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Post Amman Attacks: Jordanian Public Opinion and Terrorism

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Introduction

There have been a number of published opinion polls that have tried to uncover the level of support Arabs and Muslims have for terrorism. Many of these studies have come to the conclusion that Arabs and Muslims generally support terrorism, with slight variations from one country to another. Nonetheless, the majority of these polls did not take into account the political dimensions of terrorism. In order to add more insight to the already available body of literature and information about terrorism, and to further advance the discourse, the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan developed, in 2004, a framework to examine public opinion on terrorism. The framework consists of three approaches to investigate terrorism: The first approach aims to examine the perspective on “killing of civilians of an occupying state that occupies a Muslim country”. The second approach aims to examine the views of citizens on whether the following organizations: Hamas, Hizballah, al-Qaeda led by Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, and al-Qaeda led by Osama Bin Laden, are “legitimate resistance organizations” or “terrorist organizations”. The third approach examines the citizens’ views on various actions that have been carried out by organizations or armed forces belonging to a state, and whether they are viewed as terrorist or non-terrorist. This framework will lead to an understanding of the citizens’ views and understanding of terrorism. Using this approach the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan conducted a public opinion poll on the subject of terrorism between the 1st and 7th of December, 2005. The total national sample of respondents in the poll amounted to 1417 respondents distributed throughout the Kingdom. The sample was constructed following the method of multi-stage cluster design, which takes into account proportional distribution to the size of the population in each governorate. In addition to that a sample of public opinion leaders (POL) that amounted to a total of 669 respondents divided among seven groups as shown in Table (1) below.

Table no. 1: Pubic Opinion Leaders sample by group

| Group | Completed | Refusals | Total |
|---|-----------|----------|-------|
| Business people (CEO or GD of companies) | 91 | 9 | 100 |
| Political Parties’ Leaders (highest executive committee of each party) | 99 | 1 | 100 |
| Professionals (Lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, geologists, nurses, agricultural engineers. | 91 | 9 | 100 |
| Media (writers, artists, journalists) | 95 | 5 | 100 |
| Leaders of professional associations, trade Unions and GNOs | 98 | 2 | 100 |
| High ranking state officials (former ministers, directors generals, MPs, senates, former security officers and, tribal and camps leaders) | 99 | 1 | 100 |
| University professors | 96 | 4 | 100 |
| Total | 669 | 31 | 700 |

National Sample

First Approach: The stance on the killing of civilians

The large majority of Jordanians reject the notion of killing civilians of a state occupying Muslim land; 92% of the national sample rejected the killing of civilians. This shows that there has been a rise in the percentage of respondents who reject killing civilians from 76.4% in 2004 to 92% in 2005.

Second Approach: which organizations are “legitimate resistance groups” and which are “terrorists”?

Hamas and Hizballah: Legitimate resistance organizations?

When respondents were asked more detailed questions we found that the political dimension plays an important role in defining the respondent’s stance on the killing of civilians. It appears that the Arab-Israeli conflict has a large impact on public opinion vis-à-vis these organizations. Despite the drop in the number of respondents who view Hamas as a “legitimate resistance organization”, from 86.7% in 2004 to 73.5% in December of 2005, yet the large majority of Jordanians continue to view Hamas as a “legitimate resistance organization”. It is important to note that there has been an increase in the percentage of respondents who view Hamas as a “terrorist organization”, from 1.8% in 2004 to 5.8% in December 2005. There was also an increase in the number of those who answered, “I don’t know” and “Refuse to answer” the question, as shown in Table (2). The same trends were evident with regards to Hizballah, with a decline in the percentage of those who view Hizballah as a “legitimate resistance organization” from 84% in 2004 to 63.9% in December 2005. Similarly, there was an increase in the percentage of those who viewed Hizballah as a “terrorist organization”, as well as those who answered “I don’t know” or “refuse to answer” the question, as shown in Table (2). This shift in Jordanian public opinion towards Hizballah could be attributed, partly, to the political situation in Lebanon during 2005 since the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Harriri.

