Humanitarian Overview

The situation in Rukban, at the north-eastern border between Jordan and Syria remains unchanged since the last truck to truck distribution by crane from the UN early January. There has been no new distribution since and no information when the next one might take place. Negotiations are ongoing between the UN, Syrian Government and other stakeholders to access Rukban from Damascus but so far no agreement has been reached.

According to UNHCR, the active camp population of Azraq camp stood at around 35,800 Syrian refugees at the end of February. As of 31 January, UNHCR recorded 9,133 Syrian refugees registered within V-5, an increase of 533 individuals since our last reporting. In January, no refugees were relocated to the unfenced area of Azraq Camp, while partners report the relocation of several hundreds of refugees from Za’atri and host communities to V-5. UNHCR indicated that people being relocated to V5 fall into different categories, mostly linked to alleged criminal activities. It remains unclear whether these are temporary or permanent measures and whether all families forcibly relocated to Azraq V-5 will be transferred to unfenced areas in Azraq or back to Za’atri, or to host communities at some point.

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2. UNHCR (Jan. 2018), Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Portal
4. UNHCR (Feb. 2018) February Fact sheet
Partners activities

Host Communities

INTEROS Jordan organizes a competition for youth initiatives to promote social cohesion

INTEROS in Jordan started the “youth initiative” project between Syrians and Jordanians in host communities, in order to enhance social cohesion and peaceful relations. Organized around a competition, the objective was to encourage youth-led projects around sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, or life skills. In the first phase, Syrian and Jordanian youth promoted the competition in their communities in Greater Amman Municipality. Youngster submitted proposals that were later pre-selected based on their feasibility, their innovative aspect, their link with the community and the ability to serve both Syrians and Jordanians. A youth network of 127 young men and women from all nationality was then created, so that they could become ambassadors of the projects. Youth are also provided with life skills training and child protection awareness session. The first winner was “my melody”, an initiative that reinforces peace in communities by using music. The second winner was “together we stand” which focuses on peer to peer support. The two initiatives were merged together and will organize a concert in Amman in April that will promote music as a universal language, and will be broadcasted on Roaya TV. It will gather Syrian and Jordanian artists who will share their experience and talent with the communities and include a musical piece; a fusion of Jordanian and Syrian music that will be played by children who have been following music class with INTEROS.

Islamic Relief Jordan (IRJ) provides winterization aid to 2,194 vulnerable families

Like every year, IRJ provided vulnerable Syrian refugee and Jordanian families with winterization assistance to improve their overall living conditions during the harsh winter and mitigate the risk of health deterioration. During January and February, IRJ managed to provide winterization items to 2,194 refugee and vulnerable Jordanian families (around 10,970 individuals) in northern Jordan. These included clothes vouchers, blankets, gas heaters, gas cylinders, hygiene vouchers and gas refill vouchers. IRJ also reached refugees living in informal settlements in Mafraq and Amman.

Beside the lack of information shared with refugees, having alleged criminals concentrated in one place amongst a population made up mainly by women, elderly and children (brought from the berm) might have implications for the safety of the population in V-5, result in social tension within V-5 and as well as between former V5 residents and residents of other villages. In addition, INGOs working in Azraq have noted that ex-village 5 and 2 residents do not enjoy the same rights as other camp residents, especially in terms of freedom of movement to leave the camp or obtain work permits.

The situation in the Emirati Jordanian Camp (EJC) which is home to over 7,000 Syrian refugees also warrants further attention. INGO working there note ongoing protection challenges with overcrowded caravans, lack of occupational and recreational activities as well as the rarity of safe spaces in the camp contributing to a prevalence of violence against children and SGBV cases.

