

Jordan

February 2021

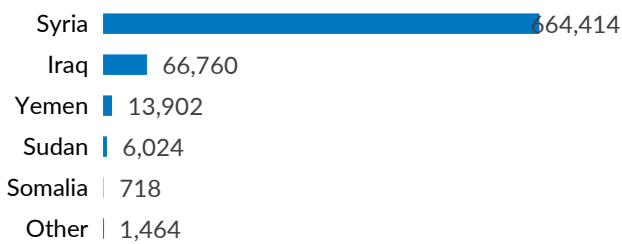
Jordan is one of the countries most affected by the Syria crisis, hosting the second highest share of refugees per capita globally. In 2020 and so far in 2021, the country has been **severely impacted by COVID-19**.

The Government of Jordan has taken strict measures to prevent the spread of the virus and has, since the onset, included refugees in the **National Health Response Plan** and **COVID-19 vaccination programme**.

Adapting to the needs and challenges presented by COVID-19, UNHCR has **shifted most of its services to remote modalities**, to continue providing much needed support and assistance to refugees.

POPULATION OF CONCERN (AS OF 30 FEBRUARY 2021)

Countries of Origin



753,282 Refugees in Jordan

57 refugee nationalities

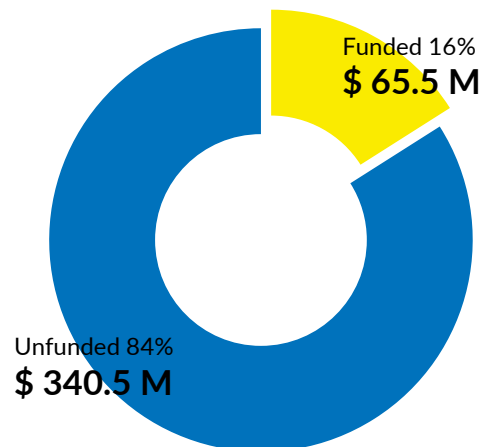
83% living in urban areas

17% refugees live in three camps: **Zaatari, Azraq, Emirati Jordanian Camp**

FUNDING (AS OF 2 MARCH)

USD 405 M

UNHCR Jordan's financial requirements in 2021



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff: 502

425 National Staff

77 International Staff

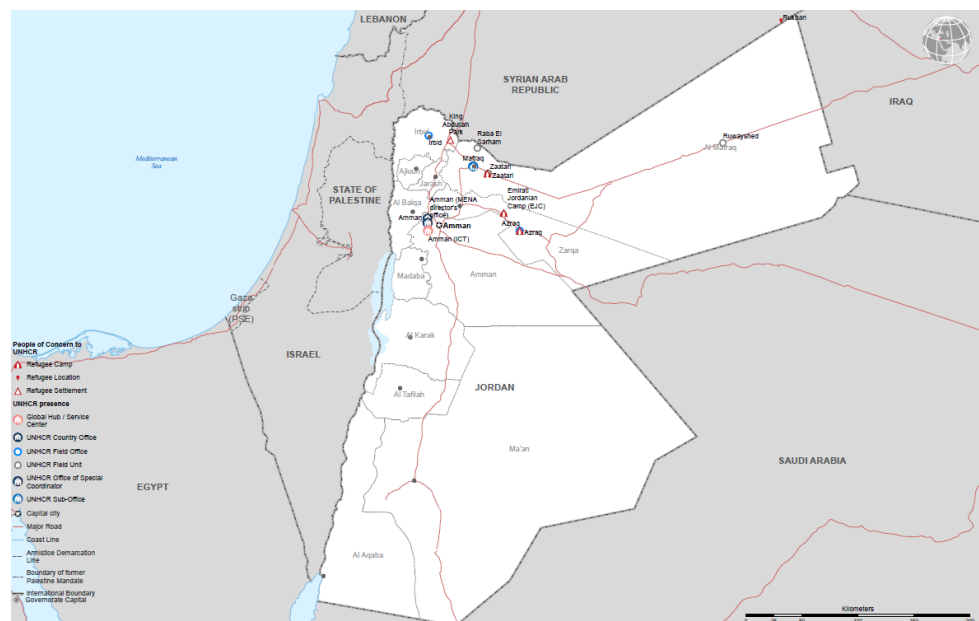
Offices:

