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Jordan – A Regime's Struggle against Takfiri- Jihadi Ideology

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General

In recent years, the Jordanian region has faced a growing threat to its stability from extreme, violent, and political Islamic groups. The most tangible expressions of this were the rocket attacks on Aqaba in May 2005, and the simultaneous attacks on hotels in Amman in November of the same year – two actions carried out by groups affiliated with the al-Qaeda organization in Iraq. Even prior to these attacks, the Jordanian regime was waging an uncompromising and all-out warfare against the violent Islamic organizations.

However, unlike other states in the region whose activity against extreme Islam focuses on the military-terrorist aspects, the Jordanian regime is devoting a concentrated and ongoing effort aimed to the fight against the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah ideology, which it has identified as one of the principal sources of power and attraction of these groups, and as a main impetus for raising new generations of terrorists. In this struggle against extremist ideology, the Jordanian regime operates in two complementary channels: delegitimizing and refuting the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah, and disseminating a conception of moderate traditional Islam as "immunization" against an extremist Islam. In both channels, the regime is functioning both at home and abroad, attempting to recruit Islamic forces outside of Jordan, primarily by convening Islamic conferences and mobilizing first-rank religious scholars who are regarded as religious authorities in the Muslim world.¹

This article analyzes two main aspects of the Jordanian regime's confrontation with the takfir-jihadi Salafiyyah: the regime's "defense" against the attack by this stream during the second half of 2005, and the regime's ideological counterattack.

Extremist Islam's sources of strength in Jordan

The extremist Islamic stream in Jordan enjoys significant sources of strength. The most important of these include organizational and ideological infrastructure, an ability to rely on the non-violent political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which has deep roots in the Jordanian public – both Trans-Jordanian and Palestinian, and the inciting influence of the war in Iraq, as well as the conflict with Israel. Facing these sources of strength is a weak religious establishment that lacks popular authority, and is incapable of mobilizing those with religious authority to defend the regime's views.

The institutional infrastructure of the Salafi-jihadi stream in Jordan is diverse. It includes popular mosques that are not under the regime's supervision, as well as book stands that serve as a central focus for this infrastructure. In addition to the book stands, the many Web sites of global jihad groups serve as a means for mass dissemination of this ideology. Activists from jihad groups who have been arrested were indoctrinated with extremist ideology in these popular mosques.² Ignorance of the laws of Islam make young people, in particular, easy prey for this

¹ King Abdullah in an interview with CNN-Al-Rai, June 24, 2006

² A prominent example is Abed Shahadeh al-Tahawi, who is considered a source of religious law among extreme Islamic groups in Irbid. He preaches the takfir doctrine in mosques in the Irbid region. He was arrested and brought to trial. Al-Dustour . May 23, 2005; Al-Quds Al-Arabi, June 6, 2005.

propaganda.³ The existence of a minority that supports the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah and facilitates recruitment of activists for jihad organizations has been illustrated in public opinion surveys conducted in recent years in Jordan.⁴

The Muslim Brotherhood movement, and its extreme wing in particular, play a central role in preparing the ground for the internalization and absorption of the takfiri Salafiyyah in Jordanian society, especially among the young generation. Since the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan, there have been internal struggles between the moderate stream that aspires to co-existence and enjoy sound relations with the regime; and the extremist wing, schooled in the takfir doctrine of Sayed Qutub, which engages in a sharp political and ideological confrontation with the regime. Throughout most of the movement's history in Jordan, the extremist wing has usually been identified with leaders of Palestinian origin, whose identification with the Hashemite regime was weaker than that of their Trans-Jordanian colleagues.⁵ In the distant past, this extremist wing was relatively marginal, and in the 1980s and 1990s, its main energy was directed toward the jihad in Afghanistan and subsequently in Chechnya, Bosnia and other places. This stream has gained strength and daring, especially during the past year, as reflected in the elections in early 2006 for the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front party in particular, and has become a leading factor in continuous confrontation with the regime.⁶ One of the expressions of the Muslim Brotherhood's identification, if only

³ Ramadan al-Rawashdeh, who describes this situation, calls on scholars of Islamic law (shari'a) to battle against this phenomenon. Al-Rai, June 15, 2006. In the Old City of Amman (the "Balad"), near the Al-Husseini mosque, there are book stands disseminating propaganda material in the spirit of the takfiri-jihadi ideology. Since the second Gulf War, there has been a rise in demand in Jordan for books about the end of days and signs of the apocalypse. The book stalls in the "Balad" are inundated with these books. Al-Hiyat, February 15, 2006.

⁴ According to a one survey conducted prior to the attacks in Amman on November 9, 2005, some 64% of the Jordanian public sympathized with the al-Qaeda organization in Iraq led by al-Zarqawi – Al-Hiyat, December 15, 2005. However, this sympathy dropped sharply after the attacks in Amman. In a survey conducted immediately after these attacks, 72% of the sample believed that this organization is a terror organization, 20% believed that it is not a terror organization and 15.6% believed that it is a resistance organization. But after the killing of al-Zarqawi in June 2006, the percentage of those who regard the organization as a terror organization dropped to 54%, while 20% still believed it is not a terror organization. It should be noted that the data shows that 10% of those surveyed in 2004 believed that the al-Qaeda organization led by bin Laden is a terror organization, compared to 49% in 2005 and 41% in 2006. This indicates that there is greater sympathy for bin Laden's organization than for the al-Zarqawi organization. In any case, both organizations have levels of sympathy that explain the existence of a takfiri Salafiyyah infrastructure, albeit a relatively small one – Al-Rai, Al-Quds Al-Arabi, July 10, 2006.

⁵ Shmuel Bar, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan," pp 50-52, The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, June 1998.