Table no. 2: question: there is a debate over the description of the following organizations, some people describe them as legitimate resistance organizations and others describe them as terrorist organizations, do you think (Hamas) is legitimate resistance or a terrorist organization?

| Organization name | Poll's date | Legitimate resistance organization | Terrorist organization | Did not hear of it | DK | Refuse to answer | Total |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|-------|
| HAMAS | 2004 | 86.7 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 9.2 | 1.1 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 73.5 | 5.8 | 1.1 | 14.6 | 5 | 100 |
| Change | | 13.2 - | 4 + | 0.2 - | 5.4 + | 3.9 + | |
| Hizballah | 2004 | 84 | 2.9 | 1.1 | 10.6 | 1.4 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 63.9 | 6 | 3.8 | 20.8 | 5.5 | 100 |
| Change | | 21.1 - | 3.1 + | 2.7 + | 10.2 + | 4.1 + | |
| Al-Qaeda Bin Ladin | 2004 | 66.8 | 10.6 | 3.2 | 16.8 | 2.6 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 20 | 48.9 | 1.4 | 24.3 | 5.4 | 100 |
| | | 46.8 - | 38.3+ | 1.8 - | 7.5 + | 2.8 + | |
| Al-Qaeda Zarqawi | 2005 | 6.2 | 72.2 | 0.7 | 15.6 | 5.3 | 100 |

Al-Qaeda Organization - Bin Ladin:

Following the bombings of the three hotels in Amman on the 9th of November 2005, there was a significant transformation in Jordanian public opinion towards Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda due to the connection between Bin Laden and the al-Qaeda organization led by Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi. While around half of respondents considered Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda to be a "terrorist organization", around three quarters of respondents described al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda as a "terrorist organization".

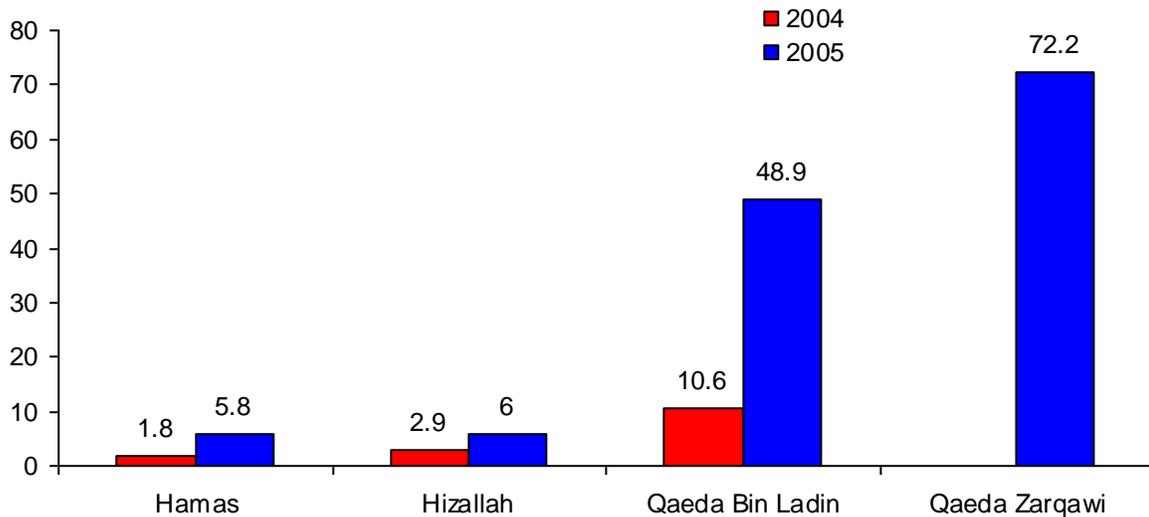
In the year 2004, 66.8% of Jordanian respondents viewed Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a "legitimate resistance organization", yet in this poll (December 2005) the percentage dropped to 20% of respondents. Furthermore, the percentage of Jordanians viewing Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a "terrorist organization" rose from 10.6% in 2004 to 48.9% in this poll. The percentage of respondents that answered "I don't know" also rose from 16.8% in 2004 to 24.3% in this poll, as did the percentage of those who "refused to answer", from 2.6% in 2004 to 5.4% in this poll.

al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the hotel bombings in Amman, 72.2% of respondents viewed the organization as "terrorist", while 6.2% said it was a "legitimate resistance organization"; 15.6% answered, "I don't know", while 5.3% refused to answer the question.

