



[Global \(In-\)Security](#)

Jordan and the Jihadist Threat

How Stable Is Germany's Ally in the Middle East?

[Annette Ranko/Imke Haase](#)

Jordan is widely considered to be an “anchor of stability” in a crisis-ridden region. That is why Germany is also seeking to extend its strategic partnership, not least noticeable through the relocation of its *Bundeswehr* Tornado jets from Turkey to Jordan. It should be noted, however, that Jordan is currently facing some serious economic and domestic challenges. These include a jihadist scene, in which recent developments suggest that the country is still at risk of terrorist attacks, necessitating innovative approaches for preventing extremism.

Against a backdrop of growing tensions between Turkey, Germany and other NATO states, the German *Bundeswehr* redeployed its military troops and Tornado surveillance jets from the NATO base in Incirlik, Turkey, to the Jordanian desert oasis of al-Azraq in autumn 2017. Subsequent state visits by Germany’s Defence Minister, Foreign Minister, the German President and Chancellor Angela Merkel underline the growing strategic importance that Germany attaches to Jordan and indicate that a longer-term partnership in the area of foreign and security policy is in the pipeline. Particularly since the start of the Syrian refugee crisis, the two countries have been working closely together on development cooperation projects. Germany is currently Jordan’s second-largest bilateral donor in the area of development assistance and humanitarian aid.¹

Compared to other countries in the region, Jordan is the ideal partner for Germany when it comes to its Middle East policy. It is one of only two Arab countries to have signed a peace treaty with Israel.² Unlike other Arab states, the Jordanian royal family espouses a moderate and progressive view of Islam, which it advocates beyond its own national borders.³ Jordan also takes a balanced approach to foreign policy in the region. It explicitly seeks to be the country with the most rational foreign policy in the Middle East. Thus, for example, Jordan takes a moderate stance towards the Iranian-Saudi contest for regional supremacy.

Furthermore, Jordan is largely considered to be an “anchor of stability”⁴ in a crisis-ridden region. Yet, Jordan has also been struggling with a number of economic and domestic challenges in recent years. The border closures with neighbouring Syria and Iraq (as a result of the conflicts in these countries) mean that Jordan has lost some of its key trading partners and transit routes. Youth unemployment has further increased, and currently stands at 36 per cent. The country’s national debt is 95 per cent of GDP. An economic reform programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund, which has led to cuts in subsidies and tax hikes, puts an increasing strain on lower and middle-income groups. This has already led to a number of protests which started in early 2018, with people expressing their dissatisfaction with the economy and venting their frustration at the slow pace of political reform. The protests reached their peak in June 2018 and resulted in the creation of a new government. The high number of Syrian refugees in the country (Jordan is one of the world’s largest host countries), is also putting its infrastructure to the test and – increasingly – threatening social cohesion.

This situation has enabled jihadists in Jordan to recruit new members over recent years. Whilst the country had not been affected by Islamist violence (compared to other Arab states) for many years, and was an exporter of rather than a target for Jihadist attacks⁵, this changed between 2015 and 2016.

In 2016, the country suffered a series of terror attacks.⁶ Since then, three terrorist cells have been uncovered in the country. They were armed and were planning to attack civilian targets. Additionally, there is also some concern that Jordanian fighters, who have been affiliated with IS in Syria and Iraq since 2011, could return to Jordan in the wake of its recent territorial losses.

Jordan is a key country in Germany's efforts to help countries ramp up their security.

This article deals with the current dynamics of the Jordanian jihadist scene and asks to what extent it has the potential to challenge the stability of Germany's new partner, Jordan. Germany is already taking this issue seriously. Since 2016, Jordan has been a focus country of the empowerment initiative, which aims to assist the country in its fight against terrorism.⁷ It should be noted, however, that recent developments in the Jordanian jihadist spectrum could generate new potential sympathisers among young people, a group that is particularly at risk of radicalisation. Coupled with contextual factors that fuel dissatisfaction in society, there continues to be a risk of further terrorist attacks in Jordan requiring innovative approaches in the area of preventing extremism.

Jordan's Broad Islamist Scene

Jordan's large Islamist scene has many facets. Most of the Islamist movements and groups are opposed to violence, but it is supported by a dangerous minority, the jihadists.

