

Can Jordan Dismantle the “Deep State” Moguls?

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Brief Analysis

Today, Jordan’s government is facing backlash after a long period of corruption labeled a “deep state” system. Citizens are organizing [demonstrations \(https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/contents/afp/2018/06/jordan-economy-taxation-demonstration.html\)](https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/contents/afp/2018/06/jordan-economy-taxation-demonstration.html) rejecting federal decisions to increase taxes and impose further strict rules on the people that would negatively affect their livelihoods.

Recently, some political figures have used the term "deep state" to describe the situation in Jordan. This is because they blame influencers for the inefficiency of the current government, as well as for the government's failure to implement its promises to improve Jordanian political and economic plans.

The “deep state” refers to a web of alliances and networks in Jordan that extend throughout the government, including parliamentarians, politicians, business czars, and more. Members form a complex and interdependent network of common interests among themselves. Most of them do not know each other but work for one common purpose: developing and protecting their personal interests and the privileges they have obtained. Influencers operate even if their actions are against regulations and contrary to the norms prevailing in the community, paving the way for the “deep state” to act within Jordan if not above the state.

Many of these Jordanian officials benefit from their strong ties with other business leaders and government officials to obtain leadership positions so as to better serve their families. Some have strong ties with embassies and foreign dignitaries as well. This web of businessmen and politicians has helped “deep state” officials secure privileges and grants, not for the country, but for themselves.

The “deep state” is not an emergency; rather it is a state of mind related to the practices and experiences of Jordanians with the government. The concept of the "deep state" is what the Jordanians feel about the transparency of their political system, equal opportunities for citizens, and justice of services in all regions instead of just in Western Amman, where most of the influential officials reside.

For many Jordanians, the “deep state” is not significant as long as their country is secure and safe. However, the hardships that Jordanians are facing and the laws imposed on them have transformed their living conditions from [stable to insecure. \(https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-warily-watches-at-jordan-rocked-by-biggest-protests-in-years-1.6139659?=&v=B94000BBBB5E282A3489E2CD756F882E&ts= 1528394384784\)](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-warily-watches-at-jordan-rocked-by-biggest-protests-in-years-1.6139659?=&v=B94000BBBB5E282A3489E2CD756F882E&ts= 1528394384784)

The most important question is whether the Jordanians look at the “deep state” in a positive way that stimulates them to maintain the system.

In many Jordanians' minds, the “deep state” is not represented by the three branches of government but rather by those who act behind the screen. These are the mainstays of the “deep state” in Jordan who run the political scene. Jordanians now realize that some of the “deep state” officials have good ties with regional states and act individually. Such influencers have played a major role by exercising pressure on the government to issue new bills, such as the new Taxation Law. The legislation imposes taxes on all Jordanians above eighteen, whether employed or not, in order to cover the country's huge budget deficit. In response to the corrupt system, higher officials are paving the way for a change.

His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan is trying hard to dismantle the “deep state” by involving the people in the process. The king visited refugee camps, various governorates, orphanages, and universities in order to listen to, address, and meet citizens' demands. King Abdullah's many trips to tribes and state-owned hospitals, entities and firms, as well as his meetings with notables from various Jordanian provinces, aim to convey a message that though Jordan is surrounded by unstable countries that pose a threat to its borders and harm its trade ties with its partners, “deep state” influencers have played a major role in exacerbating the economic and political situation in the country.

The recent [dismissal \(https://twitter.com/joshledermanAP/status/1003613571752882179\)](https://twitter.com/joshledermanAP/status/1003613571752882179) of some Jordanian officials shows that the king is going ahead with the process to address the grievances: Most notably, in the wake of the demonstrations, the king has requested Hani Mulki to **step down** (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/07/world/middleeast/jordan-tax-bill-protests.html>) from his role as prime minister. Mulki's successor, Omar Razzaz, has already announced that the controversial bill that had sparked the demonstrations will be axed. The “deep state” has helped the country in the past, but right now many of those senior officials, current and former, have abused the country and have become a burden on the citizens.

Dismantling the financial arm of the “deep state” is possible but difficult because of the close ties between political officials and business moguls, which creates a permanent state of joint defense policy. The first step to strip these influencers of their power is to determine the relationship between those in politics and those in business, and then to individually conquer the “deep state” officials. ❖

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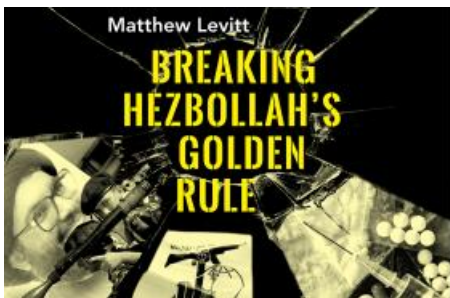
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