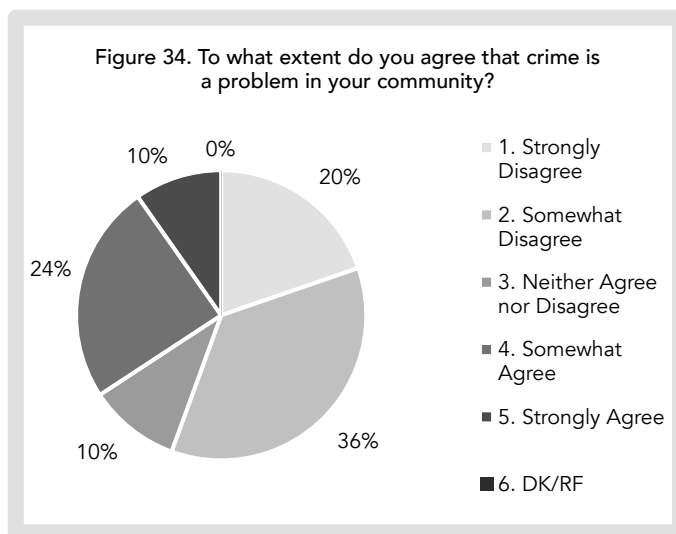
Mohammad Al Sinyan	Preacher at Al Hawa Mosque in Maeen.
Mo'tasem Al Bawareed	Preacher at Al Farouq Hospital in Dieban.
Ziad Al Ta'mari	Preacher at the old hospital in Maeen and an employee of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

### 5.3 EXPOSURE TO CRIME AND CONFLICT

Although not considered a problem for most, crime may be on the rise in certain areas of the governorate.

Respondents were somewhat divided over whether crime is a local problem: while a majority (56 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that crime is a problem in their community, 34 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed (see Figure 34). Interestingly, only 13 percent of respondents reported having directly suffered from crime compared with 87 percent who reported that they have not (see Figure 35). This suggests that overall, crime is not a serious problem in Madaba. However, respondents claimed that throughout the governorate, and particularly in highly populated areas, crime is on the rise. Indeed, they cited Madaba Camp (the western

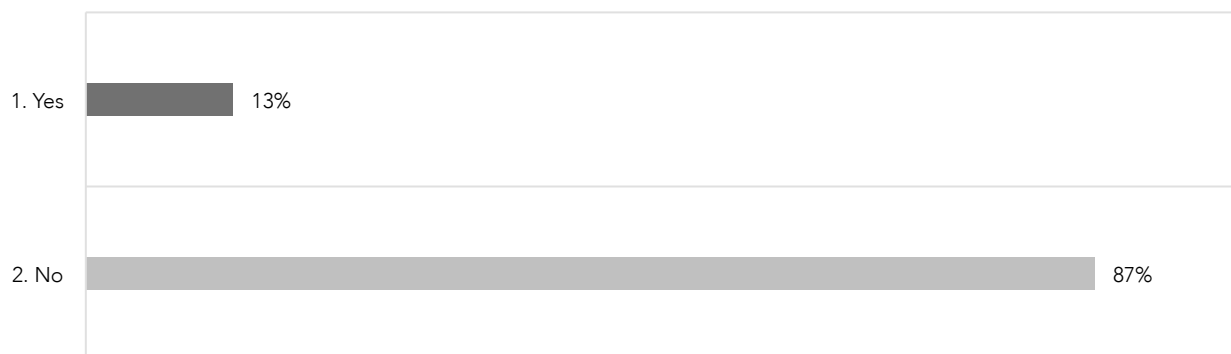
portion of Madaba City) as one location where high profile crimes including murder often occur. Once a temporary home for Palestinian refugees, Madaba Camp has expanded beyond its original borders. It was reported that unemployment is exceptionally high there, and that with no jobs to occupy and sustain them, many of the camp's inhabitants have turned to crime and drugs. That said, researchers gave no indication that measures are being taken to slow the spread of crime here or to combat it. Thus, they warned that if crime is permitted to continue unchecked – especially in Madaba Camp, but also in Al Faisaliya in the north of Madaba district, and Madaba City – the governorate can expect an escalation in crime rates in the near or distant future. Respondents discussing the issue implied that what crime does exist in Madaba is usually related to drugs.



*"It doesn't happen often, but sometimes people are killed in Madaba. One day, a man disappeared from his home. He was gone for three days before the police found his body somewhere. He had been stabbed seven times. Eventually, the people who killed him were caught. They were about 17 years old, still in school. They were mixed up in drugs I suppose. It was so sad because the guy they killed had three young kids."*

(Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

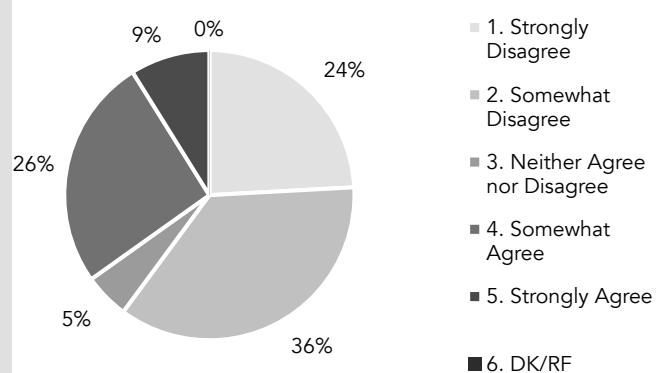
Figure 35. Have you or your family directly suffered from crime?



### Respondents feared that drug abuse has become a fact of daily life in certain parts of Madaba.

Most respondents did not see drug abuse as a problem in their locality. Indeed, while 35 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 60 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that drug abuse is a problem in their community (see Figure 36). Reflecting the minority here, some respondents claimed that there are certain areas in the governorate where drugs have been allowed to proliferate and where citizens – and especially youth – are more likely to encounter them. One such place is Madaba Camp, which has now become the western part of Madaba City. Perhaps linked to high rates of drug abuse here, unemployment in this part of town has been high for decades and little is being done to solve such problems. Here and elsewhere – such as the eastern part of Madaba City – it is reported that drug dealers congregate near schools and solicit young children aged 15-20. One respondent recalled that drug dealers regularly lure students with free drugs. He explained that once these students are addicted – and get their friends involved – prices go up, rendering it difficult for clients to pay.<sup>80</sup> To locals, this is a dangerous cycle and one that must be stopped. They believed that drug addicts will do anything to get their fix, and they worried that many young people who are unable to pay for their drugs will turn to theft in order to maintain their highs. Some even suggested

Figure 36. To what extent do you agree that drug abuse is a problem in your community?



<sup>80</sup> "Drug dealers often go to the schools and sell to children. And this is how they bait them: the first time, the drugs are free, but they have to pay the next time. Inevitably, the kids bring their friends to buy drugs, too. I think they're from ISIS because I heard that the drug dealers have beards." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

that those involved with drugs might develop connections to jihadists and VEOs, who reportedly market the drug Captagon – rumored to increase stamina and make one fearless in battle. Furthermore, some respondents identified Madaba Camp and the eastern part of the city as home to disenfranchised young people, who were either born into a life of crime and drugs or failed to reach their potential at university. That said, suggestions for solving the problem varied, with some advocating increased police presence in and around these areas to contain drug trafficking to other parts of the governorate, and others calling for training workshops to be set up in areas where drug abuse is known to be a problem. Regardless of the favored solution however, respondents emphasized that attention to these neighborhoods must come quickly.

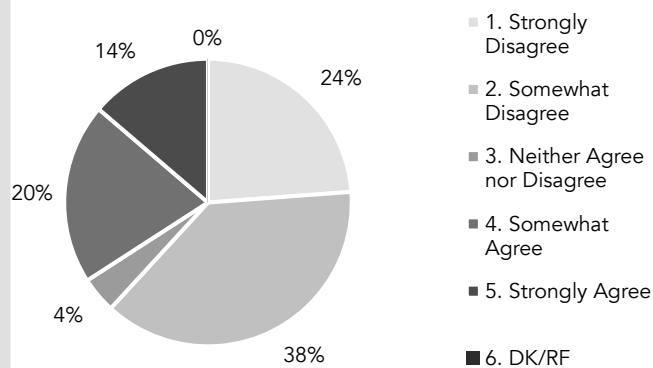
*"Drugs are a real and growing problem. We can't afford to wait around for something to be done five or 10 years from now. The government should take steps to reduce drug abuse in poor neighborhoods before it spreads to other parts of Madaba and throughout Jordan."*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

The majority of locals believe that gun violence is not a problem in their community, although it appears to be on the rise in Jordan, for which respondents blamed tribes.

34 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, while 62 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that the availability of weapons is a problem in their community (see Figure 37). That said, some respondents were concerned that weapons seem to be available for sale everywhere in the governorate. Furthermore, there are concerns that where weapons exist, violent crime has a chance of taking hold, especially in marginalized communities. Certain areas of the governorate validate this concern, particularly where tribes exercise influence over local communities. For example, Al Faisaliya, a town lying northwest of Madaba City, was cited as a community in which tribal violence has become a way of life. A number of tribes occupy the area – including the tribes of Abu Ghanam, Al Masa'eed, and Al Qa'af'a – and a number of incidents involving guns and knives have been reported there. Other areas where weapons are known to have been used are the eastern and western parts of Madaba City.

Figure 37. To what extent do you agree that the availability of weapons is a problem in your community?



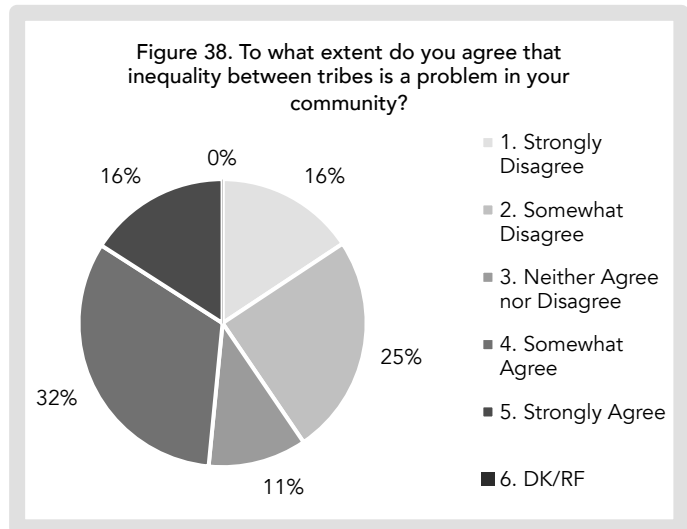
*"In Madaba, having weapons around is normal. Any house in Madaba has weapons. People like them here. People come here to buy weapons in bulk. Many people sell weapons here, so there's*

*no one place to mention. Our worry is that weapons like guns and knives drive up crime, especially in poorer towns and villages."*

*(Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)*

**Tribal violence accounts for a great deal of Madaba's crime, especially in poor neighborhoods, and some worry that the problem will intensify.**

Locals are divided on whether inequality between tribes is a problem. Indeed, while 48 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 41 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that inequality between tribes is a problem in their community (see Figure 38). A further 11 percent neither agreed nor disagreed (see Figure 38). Discussing the issue of tribal conflict, respondents explained that for some time, much local crime has been the result of ongoing or upstart feuds among different tribes in the governorate, and that tribal squabbles account for many cases heard in the courts. Although tribal violence is a known problem in a number of local



communities, there are certain areas where it has reached striking proportions. For example, in the town of Al Faisaliya, to the northwest of Madaba City, tribes are rumored to have resorted to using weapons in order to solve minor arguments. In other areas – most notably in Madaba City, where a tribal feud resulted in two gun injuries and a stabbing – regular community activity has on occasion come to a standstill as tribes retaliate against each other. However, it does appear that tribal violence is decreasing. For example, of all of the instances of tribal violence that researchers could recall, most happened in 2009 and the most recent occurred in 2011. However, maintaining peace between wealthy and poorer tribes remains a key issue. Respondents emphasized this point, insisting that in communities where poverty and unemployment are worst, both the local and central government will need the full cooperation of every tribe.

