



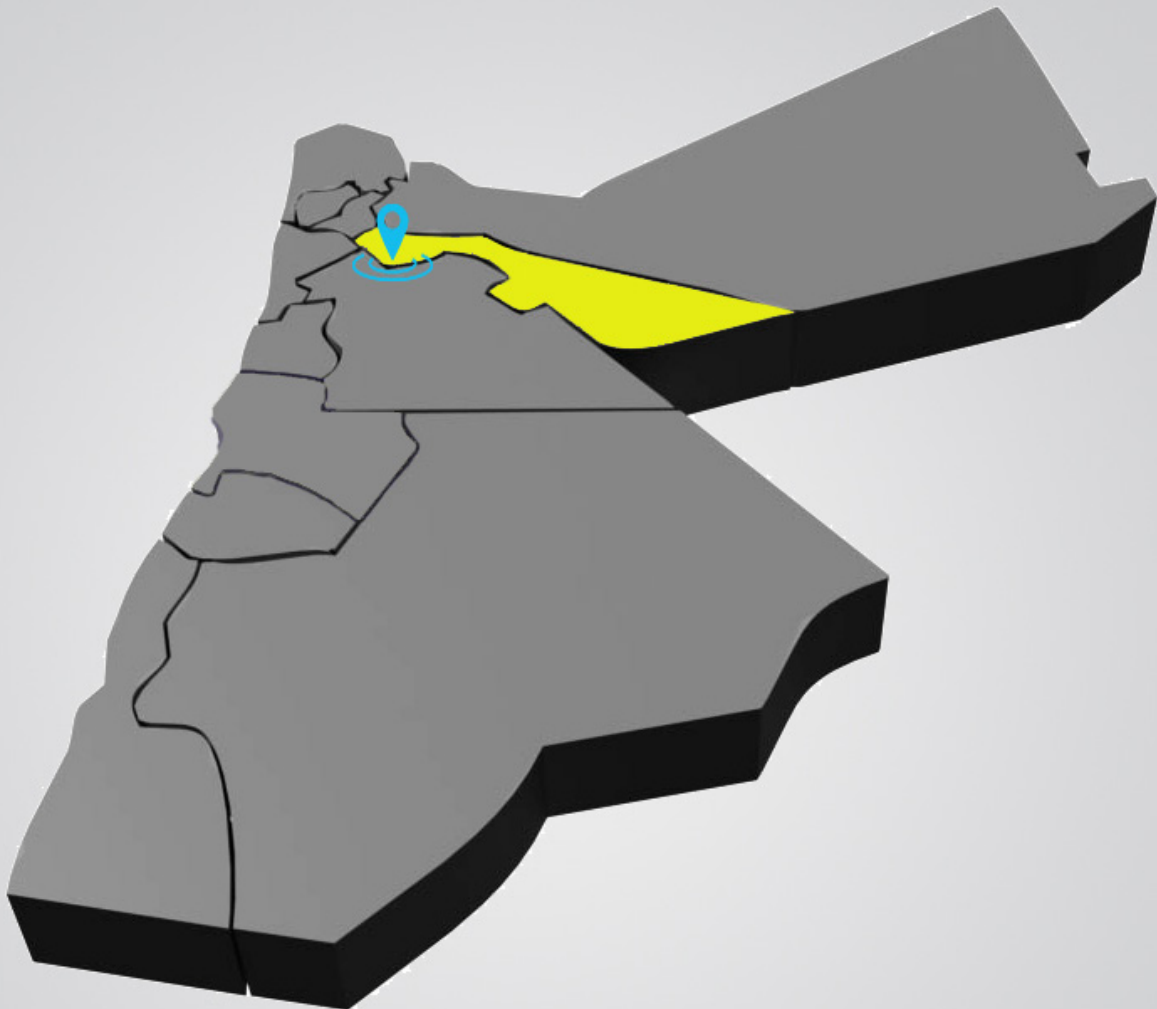
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A Read of Human and Population Security: Russeifa as a Case Study



