



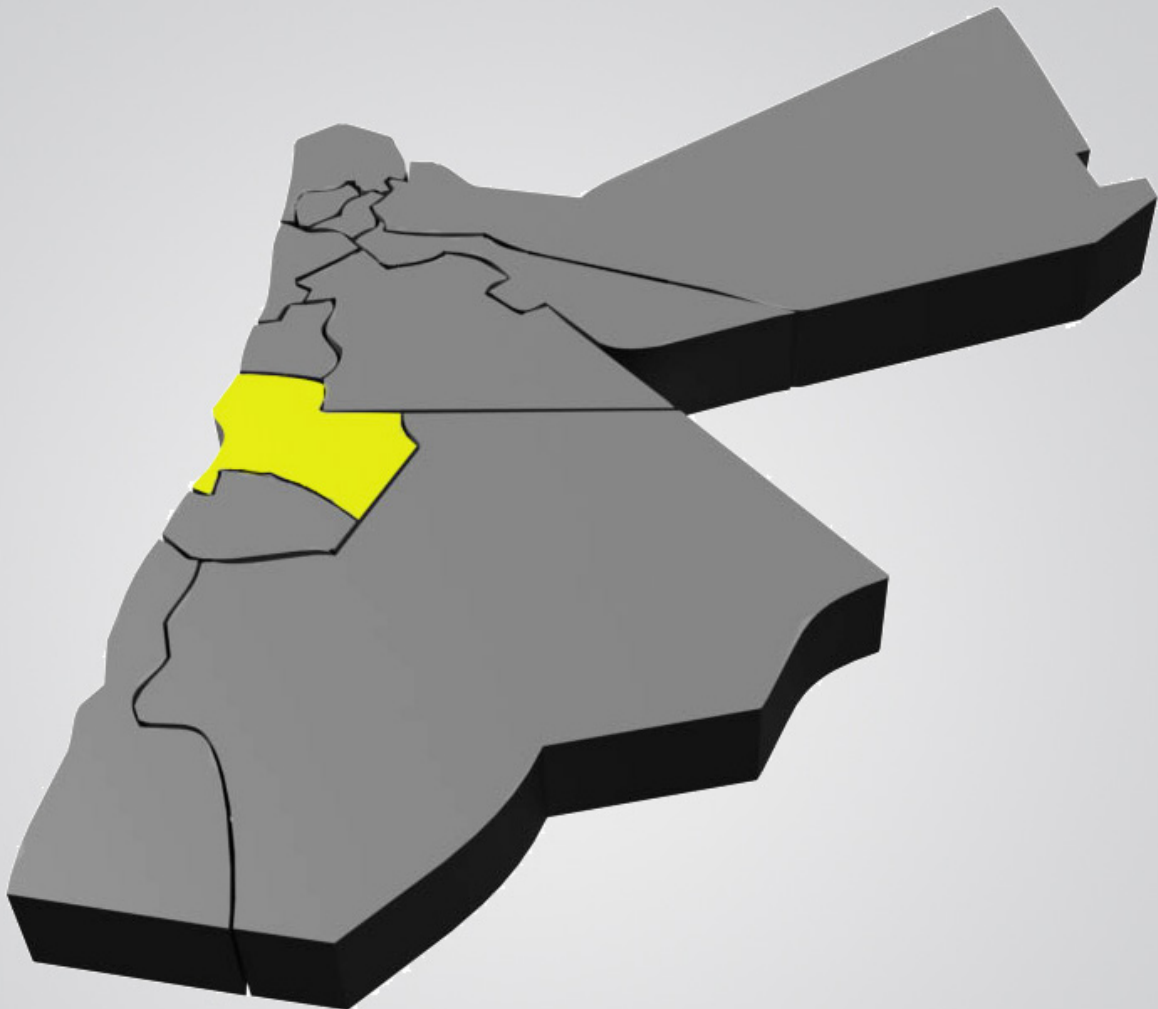
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DETERMINANTS OF HUMAN SECURITY AND STATE-CENTRIC SECURITY IN KARAK



West Asia-North Africa Institute, February 2019



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1. Introduction

Karak is one of the most compelling governorates in which to explore the relationship between human security and state-centric security policies as far as preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) is concerned. The governorate has been at the forefront of the interplay between human security and traditional security policies, as it witnessed the 1989 events that led to a democratic opening in Jordan as well as the "Bread Riots" of 1996. Since the outbreak of the Arab uprisings in 2011, Karak governorate also saw the rise of an ongoing dynamic and popular political movement. Further, the 2016 Daesh attack on Karak Castle¹ and the subsequent security and community response help shed greater light on the relationship between these security approaches as well.