*"After the killing of one man – a bus driver – everything in Madaba was closed for three days. The police were having lots of problems with the tribes. The Azaydeh family was involved, but I don't know the families of the kids. I heard that their families have good ties with the government, and that they have a relative who is a minister. But the Azaydehs are a big tribe here. We help each other so you don't want to mess with us."*

*(Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)*

### Locals worry that, if conditions worsen, the government could lose the support of the tribes.

Some respondents believed that if unemployment and poverty in Madaba worsen, and if the government does not soon take action to solve these problems, tribal violence will increase. Not only that, there were concerns that the government could eventually lose the support of Madaba's tribes. As Jordan's tribes function as crucial bridges between citizens and the regime, this would have damaging knock-on effects, potentially increasing locals' susceptibility to VE and VEO recruitment. However, one respondent, a tribal leader, dismissed the possibility of a tribe-government fallout, explaining that tribes and the state are interdependent. For example, while tribes are obligated to provide for their members, especially the poor, on occasion they require additional help from the government. Meanwhile, the same respondent insisted that in receiving the loyalty of the tribes, the government should recognize that its interests are being served in terms of minimizing public dissent.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, several respondents felt that tribe members who feel neglected by the government have a higher chance of becoming radicalized.<sup>82</sup> Contributing to this observation, respondents claimed that increasingly, the most powerful tribes in Jordan – who are not necessarily immune to problems like poverty and unemployment – are being lobbied by VEOs for their support.<sup>83</sup> For the time being however, most respondents maintained that local tribes remain loyal to the regime. Nonetheless, they implied that tribal influence may be weakening, and warned that in the near future, residents – especially the youth – may not be equally inclined to follow their tribes' direction.<sup>84</sup>

*"There is a saying that the son of a clan works for the system when he is happy and works against it when he is not. He depends on the state, of course, for his job and good life, but when he feels cheated, he takes out his frustrations all at once. He will join groups like ISIS as a result of marginalization and a lack of awareness. That's a big worry here, that the clans will turn against the government, because the government's existence depends on the clans."*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

---

<sup>81</sup> "Tribes play an essential role in preventing young people from falling prey to extremism. People trust their tribes, so the tribes must provide for their people. They must aid poor families and clans, and they must make sure that their children are not being radicalized. But oftentimes, the tribes need help from the government. The tribes are loyal to the government, but it's a two-way street – the government should support the tribes as well." (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

<sup>82</sup> "Members of specific tribes may complain that they are being deprived of rights, or that the government is working against them in different ways. They may be prone to extremism." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>83</sup> "We here in Madaba are Bedouins and live in tribes, so of course we are targeted by these groups. They want the strongest of us on their side. I think they want to organize a coup in Jordan like they did in Syria and Iraq, but it will not work. We are smarter than that. We would be killing ourselves if we joined them." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>84</sup> "The tribal culture here has not allowed the existence of such groups. The people here are religious, but they are loyal to their tribes. Even if individual people support these [VEO] groups, if the tribes are against them, the people will not leave to fight for [VEOs]. But there is coming a day when the tribes will not be able to stop their people from going." (Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

Table 4. Most Influential Tribes

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL TRIBES IN MADABA		
Name	Leader(s)	Location/Description
Al Mawazra	Ghaleb Al Mawazra (JAF Lieutenant)	Large tribe with influence in Maeen.
Al Hmeimat	Ibrahim Al Hmeimat (JAF Sergeant)	Active in Maeen.
Al Qteish	Ahmad Al Qteish (Social Activist)	Active in Maeen and famous for overseeing local waste collection.
Al Shawabka	Zaid Al Shawabka (Lawyer)	Active in Maeen and Madaba City.
Al Fuqaha'	Mohammad Mushrif Al Fuqaha'	As a Bani Hamida tribe, this is one of the largest tribes in Madaba. It is active in Dallagha, Mukawir, Al Der, Al Jabal, Wadi Al Hawama, Wadi Al Shajara and A'rtouz.
Al Azaydeh	Mohammad Al Azaydeh	Active in Madaba City and is one of the only tribes of the western portion of the city.
Al Breizt	Abd Al Ra'ouf Al Breizat (Sheikh)	One of the most influential tribes in Madaba. It is active in Dieban and its leaders are important figures in local government.
Al Wakhyan	A'ref Abd Al Jalil Al Wakhyan	One of the largest and most influential tribes in Madaba. It is active in Madaba City and its leaders are important figures in local government.
Abu Ghanam	Ahmad Salameh Abu Ghanam	Active in Al Faisaliya and Madaba City. As a Balgawiya tribe, it is one of the largest and most influential in the governorate.



### THE MOST INFLUENTIAL TRIBES IN MADABA

Name	Leader(s)	Location/Description
Al Masanda	Youssef Al Masanda	A Balgawiya tribe active in both Al Faisaliya and Madaba City.

#### Locals blame national drug abuse and gun violence on regional VEO activity.

According to locals, drugs and weapons go hand-in-hand. That is, when asked, several respondents claimed that where weapons are regularly used and abused, drug abuse is most likely a corresponding issue. That said, many respondents claimed that in recent years, these problems have been growing in intensity, and several blamed the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq. In most cases, respondents believed that Jordan's problems with drug abuse and weapons are due to a high demand for such wares in neighboring countries. They feared that such demand, and Jordan's convenient location, has made the country the natural route for caravans of these illicit goods. These fears are perhaps heightened by media reports, which often concern arrests of drug and weapons smugglers. That said, respondents suggested that these reports have two effects on the public: they either increase locals' awareness of the issue, or cause them to panic and believe that drugs and gun crime are more prominent in their community than they really are.

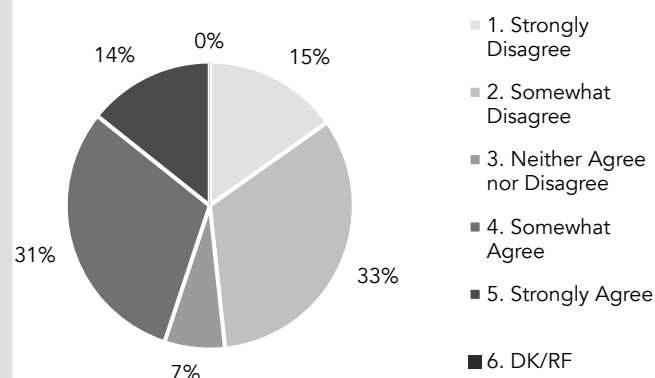
*"We hear a lot about weapon and drug smugglers, and it makes us very afraid. I think they have been planted in Jordan, or are passing through to some other place, like Syria."*

*Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)*

#### Locals are divided on whether inequality between East and West Bank Jordanians is a problem.

While 45 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 48 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that inequality between East and West Bank Jordanians is a problem in their community (see Figure 39). Reflecting the latter, one respondent maintained that the two groups have a close and

Figure 39. To what extent do you agree that inequality between East and West Bank Jordanians is a problem in your community?



cordial relationship,<sup>85</sup> although he was wary of the potential negative consequences that could arise if inequality between East and West Bank Jordanians transpired and/or deepened. Meanwhile, other respondents claimed that although local East and West Bank populations have become increasingly homogenized, there remain instances of economic inequality between them. In this respect, respondents singled out Madaba Camp – a former Palestinian refugee camp that has grown to merge with Madaba City – as one of the governorate’s most impoverished and crime-ridden communities. Here, murders are commonplace and children are reportedly forced to work in the streets.<sup>86</sup> Nonetheless, at least politically, West Bank Jordanians have allies who speak and work on their behalf and, indeed, on behalf of national unity. For instance, respondents claimed that the Jordanian Democratic People’s Party has, on a number of occasions, stood with the West Bank community to demand equal economic and political rights, and that the party continues to foster good relations between East and West Bank Jordanians. Its popularity is reportedly growing in Madaba, in part because of the support of young people in their twenties.

*“Neglecting some groups in favor of others always leads to extremism. For instance, extremist seeds have emerged in Syria because, for years, Sunnis were marginalized and deprived from holding high state positions, while Shias and Alawites were dominating the country. A similar problem could develop in Jordan if we neglect our Palestinian population. But we don’t.”*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

**Focus: A field researcher explains the influence of the Jordanian Democratic People’s Party.**

*“The Jordanian Democratic People’s Party is a political party in Jordan that was founded in 1989. It has an office in Madaba City and is popular with young people because of its social functions. The party is guided by Marxist ideology and seeks to analyze social reality with plans for changing it for the better. The party defends the right of Palestinians in Jordan to practice all citizenship rights, including involvement in politics, and seeks to increase their political activity. But they do not represent Palestinians exclusively. Instead, they seek to build a better Jordan by reinforcing Jordan’s national unity. At the same time, they educate citizens on not only the Palestinian cause for citizenship, but also their cause for statehood.”*

*(Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)*

<sup>85</sup> “After the Zionist occupation of Gaza, we here in Madaba received Palestinians warmly and welcomed them into our society. We are a very kind and accepting people here, and that is why we will remain untouched by extremism. There is no indication that there are any problems between Palestinians and Jordanians. We are kind to our Palestinian population.” (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

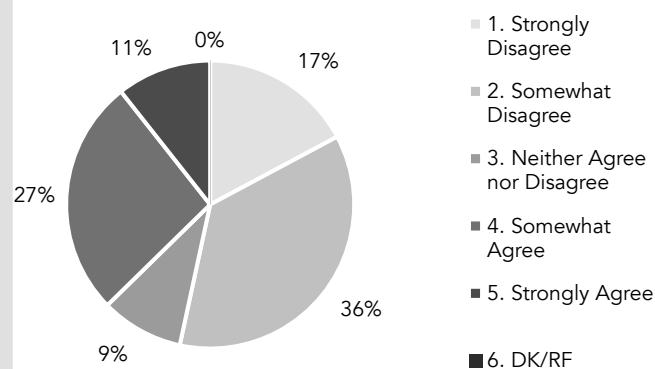
<sup>86</sup> “We documented two child labor cases in Madaba Camp: the first for a child named Moath Al Sleiman, 14 years old, who sells figs after school till sunset, and puts the money in the hands of his dad who works as a guard for a public school. The other case concerns a child named Mohammad Al Ta’mari. He left school, even though he is three years old, and sells guava on the sidewalk since last year.” (Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)

## Locals sympathize with Syrian refugees, but worry that they are taking their jobs.

Standing at just under 11,000 individuals, Madaba's share of refugees is small in comparison to that of other governorates in the north of Jordan. It has no large refugee camps, so those who have found their way into the governorate are spread throughout the countryside and in towns.<sup>87</sup>

That said, though the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (53 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, 38 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that inequality between Jordanians and Syrian refugees is a problem in their community (see Figure 40). In fact, the vast majority of respondents who discussed Syrian refugees worried that they are harming the country. They identified the presence of Syrian refugees as an enormous strain on Jordan's economy, thus hindering the country's capacity to provide for native Jordanians.<sup>88</sup> Supporting these remarks, other respondents explained that while most Jordanians sympathize with the refugees and seek justice on their behalf, they cannot help but feel cheated by them. They complained that refugees are willing to work longer hours for smaller wages – particularly in the construction industry – and therefore constitute formidable competition in an already tough job market.

Figure 40. To what extent do you agree that inequality between Jordanians and Syrian refugees is a problem in your community?



*"The people sympathize with the refugees. They feel sorry that they have been displaced, and that their homes have been destroyed, and they wish for the situation in Syria to be resolved as soon as possible. But at the same time, they see that refugees have had an impact on Jordan. They see that the infrastructure cannot handle all of them and they worry that they are taking their jobs. Labor laws say that the minimum wage for Jordanians is 150 JD for eight hours' work, but it is rumored that the refugees take smaller salaries and work more hours. This is the case for construction and plumbing jobs, and it has been reported to the media."*

*(Male, 5, Researcher, Madaba)*

## Some worry that Syrian refugees pose a risk to Jordan's national security.

Local worries concerning the presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan are not limited to fears that Syrians are stealing their jobs. On a number of occasions, respondents asserted that Syrian refugees may even pose a risk to Jordan's national security. One respondent for example, maintained that in some ways refugees

<sup>87</sup> The UN Refugee Agency 2016. 'Syria Regional Refugee Response', UNHCR, June 20, 2016.

<sup>88</sup> "The refugees are straining our resources as well as the government's ability to create jobs in Madaba. They are increasing the load on health centers and will continue to worsen the employment situation for as long as they are here." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

have betrayed the kindness and trust of the Jordanian people: she blamed them for a rise in national violent crime and an increase in drug abuse and weapons availability, as well as accusing them of advocating on behalf of VEOs.<sup>89</sup> Other respondents echoed this view, urging security forces to be on guard at all times to ensure that native-born Jordanians are being protected from this potential threat. That said, considering that there are not many refugees in Madaba, and that those who do live in the governorate are not housed together in large camps, the likelihood that Syrian refugees are responsible for increases in crime and VEO recruitment is low. Still, if Jordanians continue to hold these beliefs, increased tensions – and even open hostility – between Jordanians and Syrians in Madaba could ensue.

*“The influx of Syrian refugees may make it easier for extremism to take off in Jordan. The people are very suspicious of the refugees, and I don’t blame them. Jordan could also be affected by people who are sent to enter into refugee camps as refugees but turn out to be recruiters or terrorist cells. If I were security, I would be keeping a tight watch on our refugee population.”*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

---

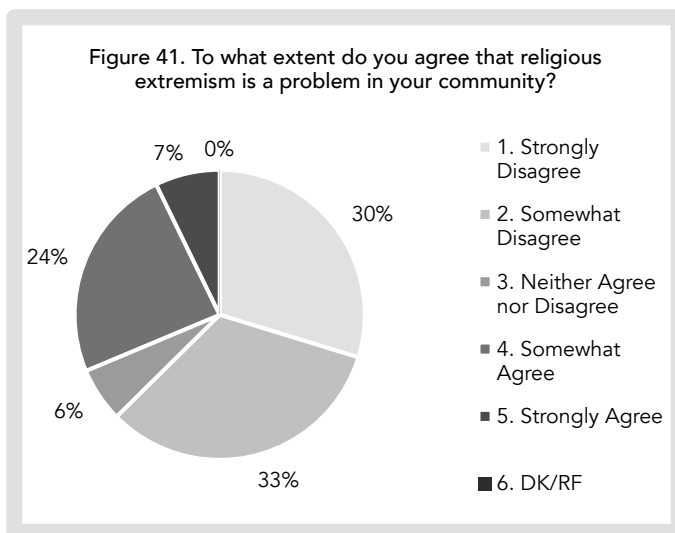
<sup>89</sup> “Outsiders come to our country as refugees and we welcome them with open arms. But as they come, they smuggle drugs and weapons into Jordan, making it a much more dangerous place. Not only that, they try to convince young people to join the groups that they say they were escaping.” (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

## 5.4 EXPOSURE TO VE AND PERCEPTIONS OF VEO THREAT

A majority of locals are convinced that religious extremism is not a problem in their community despite a large percentage believing that it is or could be in the future.

