معهد السياسة والمجتمع
Politics and Society Institute (PSI)

From Hmoud to the World:

Media Monitoring and Global Digital Engagement with the Attack on St. George's Church in Karak

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Key Highlights

- More than 10 million digital interactions in four days with the attack on the church in the village of Hmoud.
- At least 10 languages engaged with the event online.
- Within the first three hours of the attack, Karak went from an ordinary digital presence of about 300 posts per hour to nearly 10,000 posts per hour.
- One third of all digital engagement with the event was concentrated in the first ten hours.
- Arab official statements focused on Jordan's security and national unity, while Western statements emphasized that the victims were Christians.
- Jordanian media coverage centered on the presence of the Hashemite leadership, the stories of the Hmoud church martyrs, and the performance of the security services.
- National unity and the rejection of religious discrimination dominated Jordanian media messaging.
- The post showing the King arriving at Karak Hospital in military uniform received the highest engagement of any post about the event.
- American right-wing accounts attacked ABC's headline for using the word "gunmen" instead of "Muslims."
- CBN published the story in its "Israel" section, while an Argentine website described it as "Islamic terrorism."
- Vatican News quoted the Apostolic Nuncio as saying the attack was the first in Jordan's history to specifically target a Christian community.
- Arabic posts presented the attack as an assault on the nation, and the word "treachery" recurred throughout them.
- English-language posts accounted for 71% of all posts linking the attack to ISIS.
- 4,400 English-language posts linked the attack to ISIS, compared with only 53 that relayed the Interior Minister's statement on the perpetrators' identity.
- Spanish-language posts used terms such as "massacre" and "Islamist violence," and blamed Islamism in general.
- Greek-language engagement named the church in full and presented the victims as its own children.
- A national narrative is not enough at home alone: the battle over the narrative is international.

Executive Summary

This report examines Arab and international media coverage and digital engagement with the attack on the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in the village of Hmoud, Karak Governorate, at noon on 23 October 2026. The attack took place during a funeral service and left nine people killed and dozens wounded. The report covers the period from the attack until the arrest of the perpetrators and the release of official statements on their identity on 26 October.

The report works on three levels: media monitoring, which tracks how Arab and international media and official bodies covered the attack; quantitative analysis, which measures the volume, rhythm, and distribution of engagement; and qualitative analysis, which identifies the frames through which each language space presented the event and its victims.

First: Scale and Rhythm of the Event

The event generated more than 268,000 digital results, involving more than 113,000 accounts, with over 10.6 million interactions. Content from media outlets and news websites exceeded 30% of total engagement, a high share that reflects the central role of the media in shaping the narrative of the event.

Engagement did not come all at once. It came in four waves corresponding to the stages of the event: the attack (Friday 23), the rising death toll and the meeting of Jordan's National Security Council, the unified military funeral, and the arrest of the perpetrators.

The first wave was by far the largest. Engagement rose more than thirtyfold within three to four hours, and about one third of all engagement was concentrated in the first ten hours alone. Each later wave was smaller than the one before it, even though it carried clearer information, and the arrest wave did not exceed a quarter of the first peak. In other words, the first impression of the event formed before any official answer about the perpetrators' identity.

Second: Media Monitoring and Official Positions

Jordanian media produced almost all of the most-engaged Arabic content. Its coverage revolved around three themes: the presence of the Hashemite leadership, from the King's arrival at Karak Hospital in military uniform and his phrase "rah nwarjeehom" ("we will show them") to the Queen consoling the victims' families; the humanization of the martyrs through their names, professions, and stories; and the achievement of the security services in arresting the perpetrators. "National unity" was the most frequently repeated message.

Arab media covered the event within a frame of condemnation and solidarity with Jordan. **International news agencies**, in the first hours, presented it as breaking news about "unidentified gunmen," a wording that quickly became contested. American and European right-wing accounts rewrote neutral headlines, such as ABC's in English and WELT's in German, to read "Muslims open

fire." The American evangelical network CBN placed the story in its "Israel" section, and an Argentine website explicitly used the term "Islamic terrorism." **Church media** played a central role in the coverage, from Vatican News to the platforms of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and quoted the Apostolic Nuncio in Jordan as saying the attack was "the very first time in the country's entire history that an attack has specifically targeted a Christian community."

At the official level, almost all Arab states condemned the attack, including Syria, along with the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United Nations, the European Union, and many other countries. Although the language of condemnation was similar, the identification of the victim differed: Arab statements spoke of "Jordan" and its security and stability, while European statements, particularly French and Greek ones, added "Christians" specifically. The contest between reading the attack as an assault on a state or as an assault on a religious community therefore began at the level of states themselves.

Third: The Linguistic and Geographic Map

Users engaged with the event in more than ten languages, led by Arabic (63.5%), then English (24.5%), then Spanish (7.7%), followed by Greek, German, Turkish, and Russian at lower shares. Engagement differed not only in volume but also in intensity: Arabic reached about three posts per account, reflecting an invested audience that returned to the event with every development, while many English and Spanish speakers posted about it once and moved on. Greek, despite its small volume, ranked second in intensity, indicating a direct bond with the targeted church.

Each language read the event from its own position:

- **Arabic** read it as an attack on the nation, dominated by a national vocabulary ("homeland," "the King," "martyrs," "treachery"), and linked the attack to ISIS in less than 1% of posts.
- **English** carried the ISIS narrative more than any other language (7.4% of its engagement), and alone accounted for about 71% of all posts linking the attack to the group across all languages, with a clear "Christians" versus "Muslims" binary.
- **Spanish** was the most ideological, attributing the attack to "Islamism." About 38% of its engagement came from accounts that locate themselves in Israel, roughly 6,200 results, compared with only about 310 results in Hebrew.
- **Greek** named the church and treated the victims as members of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.
- **Turkish** featured a conspiracy discourse accusing Israel and the Mossad, alongside an Islamic discourse denying any link between the attack and Islam.
- **German** placed the event within a domestic debate about antisemitism and the persecution of Christians.