The Muslim Brotherhood and Their Party

Traditionally, the biggest and strongest player is the Muslim Brotherhood and its political wing, the Islamic Action Front (IAF). The group was founded in 1946 and, until the mid-1990s,

it was a social and political force favoured by the former King Hussein. It exerts a powerful influence over education and culture and runs an extensive network of charitable associations. The Muslim Brotherhood has always sought to bring about gradual social and political change in Jordan, while rejecting the use of violent means. It does not condemn the state and government of Jordan as being "apostate" and therefore does not use violence against them. The group's political wing, the IAF, is the strongest opposition party and many Jordanians of Palestinian origin believe it represents their political views. In the country's freest elections to date, in 1989, the group won 27.5 per cent of the votes.⁸

Quietist Salafists

Another large but non-political part of the Islamist spectrum is made up of the quietist Salafists, who also reject violence and do not consider the state and rulers as "apostate". Supported by Saudi petrodollars, this movement has been growing in Jordan since the 1980s. Their numbers were further strengthened by the many Jordanian guest workers who came into close contact with Salafi ideas and customs in Saudi Arabia. Quietist Salafists want to return to what they believe is a "pure" form of Islam, as practised at the time of Mohammed. They refuse to engage in political processes and their prime aim is to make society more devout. They believe there is only one true form of Islam, which is derived from a strictly literal understanding of the religious sources, the Quran and Sunnah. They are also of the opinion that the "right" belief is underpinned by "right" actions in everyday life. In this respect, they differ from the Muslim Brotherhood, whose members do not view an individual's daily actions as direct evidence of their belief or disbelief, and who do not insist on a literal interpretation of religious sources but allow for human interpretation instead.⁹

Salafist Jihadists

To date, the Salafist jihadist movement only makes up a small part of the Islamist spectrum.





Rising threat level: Jordan, too, has become the target of terrorist attacks in the recent few years.
Source: © Muhammad Hamed, Reuters.

Like the quietist Salafists, supporters of this movement believe there is only one correct way of living and interpreting Islam. They, too, follow a literal interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah, mainly based on identical legal and theological concepts and instruments. However, the jihadists conclude that today's states and rulers in the Arab world are "apostates". They believe it is a religious duty to take up arms against them because they have collaborated with the illegal occupiers of Muslim territories, especially the USA and Israel. Jordan's jihadists fall roughly into two camps: one follows the

teachings of Palestinian-Jordanian scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi – one of the world's most influential jihadist ideologues – while the other follows Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian who was killed in Iraq in 2006 and was the former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq (a forerunner of IS). The main difference between the two is that the IS-linked camp recognises Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi as a caliph, while the followers of al-Maqdisi do not. Furthermore, the IS-linked camp believes their leaders' authority is largely rooted in their combat experience, whereas the al-Maqdisi camp believes it derives

from their deep understanding of theology and law. Accordingly, the al-Maqdisi camp is characterised by a stricter judicial approach to the interpretation of religious sources and the justification of violent acts. It therefore often views the violence of IS as illegitimate from a religious, Salafi viewpoint.¹⁰

Islamists and the State

Rather than trying to reduce the scope of the Islamist groups as a whole, the Jordanian government is pursuing a strategy that allows the Islamists a certain amount of latitude, while trying to create internal divisions within the groups, and playing them off or using them as bulwarks against each other. Although the Muslim Brotherhood was traditionally granted a privileged role by the state, this changed when the current King Abdullah took the throne in 1999, and certainly since the start of the Arab Spring, when the Muslim Brotherhood was considered the main challenger to the government. The state tried to weaken the group by encouraging internal splits, a strategy that was successful when it led to the emergence of the Zamzam Initiative and the Muslim Brotherhood Society. In the medium term, however, neither group managed to seriously rival the Muslim Brotherhood. What is more, especially since 2011, the Salafis have been supported as counterweights to the Muslim Brotherhood. This not only affected quietist Salafis, but ultimately also the jihadist element in the movement. Two of the most prominent jihadist thought leaders from the al-Maqdisi camp were released from prison: al-Maqdisi himself in 2015 and Abu Qatada in 2014.¹¹ Shortly afterwards, the state made use of them both to counteract IS and its sympathisers in Jordan. They both publicly condemned IS's ideology and actions as being incompatible with the correct Salafi interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah. However, since the attack in Karak in December 2016, the government has taken a different approach to the whole jihadist movement in Jordan. Supported by appropriate legislation, the security services¹² are now taking tough action against jihadists of all shades, along with their sympathisers.¹³