While 31 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that religious extremism is a problem in their community, 63 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed (see Figure 41). Meanwhile, only 16 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that they or their families have directly suffered from VE, while the vast majority (84 percent) reported that they have not (see Figure 42). One respondent denied that religious extremism exists at all in the governorate, claiming that extremism is something that happens only in far-off lands.<sup>90</sup> In this regard, extremism is in many ways more of a curiosity than an immediate issue for debate. As one respondent

put it, because cases of extremism and terrorism are exceedingly rare in the governorate, when something of this sort does occur, it is considered a phenomenon.<sup>91</sup> Another respondent supported this view, arguing that such is the infrequency at which locals hear of extremism that some forget that it is a threat to their community at all. For this, the same respondent applauded the security forces for keeping the population at ease in the face of real dangers. That said, the fact that 31 percent of GQ respondents recognized religious extremism as a problem in their community suggests that Madaba is not entirely devoid of extremist threats. Indeed, many respondents feared that VE might develop into a pressing issue in the near or distant future.



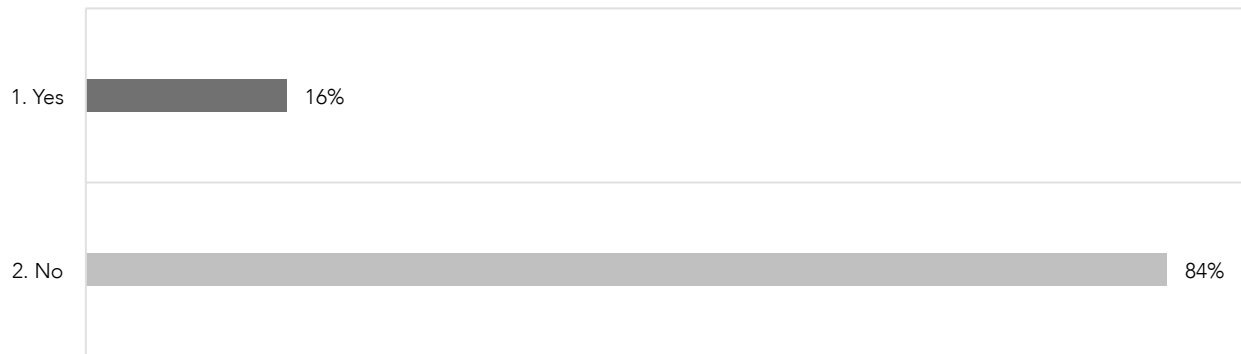
*"Extremism isn't considered a problem here because it's not really talked about. We have a lot to be thankful for. It doesn't happen often, but when we hear of a few instances the security forces keep that information away from us, and so we forget about it. But it certainly is a problem we must face."*

*(Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)*

<sup>90</sup> "I think extremism is less of a problem in Madaba today than it was in the past. We hear all the time about people getting killed in car wrecks and other accidents, but it has been a long time since somebody was killed because of ideological, religious, sectarian or racial reasons. And when it does happen, it happens in far off places. In my opinion extremism doesn't exist in Madaba." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>91</sup> "Cases of extremism are rare in Jordan, and especially rare in Madaba. It is considered a phenomenon here." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

Figure 42. Have you or your family directly suffered from VE?



**Locals believe that socio-economic problems and Syrian refugees might aggravate VE, but failing government intervention some maintain faith in community resilience.**

Respondents were not altogether dismissive of VE threats to their community, with many citing socio-economic issues as principal drivers. These issues include government corruption, the Syrian refugee crisis, poverty, unemployment and political injustice. In respect to the Syrian conflict, some respondents believed that locals who sympathize with those suffering from political injustice might be convinced to join VEOs and answer the call to jihad.<sup>92</sup> Others were concerned that Syrian refugees themselves may sow the seeds of radicalism in their new-found home (see section 5.3 Exposure to Crime and Conflict). That said, only a few respondents held this view. Indeed, when it came to factors driving propensity toward VE, most were concerned with the economic and political conditions in Madaba. Many identified economic hardship together with government corruption and injustice as reasons why their communities might one day fall prey to radical ideologies, and several claimed that local unemployment is the most immediate risk factor at the local level.<sup>93</sup> To this end, respondents argued that the youth in Madaba's most marginalized districts – such as Dieban, Maeen, and Mlaih – are especially at risk. Time and again, they called for the government to enact reforms that could ease growing tensions in these areas, but had little faith that their calls will be answered (see section 3.3 Economy, Housing, and Debt). As such, many hoped that local communities possess the strength to withstand the growing threat of VE on their own. A few respondents were positive in this regard, in part on the grounds that the governorate's ethnic and religious diversity constitutes an effective barrier to VE.<sup>94 95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> "Personally, I don't see any threat of extremism in the Dieban area, or in Madaba. If we want to talk about Jordan as a whole though, then we could say that there might be at least some threat. A few people in this country believe that it is their duty to fight in Syria, to protect the weak people there from Assad and to protect their own families here in Jordan." (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

<sup>93</sup> "Extremism is currently hurting Jordan, and my region of Madaba in particular. It is poisoning the thoughts of our youth, especially in areas when there are few job vacancies or factories or none." (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

<sup>94</sup> "Thank God we don't have extremism here in Madaba. We have many Christians and Muslims and they live together peacefully. We never heard of a Christian fighting with a Muslim here." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

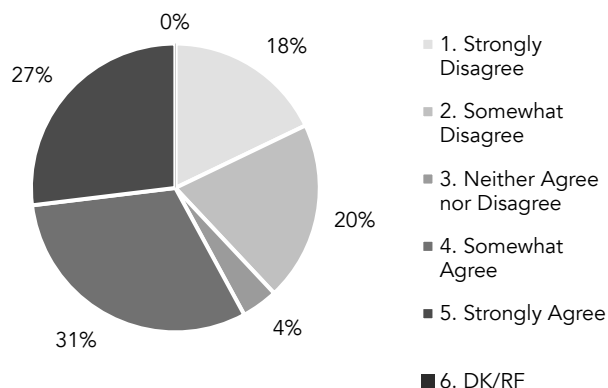
*"Based on current events, I don't think extremism is a problem here. I just don't see the effect of extremism in Dieban. We all reject these groups and hate them for what they're doing and how they are portraying Islam to the world. That does not mean that they won't gain some footing here in the future though. Though Dieban is not an extreme area, I consider it at risk because the people here suffer from poverty, unemployment and injustice from the government."*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

Most locals consider ISIS a real threat to their communities, a perception that has been encouraged through media output.

58 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, while 38 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that ISIS is a threat to Jordan's national security (see Figure 43). For those who disagreed, confidence in the abilities of security forces may account for their views (see section 4.2 Law Enforcement). For those who agreed, the media's representation of ISIS' regional and national terrorist activity has been instrumental. For example, one respondent stated that following national security incidents – when a terrorist cell is discovered or illegal weapons are confiscated – the media has a tendency to assume that ISIS is responsible. Consequently, according to the same respondent, with each new incident, the group looms larger in the minds of locals.<sup>96</sup> This view was supported by others, who alluded to incidents in Irbid, Ruqban (Mafrqa governorate) and Ein Al Basha when discussing ISIS' presence to the country.<sup>97</sup>

Figure 43. To what extent do you agree that ISIS is a threat to Jordan's national security?



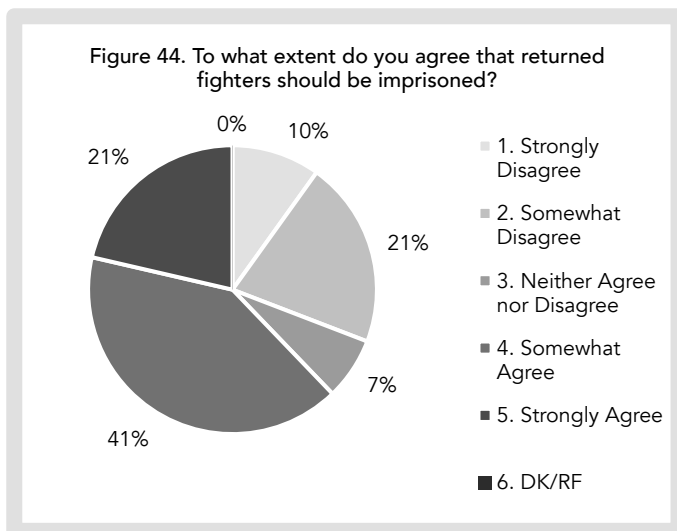
<sup>95</sup> "Madaba is a mixed society made up of various different peoples who practice different religions. We have Jordanians, Palestinians, Muslims and Christians here, and because of our long history of diversity, racial and religious extremism does not exist. Members of this society were all raised in one environment, studied in the same schools and work with each other. That is how it has always been and that is how it will remain." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>96</sup> "As for Jordan as a whole, I see that the problem is becoming bigger. Every two weeks, we hear of incidents happening in the country, and they always say ISIS is behind it. When they say this, ISIS becomes very big and people fear them." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>97</sup> "Extremist groups are certainly a threat to Jordan. When we think about the attacks in Ruqban, Ein Al Basha and Irbid, we see that they are right on our doorstep, waiting for us to cave to their radical thoughts and let them in. They are a great threat to Jordan's national security." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

The majority of locals believe that Jordanians fighting abroad should be imprisoned upon their return – but some said that they would not report a neighbor for being involved with a VEO.

While 31 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that Jordanians fighting abroad should be imprisoned upon their return to Jordan, 62 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed (see Figure 44). One respondent subscribing to the latter view was forthright in asserting that returning fighters are likely to bring with them jihadist ideologies that have been cultivated in Syria, and pass them on to local youth.<sup>98</sup> Despite such views, several respondents stated that due to social stigmas associated with extremism, they were unsure whether they would report neighbors whom they suspected of being extremists. That is, they would find it difficult to report incidents of extremism since one man’s choice to join a VEO could affect the reputation of his entire family.<sup>99</sup> In this regard, a few respondents recommended that, rather than immediately arresting individuals suspected of VE, security forces contact the individual’s family first and see if they can dissuade him from joining VEOs. “Sometimes imprisonment isn’t the answer, one man said. “Sometimes the police should ask the family to step in and help in the reform process, particularly if it is determined that the boy in question is just confused and not an extremist at all.”<sup>100</sup>



*“We see what ISIS has done in other country – how they have killed innocent people in Syria, as well as how they have targeted people all over the world – and we do not want them here. We have to do everything we can to ensure our safety, and I think that means putting those who fought with them in jail. It’s only a matter of time before they come home. ISIS will be defeated, and then they will come pouring over the border, back to their lives in Jordan. If we don’t want to see what they’ve done elsewhere happen in Jordan, we need to do something.” (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

<sup>98</sup> “It’s scary to think that, regardless of what happens in Syria, the fighters there who are from Jordan will one day return to their homes. We shouldn’t expect that the doctrine of combat and non-national ideology will just go away. They will bring to Jordan what they practiced in Syria and it will be the end of us. The government should be putting them all in prison – or at least watching them closely to see if they try to convince people to follow their warped view of Islam.” (Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)

<sup>99</sup> “We have to think of the families. Because I don’t know if I would report my neighbors.” (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>100</sup> “Rather than arresting people who might be extremists and torturing them (which we suspect them of doing), the security forces should include the family. The mother has a lot of sway over her son. What she says matters. Sometimes imprisonment isn’t the answer. Sometimes the police should ask the family to step in and help in the reform process, particularly if it is determined that the boy in question is just confused and not an extremist at all.” (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)



## 6.0 EXTERNAL DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

### 6.1 PERCEIVED IMPACT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

Israel is unpopular in Madaba for many reasons, but its occupation of Palestine and alleged support for VEOs were the most prominent of these.

The majority of locals hold negative views of Israel. Indeed, while 26 percent of Madaba GQ respondents claimed that Israel has a ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ positive impact on Jordan, 63 percent said that the country has a ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ negative impact (see Figure 50). Specifically, most respondents expressed distrust of Israel, maintaining that in various ways the country has exploited its Arab neighbors in the past and could be expected to do so again. In short, they believed that in order for Israel to continue to exist and thrive amid growing regional hostility toward it, the ruin of all Arab countries would be necessary. Meanwhile, they condemned Israel’s involvement in Palestine and dismissed the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty – which adjusted land and water disputes and provided for broad cooperation in tourism and trade – as nothing more than a piece of paper considering Israel’s behavior since the signing of the agreement in 1994. In this regard, Israel’s special relationship with the US was cause for concern: several respondents believed that Israel and the US are united in supporting disruptive groups in Syria such as ISIS,<sup>101</sup> and a few feared that Jordan could be the next country to suffer from this alliance given its border with Israel. To this end, they speculated that Jordan might one day be held responsible for an attack on Israel, and could therefore become the next target of Israeli expansion in the Middle East.<sup>102</sup> Perplexed by this possibility, one respondent wondered what Israel could possibly want from Jordan.