This brief presents the key points made by participants in the WANA Institute's fieldwork in Karak as part of a project on enhancing human security in vulnerable communities across Jordan, Lebanon, and Tunisia.² The project is rooted in two key assumptions: first, that enhanced human security measures curb the drivers of extremism; and second, that state-centric security measures may generate hostile reactions in local communities, thereby possibly promoting rather than countering extremism.

The research draws from two workshops, two focus group discussions (FGDs), and nine interviews with various stakeholders in Karak, including government entities, security actors, community leaders, civil society representatives, and international organisations. The findings were then verified during an additional FGD. In total, 91 participants took part in the research activities — 53 men and 36 women — between 16 August and 29 November 2018. The opinions of this sample may not be representative of all citizens in Karak, but they reflect local views and attitudes, and could prove useful to inform relevant stakeholders.

2. Human Security and State-Centric Security

In any state, security agencies will typically lead the efforts in *countering* violent extremism and cooperate with other governmental and civilian institutions for prevention and protection. But in *preventing* extremism, human security is an equally central concept insofar as it addresses the contextual drivers of extremism such as unemployment, lack of social justice, marginalisation, corruption, and weak political participation.³ This brief therefore builds on the view that

¹ "Karak events in a new documentary on Sky News Arabia." *Sky News Arabia*. 4 January 2017.

<https://bit.ly/2UZ9CMk>

² For the project page, see <http://wanainstitute.org/en/project/towards-more-effective-human-security-approaches-context-emerging-threat-violent-extremism>

³ Neven Bondokji, Kim Wilkinson and Leen Aghabi. *Trapped Between Destructive Choices: Radicalisation Drivers Affecting Youth In Jordan*. WANA Institute. 2017 "<http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/trapped-between-destructive-choices-radicalisation-drivers-affecting-youth-jordan>" <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/trapped-between-destructive-choices-radicalisation-drivers-affecting-youth-jordan>

state-centric security and human security⁴ are complementary and together capable of addressing extremism.

Participants from Karak defined human security as comprehensive security that aims at achieving a sense of psychological stability for the individual by meeting his or her basic needs, as well as by ensuring a sense of protection and safety when addressing the risks facing the state and individuals. In their definition, the participants focused on the philosophical aspect of the concept, in terms of the provision of freedoms and rights. This is a perception that attaches importance to abstract gains that will eventually lead to a sense of security and protection. In this view, human security is an end the society and the country can reach only after ensuring these freedoms. This differs from the views of participants in other governorates of Jordan, who saw human security as a gradual process through which living conditions and safety indicators in a society are incrementally improved by providing basic needs such as food, education, work, and health.⁵

The Karak community included the protection provided by security agencies in its definition of human security for stability. Yet, participants also believed that human security is a proactive step that leads to individual stability, which prevents the individual from committing violent acts in reaction to a failure in meeting his/her human security needs. Still, participants agreed that human security was absent, or that the level of human security was insufficient.

With regard to their position on state-centric security measures, participants' views differed on the effectiveness of said measures in countering extremism. Some supported state-centric security measures such as raids, arrests, and detentions, seeing them as the cornerstone of security. However, other participants suggested the behaviour of security agencies needs to be adjusted to avoid a sense of injustice amongst the local population. They suggested, for example, that authorities avoid spreading fear among citizens during raids and resort to dialogue in the instances where suspects are not classified as dangerous.⁶ Surprisingly, the majority of those who favoured the state-centric security measures did not refer to the 2016 Karak Castle attack, perhaps implying that they did not view the security response at the time to be effective, making the widespread citizen response to the attack a necessity.

