

UNHCR Jordan COVID-19 response

Country context: cases rising fast in Jordan, now one of the world's hotspots

Since January 2020, the Government of Jordan has taken strict measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This includes refugee camps, which were put under restrictions of movement as of mid-March, with only essential staff given access. By July, most restrictions were lifted, while precaution measures have been enhanced. Since the beginning of the pandemic outbreak, all refugees in Jordan have been included in the National Health Response Plan and are able to access national health services on par with Jordanian nationals. With the increase in cases during September and October, Jordan is now in the phase of community transmission, with a total of 114,986 cases and 1,295 deaths.

Refugee camps: cases below national average, faster rate of recovery recorded

As of 10 November, the total number of persons of concern (PoC) that have tested positive for COVID-19 in Jordan's refugee camps reached 672, of which 503 have recovered. No deaths have been recorded. While the number of PoC cases has increased, it remains lower the national average, with 0.6% of the refugee population in camps having tested positive, compared to 1.1% of the total Jordanian population, while 75% of the total refugee cases in camps have recovered, as compared to 8% of total Jordanian cases. UNHCR is working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate to carry out surveillance and contact tracing exercises in the camps, while confirmed cases are being quarantined either in their own shelters or at isolation sites and transferred to hospital as needed as per the established protocol.

Stay and deliver: UNHCR response and preparedness measures

UNHCR began scaling up its preparedness plans in January 2020, together with WHO and partners and under the leadership of the MoH, and has been strengthening its [response](#) since. Key activities include:

- construction of [quarantine facilities](#) in Azraq and Zaatari
- health screening [procedures](#)
- PPE provision for frontline workers/refugees
- emergency [cash assistance](#) to over 50,000 newly identifies vulnerable families
- support refugee access to [e-learning](#) platforms
- regular [communications](#) via SMS and WhatsApp to refugee populations
- remote protection hotlines and newly launched [Help website](#) platform

In focus: Registration and RSD activities: As of 16 March 2020, in compliance with GoJ regulations, UNHCR closed its Registration Centres in Amman, Mafraq and Irbid. Prior to this, some 5,000 refugees approached the Registration centres daily to register or renew their Asylum Seeker Certificate (ASC). UNHCR Jordan shifted to [remote modalities](#) to continue providing these services and is now conducting registration and refugee status determination (RSD) interviews over the phone, with the aim to protect the health of refugees and UNHCR staff.



A UNHCR staff member helps a refugee who has approached UNHCR Registration Centre in Amman to renew their ASC.

This streamlined process ensures data on persons of concern (POCs) in Jordan is updated in a fraud-proof and secure manner. When receiving a call to schedule their renewal or RSD interview, refugees receive an SMS one-time password to verify the identity of the caller. Registration calls are all routed through the Helpline number, even when made from the office, to further strengthen UNHCR's identity and mitigate fraud. Refugees are also notified by SMS regarding their appointment to collect their renewed ASC from the UNHCR Registration Centres, which have recently partially reopened with strict guidance to respect social distancing and other public health measures. [Read more here.](#)