Fourth: What the Public Engaged With

The most-engaged images and videos show that the public engaged less with the moment of the attack than with what followed it. Funeral scenes and the recitation of al-Fatiha in front of the church came first, followed by images of the King with the wounded, then scenes of the perpetrators' arrest. The Jordanian public built its narrative on three successive images: grief, embrace, and retribution. Digitally, the event shifted from a scene of violence to a scene of mourning in which Muslims and Christians shared the same farewell.

Fifth: Who Owns the Martyrs?

The report identifies four cross-language frames competing over the victims themselves:

- **The Jordanian national frame** presents them as citizens and martyrs, by name, and proposes retribution and national unity as the response, presenting them as "martyrs of the nation before being Christians."
- **The church frame** presents them as members of a religious community and calls for the protection of Christians. Among some Greek accounts, it slid into a discourse hostile to Muslim migrants.
- **The "Muslims killing Christians" frame** turns them into evidence of "the danger of Islam," and ignores the existence of Arab Christians as an integral part of their societies, contradicting the image presented by the victims' own families.
- **The conspiracy frame** erases the victims entirely and casts the attack as an "Israeli" operation.

Despite the apparent contradiction between the last two frames, both revolve around the same center: Israel. An attack in a Jordanian village, on a Jordanian church, by Jordanian perpetrators, thus became, in a large part of global engagement, a chapter in a conflict that has nothing to do with Hmoud.

Sixth: A Narrative That Did Not Reach Everyone Equally

Official statements did not reach all languages to the same extent, or languages chose not to engage with them to the same extent. The Interior Minister's statement on the perpetrators' identity was relayed by 126 posts in Arabic, only 53 in English, and only two in Spanish. After the arrest, discussion of the event almost stopped in Spanish, Turkish, and German, falling to less than 10% of its earlier level. Users in these languages moved away from the event before the official information reached them.

The report concludes that whether official information gets through depends on how the audience understood the event from the start. The Arab audience saw the event as an attack on Jordan, so it received the official information easily, since it was consistent with its understanding. The audience that believed the ISIS narrative in the first hours, as in English, received the official information with

difficulty and in limited volume. The audience that blamed "Islam" from the outset, as in Spanish, was not concerned with any later information about the perpetrators' identity, because its judgment about the perpetrator was formed before the event occurred.

The picture was further complicated by the fact that the official narrative itself changed during the monitoring period. On the morning of 26 October, the Interior Minister stated that the perpetrators were Jordanian and had no external links. That same evening, the Armed Forces announced that they were linked to organizations in southern Syria and carried out airstrikes in Daraa. With this shift, the question was no longer "Who carried out the attack?" but "How will Jordan respond?"

Implications

The report's findings point to three key implications for official communication during sudden security events:

1. **The first hours are decisive:** the information vacuum in the first hours is filled by unverified narratives that are hard to correct later.
2. **The national narrative needs other languages:** the success of the national frame at home was not matched by sufficient presence in English and Spanish, leaving the international space to frames that used the event in other conflicts.
3. **Consistency of the official narrative is a condition for its reach:** successive, differing statements within a short time weaken the ability of official information to revise the first impression, at home and abroad.

1. Methodology

This report is part of the series of digital listening and analysis reports published by the Politics and Society Institute. It examines media coverage and digital engagement, Arab and international, with the attack on the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in the village of Hmoud, Karak Governorate.[1]

Digital listening and analysis reports are reports that monitor what accounts publish on social media platforms, news websites, forums, and any websites whose privacy policies allow access, on a particular issue, and then analyze it to understand the direction of discussion and how digital accounts engage with it.

1.1 Timeframe: The report covers the period from the moment of the attack at noon on 23 October 2026 until the end of 26 October 2026, that is, until the arrest of the perpetrators and the release of official statements on their identity.

1.2 Levels of analysis: The report relies on data collected using a specialized digital listening tool, and analyzes it on three levels:

- **1.2.1 Media monitoring:** tracks how Arab and international media covered the event and how official bodies presented it. This level relied on the digital listening tool's classification of content by source type. Content from media outlets and news websites exceeded 30% of total engagement, a high share that reflects the central role of the media in shaping the event's narrative. This was complemented by a manual review of official statements and press coverage from their primary sources.
- **1.2.2 Quantitative level:** measures the volume of digital engagement, its timeline, and its distribution across languages and countries.
- **1.2.3 Qualitative level:** analyzes the frames through which each language space presented the event and its victims, based on a manual reading of the most-engaged posts in each language. The analysis started from the principle of "the primacy of understanding over method,"[2] so frames were extracted from the texts themselves rather than imposed through a prior classification, and were then read according to Robert Entman's four functions of framing:[3] defining the problem, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies.

1.3 Operational definitions: A **post or digital discussion** refers to any post, comment, or article that addressed the attack on the Hmoud church. An **author** refers to any distinct, unique account that took part in the engagement, counted once regardless of the number of its contributions. **Engagement** refers to the total number of likes, comments, and shares on content related to the event.

1.4 Language coverage: Data was collected from countries worldwide and in all languages covered by the tool, with a focus on Arabic to monitor Jordanian and Arab engagement and English to monitor international coverage, in addition to Spanish, Greek, German, French, Turkish, Russian, and

Hebrew, the languages that recorded high and noticeable engagement relevant to the event. The tool's machine translation was used, with a manual review of the most-engaged content.

1.5 Data cleaning: Results containing the name "Karak" without relevance to the event were excluded, including results in Uzbek, Tajik, and Persian in which the word resembles local vocabulary. Duplicate content and content from fake, coordinated, or troll accounts were also excluded.

1.6 Ethical safeguards: In compliance with the publication ban on the case, the report does not name the suspects or disclose details of the investigation, and does not republish graphic images. It also does not name private individual accounts, and describes them instead.

1.7 Limitations: The report acknowledges several limitations. The tool does not reach messaging applications and closed groups, channels through which many narratives spread in the first hours, so the report does not claim to capture all forms of digital engagement on the subject. The tool's coverage of Hebrew content was limited, so it was complemented by a direct, manual review of Israeli news websites. Machine translation may miss some fine semantic nuances. Digital engagement remains an indicator of trends in public discussion, not a substitute for measuring public opinion.