These results indicate that one the most important outcomes of Amman's bombing was the significant drop in the number of Jordanians supporting Bin Ladin's al-

Qaeda. In addition, Jordanian public opinion is making a distinction between Bin Ladin and Zarqawi's organizations. Thus, it is clear that targeting Jordan has had a great impact on Jordanian public opinion.

Figure no. 1: Percent of respondents describing the following organizations as terrorist



Third Approach: Acts and attacks, is there a difference between killing American civilians and soldiers?

Results have shown a large shift in public opinion on the issue of killing American and Israeli civilians, yet there has not been a similar stance on the killing of American soldiers in Iraq. In 2004, 34.6% of Jordanian respondents said that the 2001 World Trade Center attacks were “terrorist” attack. In this poll, however, the number of respondents defining them as terrorist attacks rose to 61.4%, as shown in Table (3). There was also a rise in the percentage of respondents who viewed the killing of Israeli civilians inside Israel as “terrorist attacks”, from 24% in 2004 to 48.5% in this poll. This is a significant shift in Jordanian public opinion.

Table no. 3: Question: how would you describe the following acts, would you say a “terrorist” or “not a terrorist” act (read)?

| Acts | Poll's date | Terrorist | Not terrorist | Did not hear of it | DK | Refuse to answer | Total |
|--|-------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| WTC attacks 2001 | 2004 | 34.6 | 48.3 | 0.0 | 15.0 | 2.1 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 61.4 | 20.1 | 2.6 | 11.6 | 4.2 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | | 26.8 + | 28.2 - | 2.6 + | 3.4 - | 2.1 + | |
| Armed operations against US-lead forces in Iraq | 2004 | 17.7 | 68.8 | 0.0 | 12.5 | 1.0 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 21.1 | 63.6 | 1.1 | 9.8 | 4.5 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | | 3.4 + | 5.2 - | 1.1 + | 2.7 - | 3.5 + | |
| US-led armed operations in Iraq | 2004 | 86.3 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 9.4 | 1.2 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 78.3 | 8.4 | 1.1 | 8.0 | 4.1 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | | 8 - | 5.3 + | 1.1 + | 1.4 - | 2.9 + | |
| Operations against Israeli Civilians inside Israel | 2004 | 24.0 | 63.9 | 0.0 | 10.6 | 1.5 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 48.5 | 36.5 | 0.4 | 10.4 | 4.1 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | | 24.5 + | 27.4- | 0.4+ | 0.2- | 2.6+ | |
| Killing of Palestinian civilians in WB and GS | 2004 | 90.3 | 2.2 | 0.0 | 6.6 | 0.9 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 90.5 | 2.2 | 0.3 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | | 0.2 + | 0.0 | 0.3 + | 2.9 - | 2.5 + | |
| Assassination of Palestinian political leaders by Israel | 2004 | 84.0 | 7.2 | 0.0 | 7.6 | 1.3 | 100 |
| | 2005 | 88.7 | 2.9 | 0.5 | 4.5 | 3.4 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | | 4.7+ | 4.3 | 0.5 + | 3.1 - | 2.1 + | |
| London Bombings 7/7/2005 | 2005 | 63.1 | 8.3 | 13.9 | 10.4 | 4.3 | 100 |
| Bombings of Shar El-Shaykh –Egypt 2005/7/23 | 2005 | 77.4 | 4.8 | 5.6 | 8.3 | 3.8 | 100 |
| Bombings of three hotels in Amman –Jordan 2005/11/9 | 2005 | 94.0 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 1.9 | 3.4 | 100 |