West Asia-North Africa Institute, April 2019



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Authors: Dr Neven Bondokji, Lina AlHaj

Translation: Project Tarjim

Editing the translation: Barik Mhadeen

Cover Design: Hadeel Qatamin

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1. Introduction

The city of Russeifa, which sits about 20 kilometres from Amman, suffers from an overpopulation issue that is affecting the quality of life. In 2014,¹ the population amounted to 348,870 inhabitants in an area of 84 square kilometres.² Consequently, citizens suffer from a gap between their needs for services and infrastructure on the one hand and their availability on the other. Therefore, it is befitting for the issue of overpopulation to be of concern to the people of Russeifa when discussing the relationship between human security programmes and traditional security measures in preventing violent extremism in Jordan.

As part of the project "Towards More Effective Human Security Approaches in the Context of The Emerging Threat of Violent Extremism in Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia,"³ the research team surveyed 37 male participants and 43 female participants from Russeifa, who took part in two workshops and two focus group discussions (FGDs). The team also carried out nine key stakeholder interviews (KSIs) with stakeholders from various sectors, including municipal employees, security officials, workers, employees of local and international organisations, along with local community members between 4 April 2018 and 25 November 2018. Certainly, this sample does not represent all residents of Russeifa, but their opinions are used to solicit the attitudes prevailing in the district.

Russeifa was chosen as it is a source of interest for scholars studying the phenomenon of radicalisation and support of armed groups. A study conducted by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in 2018 found that about 40 per cent of those convicted of cases related to radicalisation or supporting radicalisation were from Russeifa and the Governorate of Zarqa more generally.⁴ The residents of the district do not deny that there are supporters of extremists among them, but they reject the negative media image currently existing around Russeifa.⁵

This report focuses on aspects that distinguish Russeifa from other communities in regards to the nexus of human security, state-centric security and violent extremism. For example, participants from Russeifa and other governorates under consideration discussed unemployment, *wasta* [nepotism], poor quality of education and their reluctance to participate politically. However, this report highlights what sets apart the perception of the Russeifa participants from other participants across Jordan. It discusses the issue of overpopulation and its impact on the views of the citizens of Russeifa and their sense of social justice, in addition to its impact on urban planning, the quality of the educational environment and other aspects of human and traditional security.

¹ "The Jordanian Statistical Yearbook", Department of Statistics, 2014 http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/yearbook_2014.pdf

² "Russeifa District", the Ministry of Interior's website. <http://moi.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=322>

³ For details of the project, see <http://wanainstitute.org/en/project/towards-more-effective-human-security-approaches-context-emerging-threat-violent-extremism>

⁴ Muhammad Abu Rumman and Musa Shteivi, sociology of extremism and terrorism in Jordan: Field and analytical study (Amman: Centre for Strategic Studies, 2018), p. 78.

⁵ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018, and interview with the Assistant Head of Development Department at the Municipality, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

2. Social Justice and Urban Planning

The people of Russeifa talked about social justice by addressing the many manifestations of social injustice in their daily lives. Perhaps the most important aspects of this are the old infrastructure, poor urban planning and the lack of reliable public transportation networks. This exacerbates social issues and community violence due to increased daily pressure on the residents, along with the resulting security implications on the district. For participants, better PVE policies should include improved urban planning in the city and providing open spaces for cultural and communal learning.

The head of the Local Development Department in Zarqa Governorate explains this dimension:

"I have begun to realise the importance of urban planning; how we can absorb the [negative] energy of youth and children by the proper planning of parks, open landscapes and public places where young people's energy can be released and their loyalty to their communities is strengthened."⁶

This opinion is shared by the head of a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) who calls for community projects and investments to create sport areas in the district that invest in young people and promote their belonging to their communities.