Recent Changes in Jordan's Jihadist Scene

Leading Jordanian experts have described recent changes among jihadists in Jordan, who suggest the threat of attacks in the country remains acute. There are four main trends:

Combat Experience Rather Than Theological and Legal Expertise

Increasingly, the authority of jihadist leaders is based primarily on their experience in combat. Hence, jihadist ideologues with theological and legal expertise, such as al-Maqdisi and Abu Qatada, who were long regarded as leading thinkers for jihadists the world over, are now losing the upper hand to jihadists who have close ties to IS. This is accompanied by a greater willingness to embrace violence, which is now less strictly derived from religious sources with Salafi concepts and instruments. New leaders have been emerging in Jordan's Salafi scene. They are little known in the outside world, as their discourse is more aggressive than that of the ideologues in the al-Maqdisi camp. The government does not therefore allow them to express their ideas publicly, so they have gone underground. Key figures include: Sa'd al-Hunayti, Abu Muhammad al-Tahawi and Umar Mahdi Al Zaydan, who were all previously supporters of al-Maqdisi but who have turned to IS since its rise to prominence.¹⁴

Jihadists still view the rise of IS as a success story.

IS as a "Success Story"

The increasing unattractiveness of the al-Maqdisi camp among jihadists also arises from the fact that this camp is close to al-Qaeda. In Jordan at least, IS is more attractive as an organisation than al-Qaeda. The founding of IS in 2013 led to massive change in the jihadist spectrum, which until then had been mainly influenced by al-Qaeda. Unlike al-Qaeda, whose primary goal was

fighting the USA, IS proclaimed much loftier goals, namely to create a home for believers – a supposed “true Islamic state”. Many of the Jordanians who joined IS in Syria went there “to live, not to die”¹⁵. The founding of IS and its rapid territorial expansion caused problems for Arab authoritarian regimes and the West alike. For many, it was a symbol of power and provided proof that God was on their side. Even the massive territorial losses suffered by IS in Syria and Iraq in recent months, have not diminished the fame of IS as the first organisation to achieve this. The rapid ascent of IS continues to be viewed by many as a success story, while the loss of territory is merely regarded as a temporary setback.¹⁶ In addition, the growing influence of Shiite Iran in the region (especially in Iraq and Syria) and the denominational tensions that accompany it, are expected to continue for the foreseeable future and secure further support for IS. For the first time in modern history, Sunnis in the region – who also make up the majority of the population in Jordan – are living in real fear of losing their Sunni cultural identity. Al-Qaeda’s greatest foe was the USA, but this changed with the advent of IS, who view the Shia as their number one enemy.

Women and teenagers are playing an increasingly important role in the jihadist movement.

From “Lone Wolf” to Family Structures

A new study by the Center for Strategic Studies at Jordan University suggests that a change in the structure of the jihadist spectrum is making it harder for the intelligence services to recognise and destroy these structures and make jihadist ideology less attractive to its followers. Jihadist groups are no longer predominantly made up of lone men, but instead are increasingly attracting entire families to their ideology. For example, entire families have travelled to Syria to live in IS-controlled areas. This trend involves three main factors: firstly, in Jordan there are whole

generations of jihadists who pass on their fighting spirit and Salafi ideology from father to son. Therefore, fathers and their sons are sometimes indicted in the same court cases. Secondly, members of the Salafi jihadist movements are increasingly joining forces through marriage. Thirdly, women and teenagers are playing a more important role in the jihadist movement. Researchers at the Center for Strategic Studies call it the emergence of a “society within a society”. It currently involves less than one hundred families, but their numbers are growing.¹⁷