Lastly, JIF members have raised concerns vis-à-vis the recent announcement to further reduce health subsidies to Syrian refugees who will now be required to pay the foreigners’ fees with a 20 per cent discount. Assessments largely show that in host communities, the cost of healthcare is one of the most significant impediments for refugees to access such services and acts as an inhibiting factor to access livelihood opportunities. With this new policy and without additional donor support, refugees run the risk of falling deeper in poverty.
CARE International in Jordan – Reflecting on a 70-year long legacy in Jordan

The 70th anniversary of CARE International in Jordan is an opportunity to reflect on CARE’s history and take stock of its lasting achievements. In 1948, CARE provided food and non-food items to Palestine refugees displaced to Jordan. From that time onward, CARE has continued to respond to humanitarian crises, contributing to protecting the most vulnerable and improving their lives, thanks to the dedication and commitment of staff, partners, host and refugee communities. The values of CARE remain its guide: equality, integrity, transformation, excellence, diversity, and respect for the dignity and worth of every human being, where we affirm the dignity, potential, and contribution of all.

Throughout the years, CARE has developed a holistic response model that combines social work components and community-based protection interventions (case management, cash assistance, psychosocial support, and livelihood activities). In parallel, CARE has continued to address the root causes of poverty and inequality in Jordan through economic development support, women’s empowerment and gender equality programming. As the crises became protracted, the needs and vulnerabilities of refugees and vulnerable Jordanians largely converged.

In 2014, CARE merged all activities into one holistic program that focuses on addressing needs and vulnerabilities – irrespective of the nationality of those affected. In the course of this transition, CARE learned a number of important lessons and developed best practice examples for linking relief and development through a Double Nexus. These lessons learnt— as well as recommendations— are documented in a Policy Brief which highlights the transition of the response into resilience programming that supports Syrians and other refugees in a sustainable way while they await durable solutions, and promotes social cohesion.

Finally, to mark the 70th anniversary of its work in Jordan, CARE will organize celebrations in April under the theme of “Delivering Lasting Change” at all CARE’s centers in East Amman, Zarka including Azraq town, Irbid, Mafraq and Azraq Camp.

Alianza por la Solidaridad’s clinics tackle sexual and reproductive health and SGBV in Ajloun

More than 1,600 women have received sexual and reproductive health care in Alianza and its local partner Institute for Family Health’s clinic in Ajloun since 2015. Funded by the Spanish Cooperation, this safe space provides Syrians and Jordanians women quality and personalized sexual and reproductive health care, and is used as an entry point to identify sexual gender based violence (SGBV) cases. Survivor of SGBV are offered psychosocial support (individual or group) as well as legal services. In addition, the clinic serves as a common space where recreational and life skills activities are offered.

The program also includes awareness campaigns on SGBV and child marriage. Within that project, 1,223 women, men, girls and boys participated in support groups last year, along with the clinic staff and more than 20 civil society organizations. Another 1,666 women improved their knowledge in reproductive health and family planning, and 2,355 children and adolescents attended workshops that also addressed the issue of child marriage and conflict resolution.

Finally, taking into account the greater degree of vulnerability of women living in rural and isolated areas, Alianza launched this February a mobile clinic unit with all sexual and reproductive health services.
Focus groups discussions were carried out with children, parents, and the facilitators. Reactions were overwhelmingly positive and the numerous feedback were all aimed at identifying ways to increase the scale of the workshops and the diversity of activities offered. Turquoise Mountain and Mercy Corps are now working on an expansion of this program to other Azraq villages and Zaatari camp.

Camps

Mercy Corps and Turquoise Mountain partner to conduct a cultural heritage-based outreach program in Azraq

In addition to the traumas of war and exile, Syrian refugees have also endured the progressive and brutal destruction of a millenary cultural heritage, a set of tangible constructions and intangible traditions that form the very core of Syrians’ identities. Following a year-long research, Mercy corps and Turquoise Mountain have partnered to harness the potential of cultural heritage to support personal skill developments, inter-community dialogue, and social cohesion.