*“I don’t know what Israel wants from Jordan, but I can assure that they’re up to no good. Did you know that there is a place called Khudira between Tel Aviv and Natania, where some Jews bought some land and converted it into a paradise for farming and fishing? It has cows and other animals that probably bring in billions of dollars annually for Israel. They get everything they want. They are rich enough there, and we’re stuck with mass unemployment, poverty and no way to fix the problem. If you ask me, they’re the real terrorist and criminal state. Why are we afraid to say that?”*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

**Some locals believe that European countries, France in particular, are hostile toward Muslims.**

Some respondents believed that presently, certain European countries have pursued policies that unjustly target native-born Muslims. This assumption – encouraged perhaps by media representation – might account for some locals’ negative attitudes toward the European Union (EU) (see section 6.2 Perceived Impact of Foreign and Domestic Interventionism). In particular, respondents referenced France’s treatment

<sup>101</sup> “ISIS supports the Zionists. They may even work for the Zionists, I don’t know. Israel has been behind them from the beginning. They want to occupy us and kill us. What’s happening in Syria and Iraq is benefiting Israel and hurting Jordan.” (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>102</sup> “We can’t blame any country in particular but Israel is the one who wants our country ruined because we share a border with them. If any attack happened in Israel they will fear that it came from Jordan or maybe the Arab countries.” (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

of Muslim communities in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attacks and Paris attacks in 2015, as well as the Nice attack in 2016. Respondents claimed that since these attacks they have witnessed a growing number of incriminating comments and slurs directed toward Muslims on social media. This behavior they argued, could to a certain extent be overlooked if the French government had not then taken steps to limit French Muslims' religious freedoms by prohibiting Muslim women from wearing burkini swim wear and from wearing the hijab in public schools. Such behavior was deemed comparable to the extremism exhibited by VEOs like ISIS, and was even said to be evidence that Christian nations are intentionally vilifying Islam without ever trying to understand Islamic culture.<sup>103</sup>

*"There are many extremist groups in Europe who target Muslims. There is a movement in France that prohibits women from wearing the hijab, and people in Madaba talk about it when they see what they do on social media. We compare them to groups like ISIS, and to the Salafists, who are also very extreme."*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

### Many distrust Iran, mostly in relation to its motivations in supporting the Syrian regime.

Though 20 percent of Madaba GQ respondents claimed that Iran has a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive impact on Jordan, the majority (66 percent) reported that it has a 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impact on the country (see Figure 50). There are at least two explanations for this. First, Iran, like most Western countries, is widely seen as an empire going to great lengths to undermine Arab unity and augment its influence in the region (see section 6.2 Perceived Impact of Foreign and Domestic Interventionism). Second, the country is a major supporter of the Syrian regime: considering that respondents were divided on whether the Syrian regime should be supported or opposed, this is perhaps the most important explanation for antipathy to Iran. While some in Madaba see the Assad regime as the sole hope of peace and stability in Syria and by extension, in Jordan, others consider it a major perpetrator of war crimes. Therefore, the financial and military support that Iran provides Assad may explain at least some respondents' opinions of the former. Indeed, one respondent blamed Iran for VE in Jordan, claiming that its support for Shia militias in Syria – such as Jaysh Al Shaabi – has resulted in more murders than ISIS could ever hope to commit. Moreover, he and others criticized Iran for making Sunnis the target of their military exploits.

*"I blame Iran and the Shia sect in Iraq for a lot of the problems we are facing. From what I've heard, Iran had been supporting groups that have been killing Sunnis and raping women. Jaysh Al Shaabi has committed more crimes in Al Fallujah than ISIS."*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

---

<sup>103</sup> "We're seeing a lot of extremism coming from the West. For instance, Christians in Europe look for evidence to support the idea that Islam is their enemy. They read only Christian books without reviewing any books about Islam, and we can't say that that's right. They kill Muslims because they refuse to understand Islam." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

---

### Locals are divided on the nature of Saudi Arabia's influence on Jordan and the Middle East.

Respondents' views on Saudi Arabia were mixed. Indeed, while 37 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that Saudi Arabia has a 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impact on Jordan, 54 percent said that the country has a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive impact (see Figure 50). On one hand, some respondents defended Saudi Arabia, stressing that the country has been and remains a valued ally of Jordan.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, they denied that Saudi Arabia has any role in the creation and proliferation of VEOs, stressing that the country, while religious, is not radical.<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, more respondents claimed that Saudi Arabia does share some responsibility for the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. They argued that since at least the 1970s, Saudi Arabia has supported 'Wahhabi groups' like Al Qa'ida for political gain. Respondents maintained that, funded in part by Saudi Arabian oil sales, such groups were able to expand their influence into countries that had previously seemed impervious to religious extremism – countries like Jordan, Syria and, to a lesser extent, Iraq and Egypt.<sup>106</sup> Respondents believed that to a certain degree, Saudi Arabia continues to support these groups both privately and overtly. They alleged that groups like Al Qa'ida – which respondents widely regarded as impotent – continue to receive money raised both in Saudi mosques and by the Saudi government.<sup>107</sup>

*"I blame Saudi Arabia 100 percent for the troubles in Syria and Iraq, as well as for the problems that Jordan is facing when it comes to extremism. They and some other countries in the world helped create and sponsor terrorist groups like Al Qa'ida for political gain. They opened the gate for extremist preachers to come to Jordan, and they have sown division among the people. Osama bin Laden was supported by the Saudis. The Gulf supported him as well."*

*(Male, 43, Engineer, Madaba)*

Though a majority of locals holds positive opinions on Turkey, many claim that the country has become a haven for, and supporter of VEOs.

Quantitative data suggests that a slight majority of locals hold positive views on Turkey. Indeed, 50 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that Turkey has a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive impact on Jordan, while 39 percent held that Turkey has a 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impact (see Figure 50). In discussing Turkey, DI respondents were more representative of the latter view. For example, several respondents

---

<sup>104</sup> "If Jordan was actually threatened by ISIS, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would help us. And we would win." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>105</sup> "I don't think that Saudi Arabia had a role in the establishment of these groups [VEOs]. Why would they want this mess? Saudi Arabia is religious not radical. They don't kill anyone for no reason. They only do if a person did something wrong. They cut the hands off thieves, but this is our religion." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>106</sup> "In 1973, after the Saudis became so rich from the sale of oil, they used their money to spread the Wahhabi ideology. Within a few years, it started to appear in the Levant, in Egypt, and as far away as Morocco. We are not blind. We see what they've done, and we see that everything is going according to plan for them in Syria and Iraq." (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

<sup>107</sup> "It's well known that Saudi Arabia funds these groups. That country is a haven for Wahhabis and they raise funds for ISIS both in private and out in the open. They raise money for radicals in the mosques, and their country is rich enough to really give groups like Al Qa'ida a lift." (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

claimed that Jordan, and indeed most of Turkey's allies, have been deceived by Turkey. That is, despite the country's insistence that it does not support terrorist organizations, respondents maintained that its complicity in this respect is becoming increasingly apparent. They argued that in recent years, Turkey has become a haven for terrorists, and that the Turkish government willingly allows them to pass unchallenged through the Turkish border *en route* to Iraq and Syria. In addition to these claims, respondents alleged that throughout the conflicts raging to its south, Turkey has been supplying VEOs such as ISIS with money and weapons and purchasing their oil.<sup>108</sup> That said, respondents maintained that most locals look up to Turkey as having the kind of secular government they desire for Jordan. Moreover, they insisted that Jordan-Turkey relations remain healthy, and that many locals enjoy taking vacations to the scenic Turkish plains and mountains.

*"How was ISIS created? Where does it get its money from? Who paid the expenses of its operations? I believe it was Turkey. It had borders with Syria and it is very powerful. Who could it be but Turkey?"*

*(Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)*

### **The economic burden of Syrian refugees, coupled with objection to the Assad regime may explain locals' negative opinions of Syria.**

The majority of locals held negative opinions on Syria. Indeed, while 26 percent of Madaba GO respondents reported that Syria has a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive impact on Jordan, 64 percent reported that the country has a 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impact (see Figure 50). Perhaps the most obvious reason for respondents' negative opinions of Syria is the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan. According to conservative estimates, since the start of the Syrian conflict Jordan has admitted around 700,000 registered refugees from the country.<sup>109</sup> Although respondents often sympathized with these refugees, they noted how their presence has affected their country's already fragile economy (see section 3.3 Economy, Housing and Debt). Therefore, even though Madaba does not host a large population of refugees, it is possible that locals are predisposed to thinking that the presence of refugees in their communities could ultimately worsen living standards, leading to eventual unrest and radicalization.

Another possible explanation for respondents' views on Syria concerns the Assad regime. On multiple occasions, and especially when refugees were mentioned, respondents condemned the actions of Assad and called for his removal from power, adding that hatred for the Syrian President, not religious extremism, is a key factor in determining propensity toward VE.<sup>110</sup> That said, some – though admittedly a small number – did not take this view. On the contrary, they argued that the removal of Assad would be catastrophic for Jordan in that it would create a power vacuum that could cause VEOs like ISIS and JN to

<sup>108</sup> "I blame every country that supports these groups, like Turkey. Turkey has given ISIS money and weapons from the beginning, and they have bought the oil that ISIS has stolen. That's not right." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>109</sup> The UN Refugee Agency 2016. 'Syria Regional Refugee Response', UNHCR, June 20, 2016.

<sup>110</sup> "What happened in the beginning of the Syrian revolution was that Bashar Al Assad started bombing his own people. Then, people from all over the world wanted to fight him, but they had to join Nusra or ISIS to do it. Some of them aren't religious extremists. Some of them just hate Assad." (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

proliferate. This scenario, they claimed, would not only put Jordan itself at risk of collapsing into civil war, but would ultimately hurt Jordanian businesses as well. With this in mind, they averred that at this point in time, the regime is the only force capable of establishing and maintaining lasting peace in the region. Indeed, one respondent – a journalist working for an independent paper in Madaba – insisted that Jordan’s destiny is linked to that of Syria. He and a few others reasoned that, because Assad is in possession of a professional army, and because he has shown that peace is not wholly alien to his rule, he remains the sole source of hope for many Jordanians who are uneasy about the potentially calamitous effects of the conflicts in Syria.

*“I’m a journalist, and for years I have written that our destiny is linked to Syria. Really, time and again I have told my readers that the fate of Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and the whole of the Middle East will be decided in Syria. If Syria withstands what’s happening there, Jordan will be saved. However, if it falls there will be no security here. Right now, even though we may hate him, we must put our faith in Assad, that he will triumph, because he is Syria’s only shot at stability at this point.”*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

## 6.2 PERCEIVED IMPACT OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC INTERVENTIONISM

**Locals have mixed views on whether the US is a positive or negative force for Jordan, but most disapprove of its regional interventions.**

44 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that the US has a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive impact on their country, while 50 percent believed that it has a 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impact on Jordan (see Figure 50). Notwithstanding these divided views, the majority of respondents objected to the US' regional interventions for numerous reasons. First, several respondents argued that the US 2003 invasion of Iraq worsened the already fragile relationship between Shia and Sunni Muslims in the region. They claimed that although other factors were at play in the evolution of sectarian conflict, tensions took on new and explosive dimensions after US forces invaded the country, uprooted the established Sunni government of Saddam Hussein and installed a Shia replacement. Respondents maintained that, rather than fighting extremism – and pursuing a just war on terror – the US essentially fueled VE in the region, allowing VEOs to swell their ranks “a hundred times over.”<sup>111</sup> Moreover, a few respondents stated that Saddam Hussein himself had been a popular figure in Madaba, and that after the US invaded and deposed him, all of the dictator's potential – to bring peace to the Middle East and to free Palestine from Israeli occupation – was unjustly snuffed out.<sup>112</sup> The second major objection to the US' regional interventions was the belief that the US and its allies – mainly Israel and the United Kingdom (UK) – have actively sought to stir regional conflict and establish destabilizing groups like ISIS in order to strengthen their position in the world. The first instance in which this supposed strategy was implemented was at the end of the Cold War, when the US sought to offset Soviet influence in Afghanistan, simultaneously providing a theatre for Al Qa'ida to establish its significance.<sup>113</sup> The second instance was supposedly the US invasion of Iraq. According to one respondent, goaded by what they saw as unjust US interference in the Middle East, enraged Arabs – not just from Jordan, but from all over the Arab world – flocked to groups like ISIS and Hizb ut-Tahrir, who promised them justice and more importantly, revenge.<sup>114</sup> Respondents were adamant that this was all in accordance with US ambitions and they admitted that to a degree, the strategy has proved successful. The conflicts in Iraq and the ongoing Syrian conflict were cited as cases in point. Finally, not only did some

