Humanitarian overview

Azraq
According to UNHCR, the active camp population of Azraq camp stands at 35,356 Syrian refugees as of 16 January, with more than 21,700 refugees arrived from the berm from 8 March to 8 November, of whom 11,763 are in Village 5 (V- 5), and 4,373 in Village 2 (V- 2). There are no more refugees in the fenced part of V-2. Following the attack on a Jordanian Border Guard Forces post near Rukban on 21 June there have been no new admissions from the borders, which were declared closed military areas by the Government of Jordan (GoJ).

INGOs remain concerned about the freedom of movement and equitable and unhindered access to services for all Syrian refugees in Azraq camp. 11,763 refugees are still living in the fenced-off V-5. The screening of refugees from fenced to unfenced areas has increased since late September with the screening committee currently meeting three times a week, but remains slower than pre-June. Between October and December, 3,208 individuals have been relocated from fenced to unfenced parts of the camp. However, at the current rate it will still take over a year to screen all refugees currently residing in V-5.

Berm
Since the resumption of assistance at the berm on 22 November, 46,528 individuals have been assisted in Rukban and in Hadalat. A rapid basic needs assessment conducted by World Vision International in October confirmed that safety and access to aid were the two main drivers for Syrians to come to Rukban. The 516 structured interviews and 16 key informant interviews revealed that food, shelter/NFIs, health care, and access to water, sanitation and hygiene were the areas identified as requiring immediate assistance. Food insecurity was considered widespread, with 94% of households stating they could not meet their food needs and 99.4% of interviewed households citing hunger as one of the top three problems for children. Several INGOs are ready to scale up interventions at the berm if allowed by the Jordanian authorities and if unimpeded access to the Syrian asylum seekers can be assured.
Partners’ activities

JIF’s continuing support to Iraqi refugees
As of 15 early January, 61,204 Iraqi refugees were registered with UNHCR. JIF members continue to provide humanitarian assistance to those most in need.

The Lutheran World Federation is providing unconditional cash grants for Iraqi refugees living in Amman funded through the German National Committee of the LWF. Cash distributions to 80 households were conducted from October to December whereby each household received 2 installments per month allowing them to feel some financial relief and plan ahead for the winter months. Iraqis reported that they often feel that they do not receive the same assistance from NGOs as other refugees in Jordan.

Collateral Repair Project is distributing NFIs, both on an individual as-needed basis and in regular distributions (particularly personal hygiene supplies), food vouchers, and winterization materials (heaters, heating fuel, blankets, etc.). In addition, it offers a wealth of scheduled activities at its community center. These range from English and computer classes, to children’s activities (after school programs, girl scouts, skateboarding for teens), and psycho-social activities. It also promotes health and fitness and training on women’s leadership, communication skills, awareness raising and prevention of family violence targeting men, women and teens. These activities take place at CRP’s community center in Hashemi Shamali and reach 500-1,000 families/month for emergency assistance from surrounding neighborhoods such as Marqa and Mahatta. Overall, between 1,500-1,800 Iraqis attend activities through Collateral Repair Project’s community center.

Through CARE’s Urban Refugees Protection Program over the past 3 months, 74 Iraqi households were engaged in case management to assess their needs and link with community resources. In addition, 297 Iraqi individuals received information on available services and community resources through information sessions in CARE community centers and through leaflets, and 255 Iraqi individuals engaged in psycho-social activities in CARE’s safe spaces.

International Medical Corps Story
Randa is a 42-year-old Iraqi female, who currently lives with her husband and 5 children in Jordan.

During the initial assessment conducted by IMC in Zarqa, staff were informed that Randa couldn’t sleep and had difficulties carrying out her usual domestic activities, had crying spells. Her relationship with her family members also deteriorated, which led her to consider committing suicide. IMC’s mental health team set a safety plan and an urgent appointment with the IMC psychiatrist was arranged.

Randa joined the psychotherapy sessions in April 2016. Through the psychotherapy sessions she was introduced to cognitive behavioral techniques used during her treatment, learned helpful ways to think about depression and learned how thoughts influence our feelings. Through eight psychotherapy sessions, she showed improvements in the concerned areas; she started to strengthen her relationship with her husband and children, her mood improved, she felt energetic and was able to perform her daily life activities normally. Rana will remain under the IMC mental health team’s supervision to monitor her improvement and stability.