He stresses that the most important hindrance to the reintegration of ex-convicts into their society, regardless of the crimes previously committed, is not investing in the promotion of their social belonging.⁷ Public spaces and safe services in communal social spaces in the district will enhance the individual's belonging to his community and reduce his isolation from his social context. However, because of the overpopulation in the district, there are no urban spaces that can be converted into parks or public squares.

In the same context, one of the employees of the Governorate also notes the total absence of the cultural artistic scene in Zarqa Governorate in general, and asks why no sufficient support is provided for the cultural and artistic sector:

"Zarqa has no art sector at all; the artist is one who carries a sensitive and delicate sense and does not become an extremist. What prevents us from promoting the skills and artistic sense locally? Decision-makers see the art sector as a luxury while it is a humanitarian need. They see it as a leisure and do not realise its importance."⁸

Some participants also touched on how overpopulation affects the delivery of services. For example, the lack of adequate knowledge by the governor or the mayor of the areas of Zarqa Governorate and its poor services, in their opinion, limits the ability of the municipality and the governorate in general to design policies and services that limit the aggravation of the living situation in the

⁶ Interview with the Head of the Development Department in the Municipality, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

⁷ Interview with the President of the Association of Athar, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

⁸ Interview with Assistant Head of Development Department in the Municipality, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

governorate.⁹ The lack of awareness about the situation on the part of local level officials deepens the feeling of citizens that they have no voice nor supporter. They also complain about the low level of representation of MPs in the parliament, further marginalising the district and hampering the provision of services to accommodate the overpopulation.¹⁰

Overpopulation affects other aspects of social injustice in Russeifa district. For example, with regard to health services, there is a shortage of medicines and doctors do not meet their appointments. The situation gets even worse because hospital infrastructure has deteriorated.¹¹ Consequently, citizens are unable to obtain one of their most important rights: the right to treatment and decent healthcare. This creates a feeling of marginalisation of the city and its residents and a sense of injustice due to the poor services and absence of oversight and accountability of corruption.

Poor services are also linked to the poor public transportation network in Russeifa, which limits the ability of its citizens to access employment opportunities outside the district, especially for women. Russeifa shares this issue with Tafileh.¹² Women in both districts brought up the difficulty of accessing employment opportunities in light of the absence of transportation means. However, women in Russeifa add another dimension: their inability to benefit from expertise in other regions or to benefit from activities and services provided by local and national CBOs outside the district due to the poor and unreliable public transportation network.¹³

The following aspects distinguish the citizens of Russeifa in their discussion of social justice compared to other citizens in the areas of Jordan that were part of this project: Karak, Tafileh, Mafraq, Ajloun, and East Amman. It is generally noted that their concerns are all about daily services and access to services that satisfy their basic human needs. Consequently, the lack of providing such services enhances the sense of marginalisation and social injustice and may lead to using negative channels of expressing these needs if the situation remains as is.

3. Education and Employment

Discussing services, the people of Russeifa addressed the impact of overpopulation on the quality of education. Education is not only a basic human need, but an essential foundation for economic and social security, which are two key pillars of human security, as will be explained below. There has been a growing interest in curriculum reform in Jordan – which received remarkable media coverage in 2016 and 2017 – however, the citizens of Russeifa discussed the quality of education and classroom environment in light of the fact that the schools are overcrowded.

⁹ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

¹⁰ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

¹¹ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

¹² More details can be found in Barik Mhadeen and Neven Bondokji, Human Security in Tafileh: Trends and Perceptions (Amman: West Asia-North Africa Institute, April 2019), <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/human-security-tafileh-trends-and-perceptions>

¹³ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

One of the local actors stated that there are about 83 public schools in Russeifa, with an average of 50 students per class. Hence, the teacher is unable to provide good quality of education, and the students do not obtain their rights to receive proper teaching. In addition, the role of the social counsellor is absent. Furthermore, the lack of interest in sports and art classes results in replacing such materials with other classes; hence, there are no spaces for creativity and that energy is channelled outside the schools.¹⁴ Thus, CBOs find themselves required to provide educational services and extracurricular activities to compensate for the absence of such opportunities at school.