The remainder of the participants was not supportive of the use of state-centric security measures, holding the belief that extremism is inherently ideological and exists within our homes, and must therefore be fought with thoughts and ideas.⁷ One female participant criticised the transfer of the CVE Unit from the Ministry of Culture to the Office of the Prime Minister as she believed that extremism is first and foremost a cultural and awareness issue.⁸

⁴ In 1994, a UN Human Development Report was released, outlining 7 key pillars of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal physical, communal, and personal political. The core definition of Human Security is "freedom from fear and freedom from want". 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

⁵ Several interventions during the Human Security Policy Workshop organised by the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) Institute in Amman on 12 July, 2018.

http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/files/NWO_PolicyLab_ReconceptualisingHumanSecurityInJordan.pdf

⁶ Two workshops on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

⁷ Participant in the Focus Group, Karak, 17 September 2018.

⁸ Interview with the director of the Directorate of Culture, Karak, 18 September 2018.

Implicitly, all participants agreed on the importance of state-centric security in *countering* extremism, but they underscored the need for a balance between human security and state-centric security measures to achieve stability. Further, the majority saw state-centric security policies as an ad-hoc approach to countering extremism, one which does not tackle the root causes. Hence, *prevention* is best achieved through a human security approach. It is worth noting that state-centric security policies may be counterproductive, leading to more extremism due to ill-handled arrests or selective detainments by the administrative officers. In tandem with rampant unemployment and a lack of social justice, such rigid security measures reinforce the sense of hostility against the state.

Consequently, participants presented several perspectives that official and non-official stakeholders might seize on to enact programmes and projects that would contribute to preventing extremism. These perspectives addressed the four pillars of human security: social justice, education and employment, women's empowerment, and political participation.

3. Social Justice

Social justice was the top priority for the citizens of Karak. They believed it is the basis of community security and what gives citizens their sense of loyalty and belonging, a sense that 'cannot be bought' (in reference to the misuse of financial resources).⁹ The importance of social justice in achieving human security was rated 50 per cent, compared to 28 per cent for education and employment, 15 per cent for women's empowerment, and 7 per cent for political participation.¹⁰

One member of the Karak Governorate Council wondered: "How can we foster a sense of belonging to the state in the absence of social justice?" Additionally, the individual experiencing injustice is more prone to develop a desire for revenge from those considered to be the cause of injustice, whether they are members of the community, the government, or the state. This sense of injustice and helplessness, in addition to the urgency of meeting one's needs, may well lead to extremism or eventually joining an armed group.¹¹

Participants in Karak linked the weak sense of social justice to the practice of favouritism, or *wasta*, which strips deserving individual of opportunities. Coupled with a status-quo already characterised by limited employment opportunities, *wasta* contributes to increased unemployment and a shrinking middle class, and further cements the inability of individuals to meet their basic needs. Combined, these factors exacerbate the levels of mistrust in the government, which can in turn even push young people toward the use of drugs.¹² As one participant noted, social justice is primarily a matter of distribution of opportunities,¹³ which explains this notable emphasis on *wasta* as a clear manifestation of feelings of social *injustice* in Karak.

⁹ Interview with a member of the Governorate Council, Karak, 23 September 2018.

¹⁰ Two workshops on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

¹¹ Interview with an employee of the Greater Karak Municipality, Karak, 17 September 2018.

¹² Interview with the director of the Directorate of Culture, Karak, 18 September 2018.

¹³ Two workshops on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

As for corruption, participants believed that the weak rule of law impedes the achievement of social justice.¹⁴ It is worrisome to note that despite the participants' rejection of corruption, they acknowledged that it has become part of the community's culture.¹⁵ Still, they deemed state-centric security measures in CVE to be worthless as long as corruption exists.¹⁶

4. Education and Employment

Unemployment levels reached 14.2 per cent in Karak in 2016.¹⁷ In addition to traditional factors, such as the lack of employment opportunities and low salaries, the weakness of the private sector and low levels of investment were also cited as contributing to the high unemployment rate. It is interesting to note that many participants believed there are only four companies in Karak.¹⁸ Although this perception is inaccurate, it reflects a general perception of poor investment in the governorate. Participants therefore demand that the government improves the investment climate.

