

JORDAN

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

May 2016¹

KEY FIGURES

1

UNHCR in Jordan was the largest operation globally for submissions to resettlement and similar humanitarian admission programmes in 2015

35

Percentage of Syrian school-aged children out of school in Jordan, with many compelled to work informally

75

Percentage of Syrians who are highly or severely shelter vulnerable

80

Percentage of Syrians using crisis or emergency coping mechanisms

90

Percentage of Syrians living outside of camps below the poverty line

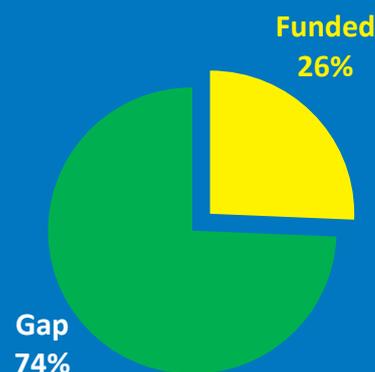
US \$ 27 million

Provided so far in 2016 in cash assistance to Jordan's most vulnerable refugees

FUNDING

US \$ 320 million

requested for the Jordan Operation in 2016



HIGHLIGHTS

- **The first Syrian refugee family to depart from Jordan to the U.S. under the "surge" regional resettlement programme left from Amman's Queen Alia International Airport on 6 April for Kansas City, Missouri.** The family of seven forms part of the almost 15,000 individuals submitted by UNHCR in Jordan to the American authorities by the end of April for fast-tracked resettlement. The U.S. plans to welcome 10,000 Syrians, mostly living in Jordan, by the end of September 2016.
- **UNHCR welcomed another measure by the Government of Jordan in April that should further significantly ease the way for Syrian refugees to find legal employment and towards some form of self-sufficiency.** These measures are currently enabling on average 200 Syrians to regularize their employment status each day. Thousands more are expected to benefit in the coming years.
- **The number of Syrians granted access to Jordanian territory has increased three-fold on last month.** In April, UNHCR received approval from the Jordanian authorities for the construction of a service area from where to better serve the humanitarian needs of an estimated 52,000 individuals (at the end of April) fleeing Syria and gathered at two points (Hadalat and Rukban) on a berm near Jordan's north-east border.



The UNHCR Refugee Registration Centre in Khalda, Amman, from where thousands of Syrians have been submitted for resettlement to the U.S. authorities under the 2016 "surge" regional resettlement programme. @UNHCR/Mohammad Hawari.

¹ Covering the period from 1 – 30 April.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR recently welcomed a series of measures by the Government of Jordan that should significantly ease the way for Syrian refugees to find legal employment and towards some form of self-sufficiency. These are currently enabling on average 200 Syrians to regularize their employment status each day. Thousands more are expected to benefit in the coming years.

The most recent of these new measures, launched in early April, is a 90-day grace-period to allow employers in the informal sector to freely obtain work permits for Syrian refugees, regularizing their employment. This potentially puts Syrian refugees on the same footing as migrant workers who are allowed to work in jobs such as construction, agriculture, the service industry, food and beverages, wholesale and some factories.

The temporary waiver of fees (which range between US\$170 to US\$1,270 depending on the sector) is an important reprieve: many Syrian refugees have been sinking into poverty as the war at home drags on, increasing the risk that they would work illegally. For employers of Syrians, the new grace period also allows them to legalize workers and avoid steep fines of between US\$280 and US\$2,100 which were imposed previously and have seen the closure of some 70 businesses to date.

Since the beginning of March, Jordanian authorities have also allowed Syrian refugees to use UNHCR-issued asylum-seeker certificates and Jordanian Ministry of Interior identity cards to obtain work permits. Previously, the only way to do so was using a passport and proof of legal entry into the country. This was problematic considering that large number of Syrians entered Jordan informally, precluding many from having jobs. Authorities have now removed that requirement, paving the way for thousands more Syrians to be legally employed.