School programmes also do not promote national belonging, which is necessary to reduce the cycle of violence and injustice felt by the residents of Russeifa. "In schools, in street and in the community, everything helps you reach the stage of radicalisation. [Why would schools not] promote the national identity and belonging through the morning assembly... or by investing in theatre and artistic activities that reinforce these values among students."¹⁵

An individual's sense of injustice and poverty affects his/her belonging to his/her country, which may create alienation and separation from society and a desire to express anger; hence, joining extremist organisations becomes a plausible option.

With regard to unemployment and vocational education, participants expressed a social grievance that stigmatises all campaigns aiming to encourage vocational education. One of them says:

"Why have the pupils of Sweifieh [in Amman] not been taught vocational training, and why is vocational training only taught to the poor? I mean, the state's policy seems to be that the poor class is provided with these vocational trainings and education, whilst the rich class gets all the scholarships and enjoys the social status."¹⁶

This observation leads researchers to a different area related to a deep sense of marginalisation among the people of the district, a feeling shared by the residents of the governorates in more than one area.¹⁷ There is a sense that the people of West Amman are more fortunate and have more opportunities. Perhaps this feeling explains why young people shun away from vocational education programmes that have long been encouraged by the state. **It is considered by some to be another social stigma that is added to other stigmas of the marginalised people in Jordan.**

Although education is an essential pillar in building the individual and investing in his/her energy, it seems to have transformed in Russeifa - due to the overcrowding in schools and marginalisation - into a factor that limits the individual's capacity-building and even involuntarily drives him to disengage himself from the state. The result is the tendency of this individual towards a cycle of

¹⁴ Interview with the President of the Association of Athar, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

¹⁵ Interview with the President of the Association of Athar, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

¹⁶ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

¹⁷ See, for example, Karak and Tafileh's reports for this project. Neven Bondokji and Lina Al-Haj Ahmad, Determinants of Human Security and State-Centric Security in Karak (Amman: West Asia-North Africa Institute, March 2019), <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/defeterminants-human-security-and-state-centric-security-karak>, Barik Mhadeen and Neven Bondokji, Human Security in Tafileh: Trends and Perceptions (Amman: West Asia-North Africa Institute, April 2019), <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/human-security-tafileh-trends-and-perceptions>

community violence that is generated in schools and then taken out to the streets. Due to the absence of preventive and remedial measures to circumvent this adverse effect, education becomes a radicalisation driver rather than a fortress against it.

4. Political Participation

The citizens of Russeifa do not trust deputies and governments. With regard to the deputies in particular, the participants discussed the fact that deputies move to Amman, where they focus on their interests and forget the interests of those who elected them and sent them to the parliament in the first place. A teacher says: "Everyone [politicians] promises certain things without actually realising them."¹⁸ Another participant deems the outputs of the electoral process unfair: "Look at the mechanisms of municipal elections and manipulation of the election results." He expressed his disdain for the performance of the parliament and its legislations who he believes are meant to guarantee the interests of the politicians, not those of the people.¹⁹

Another person questioned the immunity given to deputies as it places them above the law, yet this opinion is inaccurate, since it is possible to remove immunity from the deputy when the Council decides so.²⁰ Nevertheless, these opinions reflect the depth of the crisis of confidence not only with the government, but also with the parliament, which is supposed to be the representative body of the people.

When discussing the government, the participants compare it with the CBOs. They have shown greater confidence in the CBOs as an actor against radicalisation they perceive to result from the government policies and its restrictions on the citizens. Participants described the government as the one who generates radicalisation,²¹ while in their opinion, the CBOs offer programmes and projects that help to achieve human security and prevent radicalisation. Despite the results of CBOs' work, governments are narrowing the CBOs' space, resulting in the feeling that they stand against those who want to help citizens.²²

Mistrust in the government ultimately leads to the support of extremist groups. "People have different views because the ministries and regulations are ineffective, and they sympathise with extremist groups - not because they like their actions, but because they are looking for an alternative to the government's failure and negligence. Extremist movements are convincing because they present better alternatives to the status quo and the current disgraceful situation of people."²³ This leads people to fall for the appeal of extremist groups and accept the possibility of joining them to meet their needs or to achieve active participation.