This program was piloted in Village 2 in December 2017 with 60 children, supported by 10 trained facilitators and involved hands-on workshops and supplementary educational activities. Organized around the theme of the Syrian house, it first provided a platform for parents and children to exchange around Syrian cultural heritage using various props. Then, children were invited to take part in various craft-related activities such as traditional embroidery, mosaic, Islamic geometric pattern drawing, all leading to the construction of the model of a traditional Syrian House, which the children took home to decorate. On the final day of the workshop, an exhibition was organized in the centre and all members of the community were invited. Children would stand in front of the crowd and present their various productions and the story behind them.

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) commits to deliver impartial and accountable humanitarian and developmental assistance to the most vulnerable.

On 24 January, the global network Handicap International changed its name and became Humanity & Inclusion to enhance its core values and mandate. Inclusion should be at the core of any humanitarian intervention as a matter of social justice and a way to promote full participation of all community members. HI places itself as a role model by attracting staff and volunteers from diverse backgrounds (i.e. 30 per cent of HI volunteers are persons with disabilities in Jordan), by using disability disaggregated data across all its monitoring and evaluation system, and by offering an accessible environment within its premises.

In Jordan, HI inclusion unit provides coaching activities which aim at supporting humanitarian actors in bringing comprehensive change in knowledge, attitudes, practices and policies to ensure better inclusion of persons with disabilities. For instance, in February, HI provided a training course to Lutheran World Federation (LWF) team in Zaatari camp on understanding the different disability types, identifying persons with disabilities, improving communication and adapting activities to be more inclusive. This training is part of long-term coaching support to LWF project in Zaatari and will be followed by field support visits, guidance and mentorship. This inclusivity program can be expanded to other NGO partners in Jordan, please contact HI if interested.
Can’t Wait to Learn (CWTL) is an e-learning initiative through tablet-based educational games, using curricula endorsed by the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE). The programme supports children to catch up on core literacy (grades 1-3) and numeracy (grades 1-6) skills in both the formal and informal education contexts. The programme’s progress is analyzed in each phase. In Jordan, War Child is measuring literacy and numeracy learning outcomes, psychosocial effects and overall effectiveness compared to traditional classroom education, through a randomized control trial (RCT) approach across 51 formal schools in Zarqa governorate. War Child is working towards scaling up CWTL across formal schools and informal learning centers throughout Jordan in 2019, targeting vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian out-of-school children. War Child is also working with partners and the MoE to ensure that local actors have the capacity to continue adapting CWTL’s programming code to their changing needs when the game is handed over at the end of the programmes.

Innovation

War Child UK Can’t Wait to Learn program brings innovative, flexible and effective learning opportunities to children

For Syrian refugee women, finding work means also battling with social stigma. Women in Zaatari reported to Oxfam feeling uncomfortable working with men and facing challenges in getting permission from male family members to work alongside other men.

In 2017, Oxfam opened four greenhouses in the camp for women to develop new skills, earn small income and find a safe space to interact with other women. Trained by Oxfam, the 45 women cultivate vegetables which are then sold in the nearby community markets, outside the camp. Because of the procedures placed upon refugees to leave the camp, the sales are done by Oxfam staff, Jordanian women who also challenge social norm. “I can remember when I first entered the central market, all the men were looking at me” recalls Ola, Oxfam livelihood officer in Zaatari camp “They wondered what a woman was doing here, so I explained how we work with Syrian women in Zaatari.” Ola continues “The traders told me ‘this is the first time that a woman comes here and makes a deal with me’. I felt so proud”.

Another project led by Oxfam consists in upcycling the discarded refugee tents of Zaatari, now that the population has moved to durable caravans. Oxfam is running two workshops in the camp, where women are provided training, professional sewing equipment and supplies. All staff is female and the training workshops are designed to be short and flexible to allow women to also combine them with their daily lives. They now produce high quality and sturdy bags out of canvas, that were designed by a Jordanian designer to be marketed internationally. “Our bags are special and different because they are made of tents. They reflect the suffering Syrian refugees endured here in the burning hot summer and in harsh winter” says Fatima who participated in the project. All the profits are redistributed amongst the 200 women who took part in the project.