⁶ Ramadan al-Rawashdeh notes that this stream regards rulers and societies that do not accept its outlook as heretics. According to al-Rawashdeh, the regime has become more concerned following the declaration by one of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders, Azam al-Hanidi, that the Muslim Brotherhood is capable of assuming executive powers in light of its achievements in Egypt in the December 2005 elections and the victory of Hamas in March 2006 – Al-Rai, August 17, 2006. In another article, published after the killing of al-Zarqawi, Ramadan refers to members of the Muslim Brotherhood as new Zarqawis – Al-Rai, June 15, 2006. Sultan al-Khateb notes the development of Muslim Brotherhood philosophy toward support for violence and insubordination vis-à-vis the ruler. Tactically, the Muslim Brotherhood adopts a path of moderation until the stage of "*takwin*" or "*tamkin*" – the stage when it is possible to grab power. Then, they will move toward confrontation with the government – Al-Rai, June 26, 2006. In another article, Sultan al-Khateb calls for neutralizing the takfir propaganda of some of the Islamic movement's leaders in Jordan – that is, the Muslim Brotherhood – which serves

partial, with the takfir and jihad outlook, can be found in its religious rulings identifying with the jihad in Iraq and Palestine, and demanding that Arab leaders raise the flag of jihad. These religious rulings assert that anyone providing assistance to the "occupying forces" is committing an act of treachery and declaring war on Allah and his prophet, which leads to heresy and abandonment of the community of believers (*khuruj min milat al-islam*).⁷

The ongoing war in Iraq also contributes to the strengthening of the Salafi stream in Jordan. The extremist Islamic organizations, led by the al-Qaeda organization in Iraq, enjoy moral support and admiration among a considerable public in Jordan and throughout the Arab world, which sees them as the principal flag bearer in the war against the enemies of Islam. This war serves as a main catalyst for the leaders of these organizations to disseminate the idea of jihad throughout the Arab and Muslim world. Their extremist interpretation requires each Muslim to devote himself to jihad (*fard ayin*) at this time, because they portray the fighting in Iraq as a war against foreigners who captured Muslim land. The intensive propaganda, conducted by al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations via the media and especially on the Internet only reinforces this position. This propaganda reaches almost every home, and its impact is translated into the formation of local terrorist organizations, some of which are linked to existing organizations and some of which are independent.

The confrontation between the regime and radical Islam in 2005 - 2006 - four tests

The November 2005 bombings

Since the end of 2005, the regime in Jordan has experienced four important tests vis-à-vis the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah. The first test was initiated by the takfiri-jihadi camp itself – a series of attacks on November 9, 2005 were simultaneously launched against three hotels in Amman by a Qaedat al-Jihad cell from Iraq led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Following the attacks, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi issued a communiqué to the Jordanian public justifying the bombings, whose victims were Muslims. He sharply attacked the Jordanian regime, and preceded to present the central motifs of his outlook. The bombings were viewed by the Jordanian establishment as a serious turning point regarding Islamic terror threats against the kingdom, its government, and its stability. In addition to the blow to internal security, it became clear that al-Zarqawi had a considerable number of sympathizers, albeit this number shrunk dramatically after the attacks. Some regarded him as a hero waging war against the American enemy, and others even identified with his jihadi Salafi outlook.

al-Qaeda and prepares the ground for this organization to flourish – Al-Rai, June 27, 2006. According to Rana al-Saba'a, a new leadership stream has become stronger within the Muslim Brotherhood that is more pro-Palestinian and sympathetic to al-Qaeda's philosophy – al-Hiyat, August 27, 2006.

⁷ A fatwa by the head of the Council of Ulama of the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr. Ibrahim Zayed Kilani, published on August 14, 2004 on the Jabha Web site of the Islamic Action Front – www.jabha.net/fatwa.asp [link doesn't work] Nadwah al-Majali summarizes how the jihad stream, on one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, have a stranglehold on the state and seek to undermine its foundations: "One stream attacks the regime through violence, confrontation, takfir and bombing attacks, while the other stream gently tunnels below the regime's foundations, penetrates the society and its institutions, mobilizes the street against it and raises doubts about its direction" – Al-Rai, June 27, 2006.

Immediately after the bombings King Abdullah ordered and outlined a more comprehensive and aggressive campaign against Islamic terrorism and its ideology. At the end of November 2005, he replaced the government of Badran – only seven months after its establishment – and formed a new government led by former general and outgoing Jordanian ambassador to Israel, Marouf Bakhit. In his letter of appointment for the new government, the King launched an unprecedented attack against the "culture of takfir," and instructed the government to draw up a strategy against it that would not only focus on a security solution, but also target the ideological, cultural, and political dimensions in the war against this extremist ideology.⁸ Thus, King Abdullah called for utilization of the the media to disseminate Islamic ideas and values of tolerance and moderation. He decided that the "Amman Letter" he initiated and published about a year earlier would serve as the source of training and inspiration for this system.⁹ The Jordanian regime indeed used the bombings to launch an ideological campaign against the jihadi Salafiyyah by both vilifying al-Zarqawi, and exposing the jihadi Salafiyyah as something that strayed from the original Islamic path, citing evidence from religious law to refute its basic premises.¹⁰

The radicalization of the Muslim Brotherhood

The second test was produced by the political Islamic camp led by the Muslim Brotherhood, its extreme wing in particular. They drew encouragement from the victory of Hamas in the elections for the Palestinian Authority. They expressed support for its government, demanded the return of Hamas representatives to Jordan after being expelled in 1999, and even scornfully rejected the regime's accusations that Hamas had tried to smuggle weapons into Jordan with the goal of carrying out attacks within the kingdom. This stance by the Muslim Brotherhood placed it in direct ideological and political confrontation with the Jordanian regime, which rejected any discussion with the Hamas government and, even more, accused it of plotting to carry out terror attacks in Jordan. What blocks any discussion of this type is primarily an ideological and political gap that is impossible to bridge. Hamas' determined opposition to peace with Israel, a country with which Jordan had signed a peace

⁸ The king places the emphasis on the *takfir* schools, which constitute a platform for fanaticism, backwardness and insularity, and exploiting ignorance and implementing religious rulings that lead them astray. Al-Rai, November 25-26, 2005.

⁹ Interview with the Jordanian press agency. Al-Rai, November 13, 2005.