1.8 Sample type: The report relies on a relevance-based purposive sample rather than a probability sample. The inclusion criterion is confirmed relevance to the event, not statistical representation of the user population. The results therefore cannot be generalized to public opinion as a whole, and the report does not claim to capture every discussion or interaction on the subject; it represents a part of the digital conversation.

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[1] The attack took place at noon on Friday 23 October 2026 during a funeral service at the church, and left nine martyrs and dozens wounded. The Public Security Directorate announced the arrest of the three perpetrators at dawn on 26 October. Jordan News Agency (Petra), "Public Security: After a joint security operation, investigation and raid teams arrest the perpetrators of the cowardly terrorist operation and kill them in a firefight with no casualties among security forces," 26 October 2026: https://shorturl.at/1YF1Q

[2] Azmi Bishara, "On the Primacy of Understanding over Method," opening lecture on the second day of the Seventh Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, 24 March 2019. Later published in *Tabayyun*, no. 30 (2019), p. 7. https://www.dohainstitute.org/ar/News/Pages/Seventh-Conference-on-Social-Sciences-and-Humanities-Azmi-Bishara-Lecture.aspx

[3] Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

2. Arab and International Media Monitoring of the Event

2.1 Jordanian Media: The Narrative of National Unity

Jordanian media outlets alone produced almost all of the most-engaged Arabic content: Al Mamlaka, Roya, Al Arabiya Jordan, Hayat FM, and Jfra News. Their coverage revolved around three themes:

- **The presence of the Hashemite leadership:** the King's arrival at Karak Government Hospital in military uniform (133,900 interactions for the top post), the phrase "rah nwarjeehom" ("we will show them"), and Queen Rania, Princess Salma, and Princess Rajwa consoling the families of those the coverage described as "martyrs of the nation" (123,900 interactions).
- **Humanizing the martyrs:** stories with names and professions, such as Dr. Mohammad Al-Qusous, known as "the doctor of the poor"; the young doctor Fadi Al-Halsa, whose father recounts how he was killed beside him; and university professor Asem Barqan, whose students engaged noticeably in the digital space.
- **The achievement of the security services:** details of the arrest of the perpetrators at dawn on 26 October from the house where they had barricaded themselves, and the government spokesperson's statement that what happened was "a pivotal historical milestone in the efforts to end extremism."

The most repeated message in official Jordanian media was therefore "national unity." Among the most widely shared clips was one of a victim's sister saying: "The perpetrators of the crime are criminals who do not represent Islam... Muslims are our family and our brothers." Outlets also shared scenes of Muslims reciting al-Fatiha and lighting candles in front of churches. According to the media monitoring, Jordanian media therefore focused on the concept of national cohesion.

2.2 Arab Media: A Frame of Condemnation and Solidarity

Major Arab channels (Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Al Hadath, Asharq Al-Awsat, Sky News Arabia, and Blinx) covered the event within the frame of official Arab condemnation and solidarity with Jordan, focusing on the King's visit to the wounded and on the declaration of national mourning and the lowering of flags for three days.

2.3 International News Agencies: Breaking News with Conflicting Figures

In its first hours, international coverage relied on Reuters, the Associated Press, and Jordanian state television, and took the form of breaking news: "Unidentified gunmen open fire inside a church in Jordan." Casualty figures, however, varied widely across sources, with the number killed ranging from 6 to 9 and the number wounded from 28 to 40. Such discrepancies are normal in the first hours, but they gave ideologically driven accounts room to pick the figure that suited their narrative.

2.4 Western Press: From News to a Contested Headline

- **English-language press:** The event was covered by ABC, Al-Monitor, Arab News, and SCMP, while Roya English and Al Arabiya English carried the Jordanian narrative and its human dimensions. ABC's headline, which used the word "gunmen," became a target for American right-wing accounts demanding that the perpetrators be called "Muslims." The evangelical Christian network CBN presented the story in its "Israel" section, an editorial choice that reveals its framing.
- **Spanish-language press:** Clarín, La Gaceta, CNN Chile, and BioBio Chile reported an "attack on a church," and the latter two relayed the Chilean government's condemnation. By contrast, the Argentine website La Derecha Diario explicitly used the term "Islamic terrorism."
- **French-language press:** The event was covered by La Croix, Vatican News, franceinfo, 20 Minutes, and L'Orient-Le Jour. Vatican News stood out by relaying the Apostolic Nuncio's statement that this was the first time in the country's history that a Christian community had been specifically targeted.
- **German-language press:** WELT ran the headline "Unknown assailants open fire," and katholisch.de relayed the position of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.
- **Greek-language press:** The press treated the event as an attack on a church belonging to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, that is, on "one of our churches."
- **Hebrew-language press:** Coverage was limited in volume (only about 310 results), mostly factual updates from journalists specializing in Arab affairs, using the terms "pigua" (attack) and "mehablim" (terrorists). This may be attributable to the Israeli public's current preoccupation with elections.
- **Turkish-language press:** CNN TÜRK and other outlets relayed headlines verbatim: "Armed attack on a church in Jordan."

2.5 Religious Media: The Weight of the Churches

Church media was a clear actor in the coverage, including Vatican News, katholisch.de, AgenSIR, Infovaticana, and the platforms of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Pope Leo XIV's prayer for the victims spread widely. The parish priest of the Holy Family Church in Gaza mourned "the martyrs of Karak," forming a thread of solidarity among the Christians of the Levant.

3. Monitoring Official Positions

Arab positions: The attack was condemned by Saudi Arabia ("a cowardly terrorist act"), Egypt (including a post by President El-Sisi), the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq (a call between Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein and his counterpart Ayman Safadi), Algeria, and Syria (an explicit condemnation of the attack on the Church of St. George). It was also condemned by the Secretary-

General of the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said: "Terrorism has no religion and no homeland."

International positions: Condemnations were issued by the UN Secretary-General, the European Union (with full support for the Jordanian investigation), France (a statement on 24 October expressing explicit solidarity with "the Christian communities" in Jordan), Greece and Cyprus (a call from the Cypriot President to the King, and a call from Greek Defense Minister Dendias to Patriarch Theophilos III), Russia, Turkey, Chile, and Canada. Israel published condolences through its Foreign Ministry and embassies, while Lebanon's Hezbollah also issued condolences.

