

Supporting refugees in Jordan: what we achieved in 2020

UNHCR Jordan, December 2020



Refugees with newborn babies come to get their official birth certificates after activities were paused during the first months of the COVID-19 crisis.

2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges for people around the world. In Jordan, COVID-19 has affected refugee and host communities alike, leaving the most vulnerable populations with increasing unmet needs. UNHCR and partners continue to respond to the multifaceted situation, addressing the increasing number of challenges in the country.

A year in review...

1. In line with the country's long-term hospitality, the Government of Jordan (GoJ) included refugees in the COVID-19 response since the onset of the crisis. Consequently, refugees have had the same access to COVID-19 healthcare as Jordanian citizens, some trained refugee medical professionals will soon be deployed to support the response, and vulnerable refugees will also be included in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout early next year. With refugees being included in the government's response, UNHCR Jordan stepped up its response to the crisis to adapt to the changing environment: several **innovations** were implemented to address the increasing challenges, operations shifted to remote modalities, and UNHCR staff **stayed and continued to deliver** despite the difficulties. UNHCR has worked closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and health partners to respond to the pandemic, through **preventative health measures** in refugee camps, provision of PPE, health screenings, case management, construction of **quarantine spaces**, and more.



The quarantine site in Azraq camp was built at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak to allow for isolation of refugees who had been in contact with positive cases. It was further expanded in October to increase capacity.

2. In 2020, and throughout the COVID-19 emergency, UNHCR, in coordination with the GoJ, has continued to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to 750,000 refugees registered with UNHCR from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and 45 other nationalities. Through the “One Refugee” approach, UNHCR works towards reducing and ultimately eliminating differences based on nationality.

3. Documentation provided by UNHCR upon registration enables refugees to access education opportunities and health services, apply for work permits, and more. In 2020, more than 110,000 refugees have renewed their Asylum Seeker Certificates (ACS), through UNHCR’s newly implemented registration remote modalities. In addition, the GoJ announced in December 2020 that ASCs issued by UNHCR to refugees in Jordan will be considered valid until 30 June 2021, regardless of the date of expiry.



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

4. COVID-19 has significantly diminished economic opportunities for refugees in Jordan; according to a recent joint World Bank - UNHCR report, refugees were 73% less likely to be employed during lockdown, while poverty increased by 18 percentage points. Together with partners, UNHCR continues to work to ensure access for refugees to livelihoods opportunities, whether through vocational trainings, employment centre consultations, or entrepreneurship programs.



Jalal, 62, who fled his home in Mosul, Iraq, with his wife and children two and a half years ago when ISIS invaded, is collecting cash assistance provided by UNHCR which he will use for bills and medicine.

5. With the vast majority of refugees living below the poverty line, UNHCR provides targeted cash support to the most vulnerable families who rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Throughout 2020, each month an average of 33,000 refugee families received cash assistance from UNHCR, which enabled them to pay rent, purchase food or medications, or send their children to school. Additionally, in light of the COVID pandemic, over 50,000 newly-vulnerable refugee families have received emergency cash assistance. Finally, as part of UNHCR’s winterisation programming, an additional 52,000 families received a one-off cash assistance to cover needs arising from the cold winter weather, including heating and purchase of warm clothes.

6. Half of all refugees in Jordan are children, whose education has been severely disrupted during the COVID-19 crisis. Through 2020, UNHCR worked with the Ministry of Education, to support children in accessing online learning platforms and continue their education. Some 17,000 students accessed UNHCR’s Kolibri platform throughout the year. UNHCR also continues to support refugees who wish to pursue higher education, through the DAFI scholarship programme. In 2020, an additional 30 students were awarded scholarships to study twelve different subjects.



Ghazal, 11, and Omar, 9, study from home, as schools are closed due to COVID-19 measures.

7. As part of its protection response, UNHCR provides psycho-social support and emergency cash assistance to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, while local partners also provide specialized support

in safe spaces across Jordan. In 2019, 70% of survivors who reported GBV incidents were Syrians. Recognising the heightened risk of violence and exploitation due to the COVID-19 crisis, in 2020, UNHCR and partners supported some 39,000 survivors or persons at risk of SGBV with specialised response services and reached an additional 41,000 people through SGBV prevention and empowerment activities. Throughout the year, UNHCR Jordan also continued work closely with the GoJ and national service providers to strengthen GBV prevention and response mechanisms. In parallel, UNHCR continued to focus on building national and partner capacity with respect to its child protection and youth development strategy. In 2020, close to 5,000 children were provided case management services by UNHCR and partners.

8. Resettlement and **complementary pathways** are key components of UNHCR’s mandate to find durable solutions for displaced populations. Through November 2020, 3,446 refugees were submitted for resettlement from Jordan to Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and the UK, while 1,396 refugees are expected to have left Jordan through resettlement and other programs, including **scholarships**, family reunification, or labour mobility schemes. Overall, resettlement submissions from Jordan will represent around 10% of the global resettlement submissions in 2020.



Abdulraheem, 27, has lived in Jordan since 2013 after fleeing his home in Taiz, Yemen, but in December 2020, will be resettled to Sweden through UNHCR support.

9. For refugees in Jordan, access affordable healthcare remains a struggle. With half of the refugees considered medically vulnerable, UNHCR’s support in a range of primary, secondary and tertiary **healthcare** interventions remains critical. Throughout 2020, UNHCR continued to support refugees’ access to healthcare, including through cash assistance, submitting over 8,000 referrals of emergency or life-threatening cases to hospitals across Jordan. Moreover, in June 2020, following advocacy by UNHCR and health partners, the MoH confirmed that non-Syrians will be able to access MoH health services at the non-insured Jordanian rate.

10. Throughout 2020, UNHCR continued to strengthen its **community-based approach** to protection, actively engaging refugees in decisions impacting their lives and strengthening their links with Jordanian host communities to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Sharing information and raising awareness with refugee communities on a variety of issues, including on **COVID-19**, has been key. In 2020, UNHCR has reached an average of one million people a month through social media, as well as over 60,000 persons through SMS and 400,000 pageviews on its Help site which was launched in April. In addition, more than 350,000 calls are received by UNHCR’s Helpline each month.



Filippo Grandi meets with Ekran and her daughter Rana, 3, Sudanese refugees at Luzmila Hospital in Amman.

While 2020 has been a challenging year for people around the world, UNHCR in Jordan remained agile and adapted its way of working in order to continue to serve the most vulnerable communities, seeking to provide some relief to those who have been severely impacted by the pandemic and enable them to cover their basic needs with dignity. As noted by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi during his **visit** to Jordan in September, UNHCR is “grateful to Jordan as a major refugee host country for its continued hospitality and efforts to include refugees in the national health system and coronavirus response plan.” UNHCR’s response needs in Jordan for

2020 are \$426 million. As of 15 December, UNHCR Jordan has received 56% of funds for its 2020 requirements. We would like to thank all our donors whose support has made our efforts possible.