¹⁰ It should be noted that the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan demanded – immediately after the bombings in Amman – to expel al-Qaeda and al-Zarqawi from the ranks of Islam (*ihraj min milat al-islam*) – Al-Quds Al-Arabi, November 17, 2005. But the head of the authority for issuing religious rulings (*hiat al-aftaa*) in the Islamic Action Front party, Ibrahim Zayed al-Kilani, rejected this demand, emphasizing that al-Zarqawi could not be declared a heretic without evidence that Islamic sages would except. In the case of al-Zarqawi, he said, Islamic punishments should be imposed on him – *hidud allah* – because of the spilling of Muslim blood, but he should not be declared a heretic. An expert and researcher of Islamic law in Jordan, Hamdi Murad, noted that a Muslim can be declared a heretic if it is shown that he himself has declared Muslim leaders or Muslim sages as heretics. The party's secretary general, Hamze Mansour, argued that it had not been proven that al-Zarqawi is declaring other Muslim to be heretics, Al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 18, 2005. Al-Kilani's contention is baseless since al-Zarqawi not only publicly advocated the takfir concept, but also approved the bloodshed of Muslims who are considered heretics in his eyes. See above – al-Kilani's ruling that anyone assisting the Americans in Iraq is a heretic. This contradicts the reason al-Kilani gave for refraining from declaring al-Zarqawi a heretic and to suffice instead with a condemnation and rejection of the concept and act of takfir.

accord, and its adherence to an active jihad against Israel, while the regime in Jordan completely rejects the ideology of jihad and adheres to a peaceful solution of conflicts, makes any kind of exchange impossible. Moreover, in the regime's view, discussions with the Hamas government would work to the benefit of the Muslim Brotherhood and its Palestinian wing, (which comprises a substantial part of the movement), and would serve the extremist ideas of the fanatical-ideological wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. A wing which has assumed important positions of leadership in the elections for the movement's institutions in March 2006.

The issue of al-Zarqawi's "shaheed" status

The third test was simultaneously mounted against two camps – the takfiri-jihadi camp and the Muslim Brotherhood, with an emphasis on the extremist but influential minority that adheres to the takfir idea. This test began immediately after the killing of al-Zarqawi by the American forces in Iraq on June 9, 2006. The killing of al-Zarqawi was indeed a first-notch achievement, not only for the Americans, but also for the Jordanian regime, which was openly proud of the role it claimed to have played in this successful operation. But this achievement dimmed following the unusual step taken by four members of parliament from the Muslim Brotherhood, who visited the al-Zarqawi family's house of mourning in the city of Zarqa and conveyed their condolences. The most prominent of them – Sheikh Mohammed Abu Faras, who is known for his adherence to the takfir idea – went as far as to declare al-Zarqawi a shaheed. On the other hand, he stated that al-Zarqawi's victims, killed in the series of hotel bombings on November 9, cannot be considered shaheeds from the perspective of Islamic law.¹¹

The visit of condolence and declaration by Abu Faras, which was regarded by the establishment as a religious ruling, together with the refusal of the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership and its party to apologize for these moves, deeply shocked the Jordanian establishment. It responded immediately by arresting the four members of parliament; with a non-stop series of harsh condemnations that even bordered on accusing the four with attempting to incite a civil war (fitna) because of the uproar they aroused in the public at large and among the families of al-Zarqawi's victims in particular. The Jordanian regime regarded the actions of the four and the support they received from the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and from their political party as an unprecedented provocation, as well as a harsh blow to its fight against terror organizations and their ideology. From the regime's perspective, the actions of the four – together with the declared support of the Muslim Brotherhood for Hamas – gave legitimacy to the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah and even encouraged acts of terror.¹² In an attempt to calm the atmosphere, the parliamentary bloc of the Islamic Action Front issued an announcement declaring the Muslim Brotherhood's loyalty to the state and their disavowal of terrorism and notions of takfir.¹³

However, the regime decided to launch a vigorous campaign against the extremist minority in the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, and against the movement and its

¹¹ Al-Quds Al-Arabi, June, 12, 2006.

¹² Rana al-Saba'a notes at length the dispute that developed between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood. This dispute, she says, convinced the regime that the extremist Hamasi stream is dominating the Islamic movement in Jordan, Al-Hiyat June 27, 2006.

¹³ Jabha Web site of the Islamic Action Front, July 4, 2006.

party in general: It exercised the law to its fullest extent against three of the four members of parliament by bringing them to trial at the State Security Court. Two of them – Mohammed Abu Faras and Ali Abu Sukar – received prison terms of a year and a half. They were charged with harming national unity and inciting fanaticism and racism.¹⁴ In parallel, the court struck a blow at the movement's socio-economic stronghold – the Islamic Center Association. The Association incorporates many dozens of social welfare and medical assistance centers for the general public, and serves as a main catalyst for the movement in mobilizing public sympathy and electoral support; especially during periods of elections for parliament and local government. The regime expropriated the Muslim Brotherhood's control over the Islamic Center Association for reasons of financial mismanagement and disorder, and transferred it to the management of a council operating on the regime's behalf.¹⁵ In early October 2006, King Abdullah awarded a pardon to Abu Faras and Abu Sukar, who were released from their incarceration but without canceling the indictments against them and without their return to the parliament from which they had been expelled.¹⁶

The Lebanon War and support for Hezbollah

The fourth test derived from an external source and occurred when the war erupted in Lebanon between Israel and the Hezbollah organization on July 12, 2006. This event served as a life raft for the Muslim Brotherhood. On one hand, it focused the attention on the establishment, public opinion, and the media in Jordan on the war, thus diminishing the intensive ideological and propaganda campaign the regime was waging until then against the Muslim Brotherhood in light of their support for Hamas, and the affair of the four members of parliament who paid a condolence call to the al-Zarqawi family. On the other hand, it provided the Muslim Brotherhood with suitable ammunition to promote its ideology, calling for a religious Islamic battle in the spirit of jihad against Israel and its principal "ally" – the United States. The Muslim Brotherhood disregarded the religious disparities between Sunni and Shi'a, and declared complete solidarity with Hezbollah and the Lebanese people.¹⁷ In this way, the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan joined the leaders of extremist Islamic movements – ranging from part of the jihadi camp to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt – in expressing support for Hezbollah.