The language of official condemnation was broadly similar, but the choice of victim in each statement differed. Arab statements spoke of "Jordan" and its security and stability, while European statements, especially French and Greek ones, added "Christians" specifically. Even at the official level, two frames competed: an attack on a state, and an attack on a religious community.

4. Monitoring Digital Engagement

4.1 Overview of Digital Engagement



Figure (1): Overall indicators of digital engagement with the attack on the Hmoud church[4]

The attack on the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in the village of Hmoud, Karak Governorate, generated wide digital engagement: more than 268,300 independent digital discussions about the event were recorded between 23 and 26 October 2026, involving more than 113,000 distinct users and accounts, while total digital interactions exceeded 10.6 million.

This volume of discussion and interaction reflects how widely the event circulated online in a short time, moving beyond the local context into the global digital space.

4.2 Engagement Timeline



Figure (2): Timeline of digital engagement with the Hmoud church attack, 23 to 26 October 2026[5]

Before noon on 23 October, Karak Governorate was almost absent from digital discourse: related engagement did not exceed a few hundred posts per hour, a level that can be considered normal for a governorate. The attack then transformed this picture within a few hours, turning the name of a small village into a topic of wide global engagement.

Engagement began rising in the early afternoon, with the first breaking news of a shooting in a church in Karak, and then accelerated sharply: within three to four hours, it jumped from about 300 posts per hour to nearly 9,000, an increase of more than thirtyfold. It peaked in the evening at over 10,000 posts per hour and stayed at that level for about six consecutive hours. This extended peak was not a response to a single piece of news, but to a continuous flow of developments: surveillance camera footage spreading, then the press conference by the Director of Public Security and the

Interior Minister announcing seven martyrs and describing the attack as a terrorist operation, then the declaration of national mourning, then the King's statement and his visit to the wounded. Estimates drawn from the engagement curve indicate that about one third of all engagement over the four days was concentrated in these first ten hours alone.



Figure (3): King Abdullah II's post on X following the attack, 23 October 2026[6]

> **Translation:** "We will confront the terrorist act that targeted Karak with the harshest penalties. Whoever imagined that the bullets of treachery could divide the ranks of Jordanians has failed before our resilience and unity. All Jordanians, from the north of the homeland to its south, are partners in the land and in the stand, and no treachery will come between them. Our deepest condolences to the families of the martyrs and our wishes for a speedy recovery to the wounded. Jordanian blood is precious, and we will strike with an iron fist anyone who dares to attack this country."

The event therefore did not arrive in the digital space all at once, but in successive waves, each corresponding to a stage in its course. After a sharp drop overnight, when engagement fell to about 2,400 posts per hour, it rose again on the morning of the 24th, reaching nearly 4,400 posts per hour between noon and afternoon, coinciding with the church death toll rising to eight and then nine, the meeting of the National Security Council chaired by the King, and a stream of international condemnations. It then gradually declined until dawn on the 25th, when it recorded its lowest level since the attack, about 1,200 posts per hour.

With the unified military funeral of the nine martyrs at noon on the 25th, engagement rose again at a calmer pace, reaching nearly 3,000 posts per hour in the evening before falling again overnight.

The final wave came at dawn on the 26th, when the Public Security Directorate announced the arrest of the three perpetrators. Engagement rose within two hours from about 1,300 to nearly 2,300 posts per hour, and remained between 2,000 and 2,600 posts until the afternoon, as government statements on the perpetrators' identity followed one another.

This sequence reveals the logic of digital engagement in sudden security events: the highest peak was tied to the moment of shock, when official information was at its lowest, while each later wave shrank even though it carried clearer and more decisive information. The arrest wave did not exceed a quarter of the attack peak, though it came close in size to the funeral wave. This means the first impression of the event formed in its first hours, before any official answers were available about the perpetrators' identity and motives, the same hours in which the unverified narratives discussed in later sections of this report spread.

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[4] Source: the digital listening tool used by the Politics and Society Institute.

[5] Source: the digital listening tool used by the Politics and Society Institute.

[6] Source: the King's official account, @KingAbdullahII. The post was published at around 5:30 pm, during the phase when engagement was approaching its peak, and received 1.8 million views, making it one of the main official milestones that fed the first wave. Notably, it did not stop at condemnation and warning; it offered an interpretive frame for the event as an attempt to "divide the ranks of Jordanians," defined the victims as "martyrs," and all Jordanians as "partners in the land and in the stand," the frame whose movement into other narratives this report traces.

5. From Hmoud to the World: The Linguistic and Geographic Map of Engagement

5.1 One Event, Many Stories: How Each Language Discussed the Hmoud Attack

The event was discussed in more than ten languages, led by Arabic with about 63.5% of total engagement (155,000 results), followed by English with about 24.5% (59,800), then Spanish with about 7.7% (18,800). These were followed, each at less than 1%, by Greek (2,200), German (1,700), Turkish (1,200), and Russian (868 results), reflecting global interest and international engagement with the event.

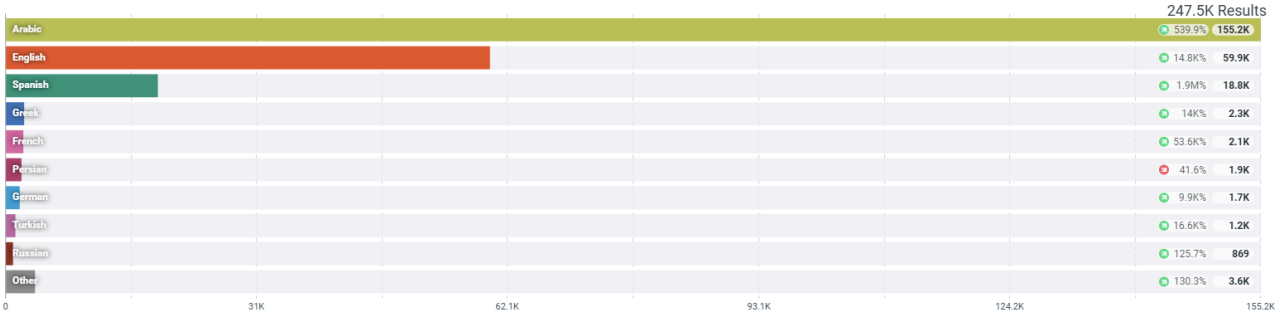


Figure (4): Most engaged languages[7]

