

ISWG Meeting Note
December 11,2024



Inter-Sector
Working Group
Jordan

ISWG Meeting Note and Action Points

Date / Time / Venue	Wednesday, 11 December 2024, 10:00 - 11:30, UNHCR office
Attendees	Inter-Sector Coordinator, Sector Coordinators, Leads/Co-Leads of the Shelter, Food Security Basic Needs, Protection, WASH, Health sectors, JIF Representative, HCR, RHAS, and Protection.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The following are the outcomes from our meeting discussion:

- Food Security Monitoring: The results of the food security assessment for the third quarter were presented.
- Refugee Financial Inclusion Survey: The findings from the baseline survey on refugee financial inclusion and financial health were shared with the economic empowerment and food security basic needs working groups.
- Durable Solutions Working Group: Inter Agency will issue a call to identify actors interested in joining the renewed durable solutions working group.
- Refugees' Perception: The situation in Syria was discussed with all participants, who confirmed that the presentation by the solutions team aligns with what they are also hearing from refugees.
- FAQ on Returns: The updated FAQ on returns will be shared with all partners and stakeholders.
- 3RP Launch Event: The 3RP 2025 launch event will take place on December 19th.

The Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Coordinator | UNHCR opened the meeting by welcoming the audience and introduced the meeting agenda as follows:

- Operational Updates
- 2024 Lessons and 2025 Moving Forward.
- WFP Presentation- Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) results for Q3/2024
- AOB

A slight adjustment was made to the sequence of the agenda to accommodate overlapping meetings and ensure all relevant topics were covered efficiently. The floor was then given to the World Food Programme (WFP) to present the Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) results for Q3/2024. This was followed by a discussion on the situation in Syria.

1.Food Security Monitoring Results Presentation:

- The food security outcome monitoring results for the third quarter were presented, based on data collected in August and September from around 2000 households, including both Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in host communities and camps.
- A significant deterioration in food security among refugees was highlighted, particularly for those who had their assistance cut. The quality and quantity of food consumed at the household level regressed.
- Data was collected from a statistically representative sample of around 2000 households, covering different strata, including Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, beneficiaries, and non-beneficiaries in both host communities and camps.
- The percentage of severely food insecure households decreased from 28% to 15% in host communities and from 9% to 5% in camps. However, the combined percentage of severely and moderately food insecure households did not change significantly.
- Maintaining acceptable diets is becoming increasingly difficult, despite sufficient food availability.
- Assistance cuts led to a significant decrease in the percentage of refugees maintaining satisfactory food consumption, with many relying on negative coping **strategies**.
- The percentage of refugees maintaining satisfactory food consumption without struggling dropped from 42% in Q2 2023 to 17% in the previous quarter.
- Many refugees had to rely on negative coping strategies, such as reducing the quality and quantity of food consumed and adopting damaging livelihood coping strategies.
- There was a temporary improvement in food consumption as households allocated more resources to food, but this was not sustainable, as it was due to reduced expenditure on non-food items.
- The number of working days for refugees decreased by 65% to 72% over 2024, affecting both camps and host communities for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.
- This decrease in working days resulted in reduced income for refugees compared to the same time last year, impacting their economic stability.
- Reduced income led to increased debt among refugees, with average debt rising to \$1393 for host community beneficiaries and around \$1300 for camp beneficiaries. Non-beneficiaries also saw an increase in debt from \$1626 to \$1785.
- Many refugees are adopting negative coping strategies in response to economic challenges, including withdrawing children from school or allowing high absenteeism rates. Absenteeism often exceeds 20% of the school year days, as defined by the Ministry of Education.

2. Syria Situation Update:

- The chair of the ISWG provided an update on the fluid situation in Syria, including significant displacement and airstrikes. UNHCR is regularly sharing updates on the Syria situation with partners.
- The situation across Syria remains volatile and hostilities continue to affect many parts of the country, with lawlessness and looting also reported in some areas. Clashes have been reported in Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor, and conflict has damaged civilian infrastructure and disrupted services in northeast Syria.
- According to local authorities, in northwest Syria at least 75 civilians had been killed and 282 injured as of 8 December, although the area is now witnessing a period of relative calm. Internal displacement remains significant, with approximately 100,000 individuals displaced to northeast Syria to date due to fighting in areas including Aleppo, and Tel Refaat.