Civil society organisations in Karak offer programmes that seek to provide professional job opportunities and improve the skills of job seekers, as well as awareness programmes.¹⁹ Hence, local organisations enjoy higher trust levels than the government, which was not trusted by the participants due to a perception of corruption, a lack of development and employment programmes, and a perceived gap between authorities and citizens. A prevailing perception suggested that "the state is marginalising Karak and it does not take interest in the issues it faces."²⁰

It is interesting to note that despite the governorate being represented in parliament by a number of well-known local figures — whose role is to represent their constituents and incite legislations to protect their interests — participants did not address the role of parliament or blame their representatives. This may be a reflection of weak confidence in the parliament in general, or may reflect a sharp prejudice against the government in Karak, which was less severe than the level found in Tafileh for instance.²¹

Certainly, the widespread unemployment affects citizens' confidence in their government due to the lack of economic reforms,²² in addition to the favouritism and nepotism discussed earlier. Citizens' trust in the state strongly determines their sense of belonging and readiness to defend it when needed. Thus, the "lack of employment opportunities and inability to bring food to the table generate a sense of hostility in the individual, as if he/she does not belong to the place and the homeland."²³

¹⁴ Two workshops on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

¹⁵ Participant in the Focus Group, 17 September, 2018.

¹⁶ Participant in the Focus Group, 17 September, 2018.

¹⁷ Information about Karak Governorate. Ministry of Interior. <http://moi.gov.jo/Pages/viewpage.aspx?pageID=233>

¹⁸ Participant in the Focus Group, 17 September 2018.

¹⁹ Workshop on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

²⁰ Interview with an employee of the Greater Karak Municipality, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

²¹ The results of the field research in Tafileh will be published in April 2019.

²² Workshop on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

²³ Interview with a volunteer and youth activist, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

The education and employment nexus in Karak clearly affects citizens' sense of belonging and determines their perceptions of social justice. Combined, the weakness of education, the consequent mismatch between education levels and the needs of the market, the discouraging investment climate and narrow horizons of economic reforms, along with favouritism and corruption, have all exacerbated feelings of marginalisation and anger at the government. Collectively, these factors increase the chances that young people are pushed towards extremist movements or resort to drugs and crime.

5. Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment leads to greater political and economic participation. In the area of political participation in formal institutions and political activities, women of Karak have reached the parliament through both competition and the quota system.²⁴ However, two obstacles to greater participation by women remain: poor economic conditions and social patriarchal structures. These factors will, for example, lead women to seek work rather than participate in politics. Moreover, a large percentage of the participants believed that the current position of women in Karak is satisfactory and that they enjoy their full rights. These opinions differ from the expectations of activists for women's empowerment, but the participants in the workshops defended these views.

Karak has a number of programmes focusing on fostering awareness around women's rights and economic empowerment through the provision of financial facilities. However, some of these programmes bear negative consequences for women when they are late to settle their instalments or become unable to repay the loans.²⁵ Due to the societal patriarchal culture, most of the women's activities remain home-based, limited to online marketing with little access to vocational training opportunities outside their homes.²⁶ International programmes, such as those of the United States Agency for Development (USAID), and local programmes, such as Al-Nashmiat Initiative, in Jordan provide financial and awareness support in the absence of government programmes in Karak. Although these programmes contribute to the empowerment of women, women's financial instability keeps them vulnerable to marginalisation and abuse by their families, according to a local female lawyer.²⁷

Women's empowerment programmes are key to enhancing human security for the community in Karak and to countering the drivers of extremism among women. A report prepared in Jordan found that the appeal of extremist groups amongst women is often due to a sense of marginalisation resulting from gender discrimination or due to not being able to exercise their rights. Generally, women's subjection to violence and injustice is a frequent reason for joining extremist groups, in order to rid themselves of community control and exact revenge.²⁸

²⁴ "20 Women in the Eighteenth House of Representatives," Al-Ghad Newspaper, 22 September, 2016.

<https://bit.ly/2DS07rg>

²⁵ Interview with the President of the Battir Charity Association, Karak, 23 September 2018.

²⁶ Interview with the President of the Battir Charity Association, Karak, 23 September 2018.

²⁷ Interview with a lawyer and activist, Karak, 17 September 2018.