Languages differed not only in the volume of their engagement with the event but also in its nature. Arabic led not only in the number of results but also in intensity of participation, with an average of about three posts per author, the highest among all languages. This reflects sustained involvement by an audience directly concerned with the event, returning to it repeatedly with each development. By contrast, English and Spanish engagement was broader in number of authors but less intense, averaging about one and a half posts per author in English and about one and a third in Spanish, meaning many people posted about the event once and moved on. Greek, despite its small size, ranked second in intensity with two posts per author, indicating deeper interest among a limited audience with a direct bond to the targeted church. German, Turkish, and Russian engagement remained limited and fleeting, at roughly one post per author.

Language	Results	Share	Authors
Arabic	155,000	63.5%	49,700
English	59,800	24.5%	39,200
Spanish	18,800	7.7%	14,800
Greek	2,200	0.9%	1,100
German	1,700	0.7%	1,500
Turkish	1,200	0.5%	965
Russian	868	0.4%	559

Figure (5): Volume, share, and number of authors of digital engagement by language[8]

A note on reading the presence of ISIS: The official narrative on the perpetrators' identity went through three stages during the monitoring period. In the first hours, a claim that ISIS had claimed responsibility for the attack spread without a verified source. On the morning of 26 October, the Interior Minister stated that the perpetrators were Jordanian and that there were no indications of links to external parties. On the evening of the same day, the Armed Forces announced that the perpetrators were linked to terrorist organizations in southern Syria, coinciding with airstrikes in Daraa. This analysis therefore does not assess the accuracy of any of these narratives. What it measures is the spread of each narrative in each language space, and the extent to which successive official statements reached the spaces that had adopted the first narrative.

How each language covered the event, and how far it linked the attack to ISIS

Attack on St. George's Church, Hmoud, Karak, 23 to 26 October 2026

Language	Top words in the original language	English meaning	How it framed the event	Linked attack to ISIS share of posts in the language [1]	Relayed Interior Minister's statement number of posts, 26 October (morning) [2]
Arabic	الكرك، الأردنيين، الوطن، الملك، الشهداء، الغدر، الإرهابي	Karak, Jordanians, homeland, the King, martyrs, treachery, terrorist	An attack on Jordan and its national unity	0.7%	126 posts
English	church, gunmen, christians, orthodox, terrorists, muslims	Original language	Breaking news with a focus on religious identity	7.4%	53 posts
Spanish	cristianos, islamista, masacre, atentado, fieles	Christians, Islamist, massacre, attack, faithful	An "Islamist" attack on Christians	2.7%	2 posts
Greek	ελληνορθόδοξη, Αγίου Γεωργίου, τρομοκρατική, Χαμούντ	Greek Orthodox, St. George, terrorist, Hmoud	An attack on a specific Orthodox church	1%	Not detected
Russian	нападение, погибли, ранения, церковь	attack, killed, injuries, church	Neutral news reporting	1.2%	7 posts
Turkish	Ürdün'de kiliseye silahlı saldırı, öldü, yaralandı	Armed attack on a church in Jordan, killed, wounded	Verbatim relay of news headlines	Not detected	Not detected
German	Kirche, Christen, Juden, unbekannte, @welt	church, Christians, Jews, unknown, WELT newspaper account	News reporting with religious references	Not detected	Not detected

[1] **Linked attack to ISIS:** of all posts about the event in a given language, the share that mentioned ISIS. For example, about 7 in every 100 English posts about the attack linked it to ISIS, compared with fewer than 1 in Arabic.

[2] **Relayed Interior Minister's statement:** after the arrest on 26 October, the Interior Minister stated that the perpetrators were Jordanian with no indications of external links. This column counts the posts that relayed this statement.

Source: prepared by the researcher based on data from the Institute's digital listening tool, 23 to 26 October 2026. Politics and Society Institute.

Figure (6): How each language covered the event, and how far it linked the attack to ISIS[9]

5.1.1 Arabic: The Event as an Attack on the Nation

Arabic-language engagement was dominated by an explicitly national vocabulary, with words such as "Jordan," "Jordanians," "homeland," "the Hashemite Kingdom," and "the King," alongside "martyrs" and prayers for the recovery of the wounded. The word "treachery" stands out as an indicator of the official frame passing to the public, echoing the phrase "the bullets of treachery" from the King's post.

In Arabic discourse, the victims were martyrs of the nation before being Christians, and the attack was an attempt to divide national ranks before being a sectarian attack. Within this frame, the ISIS narrative remained marginal, not exceeding 0.7% of event-related Arabic engagement. Arabic was, in turn, the language that most relayed the Interior Minister's statement on the morning of 26 October, with 126 posts. The Arab audience did not build its understanding of the event on the identity of the perpetrating party, because its frame of reference was the nation, not the organization. This would later make it the space most sensitive to the official narrative's shift outward.

5.1.2 English: The Main Incubator of the ISIS Narrative

English-language engagement combined descriptive news language (gunmen, opened fire, killed and wounded, surveillance cameras) with a clear emphasis on religious identity, with the words "Christians," "Orthodox," and "terrorists" standing out alongside "Muslims," a religious binary almost

absent from Arabic discourse. The most-shared links reveal the diversity of sources in this space: alongside Roya, Al Jazeera English, and Arab News, the website of the American evangelical Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) ranked third, with a report it placed in its Israel news section, describing the attack as murder carried out by "terrorists." English was the space that carried the ISIS narrative more than any other, at about 7.4% of its engagement, nearly ten times its presence in Arabic, and it alone accounted for about 71% of all posts linking the attack to the group across all languages. Later official statements did not reach it to the same extent: against about 4,400 posts linking the attack to the group in the first days, only 53 posts relayed the Interior Minister's statement. The English-language space built its picture of the event on the first, unverified narrative, and left the event before the official narrative had settled.