The expressions of support for Hezbollah were numerous. The secretary general of the Islamic Action Front, Zaki Bani Arsheed, sent a letter to Nasrallah, congratulating him on "the victory against the Israeli-American attack." Dr. al-Kilani issued a fatwa on July 30, 2006, referring to the resistance (muqawama) of Hezbollah and the jihad in Palestine and Iraq as a single battle of Islam against its enemies. This fatwa calls for Muslim leaders to stand alongside "the resistance and the jihad" and to support Hezbollah and Hamas through arms, money and "soul." The fatwa follows the fatwas of Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi in that it rejects fatwas issued by Saudi sheiks and statements by Ayman al-Zawahiri in a tape broadcast on Al-Jazeera referring to

¹⁴ Al-Quds Al-Arabi, August 17, 2005

¹⁵ Al-Quds Al-Arabi, July 7, 2005

¹⁶ Al-Rai Al-Ghrad, October 2, 2006

¹⁷ A religious ruling approved at the Islamic conference in Amman, July 4-6, 2005, granting full legitimacy to the Shi'a and regarding it as equal to the Sunna, works here to the benefit of the Muslim Brotherhood in their call to support Hezbollah. Al-Rai Al-Ghrad, July 7, 2005

Hezbollah as heretical.¹⁸ Al-Qaradawi's fatwas – accepted by the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas as carrying religious authority – give priority to conducting the jihad as opposed to a religious conception emphasizing the problematic aspect of whether the Shi'a belong to the true Islam.¹⁹ It mentions (in defiance of al-Qaeda) that during the war in Afghanistan against the Russian occupier, the stream of Sheik Jamil al-Rahman gave priority to the religious outlook, while Abdallah Azam, from the group that later became al-Qaeda, preferred the jihad to religious unity.²⁰ Al-Qaradawi states that there is nothing wrong with the Shi'a identity of the Lebanese resistance as long as it bears arms and battles to purify Muslim land from the Israeli stain and is victorious. He refers to it as a religious (shar'i) jihad and compares it to "its sister in Palestine."²¹

The Jordanian regime tried to take the wind out of the sails of the Muslim Brotherhood's propaganda on this issue by declaring overall support for Lebanon and expediting air shipments of large amounts of relief supplies to meet vital humanitarian needs, and even rebuilding what was destroyed in the war. When the war was over the regime renewed its measures vis-à-vis the Muslim Brotherhood, when the timing was convenient for it, by passing legislation that restricts the Muslim Brotherhood's religious-political methods of operation. (See below.)

The regime's battle to de-legitimize the takfir Salafiyyah

The Jordanian regime, in light of these tests, adopted a variety of means in its ideological battle against the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah. The main ones include:²²

1. Convening Islamic conferences, with the participation of renowned ulama from both home and abroad – devoted to refuting extremist ideas, on one hand, and adopting moderate Islam, on the other hand.²³
2. Initiating religious rulings (fatwas) against the takfiri Salafiyyah based on the recognition that a fatwa carries religious authority that mandates close adherence to it.
3. Publishing religious legal documents that require Muslims to follow the path of moderate Islam.
4. Providing religious training to holy men of various ranks and raising their level of education in order to enable them to explain moderate orthodox Islam, and to respond to and refute the claims of takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah.
5. Issuing ordinances and taking measures to prevent the use of mosques – especially during Friday prayers – for disseminating extremist religious ideas and promoting political interests.²⁴

¹⁸ Jabha Web site of the Islamic Action Front, July 30, 2006

¹⁹ This discussion brings to mind the Nasserite doctrine of the 1960s that coined the concept of "unity of the ranks" (all of the Arabs against Israel) that takes precedence over "unity of purpose" (the unique conception of each regime regarding the ultimate course of the Arab world).

²⁰ Yusuf al-Dini, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, August 4, 2006

²¹ Al-Sabil, July 29, 2006

²² Fadwi al-Dabagh, Al-Hiyat, November 15, 2005

²³ The minister of waqf and religious affairs, Abd al-Fatah Salah, said that his ministry prepared a program for preventing the distortion of Islam and presenting it as moderate and as a force that honors agreements. He warned that his ministry would indict anyone who employs the method of takfir. Al-Hiyat, December 25, 2005.

6. Conducting a review of mosques, media and educational institutions that serve as hothouses for fomenting and spreading the takfir idea.²⁵
7. Using legislation against those who are spreading the takfir idea and providing moral and ideological support for terror.²⁶

Convening conferences

The campaign waged by the Jordanian regime to delegitimize the takfiri Salafiyyah actually began more than a year prior to the hotel bombings in Amman. The campaign was initiated with the publication of the "Amman Letter" (*risalat amman*) on November 27, 2004. The initiative for the letter is attributed to King Abdullah himself, who derives authority from his status as a descendant of the prophet's family, and the text was posted on the home page of the King's Internet site.²⁷ The document presents a version of moderate Islam based on a middle way (*wastiya*) and Islam's lofty moral values. It advocates co-existence between peoples built upon relations of peace and respect for mutual pacts and agreements. At the same time, the document rejects the takfiri Salafiyyah, and regards it as a clear distortion of the Islamic way. The Jordanian regime lobbied to obtain general Islamic authority for the document at the conference it convened in Amman (July 2005) of prominent Islamic sages, both Shi'a and Sunni. This conference adopted the document and approved fatwas declaring rapprochement and agreement for co-existence between the eight "legitimate" schools of Sunni and Shi'a in the Islamic world. It also sought to refute the religious legal foundations guiding the takfiri Salafiyyah. Great emphasis was given to the conference's decision to invalidate any accusation of "takfir" (declaring that a Muslim is a heretic) and the conference's attempt to restrict the authority for issuing fatwas to renowned and widely accepted ulama, thus prohibiting "unqualified clergy" from issuing fatwas.²⁸

The hotel bombings in Amman on September 9, 2005 impelled Jordan to initiate a broader and more vigorous campaign - internal, Islamic and international, orchestrated by King Abdullah - with the goal of instilling and implementing the principles of the "Amman Letter," which, as stated, represents the principal beacon in Jordan's ideological battle against the takfiri Salafiyyah. On the domestic front, the new government of Marouf Bakhit accepted its letter of appointment, declaring the protection of security and liberty as its two supreme missions, each of equal importance.²⁹ Subsequently, the government initiated a series of measures in the areas of information, prevention and legislation in order to reduce as much as possible the spread and influence of the extremist Salafi ideology. In parallel, it was successful in

²⁴ The regime initiating a reformulation of the Law on Preaching and Guidance (*qanun al-wath wal-arshad*) in an effort to dictate in advance the content of sermons in the mosques so that they would not spill into political issues that mainly serve the Islamic opposition. *Al-Arab Al-Yaum*, September 1, 2006.