¹⁸ Interview with teacher, Russeifa, 25 September 2018.

¹⁹ Interview with a representative of an international organization, Russeifa, 25 September 2018.

²⁰ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

²¹ Participants in the focus group, Russeifa, 18 April 2018.

²² Participants in the focus group, Russeifa, 18 April 2018.

²³ Interview with the Head of the Development Department in the Municipality, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

5. Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment programmes play a role in Russeifa, but they are not very reliable. Empowerment programmes are weak and short-term and do not focus on women's needs; therefore, their impact remains weak and indirect. This is related to the change in the concept of women's empowerment over time as explained by one of the female workers in an international organization, saying:

"Women have always been working in the past in livestock and agriculture, but it has been difficult to grow outside these traditional roles. Therefore, empowerment for her [today] has become the ability to change her roles and emerge from the traditional framework. Technology has also played an important role by giving people the opportunity to express their talent and channel the momentum of local organisations and international non-governmental organisations to expand women's participation and develop their capabilities."²⁴

Socially, there is some support for women's empowerment, but it remains dependent on women's traditional role of raising children. There is a lack of understanding of the positive effect guaranteeing women's rights and access to education has on the children they raise.

Women in Russeifa, like others in Jordan, feel marginalised legally and politically, especially women married to foreigners. They are unable to give citizenship to their children like Jordanian men. One female participant stated that "a secretary at the Ministry of Interior once said to me: Do not dream of the day that your daughters will receive the nationality."²⁵ This leads most importantly to a sense of aggression, absence of justice, and women's perception that they are second-class citizens, which affects their identity and belonging. The way in which information is communicated and applied often involves humiliation for women and their children. For example, one participant thinks that the procedures at the National Aid Fund are humiliating for women. Most come with their children, who witness the humiliation their mother has to go through. These scenes in childhood generate psychological residues that are difficult to get rid of.²⁶

6. The relationship of Human Security and State-Centric Security Policies in Preventing Violent Extremism in Russeifa

The 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) defined human security through seven key pillars: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, social and political security. The concept of human security is a considered a comprehensive concept

²⁴ Interview with a representative of an international organization, Russeifa, 25 September 2018.

²⁵ Interview with a female activist, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

²⁶ Interview with the Head Assistant of the Development Department in the Municipality, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

catering to the needs of a secure individual in his/her country. This concept differs from the traditional concept of state security. The concept of human security defines the individual as the primary focus, i.e. the referent object. The concept also focuses on the empowerment and protection of the individual in his society and from his/her state as well.²⁷

In light of the above discussion on social justice, education, employment, political participation and women empowerment, the definition of human security put forward by Russeifa's residents is not surprising. They define it in terms of services/procedures, as a state of stability that results from achieving food, health, and economic security. Participants explain the centrality of economic security to this definition: "economic need hinders the stabilisation of human security."²⁸ The participants focused on linking human security to the basic needs of the individual as a basis for achieving social justice and thus human security more comprehensively.

While the service aspects were prioritised as the focus of the discussions in Russeifa, there was an extensive debate as well on the traditional security policies used and their impact on human security programmes and preventing violent extremism among its people. SCS measures are defined as protecting the interests of the nation.²⁹ The concept of security refers to protection from threats and dangers surrounding the state; hence, security relates to the protection and sovereignty of the state.³⁰

In terms of the impact of security measures on the delivery of human security programmes, participants identified it by the control imposed on all services and content provided by CBOs through their awareness and training programmes, which may impede the ease of establishing such programmes.³¹

In terms of the impact of these measures on PVE efforts, most opinions stressed the importance of the strong security grip to prevent/counter violent extremism; however, most views criticised the procedural methods in place. For example, participants pointed out that some raids do not respect the sanctity of the raided homes, and increase fear among people.³² It gets even worse when innocent people are arrested and then merely provided with an apology afterwards. One of the participants denounces this, saying, "What may the apology do? It only results in excessive hatred and aggression towards the security authorities."³³ In certain instances, the violent actions by the security forces lead to violent reactions by people, "so they disown" the security system. Often, the resulting change is a push towards radicalisation, according to several points of views.

