



Inter-agency Update: Syrians in Jordan

General Situation & Response

December 15 – December 22
2011

This weekly update provides a snapshot of the United Nations inter-agency response to the influx of Syrians into Jordan. The response is led by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and is undertaken in full coordination with the Government of Jordan.

I. Highlights of the week

Numbers:

The number of registered Syrians with UNHCR since March 1st up to 21st December 2011 is 1,936. In December so far 469 individuals have registered with the agency. Notably, the number is fast approaching the 2,000 mark as Syrians continue to cross the border and seek assistance.

Funding:

This week the Government of Switzerland (SDC) has confirmed in writing a contribution of CHF400,000.- (US\$ 434,310 equivalent) towards project "Support to Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon & Jordan."

Outreach:

In line with a policy decision to focus more on urban refugees, UNHCR this week met with representatives of Syrian families and individuals in Madaba. UNHCR is aware of a number of families in Madaba, who have mostly arrived from Homs area, and are liaising with local social workers to establish the figures. The field and community service units introduced the work that the agency



UNHCR staff preparing for distribution of NFIs

carries out, and clarified the registration process. Not unlike other outreach efforts, Syrians showed hesitancy in attending meetings.

Distribution:

The distribution of NFIs and food assistance in Salt and Ramtha continues, along with distribution of NFIs and the provision of one-time cash assistance to extremely vulnerable individuals in urban centers.

Education:

UNICEF, on behalf of Education Sector, has been advocating with the Government of Jordan for displaced Syrian children to access public schools. On 21 December, the Prime Minister has agreed, through the decision of the Cabinet, to allow Syrian children in public school regardless of their status in the country waiving tuition and text books fees with the support of UNICEF. In addition, UNICEF, through a local NGO Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), is providing remedial education classes and psychosocial assistance to Syrian children in Ramtha facility.

Health:

A decision taken by the GOJ to cover the cost of treating Syrians in Mafraq governorate as the insured Jordanians or MOSD beneficiaries during the last reporting period was welcomed by the Inter Agency Task Force. The formal letter for this was distributed to all Governorate of Mafraq health facilities last week.

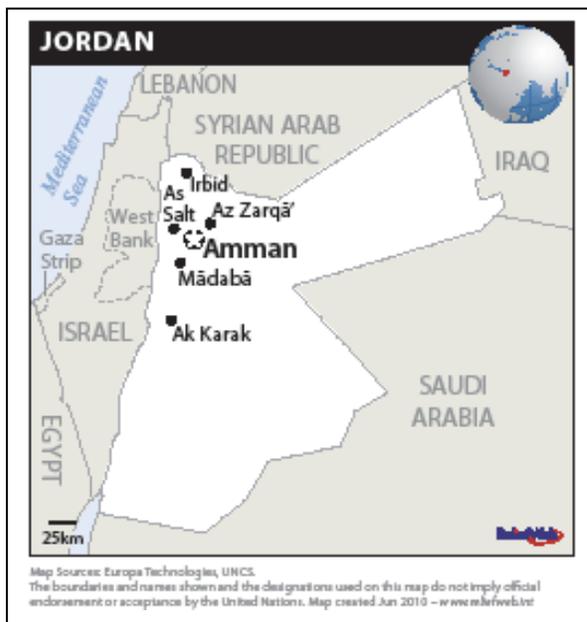
Protection:

While the protection space in Jordan remains positive, as in previous weeks, Syrians arriving in Jordan continue to express concern for their safety and that of their families in Syria. In the coming days, UNHCR, in coordination with Task Force partners, will carry out a rapid needs assessment in an effort to map and ascertain the needs of vulnerable Syrians

in Jordan. UNHCR continues to follow up on persons of concern who have been detained for illegal entry.

Syrians have also expressed concerns regarding overpriced items and food scarcity in Homs area of Syria, due to continuing instability and as a result of economic sanctions.