- OCHA reports that hospitals across Syria are overwhelmed by the high number of trauma and other injury cases, and that food shortages have been reported in major cities with the price of bread in Idlib and Aleppo has increased by 900 per cent between 27 November and 9 December. While vital public services are gradually resuming, movement restrictions, including curfews imposed by armed groups in several regions, are hindering the flow of goods and services. Further curtailing the movement of civilians and impeding the delivery of goods and services. at least 52 minefields identified across the country over the past 10 days and humanitarian partners are raising the alarm about high levels of explosive ordnances.
- Israeli airstrikes continue to target weapons systems and military sites associated with the former Syrian regime, with Israeli officials describing more than 350 airstrikes and naval and ground operations undertaken over the past 48 hours against such locations.
- Refugees continue to express both interest and concerns about return. With the non-functioning of immigration services on the Syrian side of the Masnaa – Jdeidat Yabous border crossing, larger numbers of Syrians were requesting entry to Lebanon. The situation at the main border gates between Türkiye and Syria remains calm and stable, with some Syrians crossing back and normal truck movements observers. The situation at the Jordanian border remains quiet compared to the normal traffic, though more movements have been observed over the past days. On 11 December, UNHCR observed an increase in Syrians arriving in Iraq via the Peshkabour border crossing in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with some 800 Syrians crossed the border compared to the usual daily average of 400 individuals. While it remains unclear whether these individuals intend to seek asylum – given that entry through Peshkabour requires a valid visa – the increase marks a notable shift.
- On 10 December, the UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen briefed the media in Geneva, calling for protection of civilians, de-escalation of Israeli attacks on Syrian territory and conflict in the northeast, as well as the need for an inclusive transition for Syria. The Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi also amplified and urged the protection of civilians, safeguarding of critical infrastructure, and continued functioning of Syrian institutions when she convened the Humanitarian Task Force in Geneva. The UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba emphasised that children’s rights should be prioritised as fundamental during the country’s transition and reconstruction. The UNDP Administrator pointed to the dire state of the Syrian economy - with GDP standing at 14 per cent its current value 14 years ago - and an estimated loss of 35 years of development between 2010 and 2022.
- The Durable Solutions team recently addressed the situation at the Jordan-Syria border, observing a lower than expected traffic flow, contrary to what media reports have suggested. It was noted that most individuals crossing the border are not UNHCR-registered refugees, but rather Syrians holding various types of visas, such as transit or investor visas. Within the refugee community, there is a cautious optimism about the possibility of returning to Syria, mainly driven by the desire to reunite with family after many years. However, many are hesitant and are waiting to observe how the situation unfolds before making any final decisions on returning.
- Refugees are actively seeking information about the procedures required to cross back into Syria. Currently, the process is relatively straightforward due to the lack of strong authorities or formal procedures on the Syrian side of the border. Despite this, refugees continue to express concerns over several critical issues related to their potential return. They worry about

the security environment in Syria, which is marked by a lack of law and order, prevalent criminality, and the presence of armed groups, even after the regime's fall.

- Additionally, there are significant anxieties about the availability of housing and employment opportunities in Syria. Many refugees fear that their homes may have been destroyed or are no longer accessible, and they are concerned about the challenges of finding employment upon their return. There is also uncertainty about the level of assistance they can expect from humanitarian organizations and the Syrian government once they return.
- Another major concern is the need for valid travel documents. Although the Syrian embassy continues to issue one-way travel documents (Laissez-Passer) and extend passports, the procedures and costs involved are worrying for many refugees.
- It was emphasized the strong working relationship between UNHCR and the Jordanian government, ensuring that all returns remain voluntary and are well-coordinated. This collaboration is crucial for maintaining the dignity and choices of refugees throughout the return process.

3.Operational Updates:

The following is the sectors-specific updates on the status of the JRP logframe:

- **Shelter:** The Minister of Interior held two meetings with partners to discuss and agree on the 2025 priorities. Key focus areas include shelter-related services, rehabilitation, cash assistance for rent, camp infrastructure maintenance, energy efficiency improvements, and climate change-related services.
- **Health:** There are no changes to the health JRP logframe. Due to time constraints, a thorough review of last year's JRP submissions was not possible. Over 99% of organizations have already submitted their plans for 2025, so the current submissions remain largely valid.
- **FS:** The Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) has not been responsive to our communications. However, we have updated the three JRP and the 3RP, as there are no significant changes to the objectives and activities.
- **WASH:** The Ministry of Water and Irrigation informed MoPIC that no updates are required for the 2025 WASH logframe. A mid-term review will be conducted in 2025 to assess accomplishments and achievements. The co-chair shared a major update: the completion of the water project, including a new borehole.
- **Protection:** The sector chair-initiated communication with the Ministry of Social Development (MOS). The JRP logframe was reviewed, updated, completed, and shared with MoPIC.
- **Justice:** The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) held a meeting with partners on November 26 to review 2024 priorities and propose updates for 2025. Key focus areas include human trafficking, infrastructure development, maintaining CCVT in courts, enhancing legal aid provisions, employing female lawyers for GBV cases, and expanding community sanctions. The MoJ emphasized aligning task force priorities with national strategies, such as the National Strategy for Human Trafficking.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Communication occurred between the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the Secretariat. Ten out of 28 partners have submitted their inputs for the 2025 JRP update. The EE Sector chairs have extended the submission deadline to December 5, 2024.
- The Next meeting is TBD.