Broadening of Jihadist Ideology

Over recent years another trend has emerged in Jordan’s jihadi scene: the Umma Party’s transnational network, led by Kuwaiti Salafi Hakim al-Mutayri, has also gained a foothold in Jordan. Naeem Tellawi is the leader of the group’s Jordanian subsidiary, which is mainly based in the Zarqa region. Throughout the region, the Umma Party is promoting a new concept of jihad that potentially has more mass appeal than the traditional jihad concept espoused by the jihadists. Historically, the problem for jihadists has always been that they are on the fringes of society. The majority of the population often dismissively call them *takfiris* (Muslims who call other Muslims apostates). Calling fellow Muslims apostates strongly deviates from Islamic orthodoxy, according to which only God can judge a person’s belief or lack of belief. The Umma Party’s legitimising of violence and jihad, however, is not based on the often despised practice of *takfir* (declaring someone an apostate), but has more of a secular nature. In short, this is a violent second wave of the Arab Spring (after the failure of the first wave in 2011). The aim is to trigger revolution throughout the entire region and establish new regimes that will supposedly create popular sovereignty and social justice: purported democracies with an Islamic identity.¹⁸ Although the Jordanian branch of the Umma Party is small in terms of numbers and its leader Naeem Tellawi recently had to publicly admit that the Umma Party has failed to become a leading player among jihadists in Jordan, it should nonetheless be stressed

that the Umma Party has led to new elements finding their way into the jihadist discourse. In principle, these have the potential to generate more mass appeal than the jihadists' traditional legitimisation of violence, and could therefore potentially attract new followers to jihadism.

Jihadists' Influence on Young People

A survey conducted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Jordan and the Jordanian institute NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solutions, looked at the influence of jihadists on the section of Jordanian society that is often cited as being most at risk: young people.¹⁹ The survey suggests that only a small minority of young people have jihadist sympathies, but it also reveals that there is potential for this to change.

According to the results, young Jordanians tend to favour religious conservatism. For example,

75.5 per cent of respondents said that if religion and science contradict each other in certain respects, religion is always right. 71.2 per cent believed women should cover their hair. 65.3 per cent thought that politicians would do their jobs better if they were more devout. Furthermore, 83.1 per cent believed that women should not hold leadership positions. In practice, however, this conservative attitude does not seem to preclude a certain degree of tolerance, particularly towards other religious minorities. This is particularly evident in the questions about coexisting with Christians in Jordanian society. 80.8 per cent of those questioned described Muslim-Christian relations in the country as very good. Furthermore, 44.2 per cent of the young people surveyed strongly agreed and 39.4 per cent concurred that people of other faiths are no less moral than people of their own faith. This tolerance is a clear deviation from jihadist ideology, which states that all non-Muslims as



well as Muslims of a different denomination are enemies who must be fought against.

However, the survey also shows that a small group of young people espouse jihadist ideology. When explicitly asked, around four per cent said they supported the ideologies of extremist groups such as IS, al-Qaeda or the al-Nusra Front. For example, 4.3 per cent of those questioned agreed with the statement that *all* women *must* wear the face veil, something that Salafis regard as a religious duty. Some six per cent of respondents believed that jihadist groups such as al-Qaeda should be classified as a legitimate resistance movement and not as terrorists. 3.8 per cent said they admired the “jihadist way of life”. However, the figures were lower when asked about specific IS practices, such as the destruction of antiquities and the trafficking of women.

Nevertheless, there is considerable potential for young Jordanians to sympathise with the jihadists. What is particularly striking is the lack of confidence in how jihadist groups are portrayed in the media. 48.2 per cent of the young people surveyed believed they are misrepresented, and 40.3 per cent thought they are portrayed in an exaggerated way. 48 per cent of respondents consider the Shia and their growing influence in the region as the most acute threat at present. When asked about the use of violence, 50.5 per cent of young people thought it was legitimate in order to defend their religion, 65.8 per cent considered it legitimate to defend their country against foreign occupiers, and 58.8 per cent considered it legitimate as a way of opposing injustice in society and unjust regimes.

Economic Conditions Fuel Frustration

Factors such as social inequality are often cited as a breeding ground for radicalisation. This has

always been the case in Jordan, and it is now becoming more pronounced due to the country’s bleak economic situation.

Jordan’s poor economic situation provides a fertile breeding ground for radicalisation.

Over the last few years, the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the resulting border closures with Jordan in 2015²⁰ have caused the country to lose vital trading partners as well as key transit routes. Jordan has not yet managed to make up for this loss by opening up new export markets.²¹ Jordan’s existing dependence on foreign aid has increased still further in the wake of the floods of Syrian refugees who have entered the country (Jordan is one of the main host countries).²² On top of this, Jordan’s national debt has continued to rise in recent years and currently stands at 95 per cent of GDP. This led to Jordan and the International Monetary Fund signing an agreement in 2016 aimed at reducing public debt by 2021 through tax reforms and cuts to subsidies.²³ However, the initial measures have had the greatest impact on lower and middle-income groups and on young people, who are often most at risk of unemployment. 70 per cent of the population is under 30 years of age, and youth unemployment stands at around 36 per cent.