Jordanian public opinion makes a distinction between killing American and Israeli civilians on the one hand, and killing Palestinian and Iraqi civilians on the other. In 2004, 90% of Jordanian respondents considered the killing of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza by Israel to be a “terrorist” act, and this opinion did not change in 2005, as shown in Table (3). When it comes to Israeli assassination of Palestinian political leaders in the West Bank and Gaza, 84% in 2004 and 88.7% in this poll considered these acts to be “terrorist”. In a similar vein, 86.3% in the

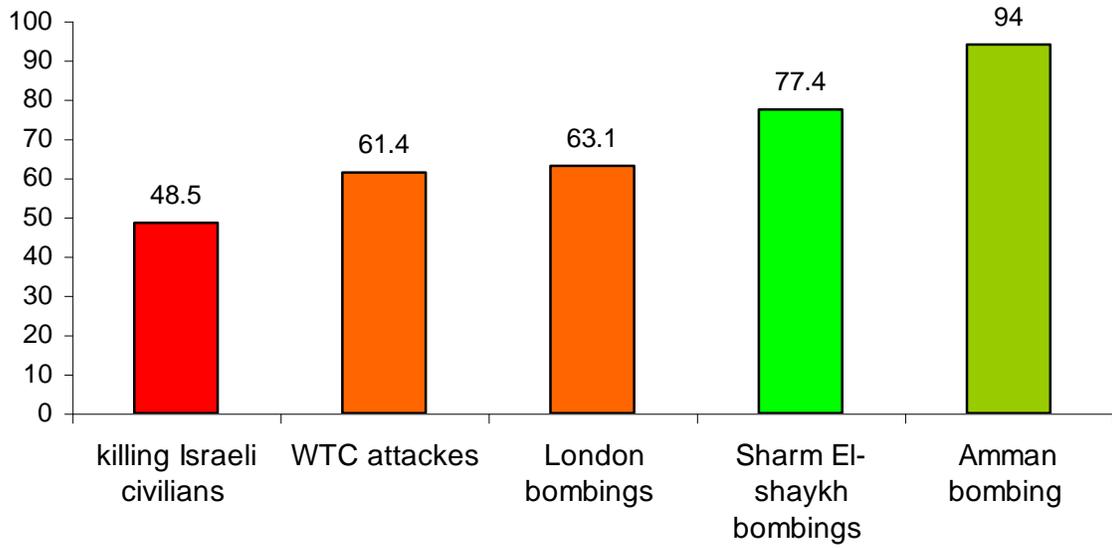
2004 poll and 78.3% in this poll view armed operations led by the United States in Iraq to be “terrorist” acts.

With regards to armed military operations carried out **against** American forces in Iraq, the majority of Jordanians, 68.8% in 2004 and 63.6% in 2005, view these attacks as “not terrorist”, while less than a quarter of respondents in both polls considered such attacks as “terrorist attacks”

It is important to note that the classification of an attack as being “terrorism” is also highly political in nature. When around half of Jordanian respondents viewed the killing of Israeli civilians inside Israel as terrorism, and around two-thirds of Jordanians view the September 11th, 2001 attacks and the London bombings as terrorist acts. Similarly, three quarters of respondents view the Sharm al-Sheykh bombings as acts of terror, as well as 94% for the Amman hotel bombings (as shown in Figure (2)). It becomes clear that Jordanians take political factors into account. Political issues such as the Israeli occupation, the American support for the Israeli occupation, and the American occupation of Iraq, as well as the British role in the occupation of Iraq are taken into consideration when viewing attacks as “terrorist” or “not terrorist”.

It is important to note that Jordanian public opinion is variable and it changes its stance vis-à-vis terrorism and its three dimensions, as noted by the results presented so far, depending on developments in the region’s political environment. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Jordanian public opinion is not ideological about the issue of terrorism. A transformation such as the one observed shows a variety of viewpoints of respondents that are not rooted in particular ideologies but rather based on political issues; such a position indicates the propensity for change should there be a change in internal and external policies. Thus we can say that ending the occupation of Palestine and Iraq would lead to a significant shift in Jordanian public opinion—and perhaps the general Arab public opinion—against terrorism. Ending the occupation may play a major role in delegitimizing support and justification of terrorism.

