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“Sectarianism in Islam and Muslim Communities”

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**ABSTRACT**

“Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Carriers of Sectarianism”

By: Sarah A. Tobin, Ph.D.  
(Brown University, Providence, RI)

The Jordanian government asserts that one million Syrian refugees reside in Jordan, sharing with the populace many concerns about this large influx and settlement of “foreigners.” While some attention has been paid to the impact of Syrian refugees on sectarian divisions in Lebanon, very little to no analysis has been conducted on the potential impact of Syrian refugees and sectarian divisions in Jordan. While Lebanon has a longer and more visible history with sectarianism, Jordan does not. Furthermore, many Syrian refugees in Jordan are also Sunni Muslims. As a result, researchers overlook the possibilities for Syrian refugees to bring sectarian outlooks and perspectives with them that are likely to inform their interactions with Jordanians. During 2014, I participated in two women’s religion classes in a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan. I interviewed Syrian refugees about the courses’ content and obtained Jordanian reflections of the classes. While sectarian outlooks and perspectives may not, in and of themselves, divide the majority of Syrian refugees in Jordan from the majority of Jordanian residents (as Sunni Muslims), the “sectarian consciousness” carried by Syrian refugees has the potential to divide Jordanian society. As a result, Jordanians reinforce the idea that sectarianism is not welcome in Jordan, and is even - as a few asserted - “against Islam.” In conclusion, this article demonstrates that the influx of sectarian outlooks held by Syrian refugees prompt Jordanians to reinforce the narrative that Jordan is free of such divisions and will continue to remain so in nationalist narratives.