



Policy Alternatives, 25 July 2014

Jordan: protests, opposition politics and the Syrian crisis

→ Hana Jaber





Arab Reform Initiative

The Syrian conflict has brought new threats, new refugees and a new wave of political uncertainty to a country already struggling to manage the political upheaval of the Arab Spring. Set against the backdrop of shifting domestic and regional politics, this new paper from Hana Jaber breaks down the impact of the Syrian conflict on Jordan.

The Arab uprisings triggered protests and demands from new opposition coalitions for economic reforms and fairer access to political decision-making. These protests drew new lines within Jordanian politics, questioning the established discourse on the Palestinian issue and bringing to the forefront domestic issues such as the expropriation of Bedouin lands. The Syrian crisis, however, brought 1.3 million refugees into the Kingdom, and shifted the preoccupations of Jordanian society, quieting the protests and once again dividing the opposition. Allegiances with one or another camp in Syria helped tear apart opposition cooperation attempts.

This regional context, combined with support to the monarchy from foreign actors worried about the regional consequences of instability in Jordan, strengthened the regime and pushed away any urgency for reform. Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether deep reforms can be avoided much longer, given the Kingdom's continuing challenges and the destabilizing effect of Syrian refugees on the Jordan's fragile demographic balance.



About the author



Hana Jaber

Hana Jaber worked as a senior research fellow at the Arab Reform Initiative, where her work focused on the follow-up and coordination of projects and the development of new fieldwork on Syrian exodus and diaspora. Her research concerns are population movements and related issues.

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- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

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arab-reform.net

contact@arab-reform.net



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