UNHCR has long been advocating for more support to Jordan and other key refugee hosting countries, including better access to development funds and low interest loans. And, a major factor in supporting Jordan's new measures, is the World Bank's commitment to provide Jordan with near zero per cent loans of US\$300-500 million tied to indicators like the granting of work permits to Syrian refugees.

These efforts to increase livelihood opportunities for Syrian refugees follow February's London conference on the Syria crisis. This focused on the dire need to increase access to work and education opportunities for Syrians, including through boosting partnerships with the private sector to allow refugees and local communities to share in economic progress.

As part of efforts to improve access to labour for refugees, a pilot project to help 2,000 Syrians access jobs in the export garment sector was launched in early April with the International Labour Organisation in the framework of its '[Better Work Jordan](#)' programme.

UNHCR believes these various initiatives will go a long way to help Syrian refugees become more sufficient and bring economic benefits to Jordan, which has felt the macro-economic consequences of a region in flux and the heavy cost of fighting in Syria. As the Syrian crisis drags on, there is an urgent need to improve conditions and stability for the increasingly aid-dependent refugees and their hosts.

A total of **710,618** people of concern are registered with UNHCR in Jordan, including **646,329** Syrians, **55,162** Iraqis and **9,127** others including, **4,071** Yemenis, **3,055** Sudanese, and **777** Somalis.

Achievements



Achievements and Impact

- **Strengthening protection at the berm:** UNHCR continued efforts to ensure registration of the population at the berm in order to issue assistance cards and a more orderly and targeted distribution of assistance, despite a challenging security environment and harsh weather conditions. UNHCR is strengthening protection of the most vulnerable cases, including child protection and sexual and gender-based violence cases, through their identification, case management, and prioritization for admission to Jordanian territory. Cases on the weekly prioritized list include unaccompanied children, medical cases, pregnant women, and persons with strong physical protection needs. UNHCR is meeting with refugees through community-based protection mechanisms to better understand those issues at the border that contribute to protection risks, including limitations on access to assistance, potential armed recruitment activities, and trafficking.
- **Increase of the number of admissions:** International advocacy has ensured that the number of new arrivals has increased threefold on previous months with a daily average of 300 individuals being admitted onto Jordanian territory during April. Those admitted are persons of concerns with heightened vulnerability profiles including those with disabilities, health issues, female headed households, infants with malnutrition and vulnerable elderly.
- **UNHCR cash assistance effective in preventing child labour in Irbid:** UNHCR's Field Office Irbid (FOI) conducted follow-up phone interviews with 63 cases of "children at risk" to measure the impact of monthly cash assistance received from UNHCR. The findings showed that in all cases they had stopped recourse to child labour but that in some cases children remain out of school. UNHCR Community Services staff are following up on these cases for referral to UNICEF's Makani centres where an integrated approach is adopted to expand protection, learning and youth engagement opportunities for vulnerable children through informal education initiatives.
- **Family reunification of war wounded UAC Irbid:** On 3 and 7 April, UNHCR successfully facilitated the reunification of three mothers with their war-wounded children who were admitted to a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) facility in Al-Ramtha. The mothers were allowed to enter Jordan exceptionally through a border entry point and were accompanied by UNHCR staff from their time of entry into Jordan.
- **ARDD-Legal Aid starts operating in Azraq camp:** UNHCR's legal partner, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – Legal Aid (ARDD-LA), started operating in Azraq camp in April with a focus on securing documentation, including marriage contracts and birth certificates, free of charge for refugees. ARDD-LA will also provide support to

the Sharia Court that opened in the camp in February.



UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and Academy Award winning actor Cate Blanchett on visit to Zaatari refugee camp at the end of April. During her visit to Jordan the actor met with Syrian refugees to hear first-hand about the perilous journey they had undertaken and the daily challenges they face. ©UNHCR/Jordi Matas

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Achievements and Impact

- **First refugee students graduate from Azraq’s vocational training centre:** The first refugees to pass through Azraq’s vocational training centres celebrated the completion of a two month course in tailoring and beauty care with a fashion show to showcase their work. The centres are located in each of the two UNHCR/CARE International community centres at the camp.