Syrian refugees’ precarious life in Informal Tented Settlements
Several JIF members have been providing assistance to Syrian refugees living in informal settlements under very dire circumstances in Irbid, Amman, Madaba, Karak, Mafraq and Ma’an since 2014. Interventions have varied from winterization assistance (cash and in-kind distributions, particularly during harsh weather emergency response) to non-winterization cash assistance, basic psychosocial support, polio vaccination campaigns, mobile healthcare, informal education, child protection, basic life skills, shelter and wash. Three INGOs are present in 91 informal settlements reaching over 9,000 individuals. At the end of 20,000, 2015 people were estimated to live in almost 400 such settlements.
Several factors have influenced Syrian refugees’ decision to move to these settlements, including the high cost of rent of conventional housing in host communities, a reluctance to live in official camps and/or a wish to continue with a semi-nomadic way of living which they had in Syria prior to the conflict. Endemic throughout the settlements is poor to no access to basic services such as water, sanitation and/or health; this comes mainly as a consequence of the geographic remoteness of settlements, a lack of resident documentation, a fear of being targeted by the police, and a fear of discrimination when interacting with host community residents. In addition to the above, child labour and exploitation are among the main concerns expressed by Syrian refugees who live in settlements. Uncertainty about funding is currently undermining INGOs’ ability to plan interventions in the settlements for 2017.

INGOs geared up to provide winterization support

Between October and December, eight JIF members cumulatively assisted over 65,300 Syrian refugees with in-kind winterization package (heater, bottle, gaz refill and blankets) in and out of camps, and 3,575 vulnerable Syrian refugees with cash for rent in urban areas.

In addition, INTERSOS is targeting approximately 1,800 households (around 12,000 individuals) with unconditional cash for winterization assistance in Irbid, Amman, Madaba, Karak and Ma’an Governorates. Assistance is delivered based on the winterization task force standards, complemented with more protection related tools. In specific cases – extremely vulnerable cases and emergency situations – INTERSOS can deliver winterization assistance through in-kind distributions. In order to respond to harsh weather conditions, INTERSOS has established emergency response teams, which can rapidly distribute emergency kits (plastic sheets, blankets and mattresses) to 640 households in Irbid, Amman, Madaba, Karak and Ma’an.

The need for increased economic empowerment of refugees

CARE conducted an impact evaluation of its urban protection response program, identifying the strength and weaknesses of the program and building on lessons learned to inform CARE’s future programming and strategy. The evaluation, which considered relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact of the programme, recommended to:

- Develop new and creative cash modalities to support resilience (e.g., conditional cash and cash for livelihoods, shelter and recurrent cash flow providing steady income) and work on providing refugees with better transparency as to the distribution of cash assistance, criteria used, and the needs assessment process.

- Operationalize a holistic approach to sustainable livelihoods with better planning for winterization, cash and NFIs and continued support for home-based projects through tailored coaching, opening up of new markets, ensuring better employment and job placement, facilitating work permits, managing joint Syrian-Jordanian projects.

- Strengthen community hubs by developing people’s agency and ownership; intensifying outreach, psychosocial support and follow-up mechanisms; empowering the community to utilize its resources to benefit others and provide synergy with CARE’s projects on women and youth; initiating advocacy campaigns on health and education; and strengthening community hubs to integrate more service delivery and become a one-stop shop for community needs.

- Institutionalize support systems at community centers for Jordanian female beneficiaries.

Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI) has been implementing cash interventions targeting vulnerable refugees and host communities in urban settings in Jordan since 2014. PUI has been using an exchange company as financial service provider. The payment process is very swift, 85% of beneficiaries withdraw cash within five days and PUI received very good feedbacks from the beneficiaries. In the last 6 months, PUI has assisted more than 2,000 individuals with regular cash assistance, 2,200 persons with emergency cash support and 2,500 with winterization cash in Amman, Zarqa, Balqa and Madaba governorates. These types of interventions have shown concrete impacts; nevertheless, recent studies and PUI’s primary data show that debt levels of Syrian refugees are increasing. Even with cash safety nets in place, needs outstrip the assistance. Thus, cash transfers should be used in tandem with livelihoods support for displaced and affected host populations in order to support economic self-reliance.
LEADERS – Local Economic Empowerment and Development to Enhance Resilience and Social Stability