II. Situation Overview:



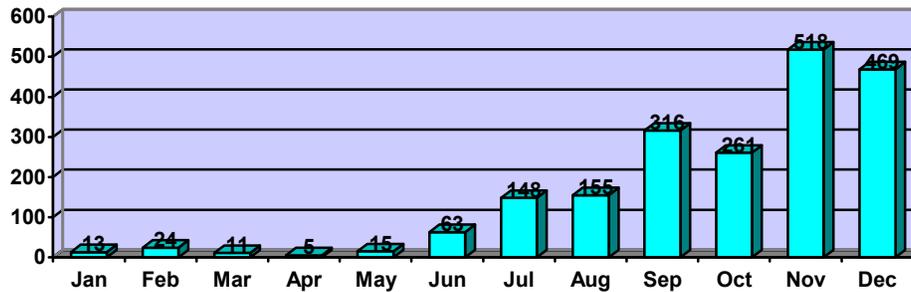
Jordan has witnessed a slow but continuous influx of Syrians into Jordan since the beginning of the disturbances in Syria in March 2011. The Government of Jordan has kept its border open.

IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO and WFP, in an inter-agency task force led by UNHCR, are providing relief assistance (food, non-food items) and other support such as refurbishment of shelter, psychosocial care and facilitating the enrollment of Syrian children in public schools. Syrians are residing in urban centers throughout the Kingdom, mainly in border towns such as Mafraq and Ramtha, but also in Amman and as far south as Ma'an and Madaba.

The UNHCR response thus far has involved concentrated efforts in the guesthouses in Ramtha, as the most vulnerable populations have been gathered there, however the next phase will be a concerted focus on urban refugee support. UNHCR is in the process of reaching out and providing basic NFIs with a view to capturing the totality of needs and numbers, and mounting a systematic programme of support to refugees and their hosts.

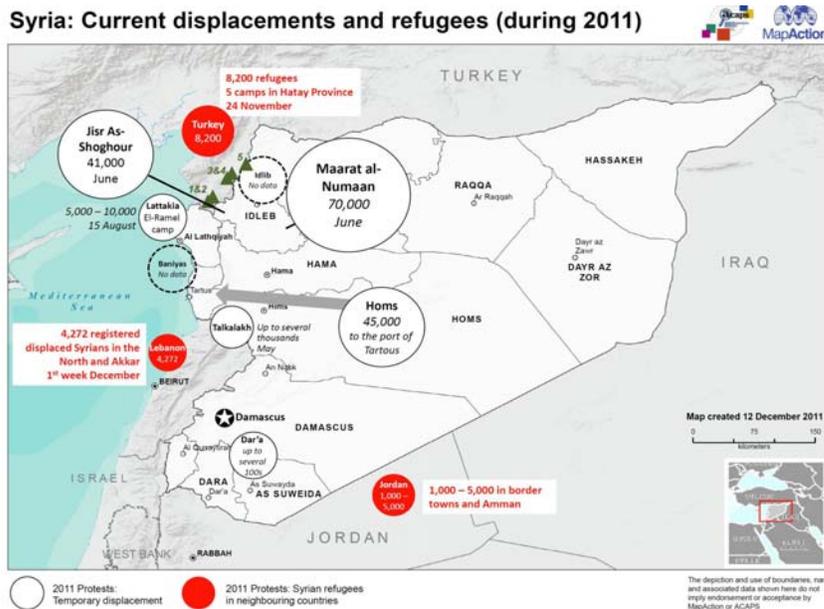
The total number of Syrians registered with UNHCR Jordan since March 2011 is 1,936. This figure does not include the Syrians that have been in Jordan for years and registered with UNHCR earlier. Below is a table showing the registration trends for 2011 up to 21 December 2011.

Registered Syrian Individuals 2011



Map of Syria courtesy of Emergency Capacity Building Project¹

Syria: Current displacements and refugees (during 2011)



According to a recent survey of 78 adult Syrians carried out in November 32.5% of this group come from Daraa, followed by Damascus 23.3%, Homs 18.18%, Idleb 12.9% and Hama 9.09%. The rest are from various Syrian cities.