Figure no. 2: Percent of respondents describing the following acts as terrorist



Public Opinion Leaders Sample (POL)

First Approach: stance on the killing of civilians

The large majority of public opinion leaders reject the killing of civilian nationals of a state that occupies a Muslim country, with 95% of respondents rejecting such killings.

Second Approach: which organizations are “legitimate resistance organizations” and which are “terrorist”?

Hamas and Hizballah: legitimate resistance organizations?

In the 2004 opinion poll the POL sample included business people and the media community, and did not include the other categories of opinion leaders that were sampled in the 2005 poll. Thus comparisons between both polls will be limited to the aforementioned categories, and the opinions of the other categories of opinion leaders will be presented for 2005 only.

There has been a significant shift in the percentage of business people that consider Hamas a legitimate resistance organization, falling from 91.1% in 2004 to 76.9% in 2005. There was also a significant drop amongst the media community, however it was less than that in the business category; in 2004, 94.2% of the media community viewed Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement, which dropped to 84.2% in this poll, as shown in Table (4).

In this poll, 84% of the entire sample (all categories of POL) viewed Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement. The highest group was among the sample of political parties, where 100% of the political parties' sample recognized Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement, while professionals were the least sample, where 73.6% of respondents identified Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement. Among other categories, 89.9% of high-ranking state officials, 83.7% of unions' leaders, and 78.1% of university professors viewed Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement.

Table no. 4: question: there is a debate over the description of the following organizations, some people describe them as legitimate resistance organizations and others describe them as terrorist organizations, do you think (Hamas) is legitimate resistance or a terrorist organization?

| Organization name | Poll's date | Sample | Legitimate resistance | Terrorist | Did not hear of it | DK | Refuse to answer | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| HAMAS | 2004 | Business | 91.1 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 100 |
| | | Media | 94.2 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 0.8 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Business | 76.9 | 5.5 | 0.0 | 14.3 | 3.3 | 100 |
| | | Media | 84.2 | 6.3 | 1.1 | 3.2 | 5.3 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | Business Media | | 14.2 - | 5 + | 0.0 | 10.4+ | 1.3 - | |
| | | | 10.0 - | 4.6 - | 1.1 + | 0.1- | 4.5 + | |
| | 2005 | High ranking state officials | 89.9 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 3.0 | 6.1 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Professionals | 73.6 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 14.3 | 7.7 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Associations leaders | 83.7 | 4.1 | 0.0 | 11.2 | 1.0 | 100 |
| | 2005 | University professors | 78.1 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 12.5 | 5.2 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Leaders of political parties | 100 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Total | 2005 | | 84 | 3.6 | 0.1 | 8.2 | 4.0 | 100 |

Lebanese Hizballah

There has been a moderately significant shift in the percentage of business people sample that consider Hizballah a legitimate resistance organization, falling from 89.4% in 2004 to 82.4% in 2005. There was a similar shift in the opinions of the media community sample, from 93.3% in 2004 to 82.1% in this poll that viewed Hizballah as a legitimate resistance organization, as shown in Table (5).

In this poll, 84.2% of the entire sample (all categories of opinion leaders) viewed Hizballah as a legitimate resistance organization. The highest group was among the sample of political parties, where 98% of respondents classified Hizballah as a legitimate resistance organization, while professionals were the least sample, with 75.8% of respondents identifying Hizballah as a legitimate resistance organization. Among other categories, 86.9% of high-ranking state officials, 81.6% of union leaders, and 81.3% of university professors viewed Hizballah as a legitimate resistance organization.