---

<sup>111</sup> “The current conflict in Iraq isn't the result of previous conflicts between Sunnis and Shias. Those conflicts certainly have a role in what's happening, but I think it has more to with foreign intrusion. It is true that these conflicts started before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but ISIS appeared after the US left. The US is therefore responsible for the worst that has come out of the Sunni-Shia divide. They have made terrorist groups grow a hundred times over.” (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>112</sup> “Saddam Hussein, may God rest his soul, was influential and well liked in Madaba. I think people dislike the US because the US took down Saddam without a reason or cause. If he was alive, none of this would have happened in Syria, and he could have freed Palestine. Now everything's gone down the drain.” (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

<sup>113</sup> “During the twentieth century, America created these Islamist groups in order to resist the communists. However, by the turn of the century, they became a danger to the USA and fired back at their creator. America cannot control them as they did in the past because these groups are too numerous now and spread out around the Middle East.” (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

<sup>114</sup> “I blame America because, historically speaking, they have created many groups that have compromised the security of the Middle East. They created Al Qa'ida in the beginning, and they probably created ISIS and Hizb ut-Tahrir, too.” (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

---

respondents believe that the US created ISIS, some others – though admittedly a small minority – subscribed to rumors that the US continues to provide support to certain VEOs – namely ISIS – in order to secure its own regional interests. They argued that the US has long supported one or another of the VEOs operating in Syria and Iraq with finances, weapons and logistical support, and they insisted that this practice continues today with the help of other Western countries such the UK and France, as well as Israel. Respondents condemned the US for these supposed actions, insisting that if locals seeking to perform jihad in Syria knew who they were really fighting for, they might be convinced otherwise.<sup>115</sup>

*"ISIS is a non-religious extremist group. I consider it a phenomenon, even if calls itself a state. I think you'll find that it was established to benefit certain individuals, or movements, or intelligence departments in foreign countries. We've recently seen how Britain, USA and Iran have interfered in favor of ISIS. They've provided logistical support for ISIS on many occasions. For example, the USA gave ISIS lots of equipment."*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

**Some locals believe that much like the US, European countries are actively supporting VEOs in order to destabilize the region.**

As with the US, locals were divided over the impact the EU has on their country: while 47 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that the EU has a 'very' or 'somewhat' positive impact on Jordan, 42 percent deemed its influence 'very' or 'somewhat' negative (see Figure 50). Despite this clear divide however, DI findings suggested that locals overwhelmingly distrust European powers. One reason for this is the close relationship between Europe and the US. According to respondents, European countries, along with their US ally, have a vested interest in dividing Arab nations in order to secure their own interests in the Middle East. In attempting to substantiate this claim, respondents maintained that historically speaking, European countries have sought to "divide and conquer" the Arabs,<sup>116</sup> perhaps alluding here to the Sykes Picot Agreement. Furthermore, respondents claimed that rather than fighting extremism, the EU has adopted the same strategy as the US: instead of formally dividing Arab countries as in the past, European countries – especially the UK and France – have resorted to sponsoring VEOs in order to prevent the Arab world from achieving lasting influence and prosperity.

*"European countries have an interest in dividing Arab countries. They always have. Ever heard of 'divide and conquer?' Now they have adopted a new strategy. They now use terrorist organizations to divide us, to make us weaker and them stronger."*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

<sup>115</sup> "Once people see that Daesh is a killing machine controlled by the Americans and the British and the Iranians, they probably won't support it." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>116</sup> "The countries of Al Sham [Greater Syria] were once one country, and the Arab Peninsula was one country, but now the area is made up of 22 states. Countries like the UK, France and Italy divided us so that they could rule us." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

### Russian support for the Assad regime has divided locals.

While 37 percent of Madaba GQ respondents reported that Russia has a ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ negative impact on Jordan, 48 percent said that it has a ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ positive impact (see Figure 50). Additionally, six percent reported that Russia has no impact at all on Jordan (see Figure 50). Accounting for negative views on Russia, many respondents believed that it, like most other powerful countries operating in the Middle East, is seeking to divide Arabs, expand its own influence in the region and extract the region’s oil. In this respect, some respondents were apt to group Russia with Western countries in spite of the ostensible difference in their objectives.<sup>117</sup> However, it must be noted that a remarkably high number of respondents believed that stability in Jordan depends on stability in Syria – stability that can only come from a renewal of the Assad regime (see above and section 2.1 Support for VEOs). Therefore, Russia’s support for the regime in Syria may to a certain extent, explain why Russia has garnered such good will and support from many locals, and particularly from the youth, who respondents explained are becoming increasingly involved in Jordan’s Communist Party.<sup>118</sup>

*“Russia is in Syria supporting a corrupt regime that is killing innocent Muslims. Therefore, we must group them with the Western countries who have made it their mission to break up the Arabs and kill every Muslim who ever lived. The Russians are just like the Americans in that all they want in the Middle East is land and oil. They don’t care who they have to support to get it, either.”*

*(Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)*

### Though a majority of locals believe that intervention against ISIS is justifiable, they are wary of the consequences of military involvement in Syria.

While 36 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed, a majority (58 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed that Jordanian intervention against ISIS is justifiable (see Figure 45). However, this does not suggest that many in Madaba believe that Jordan should go to war in Syria. In fact, considering that respondents were evenly divided on whether Jordanian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan – with 45 percent of respondents both ‘strongly’ and ‘somewhat’ agreeing and disagreeing with the statement, and 10 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing (see Figure 46) – the opposite could be equally true. This is likely due to the fact that locals are divided on which side to take in the conflict. While some believe that Bashar Al Assad is a war criminal and eagerly await the fall of his regime, others view the dictator as the region’s sole hope that peace and stability can one day return to Syria (see section 6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations). Therefore, regardless of whether or not the Jordanian government targets ISIS exclusively, any decisive government intervention in Syria would like please many in Madaba

<sup>117</sup> “The USA says it is against Assad and Russia says it to protect him, but they both say they share a common goal: to destroy Jabhat Al Nusra. It’s all fake – a way for the USA and Russia to destroy two great countries that have had a great impact in the region. To do this, they had to create extremist groups in those countries to justify getting in and destroying them. It’s all a game. They want the oil I suspect.” (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>118</sup> “The youth respect Russia. They see it as a powerful country that will help Jordan in the long run. The Communist Party, which is becoming more popular among the youth, is responsible for these attitudes.” (Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)



but anger others. Furthermore, though the vast majority of locals strongly object to ISIS and anticipate its collapse, they may be wary of military entanglements.

*"We must be very careful in respect to Syria. One wrong move could spell the end of Jordanian security, and we definitely do not want that. We have an obligation to fight terrorism, but that does not mean that we should be hasty."*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

Figure 45. To what extent do you agree that Jordanian intervention against ISIS is justifiable?

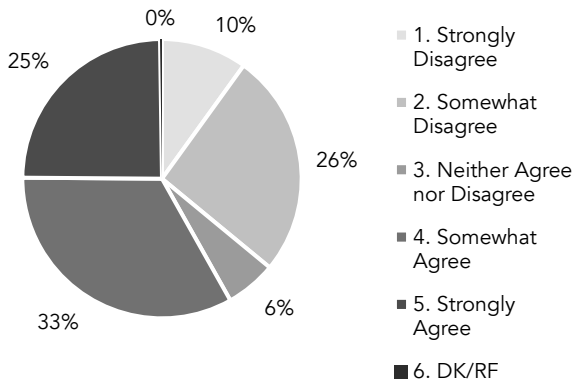
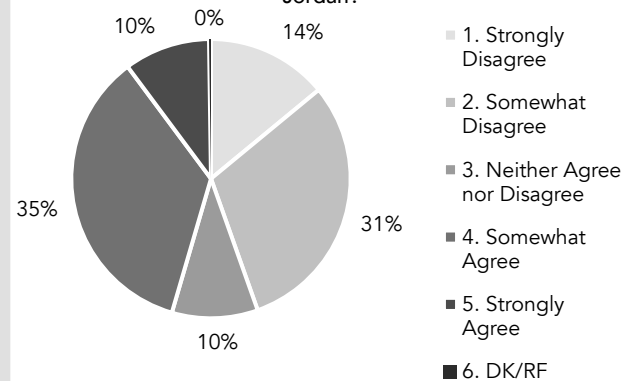


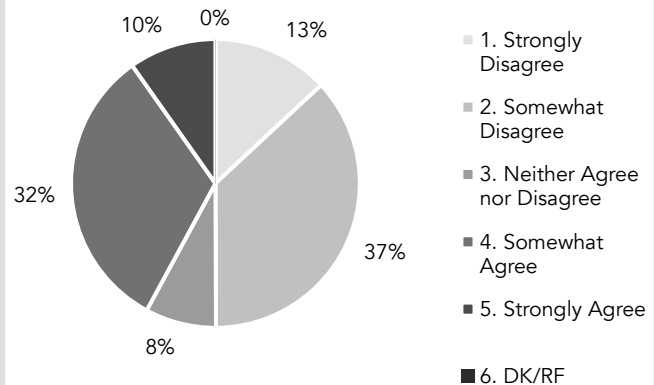
Figure 46. To what extent do you agree that Jordanian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan?



Locals are divided on whether Iran is fueling VE in Jordan, most likely because they cannot agree whether the Syrian regime should be supported or opposed.

Respondents often compared Iran to Western countries that have become entangled in the Middle East. They called it an empire that, for the sake of power and influence, will do anything to secure its own interests in the region. This perception is likely to partly account for 66 percent of Madaba GQ respondents who reported that the country has a 'very' or 'somewhat' negative impact on Jordan (see section 6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations), and it may also be a factor contributing to respondents' worries that Iran is fueling VE in their country. That said, Iran's active support for the Syrian regime – which is met with mixed views in Madaba – may also contribute to

Figure 47. To what extent do you agree that Iranian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan?



negative perceptions of the country. Some respondents even held that Assad is acting on behalf of Iran, which they claimed has been strengthened by the ongoing Syrian conflict. The fact that locals were divided on whether the Syrian regime should be supported or opposed is a possible explanation for mixed quantitative results, which revealed that although 42 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, a slight majority (50 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that Iranian intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 47).

*“The problem is that the crimes Bashar is committing against his own people are committed in order to protect Iran’s influence in the country. So Bashar is fighting on behalf of Iran. Iran is behind it all.”*

*(Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)*

### **Although there is general distrust of Western regional intentions, locals are divided on whether Western involvement in Jordan and Syria is fueling VE.**

Locals were divided on whether Western intervention in Syria and Jordan is fueling VE. Indeed, quantitative results relating to Western involvement in both countries were similar. A slight majority (51 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, while 44 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that Western intervention in Jordan is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 48). In respect to Syria, the numbers were almost reversed – a slight majority (51 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed, while 42 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed that Western intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 49). These results are difficult to parse. However, it is evident that respondents were overwhelmingly suspicious of Western regional motives. Indeed, many respondents maintained that the Western goal is to divide Arab countries and turn them against one another as part of a ‘divide and conquer’ strategy (see section 6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations).<sup>119</sup> That said, at least regarding the conflict in Syria, some locals concede that Western involvement is preventing chaos from erupting in Jordan, and restricting the expansion of VEOs such as ISIS. On the other hand, a number of respondents were heavily critical of a Western presence in Syria. One respondent for example, claimed that Western involvement in Syria – its opposition to Assad in particular – does not make sense. He argued that by challenging the existing power structure there, the West has given the impression that it has little interest in fighting VE, but rather seeks to aggravate VE in the Middle East. The same respondent feared that Jordan is next.

*“It doesn’t make sense that the West is fighting Assad. How can we fight terrorism in Syria without coordinating with the existing power structure and the Syrian army? It’s almost as if they want these groups to go on fighting for years, as if they want to keep us down by rearranging the region in a chaotic manner. I fear that Jordan is next. The West wants Jordan to become home for these terrorists and has therefore discouraged reform and the existence of opposition parties here. It wants to keep the Jordanian people poor and afraid. It wants us to be a police state under constant*

---

<sup>119</sup> “All Western countries hate the Arabs; that’s why they created ISIS – to divide us and conquer us.” (Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)

surveillance.”

(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

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

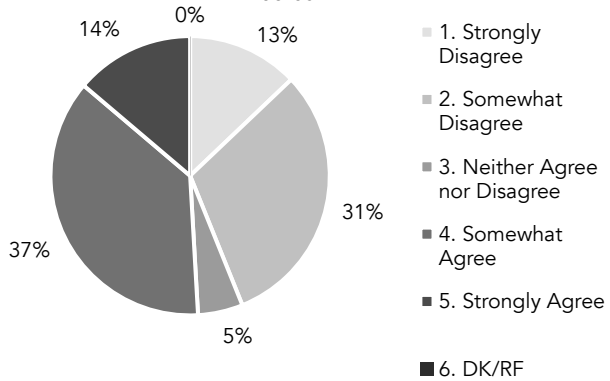


Figure 49. To what extent do you agree that Western intervention in Syria is fueling VE in Jordan?