The majority reside in Irbid (Northern Jordan), followed by Amman, Mafraq and Zarqa. Since November, a large number of Syrian families have also been identified in Ma'an in the south of Jordan.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

❖ Coordination:

UNHCR continues to maintain regular, multi-level and multi-ministry contact with the government in order to ensure that borders remain open, protection considerations are accounted for, and coordination and policy direction are shared. These positive working relations have resulted in close partnerships with the government, in particular the Ministry of Interior where UNHCR has

¹ Emergency Capacity Building Project: *Secondary Dara Review, Syrian Arab Republic*, 13/12/2011

had the opportunity to discuss and advise the MoI on plans to prepare a site for a proposed reception center/ transit facility in case of a sudden mass outflow from Syria.

UNHCR is leading the UNCT Jordan response to the Syrian situation through chairmanship of the Task Force and coordination of activities. The Task Force comprises of UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP (RC), UNFPA, UNESCO and WFP.

National and international NGOs are being engaged via directing implementing partnerships, *ad hoc* briefings and, as of this week, via sectoral working groups.

UNHCR has also met with heads of several community based organizations that are providing assistance to the displaced groups.

The above partnerships have allowed for a positive protection environment where the needs of persons of concern and affected communities are being holistically addressed, including the following: assistance to meet basic needs; education and remedial classes; provision of medical and psychosocial care.

❖ **Protection:**

The vast majority of Syrians who have arrived in the past many weeks have expressed fear and anxiety about returning, and most do not feel that the situation is safe enough for them to do so. Those who have arrived have entered both legally and illegally at borders, and encountered a positive protection space in Jordan.

❖ **Community Services**

Outreach workers continue to visit the displaced Syrians in Ramtha, Mafraq and Salt in order to counsel them, assess their needs, and refer new comers to UNHCR for registration if they wish to do so.

UNHCR staff often in coordination with UN partners conducts weekly missions to the North (Ramtha and Mafraq) for the purpose of assessing the protection needs and the socio-economic situation of the Syrians, in addition to distributing food and non-food items. UNHCR meets with local CBOs that are in touch with families as well as with local governmental entities to try to coordinate assistance efforts and target needs as well as address gaps.

❖ **Shelter**

Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. The border city of **Mafraq** (close to Al Jabr border crossing) located 80 Km to the north of Amman. UNHCR is aware of 227 families dispersed within the local population. Other groups of Syrians are reportedly in Ramtha, Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Salt and Amman.

In **Ramtha**, another border city, near to Deraa on the Syrian side, 110 Kilometers from Amman, there are currently 110 Syrians being accommodated. The facility in Ramtha consists of six buildings – five of which are used (maximum capacity around 350 persons), privately owned and normally used to accommodate guest-workers. Their freedom of movement is restricted as a result of their illegal entry. On the other hand, the possibility of bailing continues to be implemented, allowing Syrians who wish to move out of Ramtha to do so after providing the GoJ with a Jordanian sponsor. Almost 500 persons have passed through this facility so far.

The buildings were not well equipped initially (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) but are currently being refurbished in preparation for winter. Repairs are expected to be completed before the end of the year. As part of the winterization plan, UNHCR will be providing vouchers for winter clothing, heaters, high thermal fleece blankets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, kitchen sets as well as other needed items.

In addition UNHCR has identified a number of families that entered the country legally and who are dispersed within the community of Ramtha, living with relatives or in rented houses. UNHCR is currently aware of 121 families.

In **Salt**, a group of former soldiers is being hosted in a separate facility by the GOJ. The numbers are increasing and are currently at 126 persons. UNHCR is currently carrying out a profiling of this group and has been supporting them with the provision of various NFIs as well as weekly and monthly food packages and a one time equipment of the kitchen.

❖ **Distribution (Food/NFI)**

UNHCR regularly distributes food and non-food items to displaced Syrians. UNHCR has entered into a contract with "Food Security", a distribution company for the provision of food packages to the Syrians residing in the Ramtha facility. Comprehensive food packages are delivered on a monthly basis, with fresh food supplements and bread delivered on a weekly basis. UNHCR will be equipping the kitchen facilities with utensils, pots and pans, as well as electrical appliances (i.e. fridge, stove, water coolers) once the refurbishment is completed. Kitchen equipment with utensils and electrical appliances as well as NFIs were delivered to Salt.