²⁵ The government began to chart a comprehensive program to eliminate nests of the takfir doctrine after the bombings in Amman. *Al-Hiyat*, December 25, 2005.

²⁶ In late August 2006, the parliament approved an anti-terrorist law initiated after the Amman bombings of November 9, 2005. The law was aimed at preempting terrorism - including deterring the dissemination of extremist ideas and interpretations in mosques and the media that incite and justify acts of terror. Mahmoud al-Rimawi. *Al-Rai*, September 2, 2006.

²⁷ See the document on King Abdullah's Web site.

²⁸ "Jordan's 9/11 - Dealing with Jihadi Islamism," Middle East Report No. 47, November 23, 2005, International Crisis Group, page 16; *Al-Rai Al-Ghrad*, June 6-8, 2005; *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, July 7, 2005

²⁹ *Al-Ghrad*, November 28, 2005

mobilizing the Islamic world to stand by its side in this battle. A clear expression of this success came at a summit conference of the Islamic Council organization, which approved a series of decisions condemning the takfiri doctrine and supporting the Amman Letter. One of the central and intensive measures the Bakhit government took was to initiate and conduct Islamic conferences with the participation of ulama, from home and abroad, who approved decisions denouncing the takfiri Salafiyyah while advocating adoption of the Islamic way of moderation.

Several days after the bombings in Amman on November 9, 2005, Amman Net radio broadcast a roundtable discussion about the rise of the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah.³⁰ The speakers noted the complex character of the Salafiyyah – expressed in a combination of the takfiri idea (*fikr takfiri*) and the belligerent idea (*fikr katali*). Factors contributing to the rise of this extremist school of philosophy include: information technology, globalization and the fears about the influence of external culture. The speakers presented a religious legal position that invalidates the takfiri and jihadi Salafiyyah on the basis of the following arguments: It is the continuation of the khawarj stream; the prohibition in the shari'a on declaring that a Muslim is a heretic, unless he publicly announces his heresy; the prohibition on spilling Muslim blood, with three exceptions – prostitution, abandoning the religion and Muslim community (*rada*) and an act of murder; the authority to carry out a death penalty is only given to the Muslim ruler; a prohibition on any group executing or legislating a law that is contrary to an existing law; a prohibition on harming non-Muslim civilians such as women and children and those who do not bear weapons, and this applies even more so to Muslims; and rejecting the doctrine of the jihadi Salafiyyah that permits the killing of a Muslim who is under the protection of a non-Muslim during a war against them (*al-tatras*).

A conference held in Amman in mid-March 2006, sponsored by the Jordanian Center for Research and Information and with the participation of ulama and lecturers, expressed sweeping opposition to the phenomenon of religious extremism, described in both the imposition of "doctrinal terror" (*irhab fakhi*) on Muslims by schools of religious law and in the use of takfir by a number of preachers in regard to Muslims only because they did not accept the opinion of a certain religious sage (*a'alam, fakia*). The phenomenon of extremism derives from ignorance. The former Jordanian minister of waqf and religious affairs, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz al-Hiat, argued in response to the extremists that even those close to the prophet – the *sahaba* – disagreed with each other's views yet did not apply takfir against each other. (That is, they did not refer to each other as heretics.)³¹

On April 24, 2006, a conference on "The Role of the Moderate Stream (*wastiya*) in the Reform and Awakening of the Nation" opened in Amman under the patronage of Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammed and with the participation of prominent Sunni and Shi'a religious sages from throughout the Middle East. In addition to rejecting extremist and violent phenomena, the conference called for adopting the Amman Letter and the decisions of the conferences of the moderate stream of Islam that have been held in recent years in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The conference also called for dialogue

³⁰ Al-Dustour, November 16, 2005

³¹ Al-Rai, March 19, 2006

between the various Islamic streams in order to reach a common approach for confronting the challenges that face Islam. The conference also appropriated the necessity of transforming globalization from a threat into a vehicle for reciprocal relations with the world and European cultures.³²

On May 27, 2006, a conference of religious sages and researchers met in Amman to promote an ideological dialogue under the title: "Towards a Civic Democratic Islamic Discourse." Some 50 religious sages from 21 countries participated in the conference. It was organized by the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The conference discussed a number of issues, including the future of the Islamic conception in light of democracy and globalization, the connection between religion and state, the concept of the modern state in modern Islamic thought, the concepts of jihad, terror, violence, transfers of power, pluralism and minority rights of non-Muslims in Muslim societies.

Conference participants presented papers on moderate Islamic ideas, that thoroughly debunked the takfir doctrine and the use of force to impose ideas, and also raised ideas for waging war against the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah. The remarks of several of the participants focused on the problematic nature of the Muslim Brotherhood's political outlook, which is not consistent with the concepts of moderate Islam and the values of democracy, and is even tainted with the takfiri idea.³³ This critique serves the Jordanian regime in its ideological and security struggle against the Muslim Brotherhood and its party in Jordan. The conference called for the Islamic movements to reform their program of action in a way that would "close the gates of takfir and tafsik" (*tafsik* – accusing someone of disavowing Islam); to break through the isolation they have brought upon themselves by their own doing; to open the gates of ijihad; to come to terms with modern innovations; and not to take a rigid view of statements attributed to the prophet.³⁴ These remarks, directed at all of the Islamic associations, including the Muslim Brotherhood, indicate that the takfir doctrine has also made inroads in the latter. An additional call was made to demand that the Muslim Brotherhood movement internalize the principles of democracy in its philosophical literature and organizational outlook, and that they had to institute reforms in its religious view, based on enlightenment, civic responsibility and full acceptance of democracy. The implication was that as long as the Muslim Brotherhood failed to do so, its participation in the political process in the state should be restricted.³⁵

On August 25, 2006, the 27th session of the Al-Faka Al-Islami Institute convened in Amman with the participation of religious sages and thinkers from throughout the Muslim world. The conference was largely devoted to Islam's stance in regard to extremism and terror. A Jordanian representative (the advisor for Islamic affairs, Abd al-Salam al-Abadi) presented the key points of the Amman Letter. The conference participants issued a strong attack against the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah from the