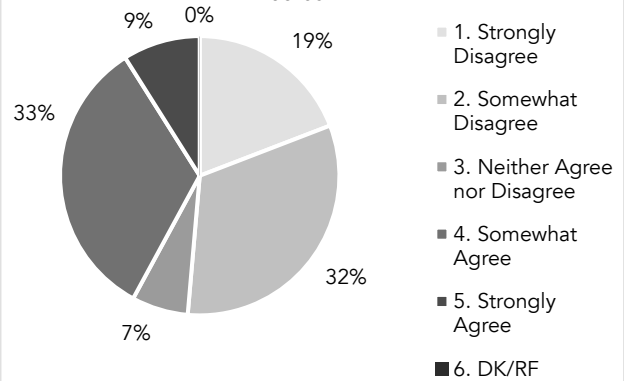
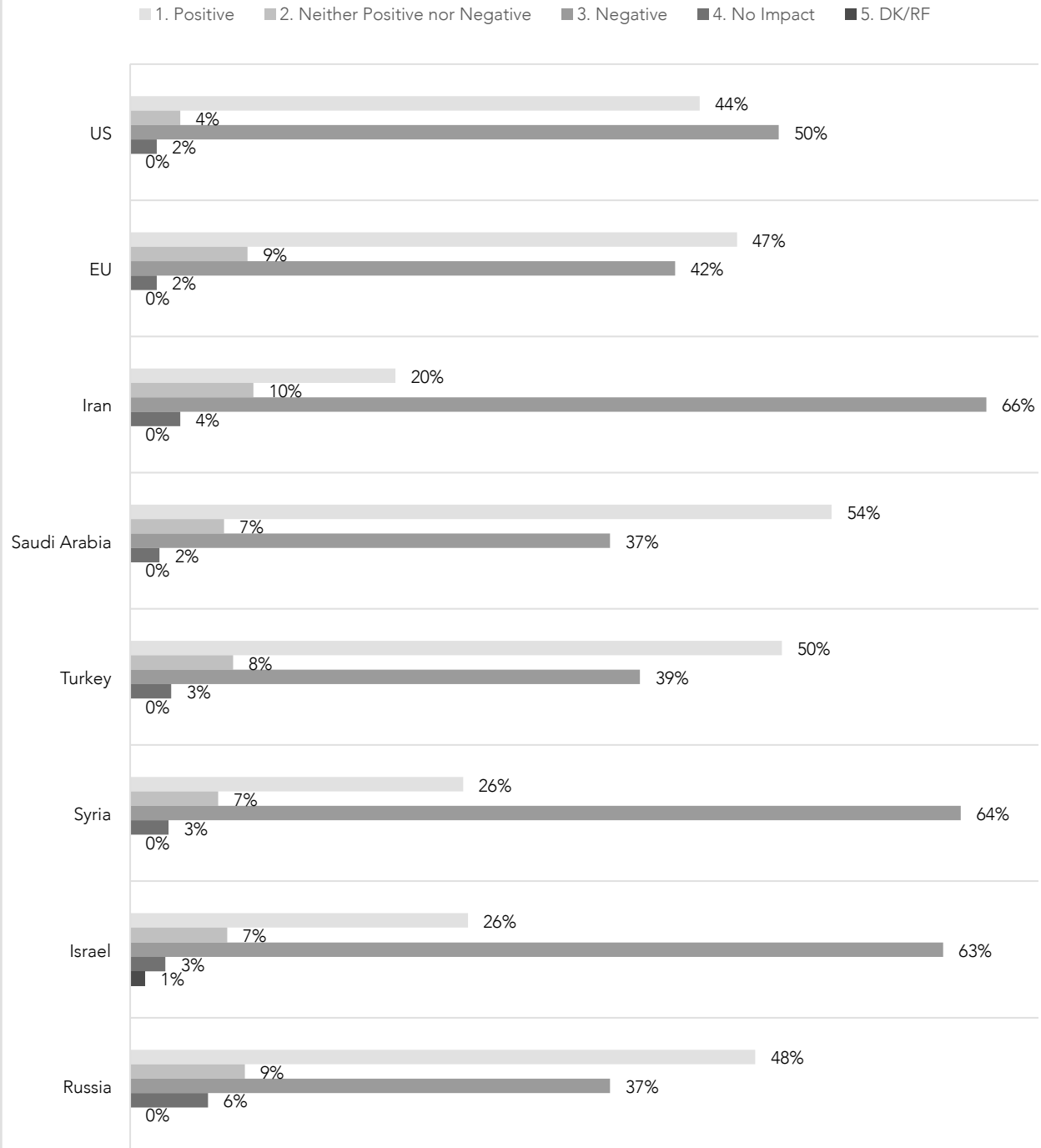


Figure 50. To what extent do you think that the following countries have a positive or negative impact on Jordan?

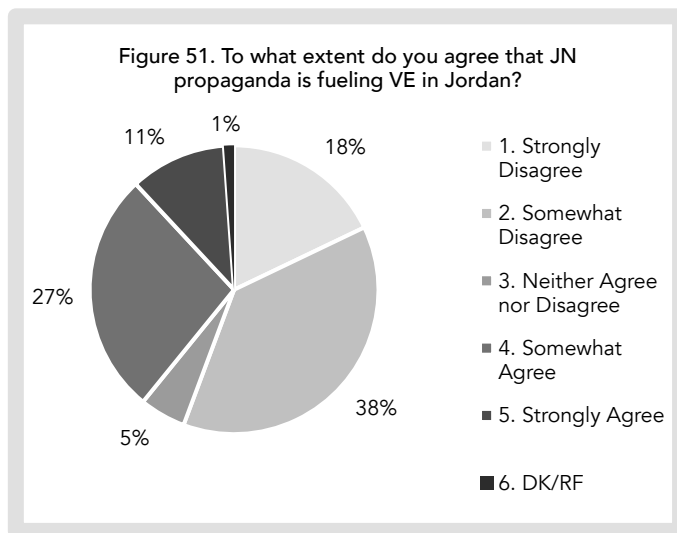


## 7.0 COMMUNICATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

### 7.1 THE ROLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROPAGANDA

JN's stated opposition to the Syrian regime may appeal to locals who condemn the actions of President Assad.

There is little evidence that Madaba has been victim to a concerted propaganda campaign by JN. This is to an extent supported by quantitative data, which revealed that while 38 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, the majority (56 percent) 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that JN propaganda is fueling VE in Jordan (see Figure 51). That said, it is possible that the group has attained some level of support for its opposition to the Syrian regime. Though many claimed that locals are more likely support the regime over oppositional groups, the majority condemned the actions of Bashar Al Assad as brutal and wished for his removal from power (see sections 2.1 Support for VEOs and 6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations). Thus, both Syrian refugees and East Bank Jordanians who readily denounce the actions of Bashar Al Assad should also be considered susceptible to JN propaganda when it is directed against the regime.



**VEOs – especially ISIS – are using social media to recruit members.**

There is local disagreement over the role played by the Internet in fueling VE. While 36 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the Internet/social media is fueling VE in Jordan, 57 percent disagreed (see Figure 52). Notwithstanding these divisions, most respondents identified social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube as prominent platforms for VEO recruitment. In particular, respondents emphasized the benefits these sites offer to VEOs such as ISIS. For example, the anonymity of the Internet is believed to protect recruiters from being detected by authorities. Furthermore, it allows them to adopt fake identities – such as those of respected local religious leaders – to gain the trust of potential recruits.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, several respondents described how ISIS takes advantage of the personal information provided on social networking sites in order to personalize their recruitment methods.<sup>121</sup> For example, if a Facebook user frequently discusses religion on their profile, ISIS

<sup>120</sup> "Terrorists recruit through Facebook and WhatsApp. They use fake IDs and fake names, I hear – names of prominent religious leaders in the area. They also fake the names of new recruits so the authorities will not find them." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)

<sup>121</sup> "Social media itself is a huge risk to our youth because it is exploited by extremist groups and allows them to easily reach each and every person at home at any time. They are able to follow people's daily activities and thoughts on Facebook and Twitter, as well as where they go and how they think. We've never seen this before, and groups like

will seek to engage the user by appealing to their sense of religiosity – which can include discussions on the virtues of jihad. On the other hand, if a user does not display a public interest in such topics on their profile, ISIS will adopt a subtler approach and try to engage the user via other topics such as music, money or sexuality. ISIS' social media strategy is reportedly related to its precautionary approach in response to the government's security efforts, as it dedicates significant time to establishing relationships with prospective recruits online before meeting them in person.<sup>122</sup> It is well recorded that ISIS employs these methods to recruit members, and a majority of locals seem to believe that it has had an impact on their communities. Indeed, although 41 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, 54 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that ISIS propaganda is fueling VE in their community (see Figure 53). ISIS' infamy alone can explain why so many disagreed – many respondents simply believed the actions of ISIS to be too criminal to garner support.<sup>123</sup>

*"People on social media are of two kinds and ISIS knows this. The two kinds are these: people who talk about religion on Facebook, and people who don't. ISIS will reach out to both, but it will interact with them in different ways. For instance, for a person who does post religion on his Facebook, ISIS will employ religious language, telling him that to go to jihad is to go to heaven. For a person who does not post religion, ISIS will talk about something else – maybe money, music or sex."*

*(Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)*

Figure 52. To what extent do you agree that the Internet/social media is fueling VE in Jordan?

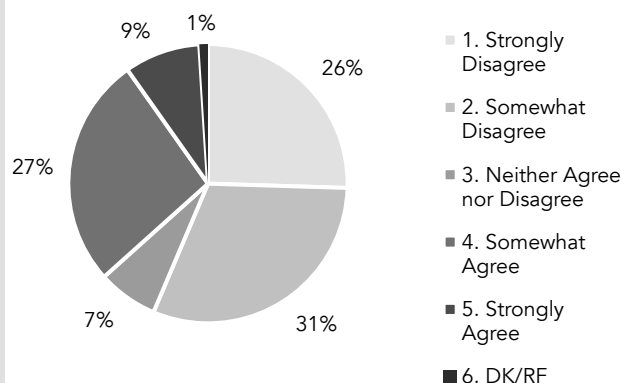
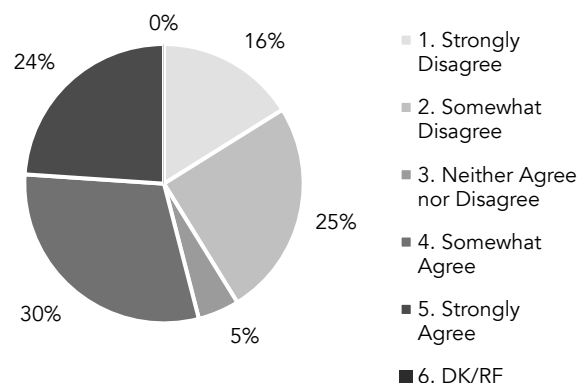


Figure 53. To what extent do you agree that ISIS propaganda is fueling VE in Jordan?



ISIS have learned quickly how to use social media to their advantage." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>122</sup> "ISIS is very capable at thwarting security efforts sometimes. They use social media and phones to contact and recruit people, rather than doing it in person. They save that for a later time, when they can trust that who they are talking to is actually somebody who wants to join them and not a government agent." (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

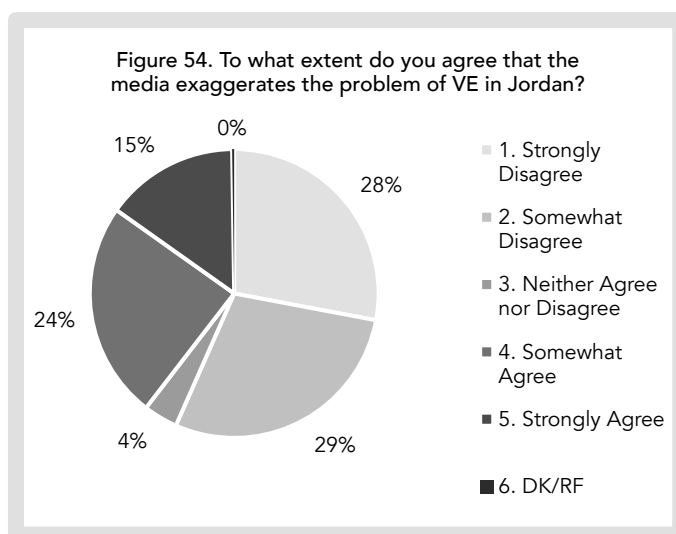
<sup>123</sup> "ISIS is too evil to be popular in Madaba. For all their talk about being true Muslims, they are criminals, and we know it. We are not stupid – we know true Muslims when we see them." (Female, 30, Program Developer, Madaba)

## 7.2 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Locals believe that television and radio media have a role to play in the fight against VE, and thus bemoan the perceived absence of such initiatives by the state.