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The game was custom-built for Jordan and was co-created with Syrian and Jordanian children and the MoE. During co-design sessions, children helped create a game world and game characters that they could relate to. Based on the children’s feedback, War Child worked with local graphic illustrators, songwriters, filmmakers and voiceover specialists to develop an interactive game world contextualized for Syrian and Jordanian children. The MoE provided substantial technical review and feedback to ensure that the game content adheres to the pedagogical framework and encompasses the learning outcomes of the national Jordanian curriculum.

The programme’s progress is analyzed in each phase. In Jordan, War Child is measuring literacy and numeracy learning outcomes, psychosocial effects and overall effectiveness compared to traditional classroom education, through a randomized control trial (RCT) approach across 51 formal schools in Zarqa governorate.

War Child is working towards scaling up CWTL across formal schools and informal learning centers throughout Jordan in 2019, targeting vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian out-of-school children. War Child is also working with partners and the MoE to ensure that local actors have the capacity to continue adapting CWTL’s programming code to their changing needs when the game is handed over at the end of the programmes.
In addition to renting accommodations that would otherwise remain empty, Syrian refugees have contributed over $1 billion in rent since the beginning of the crisis.

The largest refugee population (43 per cent) is located in the urban districts of Irbid and Amman, where the share of Syrian refugees in the rental market is relatively low and has not significantly impacted rental housing demand.

Food prices have not been seriously impacted by the Syrian refugee crisis. According to the IMF, food prices have remained consistent with their historical positive correlation with international food prices.

Did you know?

Food prices have not been seriously impacted by the Syrian refugee crisis. According to the IMF, food prices have remained consistent with their historical positive correlation with international food prices.

In 2018, JIF is launching a new campaign to counter the narrative of the crisis which tends to systematically oppose refugees to host communities. This dehumanizing discourse overshadows the countless acts of solidarity that individuals have initiated towards one another throughout Jordan. As part of this new campaign, JIF INGOs have chosen to highlight these individual stories of trust, friendship and solidarity that they witness so often working along host communities, refugees and minorities in Jordan. Contribute, send your story to JIF.

Lara and Sanaa

By Oxfam

Lara is from Damascus. She arrived in Jordan in 2012 and decided to start her own business in 2014, in Amman. Initially, there were only 5 women, but now Lara buys from 40 other Syrian women to produce clothing, soap, candles, accessories, and embroidery. “I set up this business to break free from the cycle of aid. I want to produce something sustainable for me and other women here. We have all been brought together by war.”

Last year she met Sanaa, a Jordanian woman with a gift for clothing design. “I saw a Facebook page for a Syrian woman who runs a business making products by hand,” said Sanaa. “I reached out to her and I was so impressed by how kind and inspired she is. Then our collaboration started. I do the embroidery and dying and I give them to Lara. After that, the women in her workshop do the sewing in such a professional way.”

Sanaa goes on, “Syrians have the skills, the determination and the willpower to achieve their goals, but they don’t receive enough support. If I ever have the money to establish a business, I will open a sewing factory and employ Syrian women. If we can use their skills to improve our economy, then we will not need to import so many products from other countries.”

Lara concludes “We as Syrians have many talents. We have ideas and innovations. We can use them to support ourselves and support the country we are re in. We are not a burden but useful.” Read more about the story
Collateral Repair Project (CRP): Ruba’s New World of Colour

Ruba is an Iraqi woman refugee at CRP who has felt some of the same psychological and social setbacks that many refugees experience. She fled her home in Iraq for fear that ISIS might hurt her family. While fleeing, her son broke his leg, making the journey extremely difficult. Ruba also left her career teaching fifth grade science to come to Amman, where she cannot work legally.

There are tremendous weights that hang on Ruba’s and other refugees’ shoulders. But CRP staff sees improvement as her and other women participate in psychosocial and trauma-relief programming. Some refugees walk in with heads down and won’t make eye contact, but after some months begin smiling and engaging in all sorts of energetic conversations. Ruba is one of those people. Every Sunday afternoon, she rushes her lunch to attend CRP Women Art Club.