Table no. 5: question: there is a debate over the description of the following organizations, some people describe them as legitimate resistance organizations and others describe them as terrorist organizations, do you think (Hizballah) is legitimate resistance or a terrorist organization?

| Organization name | Poll's date | Sample | Resistance organization | Terrorist | Did not hear of it | DK | Refuse to answer | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
| Hizballah | 2004 | Business | 89.4 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 5.8 | 4.3 | 100 |
| | | Media | 93.3 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 1.7 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Business | 82.4 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 12.1 | 2.2 | 100 |
| | | Media | 82.1 | 8.4 | 1.1 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | Business Media | | 7 - 11.2 - | 2.8 + 7.6 + | 0.0 1.1 + | 6.3 + 0.0 | 2.1 2.5 + | |
| | | 2005 | High ranking state officials | 86.9 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 4.0 | 7.1 |
| | 2005 | Professionals | 75.8 | 2.2 | 0.0 | 13.2 | 8.8 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Associations leaders | 81.6 | 5.1 | 0.0 | 11.2 | 2.0 | 100 |
| | 2005 | University professors | 81.3 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 12.5 | 5.2 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Leaders of political parties | 98 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 100 |
| Total | 2005 | | 84.2 | 3.3 | 0.1 | 8.1 | 4.3 | 100 |

Al-Qaeda—Bin Laden

There has been a significant shift in the percentage of business people that consider Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a legitimate resistance organization, falling from 33.7% in 2004 to 8.8% in 2005. There was a similar shift in the opinions of the media community sample, from 29.2% in 2004 to 8.4% in this poll that viewed Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a legitimate resistance organization, as shown in Table (6).

In this poll, 9.4% of the entire sample (all categories of opinion leaders) viewed Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a legitimate resistance organization, with 73.4% of the POL sample viewing it as a terrorist organization, which is significantly higher than the national sample. The highest group was among the media community sample, where 80% of respondents viewed Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization, while professionals were the least sample, where 64.8% of respondents identified al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization. Among other categories, 76.8% of high-ranking state officials, 73.5% of union leaders, 72.9% of university professors, and 68.7% of political parties viewed Bin Ladin's al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization.

Table no. 6: Question: there is a debate over the description of the following organizations, some people describe them as legitimate resistance organizations and others describe them as terrorist organizations, do you think (Al-Qaeda Bin Ladin) is legitimate resistance or a terrorist organization?

| Organization name | Poll's date | Sample | Legitimate resistance | Terrorist | Did not hear of it | DK | Refuse to answer | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|-------|
| Al-Qaeda Bin Ladin | 2004 | Business | 33.7 | 32.6 | 0.0 | 22.2 | 11.5 | 100 |
| | | Media | 29.2 | 48.3 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 15.0 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Business | 8.8 | 76.9 | 0.0 | 9.9 | 4.4 | 100 |
| | | Media | 8.4 | 80.0 | 1.1 | 4.2 | 6.3 | 100 |
| Difference between 2004 and 2005 | Business | | 24.9 - | 44.3 + | 0.0 | 12.3 - | 7.1 - | |
| | Media | | 20.8 - | 31.7+ | 1.1+ | 3.3- | 8.7 - | |
| | 2005 | High ranking state officials | 11.1 | 76.8 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 10.1 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Professionals | 8.8 | 64.8 | 0.0 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Associations leaders | 7.1 | 73.5 | 0.0 | 18.4 | 1.0 | 100 |
| | 2005 | University professors | 9.4 | 72.9 | 0.0 | 13.5 | 4.2 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Leaders of political parties | 12.1 | 68.7 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 17.2 | 100 |
| Total | 2005 | | 9.4 | 73.4 | 0.3 | 8.8 | 8.1 | 100 |

Al-Qaeda in Iraq—al-Zarqawi

In this poll, 84.6% of opinion leaders sampled viewed Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq as a terrorist organization, with only 2.1% viewing it as a legitimate resistance organization. The highest group was among the business people sample, where 89% of the business sample viewed Zarqawi's al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization, while 87.9% of high-ranking state officials, 86.3% of the media community sample, 78% of professionals, 84.7% of union leaders, 82.3% of university professors, and 83.8% of political parties' sample viewed al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization, as shown below in Table (7).