1 Branch Office in Amman

2 Field Offices in Irbid and Azraq

1 Sub Office in Mafrqa (also covering Zaatari camp)

3 Urban Registration centres in Amman, Irbid and Mafrqa



Working with Partners

UNHCR coordinates the refugee response under the leadership of the Government of Jordan, in a collaborative effort amongst the donor community, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, refugees and host communities. In June 2020, the Government of Jordan endorsed the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) 2020-2022, totalling \$6.6 billion. The JRP aligns all sectors with SDGs and areas in need of support as per the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). UNHCR exercises its leadership and coordination responsibility in Jordan's refugee response in line with the Refugee Coordination Model, which is applied and manifested in the Inter Sector Working Group, chaired by UNHCR. Currently eight sectors provide support within the Jordan refugee response. UNHCR co-chairs several sector working and sub-working groups, namely the Basic Needs Working Group with IOM, the Health Working Group with WHO, the Protection Working Group with JOHUD (as well as the associated Child Protection sub-Working Group with UNICEF and the Sexual and Gender Based Violence sub-Working Group with UNFPA), the Shelter Working Group with NRC, and the Livelihoods Working Group with Mercy Corps. UNHCR also chairs the Durable Solutions cross-sectoral Working Group, and co-chairs the Sector Gender Focal Points Network with UNFPA. These working groups provide information, advice and advocacy to high-level decision-making bodies in Jordan. UNHCR supports the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) – the Government agency in charge of the management and coordination of Zaatari and Azraq camps – to ensure that assistance is provided in the most effective and efficient way possible in accordance with international humanitarian standards and protection principles.

Main Activities

Protection

UNHCR Jordan, together with partners, have adopted and continue to advocate for the “One Refugee” approach for all persons of concern, Syrian and non-Syrian alike, in all sectors and services in Jordan. This approach seeks to reduce and ultimately eliminate differences in rights and services based on nationality, in Government, UNHCR, and NGO approaches to protection and assistance. The approach has been particularly successful in the area of community-based protection, where Jordanian nationals and refugees of different nationalities and religions participate in activities together, promoting social cohesion between refugees and host communities, as well as within refugee populations. In other areas, such as livelihoods and access to the labour market, as well as access to asylum, the approach needs to be strengthened, as existing mechanisms and resources are far greater for Syrian refugees, compared to other nationalities.

UNHCR Jordan was among the first UNHCR operations worldwide to introduce iris-scanning biometrics technology as an integrated systematic part of its **refugee registration** in 2013. It was also among the first three operations worldwide to move from using biometrics only for registration, to using it for identity management: service providers and partners are able to ‘validate’ or authenticate identities of refugees registered with UNHCR, allowing them to access daily services (cash withdrawals, buying groceries at the supermarket, and more) simply by scanning their iris. As of March 2020, in-person registration activities have been paused to prevent the spread of COVID-19. UNHCR has instead introduced **innovative remote modalities** to continue registration activities, such as the use of a One-Time-Password (OTP) integrity safeguard for verification purposes, to prevent fraud and ensure refugee data is kept in a secure manner. These modalities allow UNHCR to continue conducting interviews for registration and refugee status determination over the phone and notify refugees when their renewed documentation is available for collection.

While UNHCR has been successful in the shift to remote renewals of ASCs, with a total of 199,218 individuals (51,186 families) renewing their Asylum Seeker Certificates (ASCs) across Jordan through the year, remote processing is more time-consuming, and as a result, by the end of 2020, it was anticipated that 400,000 PoCs would be in possession of expired documentation. In light of this challenge, the [decision](#) announced by Government of Jordan to consider ASCs issued by UNHCR to refugees in Jordan, valid until 30 June 2021, regardless of the expiry date, is very welcome as it allows refugees to maintain the documentation needed to remain in Jordan and access the different services.