Young people’s frustrations are often fuelled by a lack of economic prospects, but also by the fact that nepotism is seen to be widespread. Jobs and access to information are often dependent on family and tribal affiliations. For many young people, this creates a sense of social inequality and exclusion. In 2018, this frustration seems to be manifesting itself in new ways, with an increase in the suicide rate and unprecedented levels of violent crime. For example, since January 2018 a number of banks, petrol stations and pharmacies have been victims of armed robbery. On social media these are often celebrated as “Robin Hood acts” in the sense of social justice.

Niqab Barbie: Young people espousing extremist views are (still) clearly in the minority.

Source: © Ali Jarekji, Reuters.

It is unlikely that Jordan will completely lose control of its state, as has happened in Syria and Iraq.

Young people's frustration over inequality and the increasingly difficult economic situation have also resulted in protests. Specific reasons behind them include recent cuts in bread subsidies, rising electricity and gas prices, and tax hikes resulting from the agreement with the IMF.²⁴ At the beginning, in early 2018, public demonstrations had mainly taken place in the provinces, particularly in Salt and Karak. The protests and the accompanying discourse in social media also reflected the dwindling confidence of certain sections of the population with regard to the government. Protests cumulated in May and June 2018, by then they had reached the country's capital Amman, and resulted in the creation of a new government. Should this dissatisfaction continue or should it be exacerbated, this might attract more supporters in the future.

Jordan's Capacity to Counter the Jihadist Threat

What is the Jordanian government doing to counter the jihadists, and will they succeed in destabilising the country? Firstly, Jordan has one of the most professional intelligence services in the region. At least at present, it has managed to keep tabs on the dangerous minority of already radicalised individuals who are prepared to take up arms or have already done so. It is therefore unlikely that Jordan will experience the kind of decline in security and loss of control over parts of its territory that has been seen in Syria and Iraq. One challenge, however, is how to counter the new developments in the jihadist scene and the potentially growing pool of sympathisers. Changes in the structure of the jihadist scene away from the predominance of the "lone wolf" towards the integration of entire families, along with the emergence of secular and potentially attractive narratives about violence (as the second wave of the Arab Spring) in the jihadist

discourse, and the current economic context, all require broader, innovative government strategies for the effective *prevention* of extremism. Such strategies should not only involve the security apparatus, but also the economic, social and cultural aspects, too. To achieve this, the paper on a National Strategy to prevent extremism issued in May 2017²⁵, needs to be finally debated and approved by the government and the portfolio clearly allocated to a specific government department. In 2016, responsibility was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Culture, which currently finds itself seriously underfunded and has traditionally been one of the weaker ministries. As a result, it has come up with very few initiatives to date. That is why the allocation of the prevention of extremism portfolio has suffered delays once again, and it is still not clear which ministry will be responsible for it. Some Jordanian experts recommend that an inter-ministerial body should be set up, comprising representatives of the Ministries of Education, Culture, Economy and Social Development, and reporting directly to the Prime Minister.

However, many Jordanian experts argue that the concept of security should also be viewed from a broader perspective, which is not limited to the issue of jihadism. Recent protests and the new, more violent forms of crime that have emerged since early 2018, highlight the fact that these developments also need to be monitored and addressed. This is the only way for Jordan to remain *the* anchor of stability in the region in the long term, providing a foundation for prospering relations between Germany and Jordan.

—translated from German—

Dr. Annette Ranko is Head of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's office in Jordan.

Imke Haase is Research Assistant at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's office in Jordan.