5.1.3 Spanish: Islamism Instead of the Organization

Spanish contained the most right-wing content of all the languages monitored. Its most prominent terms were not descriptive but sharply evaluative: "massacre," "Islamist attack," "Islamist violence," "Christian faithful," and "Christians continue to pay the price," a complete, recurring phrase pointing to a single wording republished widely, much of it linked to one prominent individual account. Notably, the ISIS narrative by name was less present in Spanish (2.7%) than in English, but this does not mean the accusatory frame was weaker. Spanish did not need to name the organization at all, because it attributed the attack to "Islamism" as a general category, a frame broader than any specific organization and unaffected by any later information about the perpetrators' identity or affiliations, whether denying or confirming external links. It was therefore unsurprising that only two posts relayed the Interior Minister's statement, and that Spanish engagement collapsed after the arrest to 7% of its previous level. Notably, about 38% of geolocated Spanish engagement came from accounts that locate themselves in Israel, in addition to Latin American countries.

Spanish-language discussions geolocated in Israel were dominated by content reinforcing an Islamophobic discourse about the danger Muslims pose to followers of other religions, not only Jews but Christians as well. These discussions come amid a rise in right-wing discourse toward Muslims in the West.

5.1.4 Greek: The Church by Name

Unlike English and Spanish, which spoke of "Christians" in general terms, Greek stood out for naming the church in full: the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in Hmoud. Greek engagement, 95% of which came from Greece and Cyprus, treated the victims as part of a specific church community to which it belongs, not as a symbol of a global cause. It described the attack as "terrorist" without giving the ISIS narrative any significant presence (1%). Despite the religious bond, this makes Greek the closest to reading the event in its local context.

5.1.5 Russian: A Gap Between the Official Position and the Public

Russian engagement was very limited (868 results), and the posts actually related to the attack were entirely descriptive: "attack," "killed," "injuries," "church," relying mostly on relaying news and the Russian Foreign Ministry's statement. The ISIS narrative appeared in only about ten posts, even though some Russian media attributed responsibility for the attack to the group in the first hours, while other sources denied that any claim had been issued. This reveals a gap between the event's presence in Russian media and official discourse and its near-total absence from the digital engagement of Russian-speaking audiences, and suggests that the global spread of the ISIS narrative did not pass through the Russian space but through the English one.

5.1.6 Turkish: Between the News Headline and Conspiracy Discourse

The most prominent words in Turkish engagement form what is almost a complete news headline: "Armed attack on a church in Jordan: dead and wounded," reflecting a large reliance on verbatim relaying of what agencies and news channels such as CNN TÜRK published. Reading the most-engaged posts, however, reveals a different picture. They were led by a post accusing "Israeli terrorists" of carrying out the attack and speaking of "Mossad activity," and by posts repeating that "ISIS attacks everyone except Israel." Alongside them, an Islamic discourse denying any link between the attack and Islam emerged, voiced by academics, preachers, and a statement by Hizb ut-Tahrir. The narrative of ISIS claiming the attack was absent from Turkish engagement, and the organization appeared only within the conspiracy discourse, as a tool in Israel's hands rather than an independent actor. The Turkish space was not concerned with the question "Who carried out the attack?" but with "Who is behind it?", and answered it through another conflict unrelated to Hmoud. It then quickly withdrew from the event, with engagement on 26 October falling to about 7% of its rate in previous days.

5.1.7 German: From "Unknown Assailants" to the Question of Christian Persecution

German engagement began with news coverage, led by WELT's account with the headline "Unknown assailants open fire," reflecting early coverage before the perpetrators' identity was revealed. That same headline became contested, as accounts replied by rewriting it as "Muslims open fire," the same pattern seen in the English space around ABC's headline. The presence of the word "Jews" among the most prominent terms is explained by the spread of a comment by the editor-in-chief of the WELT group linking the attack to a broader discourse: "After hatred of Jews comes hatred of Christians," alongside posts by conservative journalists describing Christianity as "the most persecuted religion in the world." By contrast, a calm church voice was present, through Pope Leo XIV's prayer for the victims and katholisch.de's relaying of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem's position, along with limited posts on Muslim-Christian solidarity. The narrative of ISIS claiming the attack was absent from German engagement, because the event was placed from the outset within a domestic German debate about antisemitism and religious minorities. Engagement then receded on 26 October to about 6% of its previous rate.

5.1.8 Summary: An Incomplete Narrative

The comparison shows that the narrative linking the attack to ISIS did not spread evenly. It was concentrated in the English space, remained marginal in the Arabic space, which held on to its national frame, and was surpassed in the Spanish space by a broader frame: "Islamism." The data shows that official information, whatever its content, reaches easily the space that shares its frame, reaches with difficulty the space that built its picture on an earlier narrative, and never reaches the space whose picture was not built on information at all, but on a preconception about the perpetrator.

This finding gains additional importance because the official narrative itself did not settle during the monitoring period: within one day, it moved from a statement that there were no external links to an announcement that the perpetrators were linked to organizations in southern Syria. With the Jordanian airstrikes in Daraa on the evening of 26 October, the event moved from the question "Who did this?" to the question "How will Jordan respond?"