Refugees showcasing their work at a fashion show in Azraq camp in April. © UNHCR/Ayman Bino

- **Bikes for refugees in Azraq:** UNHCR’s partner, CARE International, launched a bike rental scheme at community centres in two areas of Azraq camp in April where refugees can hire bikes and rickshaws free-of-charge - donated by the City of Amsterdam - for the daily use around the camp.
- **Spanish street artist Pejac visits Azraq:** As part of a project supported by the Spanish Embassy in Jordan, Pejac, a well-known Spanish street artist, produced two art pieces in Azraq camp. The artwork is dedicated to the mothers in the camp where three in ten households are headed by women.



A final polio vaccination campaign took place here at Zaatari between 3-7 April targeting all children under five years old. The total number of vaccinated children under five was 16,870, which exceeded the target number of 15,871. ©UNHCR/Mohammad Hawari

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- **UNHCR supporting refugee and host community cohesion:** UNHCR’s 23 Community Support Committees (CSCs) served 6,052 persons across the Kingdom during April, including Syrian, Iraqi and Sudanese refugees, and 1,841 Jordanians. CSCs are UNHCR’s main tool in Community-Based Protection (CBP) in Jordan and significantly contribute to the peaceful coexistence and the social cohesion between refugees and the host communities. Each Committee is comprised of representatives from refugees and host communities. Activities this month covered included food preservation methods, a lecture about osteoporosis, a legal aid session, English language courses, remedial classes in mathematics, a sports day and fitness event, and a focus groups discussion on issues that affect and concern refugees.



Clowns Without Borders (Ireland) entertaining 230 Syrian and Jordanian children at a CSC in Amman on 17 April. The country-wide sessions received very positive feedback from the children involved with one saying he “couldn’t stop laughing until the end of the show” @UNHCR

Health

Achievements and Impact

- **Expanding the reach of the Cash for Health scheme:** Five months since the launch of the Cash for Health scheme to increase the number of refugees receiving essential health care, the numbers receiving assistance now averages 100 cases per week with 1,048 transfers through the Cairo Amman Bank totaling US \$ 362,000 in assistance. The scheme channels funds directly to refugees through UNHCR’s cash assistance programme instead of UNHCR paying a more costly third party health service provider. Free access to primary health care for Syrian refugees in governmental facilities was withdrawn in 2014 by the Jordanian government for lack of financial support. By the beginning of May, Cash for Health had covered 83 deliveries for vulnerable pregnant women who cannot afford the cost of delivery in Ministry of Health facilities; 53 high-risk and complicated pregnancies; 483 medically indicated Cesarean sections; 97 neonatal cases requiring hospital admission; four antenatal care cases, and 328 emergency hospital admissions.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Instilling a sense of community through sport at Azraq refugee camp

Refugees first arrived at Azraq camp in April 2014, fleeing a conflict that shattered their houses, their schools, their families and their hopes. All they sought then was a roof over their heads to help rebuild their lives. Today that remains the strong focus of the camp's residents.

The vast majority of the families in Azraq arrived after enduring several years of conflict and fear, and mutual suspicion hung over community relations in the early days. At the time only half of today's camp population was installed and any semblance of community had yet to be established.



*Syrian refugees playing on the IOC field in January 2016.
©UNHCR/Ayman Bino*

Narjis is the person in charge of activities at the camp's sports ground, inaugurated a year after the opening of the camp and built with the support of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). "The sports ground marked the beginning of a new era at the camp", she explains. "Before, children could only play indoors making them quickly bored and lethargic. They needed open air, to jump and to run freely."

Volleyball, basketball, tennis, football, taekwondo and handball are just some of the sports played on the field each day. "We noticed a quick improvement in the children's behaviour. Now they listen and respect each other and know each other's names and understand that they need to be friends so that they can play on the same team and win!", reveals Narjis.