- 1 In 2016, the Kingdom received 470 million euros, increasing to 578 million in 2017. Cf. Zeit Online 2018: Bundesregierung übergibt Militärausrüstung an Jordanien, 14 Jan 2018, in: <http://bit.ly/2knZgpc> [20 Mar 2018].
- 2 In October 1994, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel (also known as the Wadi Araba Treaty), making it the second Arab state after Egypt to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979 following talks at Camp David. Cf. King Hussein Cyber Library, in: <http://bit.ly/2gA047M> [20 Mar 2018].
- 3 This is particularly clear in the Amman Message, a statement calling for tolerance and unity in the Muslim world and opposing extremism. This was issued in 2004 by Jordan's King Abdullah II, and signed by 552 Islamic scholars and leaders. Cf. The official website of the Amman Message, in: <http://ammanmessage.com> [19 Mar 2018].
- 4 For example, Germany's Minister of Defence Ursula von der Leyen and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Jordan in 2017 and 2018. Cf. Zeit Online, n. 1; idem 2018: Steinmeier mahnt Unterscheidung von Fluchtgründen an, in: <http://bit.ly/2saGc0S> [20 Mar 2018].
- 5 Cf. Ranko, Annette 2017: Länderporträt Jordanien: Vom Exporteur zur Zielscheibe islamistischer Kämpfer?, KAS dossier on extremism, in: <http://kas.de/wf/de/71.16807> [8 May 2018].
- 6 On 6 June 2016, five Jordanian intelligence officers were killed in a shooting near the al-Baqaa camp. One week later, six Jordanian soldiers were killed in Ruqban, on the border between Syria and Jordan. IS claimed responsibility for the attacks. On 26 September 2016, for the first time, an intellectual and someone who was not a member of the security services became a victim of terrorism. While standing outside a courthouse, Nahed Hattar was shot in the head several times by a Jordanian engineer and Islamist. Hattar was accused of sharing a cartoon about IS on social media, which was perceived as being anti-Islam. He had already received death threats as a result of this. However, what really grabbed the world's headlines were the events of 18 December 2016, when several people attacked a police patrol in al-Qatranah, a village near Kerak. The attackers then fled and took a group of tourists hostage in Kerak Castle. Ten people were killed, including one from Canada, and 34 others were injured. IS claimed responsibility for the attack. This incident was an embarrassment for the security forces as they were only able to overcome the Islamists with the help of local people. A number of high-ranking security officers were replaced in response to this. Cf. Schmid, Ulrich 2016: Ein Mord erschüttert die jordanische Ruhe, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 27 Sep 2016, in: <https://nzz.ch/ld.118857> [20 Mar 2018]; Beaumont, Peter 2016: Jordan security forces storm castle to free captured tourists, The Guardian, 19 Dec 2016, in: <http://bit.ly/2gYXvOu> [20 Mar 2018]; Global Terrorism Database, Jordan, in: <http://bit.ly/2sbjIhp> [20 Mar 2018].
- 7 German Ministry of Defence 2018: Ertüchtigung – mit Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe zum Erfolg, 1 Feb 2018, in: <http://bit.ly/2knZpZK> [20 Mar 2018].
- 8 Cf. Rantawi, Oraib 2017: Muslim Brotherhood and the Political Authority: A Compounded Crisis, in: Political Parties in Jordan, pp. 138–174.
- 9 Cf. Ranko, Annette / Nedza, Justyna 2015: Crossing the Ideological Divide? Egypt's Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 39: 6, pp. 519–541, in: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116274> [9 May 2018].
- 10 Cf. Wagemakers, Joas 2018: Jihadi-Salafism in Jordan and the Syrian Conflict: Divisions Overcome Unity, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 41: 3, pp. 191–212, 30 Mar 2017, in: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1283197> [8 May 2018].
- 11 Cf. Black, Ian 2015: Jordan releases jihadi cleric and Isis critic after group's murder of pilot, The Guardian, 5 Feb 2015, in: <http://bit.ly/2IMFluq> [15 Mar 2018]; Malik, Shiv 2014: Abu Qatada cleared of terror charges by Jordan court and released from jail, in: <http://bit.ly/2xbLxLi> [20 Mar 2018].
- 12 The legal basis is the anti-terrorism law of 2014. Article 3 on cybercrime gives a vague definition of a terrorist act: “[use the] information systems, or the internet, or any means of publishing or media, or establishing a website to facilitate terrorist acts or support a group, or organization, or charity that commits terrorist acts, or promote their ideas, or fund it, or take any action that could jeopardize Jordanians or put their property at the risk of hostile or retaliatory acts”. Cf. Anti-Terrorism Law no. 55 of Year 2006, in: <http://bit.ly/2IHRox3> [22 Apr 2018]. A cybercrime law was also drafted in September 2017 but it is yet to be ratified by parliament. The draft law states that anyone who posts or re-posts something on social media that is considered to be “hate speech” will be liable to a prison sentence of one to three years or fines of 5,000 to 10.000 JOD. Cf. draft law on cybercrime, to supplement the existing cybercrime law of 2015, in: <http://bit.ly/2x9ogcQ> [22 Apr 2018].
- 13 Cf. Al-Sharif, Osama 2016: Jordan and the Challenge of Salafi Jihadists, Middle East Institute, 21 Mar 2016, in: <http://bit.ly/1Rk91PW> [16 Mar 2018].
- 14 Cf. Wagemakers 2018, n. 10.
- 15 Interview conducted on 15 Mar 2018 with Dr. Mohammed Abu Rumman, Islamism expert at the Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, in Amman, Jordan.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Cf. Shteiwi, Musa / Abu Rumman, Mohammed 2018: Sociology of Extremism and Terrorism in Jordan, Center for Strategic Studies, Amman.
- 18 Cf. Ranko, Annette / Nedza, Justyna / Röhl, Nikolai: A Common Transnational Agenda? Communication Network and Discourse of Political-Salafists on Twitter, in: Mediterranean Politics 23: 2, 2017, pp. 1–23.