5.2 Geographic Distribution of Engagement

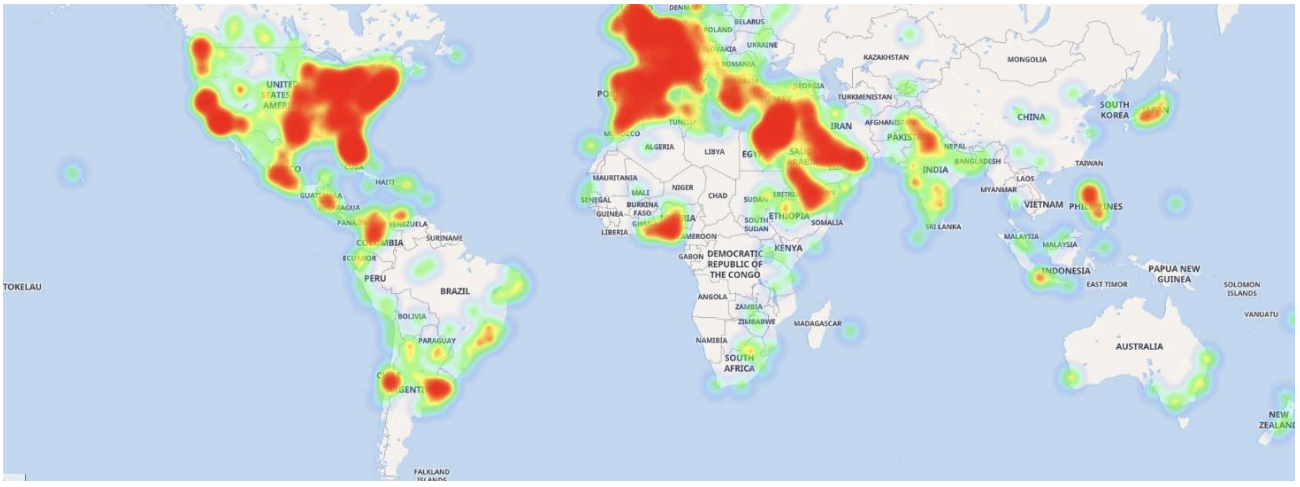


Figure (7): Geographic spread of digital engagement with the Hmoud attack[10]

The geographic distribution of engagement reveals three main hotspots. The first is Arab: Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Qatar. The second is Western, led by the United States, then Western Europe and the United Kingdom, the hotspot that embraced the "Muslims killing Christians" frame.

Notably, hotspots appeared in Nigeria, the Philippines, and India, countries with large Christian communities where a "persecution of Christians" discourse is strongly present, suggesting that the event traveled through transnational religious networks rather than through interest in Jordan itself. The most striking figure remains that accounts locating themselves in Israel produced about 6,200 results in Spanish, compared with only about 310 results in Hebrew. In other words, discourse from Israel about the event was aimed at an external audience more than a domestic one.

[7] Source: the digital listening tool used by the Politics and Society Institute.

[8] Source: prepared by the researcher based on data from the Institute's digital listening tool.

[9] Source: prepared by the researcher based on data from the Institute's digital listening tool.

[10] Source: the digital listening tool used by the Politics and Society Institute.

6. Most Engaged Content

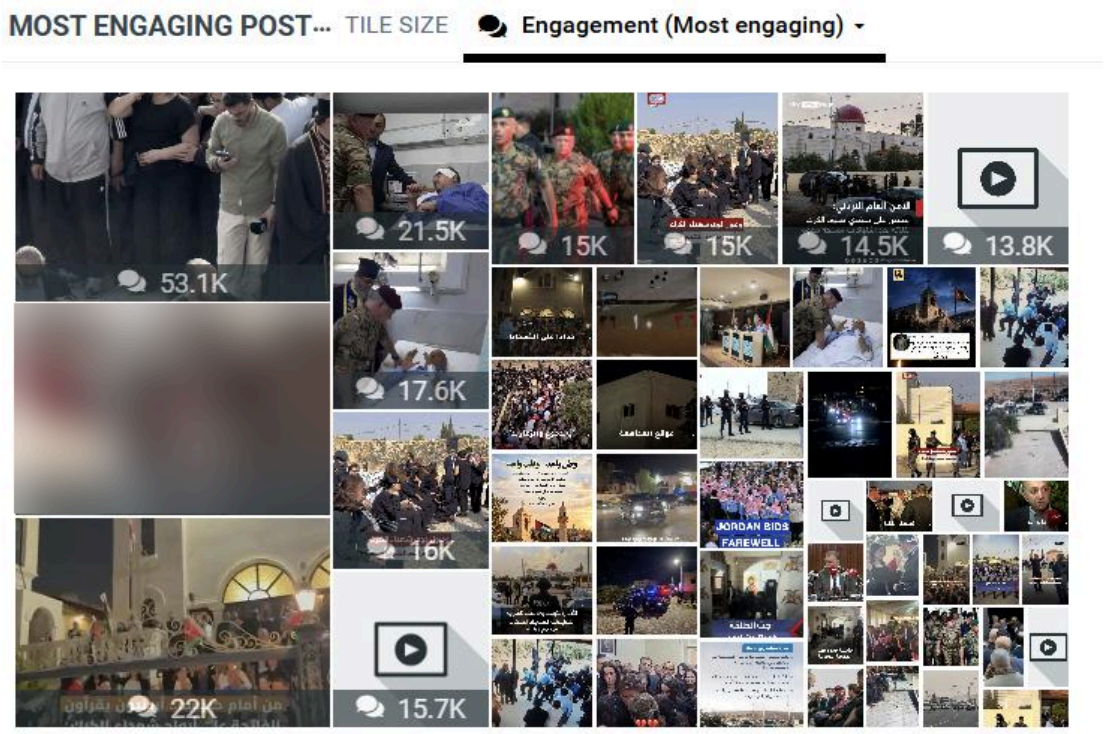


Figure (8): Most engaged images and videos in engagement with the Hmoud attack (one graphic image has been blurred)

The most-engaged images and videos show that the public engaged heavily with what followed the event. The funeral of the martyrs led the most-engaged content with about 53,000 interactions, followed by scenes of al-Fatiha being recited in front of the church, prayer services for the victims, and the phrase "Jordan bids farewell to its martyrs." Digitally, the event shifted from a crime to collective mourning, and from a scene of violence to a scene of solidarity in which Muslims and Christians shared the same farewell.

The King's presence came second, through images of his visit to the wounded at Karak Government Hospital and his arrival in military uniform, with engagement ranging between 15,000 and 21,500 per post. The military uniform gives these images a dual meaning: consoling the victims on the one hand, and affirming the presence of the state and its ability to respond on the other, as the King expressed in the widely shared phrase "rah nwarjeehom" ("we will show them"). Scenes of security deployment and the arrest of the perpetrators came third, with lower engagement.

This ranking suggests that the Jordanian public built its narrative of the event on three successive images: grief (the funeral), embrace (the King with the wounded), and retribution (the arrest of the perpetrators). These images are consistent with the national frame that dominated Arabic engagement, in which the victims appeared as "martyrs of the nation" mourned by all Jordanians, and the state was present in grief before it was present in response.