Table no. 7: question: there is a debate over the description of the following organizations, some people describe them as legitimate resistance organizations and others describe them as terrorist organizations, do you think (Al-Qaeda Zarqawi) is legitimate resistance or a terrorist organization?

| Organization name | Poll's date | Sample | Resistance organization | Terrorist | Did not hear of it | DK | Refuse to answer | Total |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------|------------------|-------|
| Al-Qaeda Zarqawi | 2005 | Media | 2.1 | 86.3 | 1.1 | 3.2 | 7.4 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Business | 3.3 | 89.0 | 0.0 | 4.4 | 3.3 | 100 |
| | 2005 | High ranking state officials | 1.0 | 87.9 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 7.1 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Professionals | 1.1 | 78.0 | 0.0 | 5.5 | 15.4 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Associations' leaders | 2.0 | 84.7 | 0.0 | 12.2 | 1.0 | 100 |
| | 2005 | University professors | 3.1 | 82.3 | 0.0 | 9.4 | 5.2 | 100 |
| | 2005 | Political parties leaders | 2.0 | 83.8 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 12.1 | 100 |
| Total | 2005 | | 2.1 | 84.6 | 0.3 | 5.7 | 7.3 | 100 |

The third approach: Acts

Similar to the national sample, it appears that political factors play an important part in shaping opinions of Jordanian society; the results of the poll conducted on opinion leaders also show that the Arab-Israeli conflict and the occupation of Iraq has had a large impact on shaping opinions. While the majority of opinion leaders sampled (83.4%) view the September 11th World Trade Center attacks as a terrorist acts, we find that 82.8% of opinion leaders sampled consider the armed military operations against the US-led allied forces in Iraq are **not** terrorist acts. However, 87.1% of opinion leaders sampled do consider the US-led armed operations in Iraq a “terrorist” acts, as shown in Table (8).

The majority of opinion leaders sampled in Jordan (62.9%) view the operations carried out against Israeli civilians inside Israel to be acts of “terrorism”, while 96.1% of respondents viewed the killing of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the killing of Palestinian political leaders by Israel to be acts of terrorism, as shown in Table (8), below.

Over 92% of respondents view the subway bombings in London, the bombings of Sharm al-Shaykh, as well as the hotel bombings of Amman, to be acts of terrorism.

Table no. 8: question: how would you describe the following acts, would you a terrorist or not a terrorist act (read)?

| Public opinion leaders groups | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Act | Description of the acts | High ranking state official | Political parties | University professors | Associations' leaders | Business | Media | Professionals | Total |
| WTC attacks 2001 | Terrorist | 86.9 | 86.9 | 88.5 | 73.5 | 83.5 | 84.2 | 80.2 | 83.4 |
| | Not terrorist | 7.1 | 4.0 | 3.1 | 16.3 | 11.0 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 7.5 |
| DK + Refuse to answer | | 6.1 | 9.1 | 8.4 | 10.2 | 5.5 | 9.3 | 14.3 | 8.9 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Armed operations against US-led forces in Iraq | Terrorist | 8.1 | 1.0 | 6.3 | 2.0 | 28.6 | 4.2 | 8.8 | 8.2 |
| | Not terrorist | 84.8 | 99 | 80.2 | 93.9 | 63.7 | 88.4 | 67 | 82.8 |
| DK + refuse to answer | | 7.1 | 0.0 | 13.2 | 4.1 | 7.7 | 7.4 | 24.2 | 8.9 |
| Groups total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Operations by US-led forces in Iraq | Terrorist | 87.9 | 97.0 | 81.3 | 92.9 | 85.7 | 90.5 | 73.6 | 87.1 |
| | Not terrorist | 6.1 | 1.0 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 4.4 | 1.1 | 9.9 | 4.0 |
| DK + refuse to answer | | 6.0 | 2.0 | 12.5 | 6.1 | 10.1 | 8.5 | 16.5 | 9 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | | | | | | |
| Operations against Israeli Civilians | Terrorist | 79.8 | 46.5 | 67.7 | 43.9 | 71.4 | 71.6 | 60.4 | 62.9 |
| | Not terrorist | 16.2 | 42.4 | 17.7 | 45.9 | 18.7 | 15.8 | 23.1 | 25.9 |
| DK + refuse to answer | | 4.0 | 11.1 | 14.6 | 10.2 | 10.1 | 12.6 | 16.5 | 11.2 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Killings of Palestinian civilians in WB and GS by Israel | Terrorist | 97.0 | 99.0 | 95.8 | 95.9 | 97.8 | 97.9 | 89.0 | 96.1 |
| | Not terrorist | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.4 |
| DK + refuse to answer | | 2.0 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 4.1 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 9.9 | 3.4 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Assassinations of Palestinian political leaders by Israel | Terrorist | 97.0 | 100.0 | 95.8 | 95.9 | 95.6 | 96.8 | 90.1 | 96.0 |
| | Not terrorist | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| DK + refuse to answer | | 2.0 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 4.1 | 2.2 | 3.2 | 9.9 | 2.5 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Continued Table no. 8: question: how would you describe the following acts, would you a terrorist or not a terrorist act (read)?