Together with partners, UNHCR continues to provide **counselling and support** to persons of concern on issues relating to legal services, psychosocial support, mental health, child protection, and more. On SGBV issues, UNHCR provides direct psychosocial support to survivors, complemented with emergency cash assistance and partnerships with local NGOs who provide specialized support to survivors in safe spaces across Jordan. Survivors are referred to health, legal, safe shelter options and other services. UNHCR also implements prevention activities such as women empowerment workshops, self-defence classes led by refugee women and various awareness activities within communities. With restrictions in place due to COVID-19, counselling and support has continued through remote modalities.

UNHCR's COVID-19 protection response has also focused on a variety of remote refugee **protection hotlines**, including the [Amaali GBV services app](#) and the UNHCR Integrated Voice Recognition Helpline, which has managed over 200,000 monthly calls since March. An additional [Help website](#) was launched to facilitate two-way communication.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

In recent years, the Government of Jordan (GoJ) has taken significant steps in facilitating the **access of Syrian refugees to the Jordanian labour market**, including waiving the fees to obtain a work permit, simplifying the documentation requirements, and allowing the registration and operation of home-based-businesses. As of December 2020, a total of 215,668 work permits have been issued since 2016, of which 38,756 were issued in 2020, mainly in the agriculture and construction sectors.

In order to support refugee access to work, UNHCR and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in coordination with the GoJ, are operating **employment offices** inside the two camps of Zaatari and Azraq. The offices aim to facilitate access to formal work opportunities across Jordan for refugees living in the camps. While the offices have been closed due to COVID-19 for the past several months, they reopened in February 2021 and are once again supporting refugees in accessing the labour market. UNHCR also works on a number of different initiatives to support **economic inclusion** of refugees, including support to livelihoods partners, using UNHCR data to identify Syrian refugees by geographical location, skill, occupation, age and gender.

During the COVID-19 crisis, refugees have been severely impacted by the mobility restrictions and widescale shutdown of the informal labour market, as employment opportunities for all have significantly decreased, especially for women and non-Syrians. Studies from [May 2020](#) show that about one third of Syrians who were employed before COVID-19 have lost their jobs. Additionally, the joint World Bank-UNHCR study published in December 2020 assessing the impact of COVID-19 on poverty, poverty rates in Jordan have increased by 38 percentage points among locals and 18 percent among Syrian refugees. The smaller share of refugees falling into poverty is explained by the fact that many were already living below the poverty line before the crisis (estimated at 78% of refugees in [2019](#)), limiting how more could fall below. However, the report found that cash assistance programmes managed to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, with a recommendation to scale them up in 2021.

UNHCR continues to support a network of 22 **Community Support Committees (CSCs)** across Jordan, jointly run by Jordanian and refugee representatives of different nationalities. CSCs in Jordan provide a novel and community-led approach to respond to the needs of urban refugees, bridging gaps between refugees and Jordanians, and helping

UNHCR to give the right assistance to those who need it most. They regularly offer a range of activities, including activities tailored to women, children, people with disabilities, older persons and the youth. During the COVID-19 crisis, CSCs are mostly operating virtually, with very few in-person activities, while they remain one of UNHCR's key channels of communication with refugee communities.

As part of its Communication with Communities strategy, UNHCR Jordan launched in 2020 the #AskUNHCR series of Facebook live events. Each session lasts on average 30 minutes and aims to tackle a different area of interest to refugees and address questions received live by refugees. The series so far has covered [a variety of issues](#), including UNHCR's cash assistance programme, the Helpline, resettlement, the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Jordan and more. Each session has reached over 100,000 people and generated a lot of interest through comments and questions. The #Ask UNHCR initiative has provided one more avenue for communication with refugee communities and has managed to address a number of key issues and topics of interest to refugees across Jordan.