A female preacher explains this cycle of violence, believing that SCS policies and legislations do not help in preventing extremism:

²⁷ United Nations Development Program. 1994. "Human Development Report 1994", pp. 24-33, accessed via: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf

²⁸ Interview with a janitor, Russeifa, 25 September 2018.

²⁹ "Human Security and Violent Extremism" two workshops, Russeifa, 7 October 2018 - 8 October 2018.

³⁰ Barik Mhadeen, "Re-conceptualizing the security approach: Why Now?" West Asia-North Africa Institute, 2018. http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Publication_YouthAndSecurity_Arabic.pdf

³¹ Participant in the focus group, Russeifa, 18 April 2018.

³² Many participants in the focus group, Russeifa, 18 April 2018.

³³ Interview with a preacher, Russeifa, 25 September 2018.

"I see many people in long queues at the security centre in order to obtain a stamp for the house arrest. [During this time] the criminal reflects carefully about his life, if he has to waste long hours of his day just to enter and register, I wonder when is he going to work? Perhaps, he will conclude that his life in prison was better and more merciful. There must be other options... this person feels guilty, so why should I keep him reflecting on this matter [due to these procedures]?"³⁴

The participants also addressed instances where the administrative governor does not comply with the judge's ruling, in addition to unjust detention in some cases.³⁵ The Tafileh report details this issue.³⁶ In conclusion, the participants' comments in Russeifa indicate a rejection of the implementation of the procedural aspect of these security measures, but they believe in the importance of SCS measures and the role of security agencies in protecting citizens from crimes and extremism.

7. Recommendations

Although the subject of overpopulation has taken a notable space in the debate in Russeifa, it was remarkable that participants did not make specific recommendations on this aspect. When asked about recommendations and proposals, they resorted to traditional proposals on unemployment. In conclusion, research activities in all of the studied areas indicate a weak ability of citizens to formulate clear recommendations. Here, this report notes two recommendations made by the participants of Russeifa:

- Prepare and present a study to identify the services needed by the Russeifa community and submit it to decision-makers. This study must be conducted through a collaborative effort between civil society, youth groups, local institutions, employers and business-owners in Russeifa. The entity supervising the implementation of the recommendations of the study shall be a civil society committee, with the initial aim of contributing to the identification of the real needs of the society, before developing and improving it to enhance the resilience of its members to marginalisation and radicalisation. The duration of implementation of the recommendations arising from this study spans from one to three years.
- Utilise the international funding provided to the education sector in the Kingdom to build more schools in the Russeifa district so that fewer students are in each classroom, and more teachers are hired [employed] in the process. International support for the education sector can also be used to invest in extracurricular activities in schools, such as supporting the school theatre, and cultural and volunteer activities that enhance the students' belonging to their community and develop their sense of service and patriotism. The government,

³⁴ Interview with a preacher, Russeifa, 25 September 2018.

³⁵ An interview with the president of Athar Association, Russeifa, 3 April 2018.

³⁶ Barik Mahadeen, Neven Bondokji, Human Security in Tafileh: Trends and Perceptions (Amman: West Asia-North Africa Institute, April, 2019).

community and international organisations can work together to achieve this in accordance with a gradual plan.



West Asia-North Africa Institute
Royal Scientific Society
70 Ahmad Al-Tarawneh St
Amman, Jordan

info@wana.jo
www.wanainstitute.org