- 19 Cf. Study “Youth Violent Extremism”, conducted by NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solutions and KAS Jordan, 2017. A survey of 1,811 people (equally split between men and women) aged 16 to 26 years was conducted in all twelve governorates in Jordan.
- 20 The border crossing with Iraq has been partially reopened for goods traffic since August 2017, but the border to Syria is still closed. Cf. Al-Khalidi, Suleiman 2017: Jordan border crossing with Iraq to reopen in major boost to ties, Reuters, 29 Aug 2017, in: <https://reut.rs/2iGKTy3> [9 May 2018].
- 21 There are 660,000 Syrian refugees registered with the United Nations Refugee Agency in Jordan; the Jordanian government has even claimed there are 1.26 million Syrians in the country. Cf. UNHCR 2018: Syria Regional Refugee Response, Jordan, in: <http://bit.ly/2GO7HCW> [9 May 2018]; Ghazal, Mohammad 2016: Population stands at around 9.5 million, including 2.9 million guests, The Jordan Times, 30 Jan 2016, in: <https://shar.es/anrHLr> [9 May 2018].
- 22 In 2017, 3.65 billion US dollars flowed in, with the main donors being the US, Germany and the EU. Saudi Arabia, which has long been Jordan’s biggest donor, has turned a significant portion of its aid into investment and is currently the country’s largest foreign investor. Cf. Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation 2017, Contracted Foreign Assistance in 2017, in: <http://bit.ly/2smoeJH> [9 May 2018].
- 23 In 2016, the IMF and the Jordanian government signed an agreement to generate income and curb government spending. By 2021, public debt is to be capped at 77 per cent of GDP, whereas it currently stands at 95 per cent of GDP.
- 24 Cf. Maayeh, Suha 2018: Jordan protests against price rises signal growing resentment, The National, 5 Feb 2018, in: <http://bit.ly/2E7uQ6Z> [20 Mar 2018]; The New Arab 2018: Riots break out in Jordan over bread price hikes, 5 Feb 2018, in: <http://bit.ly/2Ls0GLv> [20 Mar 2018]; Al-Khalidi, Suleiman 2018: Jordan unveils major IMF-guided tax hikes to reduce public debt, 16 Jan 2018, in: <https://reut.rs/2Dj6NQV> [19 Mar 2018].
- 25 The strategy paper has been drawn up jointly by UNDP and Jordanian representatives. It attaches particular importance to social and economic aspects in this prevention work. Cf. Malkawi, Khetam 2017: Anti-extremism strategy to be ready next month, The Jordan Times, 26 Jan 2017, in: <http://bit.ly/2xc8Vlr> [9 May 2018]; UNDP Jordan 2016: National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Jordan (P/CVE), 17 May 2016, in: <http://bit.ly/2d5P1VQ> [9 May 2018]; Bondokji, Neven 2017: Countering Violent Extremism Research in Jordan: High Potential and Limited Impact, WANA Institute, in: <http://bit.ly/2KVfq4H> [8 May 2018].