The ground has also had a significant impact on the adult population. Collecting bread and water used to be their only activity for a whole day, in stark contrast to their active lives back in Syria. This was incredibly difficult for many. "They now they have a place where they can feel free and forget about everything, including the passing of time", explains Narjis.

Talal, one of the football coaches, has also witnessed a change. "At the beginning everyone was a stranger to their neighbour. They used to arrive at training sessions and sit alone until the whistle blew to signal the start of the match. Now they play as one team, creating a community on the field. Children and adults are now getting to know each other, to play as one, not only at the field, but also outside", he explains, proud of the job done.

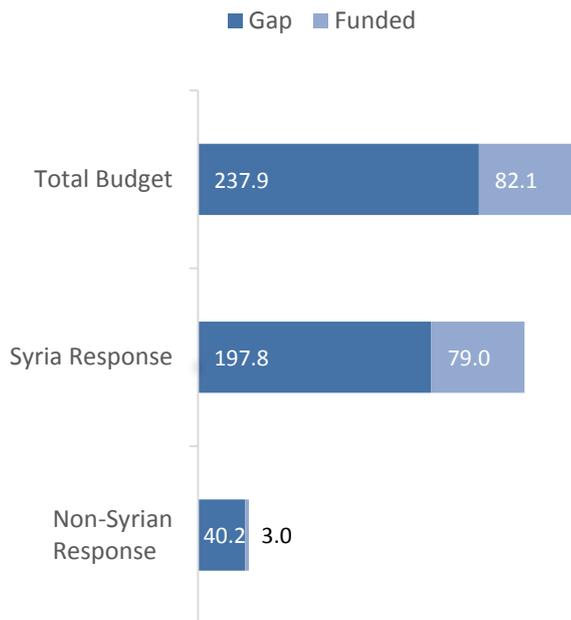
"Training the adults is easy but it is harder with the children, who represent half of the camp's population. Many of them were very small when the fighting began, so they have never watched a football match on TV. Girls, for instance, were not allowed to attend the matches played on the streets", Narjis emphasizes who now coaches about 20 girls under 14 years old.

The ground now hosts coaches from all nationalities and refugees are being trained in new sports skills all the time. Some features have been added around the ground and now it even hosts a gym for women and girls that opens its doors every day. "We provided the community with a safe space and for the rest they used their imagination", Narjis concludes.

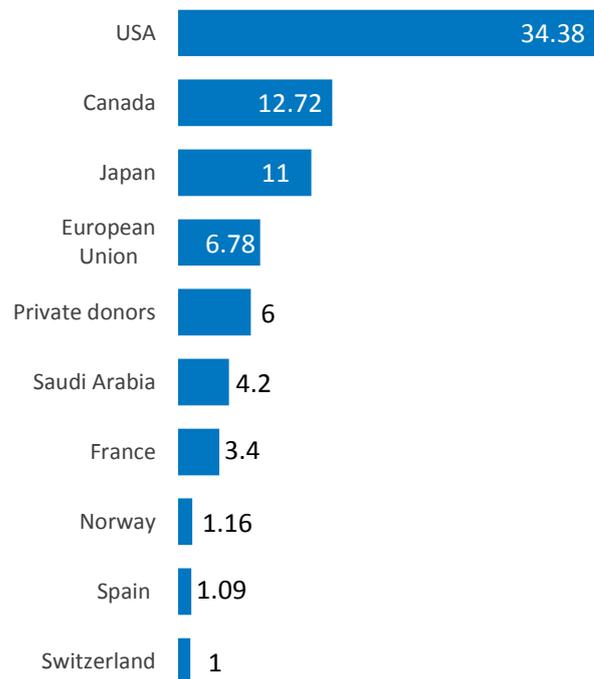
Olga Sarrado-Mur
Associate External Relations Officer, Azraq Camp

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the UNHCR operation in Jordan amount to some **US\$ 81.6 million**, including **US\$ 78.6 million** for the **Syria response** and **US\$ 3 million** for the Iraq situation at the country level.



Funding received for the Jordan operation in 2016 (in million USD)



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds (in US \$).

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