Discussion and Conclusion

First: Who Owns the Martyrs? Four Narratives for the Victims of One Village

Following the monitoring of engagement across languages, it becomes clear that the disagreement was not about the details of the event, but about the identity of the victims themselves: who they were, why they were killed, who is responsible, and what should happen next. These are the four functions of framing according to Robert Entman (Entman, 1993): defining the problem, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. Applying them to the results of media monitoring and digital engagement reveals four frames, each offering a different answer to these questions.

Four narratives for the victims of one village: engagement frames around the Hmoud attack according to the four functions of framing

Attack on St. George's Church, Hmoud, Karak, 23 to 26 October 2026

	Jordanian national frame The victim as citizen	Church frame The victim as part of a community	"Muslims killing Christians" frame The victim as evidence	Conspiracy frame The absent victim
Where it appeared	Arabic, and Jordanian media in English	Greek, and church media	English, Spanish, French, and German	Turkish, and some Spanish and English accounts
Who the victims are Defining the problem	"Martyrs of the nation," by name and profession	"Martyrs of the faith" of the Greek Orthodox Church	Nameless "Christians"	*Absent*
Who is responsible Diagnosing causes	"Treachery" and "terrorism" outside religion and custom	Unspecified "terrorism"	"Islam" and "Islamism"	Israel and the Mossad
Moral judgment	An attempt to divide national ranks	An assault on the sacred	Proof of the danger of Islam and of media hypocrisy	Proof that ISIS is an Israeli tool
Suggested remedy	**Retribution and national unity**	**Prayer and protection of Christians**	**"Ban Islam" and international protection for Christians**	**No remedy, only exposing the "real perpetrator"**

The four functions of framing: according to Robert Entman (1993), every frame defines a problem, diagnoses its causes, makes a moral judgment about it, and suggests a remedy.

Reading the table: moving from left to right, each frame moves further away from Hmoud and its victims, and closer to other conflicts unrelated to the event.

Source: qualitative analysis of the most-engaged posts in each language, digital listening tool, 23 to 26 October 2026. Politics and Society Institute.

Figure (9): Engagement frames around the Hmoud attack according to the four functions of framing[11]

The Jordanian national frame: the victim as citizen and martyr. This frame presents the victims through their names, professions, and relationships: Dr. Khaled Al-Halsa, "the doctor of the poor"; the young doctor Fadi Al-Halsa, for whom a memorial was held in Alexandria, where he studied; and university professor Asem Barqan, who was mourned by his students. Jordanian media created this frame and carried it to the public, in engagement where content from media outlets exceeded 30% of the total, and where Jordanian outlets led the most-engaged Arabic content. The most-engaged images show how the public adopted this frame in three successive stages: grief first (the funeral), then embrace (the King with the wounded), then retribution (the arrest of the perpetrators). The word "treachery" moved from the King's post into the list of the most prominent words in Arabic engagement, an indicator that the official frame reached the public.

But this frame also has its limits. When the victims are presented as "martyrs of the nation before being Christians," the dimension that made this attack exceptional recedes into the background: that it was, according to the Apostolic Nuncio in Jordan, "the very first time in the country's entire history that an attack has specifically targeted a Christian community."[12] The national frame protects the social fabric from division, but it may weaken recognition that the perpetrators chose their victims on a religious basis. This is a tension the analysis does not resolve, but it is worth recording.

The church frame: the victim as part of a community. This frame, particularly in Greek, presents the victims as "new martyrs" belonging to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. It is the only frame outside Arabic that named the church, and treated Hmoud as a specific place rather than an abstract symbol. Through it, a thread of solidarity emerged among the Christians of the Levant, from the parish priest of the Holy Family Church in Gaza to the bells of the churches of Ramallah. Among some Greek accounts, however, it slid into a discourse hostile to Turkey and to Muslim migrants, and the event was invoked to serve domestic Greek issues.

Second: Israel at the Center of Two Opposing Frames

Despite the apparent contradiction between the last two frames, both revolve around the same center: Israel. The "Muslims killing Christians" frame explicitly compares the event to antisemitism ("If the victims were Jews, the world would care," and "After hatred of Jews comes hatred of Christians"), and the conspiracy frame makes Israel the hidden actor. This gains additional significance when comparing the volume of engagement: accounts locating themselves in Israel produced about 6,200 results in Spanish, about 38% of Spanish engagement, compared with only about 310 results in Hebrew. Discourse from Israel about the event was aimed at an external audience, particularly in Latin America, more than at a domestic one. An attack in a Jordanian village, on a Jordanian church, by Jordanian perpetrators, thus became, in a large part of global engagement, a new chapter in a conflict over Israel, a conflict that has nothing to do with Hmoud.

Third: The First Impression and the Limits of Official Information

The engagement timeline shows that the highest peak was tied to the moment of shock, when official information was at its lowest, and that each later wave was smaller than the one before it even though it carried clearer information. About one third of all engagement was concentrated in the first ten hours, and the arrest wave did not exceed a quarter of that peak. In those same hours, a claim that ISIS had claimed the attack spread without a verified source, and casualty figures varied between 6 and 9 killed and between 28 and 40 wounded, giving ideologically driven accounts room to choose what suited their narrative.

When official statements were issued, they did not reach everyone to the same extent. 126 posts in Arabic relayed the Interior Minister's statement on the morning of 26 October, compared with only 53 posts in English, the language that carried about 71% of the posts linking the attack to the group,

and only two posts in Spanish. Spanish, Turkish, and German engagement fell after the arrest to less than 10% of its previous rate. These spaces left the event still carrying their first narratives. This is what the misinformation literature calls the "continued influence effect": the first information persists even after it has been revised (Lewandowsky et al., 2012), and spreads faster than its revision (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

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[11] Source: prepared by the researcher based on data from the Institute's digital listening tool.

[12] Aquilino, G. (2026, 26 October). Giordania, l'attentato a San Giorgio a Hammoud. Dal Toso: lo shock unisce la comunità. *Vatican News*. https://www.vaticannews.va/it/chiesa/news/2026-10/funerali-giordania-attentato-chiesa-greca-ortodossa-nunzio.html