Basic Needs

UNHCR continues its strategic global shift from the distribution of in-kind relief items to the provision of humanitarian **cash assistance** in form of a cash transfer to cover their most vital and essential needs. Refugees receive cash through iris-scan biometric technology directly through bank ATMs, or through mobile wallets, a modality UNHCR is increasingly pursuing in Jordan. The cash programme in Jordan is the third largest delivered by UNHCR worldwide after Lebanon and Afghanistan. In 2020, UNHCR provided cash assistance to about 33,000 families monthly, including some 3,000 non-Syrian families, targeting the most vulnerable refugees residing outside the camps.

In addition to the regular cash assistance, in 2020 UNHCR also identified and distributed **emergency cash assistance** to over 56,000 vulnerable refugee families considered to have become destitute as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis and are in urgent need of assistance.

Additionally, every year during the winter months, UNHCR distributes winter cash assistance to support families' winter needs, including gas and heating. In November and December of 2020, over 46,000 families, including almost 14,000 non-Syrian families, received winter cash support from UNHCR.

Health

UNHCR is grateful to the Government of Jordan for having included refugees in the **National Health Response Plan** since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since January 2020, UNHCR began scaling up its preparedness plans together with WHO and partners, and under the leadership of the Ministry of Health (MoH). Through 2020, UNHCR strengthened its response, including through preventive and response health measures, as well as enhanced active surveillance in Zaatari and Azraq camps. Primary healthcare centres are functioning with adequate staff and medication. Case identification/ management protocols are in place and training has been undertaken by UNHCR. Quarantine facilities in both Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps have been established for potential case identification. Health screening procedures, including temperature screening for all those entering the camps, are in place, while disinfection of commonly used spaces takes place on a regular basis. Frontline health staff are equipped with the needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), while PPE kits are available for PoCs as well.

The first cases of COVID-19 among the refugee populations in the camps were [confirmed](#) in the beginning of September 2020. As of 8 March 2021, a total of 2,377 refugees have tested positive for COVID-19 in Zaatari, Azraq and EJC camps, of which 2,320 have recovered (97%) and 18 have passed away. Cases among refugees over the past months have remained below the national average, with 2% of the refugee population in camps having tested positive compared to 4% of the total Jordanian population.

In addition to all the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Jordan rolled out its COVID-19 vaccination program in January 2021, according to which, anyone living on Jordanian soil, including refugees and asylum seekers, is entitled to receive the vaccine free of charge. As such, vaccinations of refugees are ongoing, with a total of 404 refugees having received at least the first dose of the vaccine as of 8 March. An in-camp vaccination centre opened in Zaatari to receive residents of the camp, while vaccinations for residents of Azraq and EJC camps are taking place at local health clinics in Zarqa governorate. UNHCR has been supporting MoH with awareness raising among refugee communities about the COVID-19 vaccination programme, as well as with transportation to vaccination centres.

In addition to its COVID-19 response, UNHCR, together with health partners, continues to support **access to primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services** for refugees in the camps and urban areas, through the referral system and the cash-for-health program. UNHCR also continues to advocate for refugee access to healthcare. Since July 2020, all non-Syrian asylum seekers and refugees across Jordan are able to access healthcare at hospitals and medical facilities run by the MoH at the non-insured Jordanian rate, similarly to Syrian refugees, by presenting their UNHCR-issued ASCs.

Education

UNHCR's Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative programme, better known as DAFI, has been implemented in Jordan for several years and is the primary conduit for tertiary education. The DAFI programme enables young refugees to unlock their potential by addressing key barriers to **higher education** and open doors to complete their bachelor's degree in Jordanian universities. Undergraduate refugee students are provided with scholarships that cover tuition fees, study materials, transportation, and other allowances. UNHCR announced a total of 30 new slots granted to refugees in Jordan for the 2020-2021 academic year.