With splatters of colourful paint on her hands and cardigan, she explains “Ms. Sara [CRP art teacher] lets us live in a different world that doesn’t have to do with sadness or envy or fear. Just art and hope”. The Art club helps her to release the negativity she has built up from the previous week and she even carries this new attitude to her home. “When I go home, my family wants to see my artistic side, but instead all they see is the paint all over her shirt” she laughs.

Run by Sara, a Jordanian architect based in Amman and London, the Women Art Club uses art therapy to allow women to heal, and rebuild their lives after trauma they faced in Iraq, Syria, and Sudan. The club has become an informal atmosphere to help each other and work through the pain that they carry. Ruba appreciates all of the smiles and genuine emotional support she receives from everyone at CRP and feels humanly connected to this community. “That’s something we should all be very grateful for” she concludes.

Advocacy

Brussels Conference Preparation

JIF members organize Brussels conference consultations with civil society throughout Jordan

In February, JIF members led a series of consultation with Jordan and Syrian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community based Organizations (BCOs), private sectors representatives and women leadership councils thanks to the support of ACTED, CARE and DRC in Badia, Marfraq, Zarqa, Irbid and Karak. An event was also organized by JIF in Amman with civil society representatives and the EU delegation and UN as the Brussels Conference co-chairs. The objective was to present an overview of civil society’s recommendations that will feed into the consultation process led by the EU. In particular, the recommendations focused on presenting an assessment of the progress or lack thereof made in education, economic reforms and protection, through the Jordan Compact, and highlighting areas for improvement. Civil society noted its readiness to be actors in Jordan’s transformation and highlighted how the creation of legal avenues for self-employment, the improvement of teacher training, investment in youth, and regularisation of Syrian refugees would improve Jordanians and Syrian refugees’ well-being. They also stressed the importance of creating an inclusive monitoring mechanism of the Jordan compact that will allow all stakeholders to critically assess the progress and implementation obstacles of the compact.
Civil Society

ACTED organizes an Advocacy and Civil Society Forum in Amman with Community Based Organisations (CBOs)

The event, organized with the support of the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) and the European Union (EU) last January gathered more than 70 participants, including local, national and international organisations, donors and authorities. Participants discussed how to enhance local actors’ advocacy work and how to improve coordination in order amplify their voice and role. “Donors need to be more aware of the needs on the ground as voiced by local actors,” stated ACTED Country Director, while the manager of Our Step, a local CBO, made a strong statement about the perception of local organisations by international actors – “we are not just a project”. All participants agreed on the need to establish better collaboration and coordination amongst local actors and the necessity to build stronger and more equal partnerships between local/national and international organisations. Building-up on this preliminary consultation, ACTED facilitated a roundtable discussion in February with international stakeholders, to discuss civil society capacity development approaches. The discussion focused on the importance of creating an enabling environment for civil society, access to funds and on capacity development. The consolidated report of the different consultations will be published in March.

Publications

JIF publishes the third edition of its Protection brief

Based on INGOs research, assessments and testimonies, this third edition of the JIF Protection brief highlights the severe consequences of limited legal status for Syrian refugees in Jordan, the specific vulnerabilities that derive from it and the everyday impact of these restrictions. This collective report offers INGO perspectives on key issues such as refugee’s freedom of movement, civil and legal documentation, access to basic services and livelihood, negative coping mechanisms and asylum.

IM Swedish Development Partners’ interview on JIF website: Legislation and women rights in Jordan

Gender Justice and women’s rights issues is one of IM’s main focus areas worldwide, as every day discriminatory cultural, religious and legal practices based on gender stereotypes deny millions of women their human rights. IM has a history of supporting interventions that aim to strengthen people to challenge practices that prevent them from enjoying their human rights. On the occasion of Women’s Day, IM discusses the topic of legislation and women rights in Jordan. Read the interview

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