³² Al-Rai, April 27, 2006

³³ Al-Rai, May 29, 2006; Al-Ghrad, May 28, 2006

³⁴ Dr. Al-Murtada bin Zayed al-Mahturi, member of the Ulama Association of Yemen and a lecturer at Sana'a University, Al-Rai, May 29, 2006

³⁵ Al-Rai, May 29, 2006

Islamic and universal perspectives. In this context, the conference emphasized³⁶ the distinction between the jihad in Islam and the doctrine of terror adopted by extremist organizations. They argued that the jihad was designed to protect the religion and its sanctity, and that its goals and methods are well defined. Contrarily, the doctrine of terror, which is quick to accuse others of disavowing Islam (*fasuk*), heresy (*kofer*) and abandoning the community (*al khuruj min al mila*) was designed to impose beliefs and opinions. The conference attacked the blind obedience to the ideas of extremist groups, which creates a fertile climate for norms of destruction and the mounting chaos of fatwas (*fauzat al-fatawi al-mitshadedeh*) issued by "unqualified people who lack the appropriate education," which declare groups and people as heretics and cause rifts among Muslims. Like the Amman conference in November 2004, this conference also devoted attention to defining the rules required for issuing religious legal rulings, as well the characteristics and qualifications required of a religious adjudicator (*mufti*).

Refuting the principles of the takfirist-jihadi Salafiyya

The regime's efforts focused on an attempt to refute the central religious foundations of the takfiri ideology. These include:

1. The Salafi interpretation of the concept of "*kfira*" (heresy) in the Quran and Hadith
2. The concept of jihad
3. The concept of *tatras*
4. The concept of *mua'had* (*mistamen*)

The Salafi interpretation of the concept of "*kfira*" in the Quran and Hadith

Religious sages (*ulama* and *fakha*) in Jordan often accuse the takfiri Salafiyyah with distorting the principles of Islam, with tendentious and misleading interpretation of verses and values in the Quran and Hadith, and in taking things out of context from these two sources of religious law. As part of this accusation, they challenge the authority the leaders of the takfiri Salafiyyah have taken upon themselves in declaring Muslims as heretics who have left the community of Muslims (*murtadun*). They also challenge the way these leaders use the Quran and Hadith to do "takfir" to Muslims. Following the series of bombings in Amman on November 9, 2005, commentaries on Islamic law were published in Jordanian newspapers based on the opinions and rulings of accepted religious sages that refuted the hard-line approach adopted by the takfiri Salafiyyah for the concepts of *kufir* and *kufar* (heresy and heretics). According to the takfiri Salafiyyah, whenever these words appear in the Quran and Hadith they refer to denial of the religion of Islam and abandonment of the religion and the community of Muslims (*rada*). This interpretation is intended to prove that the takfir idea is not the invention of the takfiri Salafiyyah, but actually originates from the Quran itself. The takfiri Salafiyyah refers similarly to the concept of *kufar*, in the sense of *murtadun*, which appears in the following verse that leaders of this stream often quote in their writings: "Those who do not rule in accordance with Allah's revelations are the disbelievers." (Quran 5:44). According to the takfiri Salafiyyah interpretation of this verse, whoever does not make judgments based on what is said in the Quran is a heretic (*murtad*).

³⁶ Al-Ghrad, June 26, 2006; Al-Rai, May 29, 2006; Al-Quds Al-Arabi, June 27, 2006

On the other hand, traditional religious sages have stated that the concept of "*kafr*" that appears in the Quran and Hadith should not always be understood as denial of Islam (*rada*), but rather as a serious violation (*kbira*) that is a sort of minor heresy (*kufir asghar*), which is lesser than disbelief in Islam (*rada*). According to these religious sages, this is the way the aforementioned Quranic verse should also be interpreted. The use of this verse in the concept of "heretics" is not intended to portray them as abandoners of Islam (*rada*). Rather, it is intended to deter and warn, and is used from a perspective of exaggeration. In this context, the religious sages state that the exclusive authority for declaring that a Muslim is a heretic (*murtad*) rests with the highest ulama, who base their rulings on precise evidence. One of the commentators, Ali bin Hasan al-Halabi al-Athri, even quotes the late Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin al-Baz (the greatest Saudi religious sage of this generation) who stated that the hasty use of *takfir* is liable to lead to the most serious consequences and transgressions of sanctioning bloodshed (*istabahat al-damaa*), destruction of homes and facilities, and theft of public funds. Every Muslim who believes in Allah and in the world to come must renounce this deviant and misleading doctrine.³⁷

The concept of jihad

After the bombings in Amman on November 9, 2005, the local media launched a strong attack against al-Qaeda's view of jihad. The media identified it with "jihad via the sword," violence and terror, and made a clear distinction between what was termed "legitimate resistance to the occupier." Samer Khir Ahmed summarizes the main arguments against the Salafi concept of jihad in his article "The Battle within Islam,"³⁸ as follows:

1. The victims of jihad organizations are mostly Muslims and not foreigners as these organizations claim.
2. The jihad diverts the Islamic nation from its primary battle against imperialism, corruption and division.
3. The jihad organizations seek to restore the nation's past glory through use of a jihad of all-out warfare against moderate Muslims who are considered enemies. But in our era, the meaning of jihad is different than it was in the past. Today jihad means instituting reforms in Muslim societies, enhancing ways of thinking and a war against backwardness.

The concept of tataras

After the Amman bombings, al-Zarqawi declared in an audio recording that the attacks were aimed against "Israeli and American intelligence personnel" and he justified the attacks despite the fact that all of the victims were Muslims. The justification for killing Muslims in these attacks sparked a legal discussion in the media around the issue of "tataras" – whether it is permissible in the framework of a Muslim war against nonbelievers to kill Muslims who are under the protection of these nonbelievers (*tataras*). The jihadi Salafiyah grants sweeping and unconditional permission to kill these Muslims (*tataras*). And this is based on a far-reaching fatwa

³⁷ Dr. Abdallah Salahin, the dean of the Faculty of Shari'a at the Jordanian University – a roundtable discussion on Amman Net radio about the rise of the takfiri-jihadi philosophy, Al-Dustour, November 16, 2005; Ali bin Hasan al-Halabi al-Athri, Al-Ghrad, December 16, 2005. See also the decision of the ulama sages on this issue at the Amman conference in July 2005.