While 39 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 57 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that the media exaggerates the problem of VE in Jordan (see Figure 54). Meanwhile, many respondents believed that media CVE efforts are wanting. Several criticized state television and radio channels for not taking a more educational role in society by discussing topics such as religion and issues of VE in their programs.<sup>124</sup> In this context, two respondents lamented that even though the state-run media has the capacity to spread awareness of VE – for example, by inviting moderate Muslim thinkers such as the Syrian, Mohammad Shahrour, as guests on popular programs –

they tend to give preference to what one respondent described as “repetitive and empty content.”<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, several respondents bemoaned the absence of objective reporting across the Jordanian media landscape. In particular, one resident blamed the government for exerting too much influence, while another decried the rise of “more extreme and conservative voices” in newspapers. Similarly, several respondents voiced a suspicion that there exists some level of support for extremist groups such as JN on a number of television and radio channels.<sup>126</sup>



*"I used to write a newspaper column. That was three or four years ago. My work was published weekly and sometimes daily, but not anymore. All of the leftist voices have been pushed out of the media in favor of more extreme and conservative voices."*

*(Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)*

<sup>124</sup> "I never heard of the government using its media channels to increase the awareness about extremism. They are not doing anything in terms of fighting extremism with the media. That said, security is another thing. If the government hears that someone is a supporter of ISIS, that person will be in prison the next day. So, I think the government is handling this in the wrong way. Instead of putting people in prison all the time, they need to utilize the radio and television channels to make people aware that this is a problem." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

<sup>125</sup> "The state-run media is weak. There is no convincing cultural and enlightened discourse, only repetitive and empty content. Therefore, it could do little to spread awareness or help Jordan's situation." (Male, 61, Journalist, Madaba)

<sup>126</sup> "I think that the media supports Nusra. Since the beginning, they have portrayed them as a group that fights to defend their beliefs, as well as one that opposes the Syrian regime. That has earned Nusra a degree of sympathy here." (Male, 44, Lawyer, Madaba)

There are a number of news networks with the potential to influence viewers' opinions of VE.

Respondents believed that television and radio media – particularly news media – should play an important part in local CVE efforts. Indeed, they claimed that by discussing key questions relating to Jordan's stance on, and role in surrounding conflicts, journalists and presenters could influence many listeners and viewers.<sup>127</sup> Respondents listed a number of news media outlets broadcasting to locals in Madaba, some of which are popular, others of which receive criticism for being too biased. Some of the main news channels broadcast at the local level are listed in the table below:

Table 6. News Media Outlets

FIVE NEWS MEDIA OUTLETS AVAILABLE TO LOCALS AND THEIR RELATIVE POPULARITY	
Name	Explanation
Al Anbar	A famous news network, but in recent years it has lost many of its viewers due to dull content.
Al Arabiya	Offers around-the-clock news coverage. Although popular nationally, its local branch in Madaba is not trusted because the presenters are considered biased and vague.
Al Jazeera	Popular among young and old locals in Madaba. The favorite source of news, since it offers supposedly unbiased, in-depth accounts of global events and political commentary.
Jordan TV	Despite efforts to improve its image, the network remains one of the least popular in Madaba. It is thought to present only the government's account of events, and is therefore only popular with the elderly.
Roya TV	Perhaps one of the most-watched channels in Madaba, since it features news, politics and comedy shows that both young and old can enjoy.

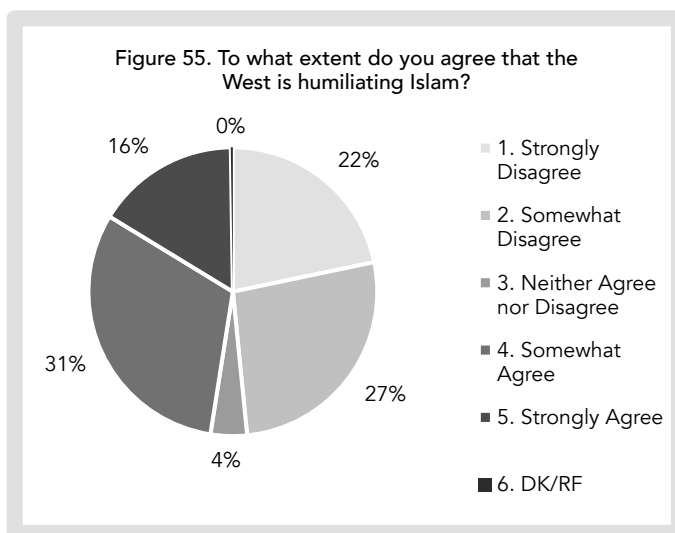
<sup>127</sup> "Television and radio programs should have a large role in explaining religion to people. They should take up key questions like whether fighting in Syria is halal or not." (Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)



### 7.3 THE ROLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

Though locals seem divided on whether the West is humiliating Islam, many believe that Western regional involvement is a plot against Arab countries.

Respondents were divided on whether the West is humiliating Islam. Indeed, while 47 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, 49 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that the West is humiliating Islam (see Figure 55). Specifically, a small number of respondents believed that Western involvement in Syria is to a certain extent humiliating Muslim countries. Indeed, on a number of occasions, respondents claimed that the grand strategy of Western countries has long been to divide Arabs and steal their oil; they maintained that the creation of VEOs like AQ and ISIS – which all received low levels of local support (see section 2.1 Support for VEOs) – was the first step toward accomplishing this goal (see section 6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations). With that in mind, it is unsurprising that anti-Western rhetoric was prominent throughout DIs, with some calling for Jordan to abandon its Western allies entirely.



*“We feel that our honor is being violated in Syria. How can we sit here and watch as Westerners attack Islam in this way? How can we sit here when Muslims are suffering just across our borders in Syria?”*

*(Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)*

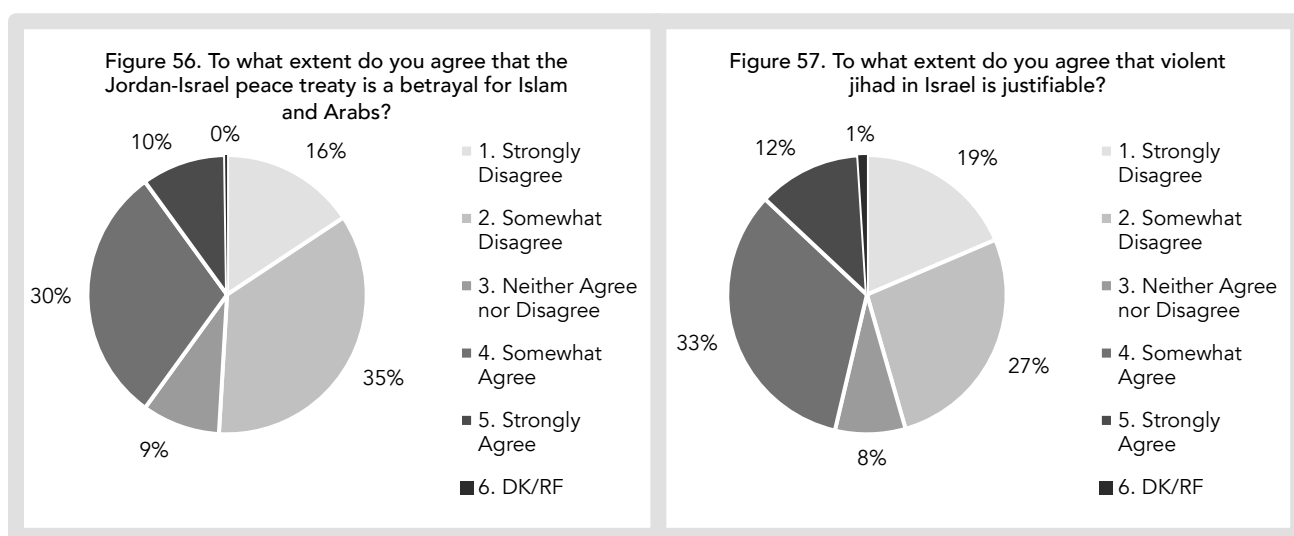
**Locals question the validity of Jordan-Israel relations, and a majority believe that jihad against Israel is justified given perceived Israeli aggression.**

While the majority of Madaba GQ respondents (51 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed, 40 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed that the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty – which normalized relations between Israel and Jordan in 1994 – is a betrayal for Islam and Arabs (see Figure 56). Indeed, many locals are strongly opposed to Israel (see section 6.1 Perceived Impact of Foreign Relations), mainly for its perceived maltreatment of Palestinians. For example, respondents expressed great sympathy those Palestinians who were displaced by the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2014. Meanwhile, among locals, a discernible side effect of Israeli aggression has been an increase in support for Hamas (see section 2.1 Support for VEOs). However, respondents indicated that locals have also begun to boycott Israeli goods in local markets. They even claimed that during the Hirak uprisings (beginning in 2011), an Israeli flag was burned in Madaba City. Such fiery objection to Israel poses the question of whether locals are sufficiently resentful of Israel to join one of the many VEOs who oppose the country out of principle, such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

Quantitative findings suggested that attitudes at least, regarding legitimate violence toward Israel, are divided. For example, 46 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed, while 55 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed that violent jihad in Israel is justifiable (see Figure 57).

*“Of course there is aggression against Israel here. We see what they have done to Gaza, to our Palestinian brothers and sisters, and we hate them for it. We call them the ‘Zionist Entity’. Many here started boycotting their fruits at the market and once, the Israeli flag was burnt in the town square. That was during the Hirak movement.”*

*(Male, 35, Researcher, Madaba)*



### Most locals disagree that ISIS’ version of a caliphate will restore Islam and solve their problems.

While 34 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, the majority (55 percent) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that the Caliphate will help restore Islam (see Figure 58). Accounting for this substantial minority, some respondents explained that it is common for local youth to dream of an Islamic caliphate that might bring “integrity and justice” to the Islamic world. Furthermore, they believed that ISIS is exploiting this dream to appeal to local youth.<sup>128</sup> However, most locals entirely rejected ISIS’ particular vision of a caliphate. Indeed, most respondents affirmed that the ‘caliphate’ that ISIS has sought to establish is no caliphate at all, but a project founded on warped perceptions of what it means to be Muslim.<sup>129</sup> This coincides with respondents’ views on the practice of Takfir – a serious accusation of impiety

<sup>128</sup> “It’s a dream for Muslim youth to have an Islamic state that brings integrity and justice, and ISIS has used this dream of theirs to their advantage. They call themselves the Islamic State, don’t they?” (Male, 51, Chairman of Youth Association, Madaba)

<sup>129</sup> “ISIS does not have the capabilities to establish an Islamic caliphate that will last any length of time. What they have created will fall because it is built on madness. It cannot provide justice to the people, only sorrow. If people think our government is corrupt, I don’t know what they would think of the government ISIS wants to set up. It’s scary what they would do.” (Male, 44, Educational Supervisor, Madaba)

and a central policy of ISIS': while 71 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed, only 25 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed that the practice of Takfir is justifiable (see Figure 59). Indeed, one respondent implied that his rejection of ISIS' 'caliphate' was predominantly on the basis of its endorsement of Takfir.<sup>130</sup>

*"It's been 100 years since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and today people yearn for a caliphate more than ever before. And the youth are especially keen on having a caliphate again. ISIS might try to convince them that all of their problems – all of the injustice, poverty, inequality, discrimination and marginalization – could be solved by the Islamic State. They could promise justice to the people, and that might make them join their side."*

*(Male, 75, Retiree, Madaba)*

Figure 58. To what extent do you agree that the Caliphate will help restore Islam?

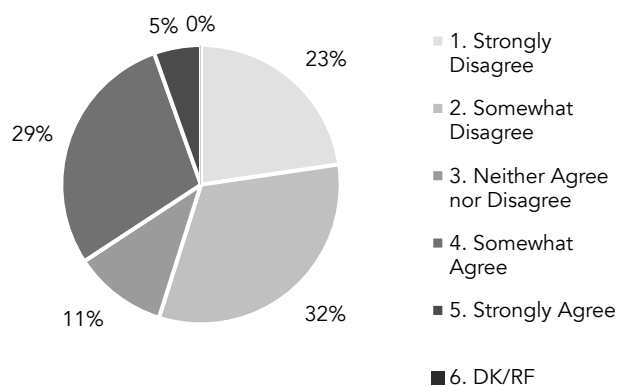
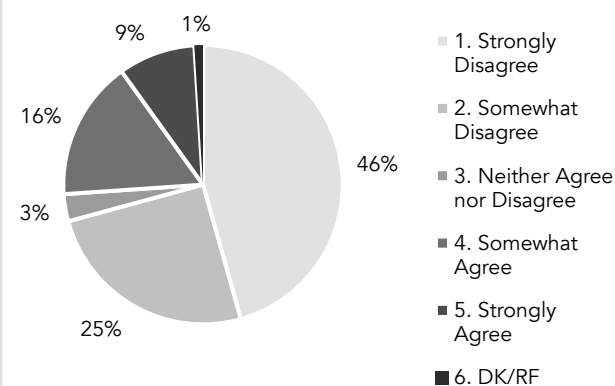


Figure 59. To what extent do you agree that the practice of Takfir is justifiable?



