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Jordan’s official stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood faced challenges in maintaining a balanced position, despite strong and unprecedented engagement from the Jordanian public. The initial official stance, which seemed relatively strong and clear, diminished later, revealing contradictions between political declarations and practical measures on the ground. This has raised questions about the factors influencing Jordan’s position on the confrontation.

## First: Determinants of the Official Stance:

The official Jordanian stance on Operation al-Aqsa Flood was shaped by various factors:

1. Concerns regarding national security intensified due to the hostile attitudes of extreme right-wing Zionist groups towards Jordan, along with fears of forced displacement in the West Bank (WB) amidst the arming of tens of thousands of settlers and their persistent efforts to compel Palestinians to relocate to Jordan.  
Furthermore, concerns emerged regarding security threats to the kingdom’s northern and eastern borders amidst increased attempts to breach them due to escalation in Gaza Strip (GS). On 28/1/2024, a drone attack targeted US forces stationed near the Syrian border in Jordan, killing three soldiers and wounding about 35 others.
2. Geographic and demographic factors, coupled with strong public engagement with Operation al-Aqsa Flood, persistently fueled Jordanian protests against Israeli aggression and in support of resistance since October 7th. The protests have spanned the entire geographical and societal spectrum in Jordan.
3. The provisions of the Wadi Araba Treaty between Jordan and Israel, including political, economic restrictions, and normalization commitments between the parties.
4. The strategic relationship between Jordan and the US, which fully sided with Israel and provided it with political, military and financial cover to continue its aggression on GS.
5. Jordan’s tepid ties with Hamas suffered a setback after Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which coincided with a noticeable decline in relations, prompted by the arrest of several Hamas members for attempting to smuggle weapons into WB.
6. Jordan’s political stance within the Arab and international sphere, which opposes Hamas and “political Islam” movements.





7. Jordan's political choices in the Palestinian arena, which support the political settlement, negotiations and the two-state solution, the efforts to de-escalate and impose calm in WB, enhancing the PA status within the Palestinian society, and preventing its collapse or decline in favor of other parties.
8. The official side voiced concerns about the impact of Operation al-Aqsa Flood on Jordanian public sentiment and electoral trends, fearing its exploitation by the Islamic movement during the critical upcoming parliamentary elections later this year (2024).

### **Second: The Various Facets of the Jordanian Position:**

On the political front, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi was the first to indicate in the early days of the confrontation that " Hamas is an idea, and the idea does not end." He emphasized that discussing a post-Gaza phase is a leap in the air, clarifying that Hamas did not create the conflict but rather the conflict created Hamas. Jordan was quick to describe Israeli military operations in GS as aggression and heinous war crimes, with positions issued by the King, Queen, Crown Prince and Jordanian Prime Minister condemning the aggression, calling for its cessation, and declaring solidarity with the Palestinian people.

On the practical front, Jordan canceled the Quad Summit scheduled in Amman with the US President on 18/10/2023, in protest against the Israeli massacre at the Baptist Hospital in GS. Jordan also froze the energy-for-water agreement with Israel. On 1/11/2023, Jordan recalled its ambassador from Israel and conducted multiple air drops to support its field hospital in GS, while establishing a second field hospital in Khan Younis.

Yet, the Jordanian public deemed these official actions insufficient, demanding the cancellation of the Wadi Araba treaty and the gas agreement with Israel, along with halting the water-for-electricity deal, closing foreign military bases in Jordan, supporting Palestinian resistance and engaging with its factions.

The Jordanian official stance during Operation al-Aqsa Flood can be summarized as follows:

1. Condemnation of Israeli aggression on GS and urging an end to war crimes.
2. Implementation of measures falling short of public demands, amidst strong interaction by the Jordanian public during the confrontation.
3. Permitting limited popular activities, restricting access to borders with the occupied Palestinian territories, opposing open sit-ins and arresting activists participating in some events.
4. Allowing Jordanian territory for Gulf-to-Israel truck transit, within the context of a land bridge inaugurated to bypass Houthi restrictions in the Bab al-Mandab Strait for ships bound to Israel.



## Conclusion:

Jordan's official response to Operation al-Aqsa Flood reveals significant confusion in aligning its regional and international stance, political choices and commitments with addressing the demands of the Jordanian public.

Jordan's participation in the land bridge for goods transit to Israel has damaged its credibility and provoked public outrage. This revelation coincided with Israel's intensified blockade on GS, coupled with increased measures to prevent the entry of humanitarian aid, as part of the Israeli policy to starve the population and incite popular resentment against the resistance.

Given recent practical behavior and relative retreat in stance and rhetoric, ongoing confusion in Jordan's official position is expected in the coming period, with increased engagement in Arab and international arrangements regarding Gaza's post-war future.

Regarding relations with Palestinian factions, Jordan's official side is expected to maintain its preference for engaging solely with the Palestinian Authority, aiming to bolster its position in the Palestinian arena, without showing openness to resistance movements in the foreseeable future.

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