UNHCR has provided the following materials since March 2011:

Item	Quantity Distributed	Item	Quantity Distributed
Mattresses	160	Plastic Mats	500
Pillows	100	Blankets	2,520
Quilts	370	Kitchen Sets	500
Plastic Mats	66	Female Underwear	1,100
Kitchen Sets	17	Male Underwear	1,400
Plastic sheeting/tarpaulines (4x5)		Hygiene kits	290
Jerry Cans	95	Tooth brushes / toothpaste	96
Sanitary Napkins	90	Newborn kits - layettes	2
Cooking Stoves	95	Clothing	30 T-shirts & 30
Plastic Mats	95	Keronene	2,127 Lt.
Blankets	400	Stoves	1,000.00
Plastic sheeting/tarpaulines (4x5)	95	Food Items	Meals, meat/poultry, vegetables, fruits, dry/canned food, bread, water
Kitchen Sets	30	Kitchen sets - type B	2,000
Jerry Cans	500	Fleece blankets	6,600
Sanitary Napkins	4,104	Sleeping mats	1,000
Cooking Stoves	500	Tents - family	600

❖ Education

UNICEF has been advocating with the Government of Jordan for displaced Syrian children to access public schools. On 21 December, the Prime Minister has agreed, through the decision of the Cabinet, to allow Syrian children in public schools regardless of their status in the country waiving tuition and text books fees with the support of UNICEF. Previously, the Jordanian Government policy stated that Syrian children whose family have a work permit can access public schools while those without are referred to private schools which many cannot afford.

In addition, UNICEF, through Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), is providing remedial education classes as well as psychosocial services for children of illegal Syrian entrants housed in Ramtha facility. A child friendly space within Ramtha facility has been set up and UNICEF and the partner are currently refurbishing the space. This week, UNICEF delivered a School-in-a-Box kit to Ramtha facility to facilitate the learning of these children. The Kit covers up to 80 children for three months period including teaching and learning materials for students.

❖ Health

The Medical Mobile Unit of the Jordan Health Aid Society (JHAS), an implementing partner of UNHCR and UNFPA, has from October 2011 begun to extend its services to Syrians, conducting regular weekly visits to Ramtha and Mafrq. Primary health care assistance and medication are provided at the site. JHAS has started to provide medical services related to reproductive health targeting vulnerable-Syrian-pregnant women in Mafrq and Al Ramtha governorates through conducting home visits by a medical team consisting of a gynecologist and a nurse. The team is responsible for assessing the needs of the pregnant women, providing them with necessary medical tests and helping them with referral to public hospitals. The visits also include raising awareness on family planning methods, antenatal and postnatal care and other issues related to reproductive health.

A decision was taken by the GOJ to cover the cost of treating Syrians in Mafrq governorate as the insured Jordanians or MOSD beneficiaries during the last reporting period. The formal letter for this was distributed to all Governorate of Mafrq health facilities last week. The move was welcomed by the UN Task Force, and the implications will be assessed in the coming weeks along with exploring the possibility of broadening the initiative to cover other pockets where Syrians are being accommodated.

❖ External Relations

During the reporting period, numerous interviews and statements were provided to the press and the diplomatic community.

IV. In the Press.

20 December 2011 – The United Nations said today it is encouraged by the signing of a protocol paving the way for monitors from the League of Arab States to go to Syria as part of efforts to end the violence that began earlier this year in the Middle East country.

Syria reportedly signed the protocol in Cairo yesterday, the same day that the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on the country to immediately implement the plan of action proposed by the Arab League to resolve the crisis.

“The League of Arab States has continued its commendable initiative to end the violence and promote a political solution,” Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told the Security Council during a briefing on the Middle East.

“In this regard, we are encouraged by the signature yesterday in Cairo of a protocol to dispatch monitors from the League of Arab States to Syria, and we continue to hope that the international community will be able to act in a concerted and coherent manner in support of these efforts for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.”

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco said the situation in Syria remains a source of “deep and growing concern” for the UN, noting that popular protests have continued to be met by violent repression, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries and detentions, and armed confrontations between the Government forces and the opposition have increased.

There are also growing concerns regarding the humanitarian impact of the crisis on civilians inside Syria, he added.

Full article on Reliefweb: <http://reliefweb.int/node/466308>