The LEADERS Consortium operating in Jordan is made up of five organisations - Danish Refugee Council (Consortium Lead), Save the Children, CARE, ACTED and Oxfam – and is dedicated to supporting people in refugee hosting communities to develop locally-owned solutions to the economic and social challenges that they face. It is supported by the European Union’s Madad Trust Fund. Since the inception of the programme in October 2016, the LEADERS Consortium has been building relations with local stakeholders and putting in place agreements to facilitate the roll-out of the project. The pillars and achievements to date include:

- Targeted skills training and facilitating job placements for vulnerable host communities and Syrian refugees, particularly youth and women, with the aim to improve access to sustainable income and reduce unemployment among vulnerable groups. Over 250 recent graduates have been identified and linked to job opportunities, matching their skills and market demand. Additionally, research has begun into skills gaps and labor market demands, in order to develop appropriate and targeted vocational curriculum.

- Support to micro, small and medium enterprises to innovate and scale-up market potential by improving their business development services, including through financial and technical inputs and market access. LEADERS is currently carrying out a needs assessment to develop comprehensive trainings and business development services.

- In the municipalities of Zarqa, Irbid and Ma'afaq, over 31 working group meetings and two dialogue tables have been held with municipalities, local authorities, refugees, women and youth groups, private sector and civil society to identify blockages to economic development in order to design appropriate community improvement plans that stimulates local economies, attracts greater investment and provides short-term work opportunities for the most vulnerable community members.

Advocacy

16 days of activism against gender-based violence celebrated by INGOs

Under the patronage of H.E. the EU Ambassador to Jordan, Mr. Andrea Matteo Fontana, CARE International organized an event on 27 November in Amman that included testimonies from 16 Jordanian and Syrian women; 6 each from the various governorates, and an additional 6 women from Azraq Camp. The women talked each about their lives, their projects and how CARE supported them in starting their home based business, and expanding their existing projects. A panel discussion including representatives from the Ministries of Labor and Social Development, the private sector, Sadaqa Campaign, the ILO Syria Response Department, and a women entrepreneur focused on the barriers to women’s economic empowerment in Jordan.

Several policy recommendations were made to address those barriers, including the need to have equal pay for equal jobs, flexible working conditions for women, presence of day care centers, and having an efficient transportation system. The event concluded with an exhibition “bazaar” of women participants in vocational training programs organized by CARE and partner civil society organizations.

The International Rescue Committee’s (IRC) Women’s Protection and Empowerment program held an open day in collaboration with the Arab Women Organization (AWO) on 29 November. Men and women from Irbid’s local community attended the event which included a theatre play, film, success stories and an introduction to IRC and AWO’s services. A series of awareness activities were also conducted in Irbid, Ma’afaq and Ramtha on different topics including early marriage, legal awareness, reproductive rights, and right to education. During the campaign the team aimed to reach around 1,000 persons from the local communities.
Following the “Learning for All” campaign, in which the Norwegian Refugee Council participated in August with the aim to encourage children to go back to schools in camps, NRC Education team took further steps to provide additional support for children by organising the “Walk to School” activity in both Zaatari and Azraq Camps. By assigning volunteers to accompany children on their way to school and back, this activity aimed to provide safety for the children on the way resulting in less violence and bullying and avoiding any other risks they might face on the road. The activity was based on feedback from and consultations with the camp communities and individual parents. Since the start of the school year in September 2016, “The Walk to School” has engaged some 75 NRC Incentive based volunteers in Zaatari and Azraq who have been accompanying children every day. On average, over 4,600 children have been engaging in the activity on a weekly basis, 60% of those being school-aged girls. Through the Walk to School campaign, children accompanied by adults are able to attend school regularly, feeling safe and comfortable without a risk of gender-based violence, bullying, road accidents, and always sure to be at school on time. Recreational activities and “Better Learning Programme” exercises have been integrated in the process to improve emotional well-being and to prepare children for their daily educational activities.

Red Cross Humanitarian Forum
JIF took part in a panel discussion organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Jordan Red Crescent Society on the topic of ‘Assisting victims of wars and conflicts– Humanitarian options’. Humanitarian Forums are part of an integrated effort by the ICRC and its partners in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement toward a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation during wars and conflicts, as well as to highlight how humanitarian practices alleviate their impact.

JIF publications
During the last quarter, JIF published a visual product on the process and obstacles when applying for a work permit and a brief on shrinking access to services for Syrian refugees.