³⁸ Al-Ghrad, November 18, 2005

from Ibn Timia. However, a number of commentators in the Jordanian media fiercely attacked this interpretation:

1. Bassam Nasser states that the religious ruling (fatwa) of Ibn Timia permits the killing of Muslims (tatra) under very limited conditions, when it is impossible to defeat the enemy (*al-nakia fi al-audu*) except in battle conditions in which Muslims are liable to be killed. If it is possible to kill enemies without harming Muslims, then this is preferable.³⁹
2. Ali bin Hasan Al-Halabi al-Athri points out the complete contradiction between the concept of tatra as understood by the recognized religious sages and the concept (of the jihadi Salafiyyah) that "results in the killing of women, children and the elderly." According to the true Islamic law, tatra killing only occurs in a situation when the Muslim soldier is forced to do this and does not take place by choice. The attacks in Amman were in complete contradiction to Islamic law and contrary to any logic and interest.⁴⁰

The concept of mua'had (mistamen)

Ali bin Hasan Al-Halabi al-Athri does not suffice with refuting, like his colleagues in the Jordanian media, the jihadi Salafi doctrine in regard to takfir and tatra. He also attacks the jihadi Salafi for disavowing the protection that traditional Islam grants to non-Muslims who enter the Islamic states (*dar al-islam*) in accordance with a defense and refuge pact (*aked al-aman ahd al-dhin wal-istaman*) the Muslim authorities made with them. The commentator quotes the words of the prophet that clearly warned against violating this religious law (*hokam*) – "whoever killed a ma'ahad will not smell the scent of Paradise." The commentator explains that the concept "ma'ahad" refers to a non-Muslim with whom a refuge and defense pact has been made by Muslims in the Muslim state.⁴¹

It seems that the commentator's article on the issue of "ma'had," which was published several days after the November 9, 2005 bombings in Amman, was intended to undermine Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's justification for the attacks – as if they were aimed against non-Muslims (American and Israeli military personnel). According to the commentator though, even in this case the attacks constitute a crime and violate a serious prohibition, since these Americans and Israelis have the status of "ma'ahad."

Initiating legislation against disseminators of extremist Islamic ideology

The November 9, 2005 attacks in Amman served as a catalyst for intensifying the Jordanian regime's ideological struggle against the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah. In this context, they gave a push to the enactment of legislation designed to restrict, (through administrative methods), the dissemination of this ideology, and to limit the Muslim Brotherhood's use of mosques and religious means (with an emphasis on the fatwas) for political needs. These laws were approved in the parliament and senate in September 2006 after a fierce, head-on confrontation with parliamentary Islamic opposition, which regarded this legislation as a violation of its freedom of action and preaching.

³⁹ Al-Ghrad, November 18, 2005

⁴⁰ Al-Ghrad, November 25, 2005

⁴¹ Al-Ghrad, November 25, 2005

The most significant law passed was the Anti-Terror Law. According to the explanations of the government spokesmen, the law is designed to fight terror and violence through preventive measures, early interception and deterrence, thus putting a halt to the preparations for terror in their early stages and preventing an atmosphere from developing that encourages terror. The dissemination and preaching of extremist ideas are also considered part of the preparations for carrying out acts of terror, according to the interpretation of the law by these spokesmen. The Islamic opposition strongly opposed the law, arguing that it violated the articles of the constitution that guarantee individual liberty and freedom of religious ritual. This opposition also argued that the law does not clearly define what constitutes terror and grants the security forces wide latitude to define terror, thus arbitrarily placing restrictions on liberties. Those justifying the law claim that it seeks to protect society from terrorism and to uncover intentions of carrying out acts of terror before they occur. The law defines an act of terror as "any action conducted via any means that is likely to result in killing or bodily injury or damage to public or private property, if the objective of the action is to disturb public order and security, including via intimidation, terror and violence, or to block the implementation of the law or to influence the policy of the state or government."⁴²

The Law of Fatwas gives expression to the motif that was reiterated in all of the conferences – to invalidate the issuance of fatwas by "unqualified people." The main objective of the law is to establish a mechanism that will prohibit extremist elements from issuing fatwas, on one hand, while granting the authority to issue fatwas to a governmental institution of religious law, on the other. Thus, the law states that "It is prohibited for any person or entity to issue shari'a fatwas on public issues and to undermine and cast doubt on fatwas issued by the Fatwa Council (*majlis al-iftaa*) and general mufti with the goal of harming and invalidating them." Thus, the law mandates the formation of a council for issuing fatwas and Islamic research, headed by the general mufti. The members of the council, who possess shari'a education are to be appointed by the government. A department for issuing fatwas is to be established and will be responsible, among other things, for overseeing fatwas on public matters, issuing fatwas that the public needs, and publishing Islamic research. The general mufti is appointed by royal decree, with the rank of minister, and is responsible for managing the department that issues the fatwas. In summary, the new law is intended to block loopholes (as much as possible) that facilitated the broad circulation of "problematic" fatwas pertaining to government policy and political issues from within both the takfir Salafi and the Muslim Brotherhood stream. At the same time, the law seeks to strengthen the religious establishment and grant it exclusive authorities to issue fatwas of public import. An amendment to the Law of Preaching and Guidance (*kanun al-wath wal-arsheed*), approved by the senate and parliament, states that the use of mosques for preaching, guidance, and teaching by clergy will be only be conducted with approval in advance from the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs.⁴³

⁴² Al-Ghrad, August 29, 2005

⁴³ Al-Rai, Al-Ghrad – September 13, 2006, September 26, 2006; Al-Rai, September 8, 2006

Summary

The series of hotel bombings in Amman on November 9, 2005, carried out by the organization of Musab al-Zarqawi, prompted the Jordanian regime to take off its gloves and engage in a head-on ideological confrontation with Islamic terror organizations and the infrastructure that was becoming more widespread and influential in the state. The rise of the extremist wing of the Muslim Brotherhood to a position of leadership and influence in the movement during the same period intensified the sense of threat to the regime, especially after this extremist wing expresses, in the worst case, open support for the takfir doctrine or, at best, maintains ambiguity in its stance toward the takfir doctrine.⁴⁴

Against the background of these threatening developments, the regime devoted a focused effort, backed by the institutional media, to fight against the takfir-jihadi-Salafi ideology. In the regime's view, this ideology is no less a part of terror than the means of destruction employed by the terrorists. Thus the undermining of this ideology's charisma and foundations in "religious law" is tantamount to preemptively thwarting terrorist plots.