²⁸ Women and Violent Radicalization in Jordan. UN Women. 2016. <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/women-violent-radicalization-jordan-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3843>

6. Political Participation

Political participation is an important step towards achieving and strengthening human security. In Karak, however, political participation does not receive much attention for two reasons. First, participants expressed their fear of not finding a job because of party affiliation.²⁹ The second reason regards government action. As one participant explained: "if there were effective and active parties — such as Islamic parties — the state would stand against them."³⁰ Parties are ineffective in providing political or community reform programmes, despite government support for each licensed party in the form of annual financial contributions of JOD50,000.³¹ Other participants pointed out that government corruption in the political process manifests in three ways: the inheritance of senior positions, the government's weak responsiveness to the demands of citizens, and citizens' poor representation in parliament. This has resulted in citizens' lack of confidence in the government and their representatives.³²

One of the participants opined that the Electoral Law seeks to divide and prevent alliances between candidates or parties.³³ Participants suggested that it should therefore be modified to revive political life and allow all segments of society to run for parliamentary elections.³⁴

On another level, schools and universities offer awareness programmes for political participation by simulating political participation through encouraging student bodies and parliaments. However, such programmes lack activities that effectively enhance students' skills and curricula that encourage participation to solidify a political culture and will within the society. On a more positive note, international and local civil society organisations also lead awareness programmes aimed at providing spaces for dialogue and political culture to take root and encourage youth participation. The "Badi Akoun Na'eb — I want to be a parliamentarian" campaign, which was founded in Karak, was able to demand a reduction in the minimum age for candidacy and the integration of young people into the political process.³⁵ By contrast, tribes play a mixed role, as they provide awareness seminars and encourage political participation, but in turn may limit the rise of some individuals politically.

This situation is worrying. The absence of political participation can feed extremism, because there are no real venues for citizens to express their views and engage in the decision-making process.³⁶ This is mostly due to favouritism, nepotism, the inheritance of positions,³⁷ and the absence of an electoral law that paves the way for all segments of society. All this drives citizens to feel that they are discriminated against and that there is no justice or equality. This in turn

²⁹ Interview with the President of the Student Union at Mu'tah University, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

³⁰ Interview with a volunteer and youth activist, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

³¹ "The Cabinet approves a modification of the contribution regulations of supporting the political parties," the website of the Cabinet. 28 July, 2016. <https://bit.ly/2S9kNAe>

³² Social Capital in Jordan: What is the level of Trust in Our Institutions & Why? Jordan Strategy Forum, 2018.

³³ Omar Al-Atout. "Electoral Law: The Devil is in the Details," 7iber. 25 February, 2016 <https://www.7iber.com/politics-economics/new-election-law-jordan/>

³⁴ Participant in the Focus Group, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

³⁵ Interview with the President of the Student Union at Mu'tah University, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

³⁶ Participant in the Focus Group, Karak, 17 September, 2018.

³⁷ Two workshops on "Human Security and Extremism," Karak, 16 and 18 September, 2018.

fosters a sense of injustice and a curiosity to join extremist groups³⁸ to have a voice and gain importance, as well as to escape the marginalisation that is seen to be exercised by the state.

7. Recommendations

Participants in Karak offered many recommendations, though most of them remained generic and superficial. This is a worrying phenomenon, which suggests that local communities are unable to submit proposals to solve their problems or to participate in the decision-making process on account of their weariness and suspicion of governmental entities. The most important suggestions can be summarised in two recommendations regarding the promotion of social justice and employment opportunities:

- Provide training and educational programmes to increase the practical experience and competencies of graduates consistent with the needs of the local market in Karak. Participants believed that this should be a collaborative effort between the Ministries of Culture and of Education and Higher Education on the one hand, and the vocational training centres and international donor organisations on the other. The same should be implemented in coordination with municipalities and civil society organisations for an open-ended period until the Ministries of Higher Education and Labour are able to coordinate regarding the required specialties for the local labour market. The aim of these programmes should be to address the imbalance between education outcomes and the needs of the local labour market, and to provide equal opportunities to obtain knowledge and professional support for all. This would increase fair competition in the labour market and enable individuals to create new employment opportunities outside the public sector.
- The participants also recommended establishing a fair, systematic, and transparent basis for recruitment and employment activities in the Civil Service Bureau, drawing from the expertise of the Senate, Civil Service Bureau, the private sector, and the Ministries of Labour and of Industry and Trade. However, the participants did not clarify the specific mechanism of cooperation required nor the desired experiences of these bodies for the purposes of cooperation. Yet, they believed that this measure would restore citizens' confidence in the government and begin to change the culture of favouritism in society, which bears on the achievement of social justice and the enhancement of human security.

³⁸ Participant in the Focus Group, Karak, 17 September, 2018.



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