**Locals are divided over whether Islam is the sole source of justice, and whether Sharia should be the only source of law as promoted by ISIS.**

ISIS reportedly promises recruits Islamic justice based on Sharia. Interestingly, respondents were divided on these matters: while 42 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 54 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that only Islam can guarantee justice (see Figure 60). Similarly, while 37 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 58 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that Sharia should be the only source of law (see Figure 61). Nevertheless, respondents maintained that promises of a united Islamic world appeal to local youth. Meanwhile, they claimed that ISIS is intent on convincing youth that the social problems they face – problems like political and economic injustice and inequality – can be solved by religion, and that it (ISIS) holds the ingredients to success. With that in mind, respondents worried that youth in Madaba's most marginalized communities – such as Dieban, Madaba Camp and

<sup>130</sup> "ISIS is not considered the needed or wanted bringer of Islam because they are takfirists, meaning that they accuse everybody in society of being nonbelievers. That is not needed or wanted in a caliphate, and ISIS will see its end because of its lack of propriety." (Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

Mlah – could be attracted by the group’s rhetoric, and may one day be inspired to take up arms against the Jordanian government and/or join VEOs. Considering that respondents were divided on the two premises of ISIS’ judicial rallying call – that only Islam can guarantee justice and Sharia should be the only source of law – such anxieties may be reasonable. However, one respondent explained that he did not think that anyone in Madaba supports ISIS now because it has shown that it cannot deliver on its promises.

*“ISIS gained so much support in the past because over the internet it promised the people Islamic justice. Since the people feel cheated out of a good life, ISIS won a lot of supporters. Now, I don’t think anybody thinks that they [ISIS] can provide the Islamic justice that comes from Sharia.”*

*(Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)*

Figure 60. To what extent do you agree that only Islam can guarantee justice?

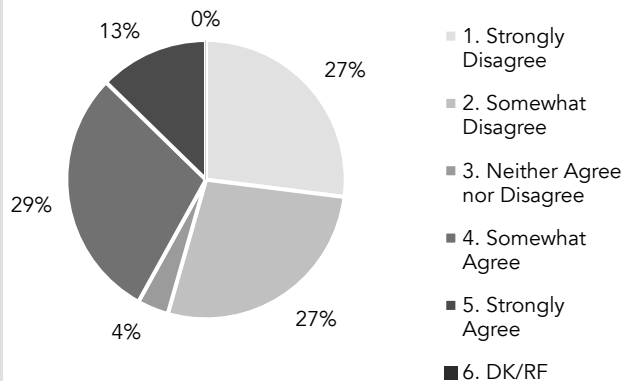
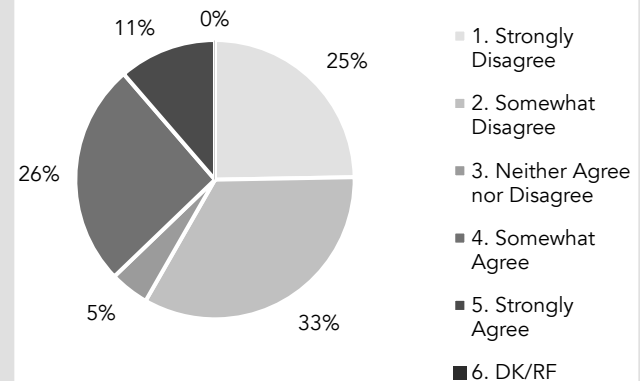


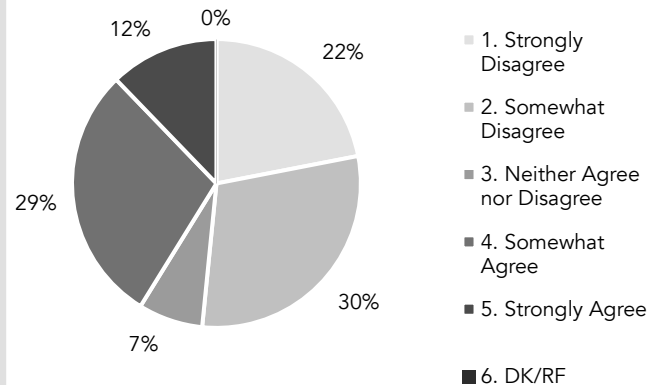
Figure 61. To what extent do you agree that Sharia should be the only source of law?



A large minority of locals believes that jihad against Europe, Syria and Shias is justifiable.

Quantitative findings were similar regarding jihad in Europe and Syria, and jihad against Shias. Indeed, findings pertaining to jihad in Europe and Syria were near-identical; in fact, 41 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, while 52 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that violent jihad is justifiable in both countries (see Figures 62 and 63). Similarly, 44 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, while 51 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’

Figure 62. To what extent do you agree that violent jihad in Europe is justifiable?



disagreed that violent jihad against Shias is justifiable (see Figure 64). That said, the most likely destination for local jihadists is Syria.

For example, while no respondent directly stated that jihad in Europe and against Shias is discussed in Madaba, many respondents voiced disapproval for Bashar Al Assad, and emphasized that they eagerly await the overthrow of his regime (see section 6.1 Perceived Impact on Foreign Relations). This increases the likelihood that groups opposing the regime – such as the FSA, ISIS and JN – will successfully recruit locals into their ranks via propaganda campaigns (see section 2.1 Support for VEOs and 7.1 The Role of Violent Extremist Propaganda). Already, jihad against Assad and Western involvement in Syria are topics of debate in Madaba, with suggestions that in both cases it is justified as a ‘defensive’ rather than ‘offensive’ jihad.

*“What are we waiting for? Why are we sitting around while the West destroys Muslims in Syria? After they finish in Syria, they will turn on us. The people who go on jihad in Syria go because they can see into the future. They can see that, if they don’t go there and fight now they will have to fight at home tomorrow.”*

*(Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)*

Figure 63. To what extent do you agree that violent jihad in Syria is justifiable?

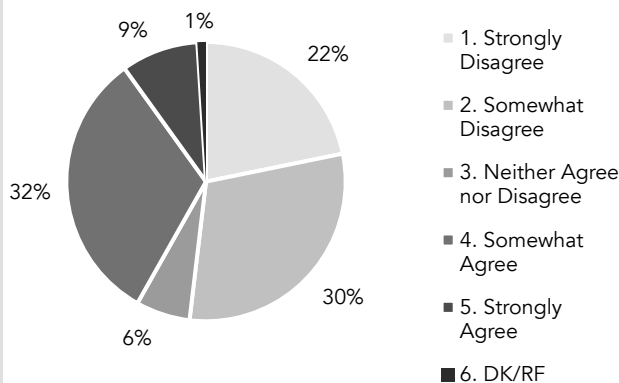
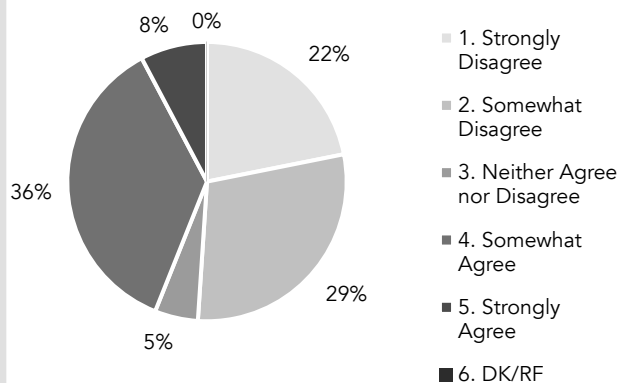


Figure 64. To what extent do you agree that violent jihad against Shias is justifiable?



**Locals are convinced that VEOs offer money to prospective recruits, but the appeal of VEOs as socially supportive networks is minimal.**

While 28 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, 62 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that violent jihad is an easy way to earn money (see Figure 65). Nevertheless, respondents indicated that VEOs like ISIS are exploiting the economic situation in Jordan and coaxing poor residents – notably youth – into joining them. Some respondents worried that young locals without jobs and unable to afford a university education may, in pursuit of economic benefits, choose to join a VEO

for as little as 2,000 JD, which respondents claimed is the going wage for ISIS recruits.<sup>131</sup> One respondent claimed to have firsthand knowledge of the VEO practice of paying off recruits. He recalled that ISIS recruited one young man – who happened to be an unemployed university graduate – by offering him large sums of money and subsequently convincing him to conduct a suicide mission based on the promise of paradise.<sup>132</sup> Aside from financial incentives, if VEO propaganda campaigns have attempted to portray VEO membership as something that can provide disenfranchised young men a home, family and friends, those campaigns have largely failed in Madaba. Quantitative results revealed that only 21 percent of Madaba GQ respondents ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agreed, while 75 percent ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ disagreed that members of VEOs always look after each other (see Figure 65). Nevertheless, it is possible that, should young men decide that prospects of leading productive lives in Madaba are unlikely, and that the job market will not yield to their desires and needs, they may join VEOs because they have been led to believe that a life with such groups is a preferable alternative. Indeed, some respondents suggested that people seek in VEOs what their communities cannot provide them: a sense of belonging and the feeling that the person beside them believes in what he or she is fighting for just as much as they do.

*“Everybody in Madaba and Jordan hates ISIS and rejects its hateful ideology, but we fear for the young people the most. We fear that they are not strong enough, that they will be encouraged by money. Things aren’t good for them here, and we fear that ISIS promises them things we cannot offer them.”*

*(Female, 30, Program Development, Madaba)*

Figure 65. To what extent do you agree that violent jihad is an easy way to earn money?

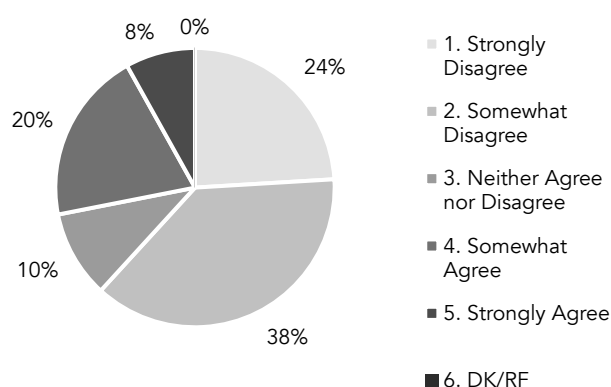
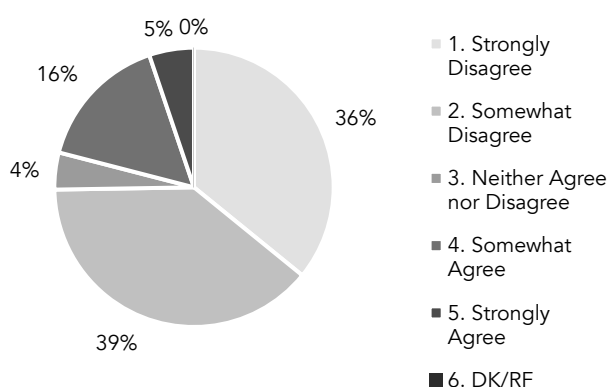


Figure 66. To what extent do you agree that members of VEOs always look after each other?

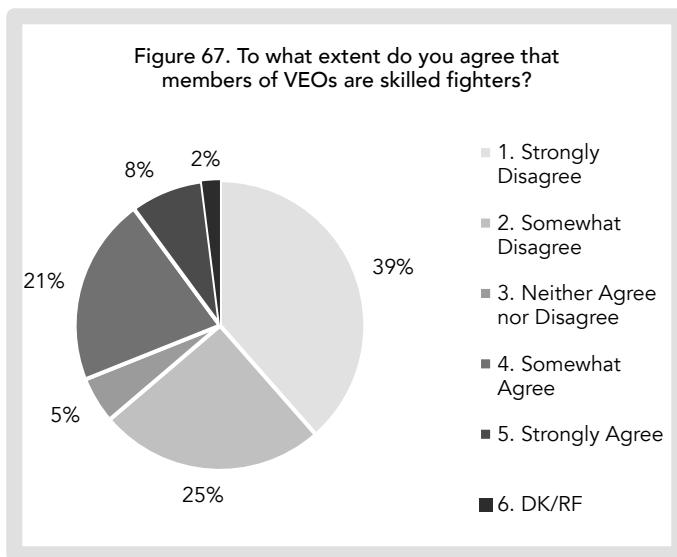


<sup>131</sup> “When you hear that ISIS gives salaries of 2,000 dinars, in this bad economy people say to themselves: ‘I am dead either way, so why not go and get the money’.” (Male, 41, Farmer, Madaba)

<sup>132</sup> “I know a person who was involved with ISIS. They forced him to go for a martyrdom operation outside Jordan of course. He was only 23 years old, a university graduate who was unemployed, and they convinced him using money and religion. They gave him lots of money and said that he would go to paradise if he carried out these missions against the infidel regimes of Syria and Iraq.” (Male, 57, Tribal Leader, Madaba)

The prospects of attaining power and glory in exchange for VEO membership have the potential to be highly seductive among locals.

While 29 percent of Madaba GQ respondents 'strongly' or 'somewhat' agreed, 64 percent 'strongly' or 'somewhat' disagreed that members of VEOs are skilled fighters (see Figure 67). At first, this finding appears to contradict widespread assumptions that membership with a VEO carries a degree of status. However, status can be realized at a number of levels beyond military strength. For example, research suggests that belief simply in one's own self-importance can prevent people from becoming radicalized, and that a lack of that belief can dramatically increase one's propensity toward VE. Indeed, some respondents believed that young, single males might feel empowered by VEO involvement – especially in light of VEO promises of money, power and glory in return for membership. While it remains to be seen how many young men in Madaba could fall prey to such promises, those who are uneducated, unemployed and struggling to survive are most at risk.



*"Everybody wants power. Everybody. I think that sometimes people join extremist groups because they empower them. They might feel superhuman after joining or something."*

*(Male, 24, Airport Employee, Madaba)*