The regime's struggle against the takfir-jihadi regime is conducted in a systematic way: in the realm of content and religious law, it focuses on refuting the foundations of Salafiyyah, on one hand, and instilling "the original" moderate Islam, on the other hand. From the organizational aspect, it attempts to scrutinize the system of mosques and Quranic religious institutions in order to prevent adherents of the takfiri Salafiyyah – including members of the extremist wing of the Muslim Brotherhood – from exploiting them, as in the past, for the dissemination of extremist ideas. The regime also initiated new laws and ordinances to prevent the spreading of propaganda, fatwas and extremist ideas, especially on political issues – both in the mass media and on the street. Highlighting this effort was the enactment of the Anti-Terror Law and the Law of Fatwas by the parliament in September 2006, despite the strong opposition of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The central question is how effective this comprehensive campaign by the Jordanian regime against the takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah is, and whether it is achieving tangible results. This question resonates even more in light of the fact that the source of this doctrine's dissemination is not only local. The takfiri-jihadi Salafiyyah crosses borders and penetrates into the kingdom from external sources of dissemination, led by Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. This explains the Jordanian regime's effort not to

⁴⁴ The expert on extremist Islamic organizations, Mohammed Abu Raman writes that the gray areas in the positions of the Muslim Brotherhood are not recent developments, but date back over 20 years. Al-Rai, August 7, 2006. He also writes that it is important that the message of the opposition – that is, the Muslim Brotherhood – be examined and that it express a clear philosophical stance against violence and extremism in order to channel the youth to constructive paths. In practice, he says, the Muslim Brotherhood's message fans the youth's frustration and anger, resulting in disaster for all. Al-Hiyat, September 15, 2006. Former Jordanian minister Salah al-Kalab notes that political Islamic movements throughout the Middle East, including Jordan, have systematically refrained from condemning terror attacks by Islamic terror organizations and have even occasionally expressed a position justifying the acts of terror. He contends that these movements have placed themselves – by extending logistic and ideological assistance for acts of terror – in the terror camp itself. Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, August 25, 2006.

suffice with a domestic struggle, but to also encourage others outside of Jordan to join this battle and expand it into a regional, even global one.

The dispute between the establishment and political Islam, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, regarding the diagnosis and treatment of the phenomenon of terror also illustrates the difficulty in dealing with the ideological dimensions of this phenomenon. In the establishment's view, the diagnosis for the phenomenon of terror is a security problem and one of ideology, and should be tackled through appropriate information campaigns and legislation (without violation the democratic process). Conversely, the representatives of the camp of political Islam believe that the diagnosis is political backwardness and not philosophical. They believe that the despotism of the regimes, the repression of political liberties and the depressed socio-economic situation all contradict the regime's proposed plans. Thus, the required treatment is far-reaching political and economic reform.⁴⁵

Another difficulty is the broad consensus of public opinion regarding the legitimacy of resistance (muqawama) against a foreign occupier – and the Muslim Brotherhood makes considerable efforts to solidify this consensus. The violent struggle of al-Qaeda in Iraq, and Hamas in Palestine is perceived by many, therefore, as a legitimate opposition to occupation, despite its character of terror and even if al-Qaeda, at least, is considered by the regime to be a full-fledged terrorist organization. Against this background, the Jordanian regime's delegitimization of these terror organizations is not always accepted and internalized by that part of the public, which does not distinguish between terror and resistance. However, the terror attacks in Amman on November 9, 2005 by the al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda organization led the public to a more sober assessment of this organization and a recognition of its terrorist character, which does not distinguish in its jihad between the killing of Americans, Shi'a or peaceful Jordanian citizens.

In a comprehensive study of the Jordanian regime's struggle against Islamic terror and the ideology of this terror following the Amman bombings on November 9, 2005 International Crisis Group notes the weaknesses of the ideological part of this struggle: "The problem with the Amman Message is that it bears no relation to the situation on the ground...In an attempt to bridge the gap between weak and discredited imams and the militant Salafi alternative in Salt, the awqaf and the GID [General Intelligence Department] are placing more charismatic imams or even respected community patriarchs in the city's mosques. Again the impact is open to question."⁴⁶

A senior Jordanian researcher of extremist Islamic organizations, Ibrahim Gharabiya, also raises questions about the effectiveness of the state's campaign against the takfiri Salafiyah. After the shooting attack by a lone terrorist against a group of tourists in the center of Amman on September 4, 2006, he stated that denunciations of terrorism, on one hand, and the information campaign to inculcate moderate Islam, on the other hand, have not reached the general public, except for those who are considered

⁴⁵ Roundtable discussion between representatives of the establishment and representatives of political Islam, against the background of the Amman bombings. Internet site of Al-Sabil, the mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood, November 24, 2006.

⁴⁶ See the source in footnote 30. The quote appears on page 16 of the source.

moderate in any case. The extremist ideas and the violent groups continue to serve as an instrument for recruiting activists. "Our ideological and administrative campaign to forestall extremism has not succeeded because it has not yet reached the sources of violence and crime. The existing simplistic solutions have not helped in the war against violence and have even served it. The search for the correct approach cannot be postponed."⁴⁷ A campaign to persuade adherents of the takfir Salafiyyah to abandon their extremist ideas was conducted with relative success in Saudi Arabia – with the participation of religious figures from the establishment. About 700 adherents of al-Qaeda were released after turning away from extremism.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Jordan remains arguably the regime in the region with the greatest cognizance of the reality of the ideological threat that the jihadi-takfiri stream poses to the Islamic culture that that regime represents. Unlike most of the other regimes in the Muslim world, the Jordanian has through its ideological war on extremism, rejected the traditional paradigm of tolerance for ideological extremism in return for domestic stability, and challenged the radical Muslim movement as a whole. Alone, it is doubtful that Jordan can succeed in this mission, and unfortunately, it is also doubtful that the other states in the region will follow suit in the near future.

⁴⁷ Al-Ghrad, September 5, 2006

⁴⁸ Mohammed al-Tariri, Al-Hiyat, September 13, 2006