

Access to Safe, Affordable, and Durable Housing

Jordan currently hosts some 732,000 refugees with around 130,000 Syrian refugees living in two refugee camps - Zaatari and Azraq. As a refugee response coordinator, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, along with the Syrian Refugees Affairs Directorate (SRAD) of the Government of Jordan, is responsible for providing refugees in the camps with shelters and managing the campsites. The Agency also provides the refugees living in urban areas with basic cash assistance to meet their basic needs including housing.

From Tents to Caravans. UNHCR provides shelter to all refugees living in camps. A family of up to five members



A refugee in her caravan at Azraq camp. There are around 37,000 shelters like hers in both refugee camps. © UNHCR/Lily Carlisle

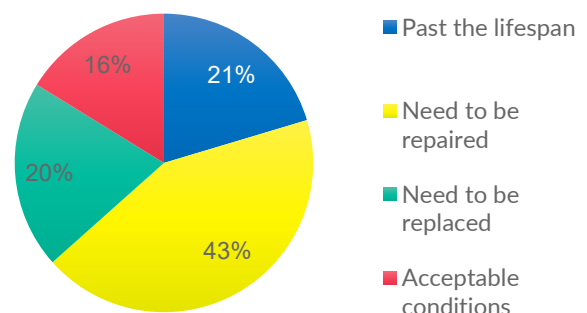
receives a caravan made out of metal sheet, size of 21m² in Zaatari and 24m² in Azraq. There are currently **25,000 and 12,000 shelters** in Zaatari and Azraq camps, respectively, while the rest of the caravans are used as shops, office facilities, etc. Some caravans have been **adjusted to address the needs of those with special needs** (e.g., concrete slabs for enhanced accessibility, private latrines, etc.) UNHCR provided most of the caravans in 2012 when it shifted from providing tents to caravans and now **most of them are well over their lifespan of five to six years.**

Many refugees live in shelters that are degraded with cracks and moulds and need to be maintained or replaced. Currently, **around 19,000 shelters need some level of maintenance and support.** UNHCR and its partner, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), have established a quick-fix team to address these needs based on vulnerability criteria. So far, in 2023, the team has provided around 470 new shelters, repaired about 800, and rehabilitated 500. However, limited funding meant that **UNHCR could only meet half of the critical needs in 2023.** On top of providing direct shelter support, UNHCR and NRC also work with refugees to **promote their self-reliance.** They give the refugees material, incentives, and training to **strengthen their capacity to fix caravans independently with the technical team's guidance.**

Initially designed as part of an emergency response more than ten years ago, the camps have become overcrowded, and **efforts to improve refugees' living situations are needed,** such as installing room partitions for increased privacy and enhancing thermal insulation and fire retardancy. **Fire incidents** in the camps have become a recurring threat. UNHCR and its partners continue to raise awareness on fire safety.

(For the graph on the right) Shelters with minor damages can be repaired while the ones with major structural damages need to be rehabilitated.

Conditions of Shelters



Site Planning of the Camps. UNHCR played a key role in supporting the government in setting up the Zaatari camp in 2012 and the Azraq camp in 2014. Since then, **UNHCR has continued to manage the sites of both camps**, ensuring that these areas are safe and accommodating for more than 130,000 refugees. In 2023, UNHCR **repaired roads** in different districts in Zaatari camp by adding proper rainwater drainage and pedestrian concrete slabs along the roads to mitigate the negative impact of floods and to ensure accessibility, especially during emergencies. UNHCR also **sets an address system** in the camp by providing each household with an address plaque. This helps ensure that UNHCR has up-to-date information about the camp population and can facilitate efficient assistance and service delivery.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. In 2023, UNHCR installed 400 new private latrines in Azraq camp at the household level, which is – inclusively- accessible to persons with disabilities. This initiative aimed to reinforce UNICEF efforts to enhance access to water, sanitation, and hygiene at the camp.

Dire Housing Situations in Urban Areas. Unlike those in the camps, refugees living in urban areas do not receive direct



Many refugees struggle during winter in Jordan where it gets very cold and rainy. © UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sanchez

shelter assistance from UNHCR. With limited livelihood opportunities, urban refugees **face challenges paying rent**. In 2023, more than 40 per cent of the urban refugee households could not pay rent in the past three months and a quarter of refugees received **eviction threats**. **UNHCR provides legal assistance** to those facing eviction threats and provides **monthly cash assistance** to more than 30,000 vulnerable refugee households in urban settings so that they can meet their basic needs.

Looking Forward. While UNHCR and the Government of Jordan have made commendable progress in setting up and managing the camps, there is a continued need to improve the living conditions in the camps, considering that shelter and settlement assistance has implications on other areas such as protection, health, and environment. With donor support, UNHCR will continue to maintain and improve the existing structures such as roads, drainage systems, fencing and security lightings. UNHCR will also explore using semi-durable, sustainable, environmentally friendly, locally available shelter materials and structures in the camps to ensure dignified shelter solutions. At the same time, UNHCR will continue to advocate for enhanced livelihood opportunities for refugees so that they can better meet their basic needs including adequate housing.



**\$6.2 MIL
NEEDED**

UNHCR is committed to delivering sustainable **shelter solutions** that guarantee **dignified living** conditions to refugee families in Azraq and Zaatari camps while strengthening resilience of refugees in urban areas so that they can support their shelter needs. UNHCR will also continue to effectively plan and **manage space and main facilities in the camps**. For this, **we need \$6.2 million in 2024**.

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