| Public Opinion leaders groups | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Act | Description of the acts | High ranking state official | Political parties | University professors | Associations, leaders | Business | Media | Professionals | Total |
| London bombings | Terrorist | 94.9 | 98.0 | 92.7 | 87.8 | 91.2 | 95.8 | 89.0 | 92.8 |
| | Not terrorist | 2.0 | 1.0 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 2.2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.6 |
| | DK + refuse to answer | 7.0 | 1.0 | 4.2 | 8.1 | 6.6 | 3.2 | 9.9 | 6.5 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Bombings of Sharm El-Shaykh – Egypt 2005/7/23 | Terrorist | 96.0 | 98.0 | 93.8 | 94.9 | 97.8 | 96.8 | 89.0 | 95.2 |
| | Not terrorist | 2.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| | DK + refuse to answer | 2 | 1.0 | 6.3 | 3.1 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 9.9 | 3.7 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Bombings of three hotels in Amman – Jordan 2005/11/9 | Terrorist | 99.0 | 100.0 | 93.8 | 94.9 | 97.8 | 96.8 | 92.3 | 96.4 |
| | Not terrorist | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 1.3 |
| | DK + refuse to answer | 1.0 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 3.1 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 7.7 | 2.2 |
| Group total | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Conclusion

The results of the study outlined in this report indicate that the Jordanian public opinion on terrorism is changing. The shift in public opinion appears through the stance taken by Jordanians in both the national sample as well as the opinion leaders sample towards the killing of civilians a state that occupies a Muslim land. Such propensity for change is also evident when respondents were asked about organizations that some view as legitimate resistance movements, while others view as terrorist organizations; this is apparent from the questions of whether or not a specific action by these groups constitutes an act of terrorism.

In the first approach we have seen a significant shift in the percentage of respondents who reject the killings of civilians of a state that occupies a Muslim land, whereby 92% of the national sample and 95% of the opinion leaders sample were against such killings. In the second approach, there was also a large shift when it came to the classification of al-Qaeda as a “legitimate resistance organization” or a “terrorist organization”. The percentage of respondents who consider Bin Ladin’s al-Qaeda as a legitimate resistance organization dropped from 66.8% in 2004 to 20% in December 2005. Similarly, only 6.2% of the national sample consider al-Qaeda in Iraq under the leadership of Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi to be a legitimate resistance movement, while 72.2% of the national sample saw it as a terrorist organization. With regards to Hamas and Hizballah, a significant drop was observed in the percentage of respondents from both samples (national and opinion leaders) that view both organizations as “legitimate resistance groups”. In the third approach, we find a large transformation regarding the national sample’s stance on killing Israeli and American civilians: there has been a rise in the percentage of respondents who see the killing of American civilians (September 11th), as well as the killing of Israeli civilians inside Israel, as acts of terrorism. There has not been a significant change in the stance of opinion leaders in Jordan about Israel killing of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the American forces operations in Iraq. These operations remain, to the Jordanian public, acts of terrorism.

In summery, the political realities in the region do influence Jordanian public opinion vis-à-vis terrorism to a large extent.