UNHCR has also been supporting refugee and Jordanian students studying at Luminus Technical University College (LTUC). The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) diploma scholarship [program](#) was launched in late 2019, in partnership with LTUC and the Nour Al-Hussein Foundation/ King Hussein Foundation. Focusing on **vocational training** in hybrid mechanics, beauty studies, and fashion design, this program allows refugees to develop skills that align with the needs of the Jordanian labour market and can become a lifeline once they return to their country of origin or if they are resettled to a third country. It is the first time that UNHCR Jordan is supporting both the local population and refugees – of all nationalities – in accessing a higher education diploma.

Since the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, in addition to regular programming, UNHCR Jordan has been supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the provision of **distant online learning** for students, including through the MoE-recognised Kolibri platform. UNHCR is also working closely with educational providers and partners across Jordan in developing the technology and modalities to facilitate [access to e-learning](#) and support refugee and Jordanian students in continuing their studies from home. More information can be found [here](#).

Durable Solutions

In March 2020, UNHCR, together with IOM, suspended all resettlement travels temporarily, due to disruptions and restrictions to international air travel caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With travel restrictions partially lifted in many countries around the world, resettlement departures resumed in June.

In Jordan, UNHCR has been conducting resettlement interviews through [remote modalities](#), by telephone and video, ensuring that integrity and identity verification safeguards are in place. Throughout 2020, a total of 3,663 individuals were submitted for resettlement, and all available slots were utilised. Resettlement departures also decreased significantly, given the limited travel options and the closure of Jordan's airport, with some 1,557 refugees departing Jordan through the year to be resettled to third countries.

In addition to resettlement, UNHCR Jordan has continued to explore opportunities for complementary pathways, including educational programmes, family reunification and labour mobility schemes, available to refugees currently in Jordan. As a result, a number of young refugees received scholarships, such as the [Habesha](#) scholarship or the [Japanese Initiative for the future of Syrian refugees \(JISR\)](#) scholarship, and after receiving legal counselling and needed support from UNHCR, [departed](#) to continue their studies abroad.

Access to Energy

In line with UNHCR's Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy, UNHCR Jordan provides access to clean and renewable energy in refugee camps. In Azraq, the first refugee camp in the world powered by **renewable energy**, a medium and low voltage power network funded by the Saudi Fund for Development connects the IKEA Foundation Solar Plant to refugee shelters, formal and informal businesses, offices and utilities, providing regular access to clean energy and year-round electricity in the camp.

In Zaatari, UNHCR, in partnership with the Government of Jordan, funded by KfW Development Bank, have established the **largest solar power plant** in a refugee camp to cover the electricity needs of the refugees. This renewable energy connects 100% of shelters in the camp via the newly renovated medium and low voltage power network support by the Government of Czech Republic. Refugees, trained by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and now accredited as electricians, were involved in the construction of this solar plant and network, and continue to work on the ongoing maintenance of the whole electrical system. It is worth noting that, during the COVID pandemic, provision of electricity in the camps was increased to 16 hrs/day to allow refugees to benefit from additional remote services, include home education for children.

External / Donors Relations

Special thanks to the major donors of earmarked contributions to UNHCR Jordan in 2021 (over 1 million USD)

European Union (18.1M) | United Kingdom (11.5M) | Japan (4.5M) | Canada (3.7M) | Ireland (1.7M)

Thanks to the major donors of softly earmarked contributions in 2021 (in USD)

Germany (59.2M) | Sweden (5.4M)

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2021 (in USD)

Norway (80M) | Sweden (66.9M) | Netherlands (36.1M) | Denmark (34.6M) | Germany (22.1M) | Switzerland (16.4M) | Private donors Spain (13.3M) | Ireland (12.5M) | Belgium (11.9M)

CONTACTS

Francesco Bert, Senior External Relations Officer

bert@unhcr.org

LINKS

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: [@UNHCRJordan](#)

www.data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees