

# Jordan: Zaatari Refugee Camp

June 2024

Home to almost **78,000 Syrian refugees**, Zaatari camp is under the joint management of the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. As the lead agency for the refugee response in Jordan, UNHCR coordinates activities and services provided in the camp. Since its establishment in 2012, Zaatari has become emblematic of Syrian displacement across the Middle East. The camp's evolution from a small collection of tents to an urban settlement reflects the needs and aspirations of the camp residents and a transition to a more predictable, cost-effective, and participatory platform for the delivery of assistance.

## Key Figures



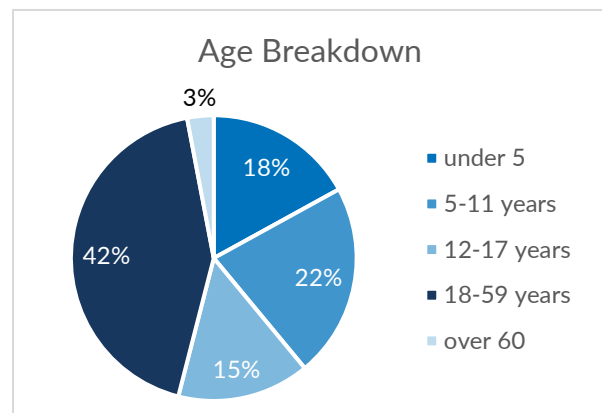
**1 in 3** households headed by **women**



**4 per cent** of population is **people with disabilities**



**Over half** of the population are **children** under the age of 18 years



## Main Activities

### Registration

- UNHCR ensures all camp residents are documented and have certificates proving their registration. It is essential to maintain accurate records of the camp population and ensure that the rights and needs of women, men, and children are recognized; the "Proof of Registration" is valid for one year and renewed annually. SRAD helps issue the Ministry of Interior service card for all camp residents to facilitate movements and access to services.

### Protection

- UNHCR chairs the Protection Working Group in Zaatari and coordinates protection support with government and partners. This includes strengthening services for people with specific needs, protecting children from violence, exploitation, and abuse, reducing the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), ensuring a survivor-centred approach, and increasing community resilience through enhancing engagement and leadership.
- UNHCR provides protection services, including legal assistance, documentation, counselling, and referrals for cases of child protection and GBV throughout the camp at easily accessible sites, via phone and home visits. Humanitarian and government partners regularly coordinate and refer individual cases to extend comprehensive support to refugees facing protection risks. Additionally, partners strive to ensure that these services are known and accessible to all refugees following the age, gender, and diversity approach. Partners operate several hotlines – many operational 24/7 – to efficiently address urgent protection concerns of refugees.

### Community Empowerment

- The 41 community centres are secure, disability-accessible hubs where refugees from various backgrounds come together to socialize and participate in recreation, education, and community-building activities. The centres serve as vital spaces for empowering refugees, encouraging participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives, and facilitating diverse programs such as sports, women empowerment, and livelihood activities.

- The Age and Disability sub-working group, led by UNHCR, promotes an inclusive approach and non-discrimination. It focuses on enhancing the participation of elderly people, individuals with disabilities, and their caretakers in community planning and activities in the camp. Based on the community-based rehabilitation approach and the available resources, the sub-working group. Also trains volunteers to visit the homes of the elderly, injured, and people with disabilities to assess and provide basic support and ensure adequate coverage of their needs in the Za'atari refugee camp, considering the available resources.
- The three Oasis centres, run by UN Women, aim to empower women, and strengthen their resilience by offering multi-sectoral services such as livelihood, GBV prevention, protection services, remedial education, and civic engagement initiatives.



*Almost 4% of refugees in the Zaatari camp are people with disabilities; UNHCR is committed to helping them integrate into the community through educational and recreational activities. ©UNHCR/ Shawkat Alharfoush*

### Basic Needs

- Every quarter, all refugees in Zaatari receive UNHCR cash assistance to replenish essential consumables such as cooking gas, diapers, and sanitary pads. In the first half of 2024, UNHCR distributed over \$1.5 million to the camp population.
- Almost all (99 per cent) households in Zaatari now receive UNHCR cash on mobile wallets, the most efficient distribution channel. UNHCR also worked with Cairo Amman Bank to facilitate regular access to cash through installing ATM inside the camp.

### Livelihoods

- The Zaatari market street is a vital source of livelihood within the camp, featuring approximately 1,000 informal shops operated by refugees. These shops offer diverse services, including restaurants, boutiques, electronic stores, and food shops.
- In partnership with the International Labour Organization and the Ministry of Labour, the Zaatari Office of Employment provides work-related counselling services, facilitates the issuance of work permits to camp residents, and advertises job vacancies and training opportunities through job fairs, exhibitions and other means.
- Incentive-based volunteering (IBV) is a critical aspect of refugee participation in delivering humanitarian assistance and other services in the camp. Almost 2,600 refugees (almost 10 per cent of the camp population above 18 years) were engaged in various IBV functions.

### Education

- UNICEF supports the Ministry of Education (MOE) to enable access to quality education for children of all ages in the camp. Over 23,000 refugee children from kindergarten 2 to Grade 12 are enrolled in formal education, while an additional 428 children are enrolled in non-formal education accredited by MOE. Half of them are girls.
- UNICEF supports operations of all 32 schools and 22 stand-alone kindergarten centres in the camp, with more than 250 Syrian refugee volunteers working as assistant teachers and another 700 volunteers supporting the operations of the schools through cleaning, maintenance and working as security guards.
- UNICEF runs different reading programme for students with reading difficulties (Grade 5 and 6 students who cannot read at Grade 3 level) or for refugee children (KG2) to improve their foundational reading skills. Around 4,000 students and children have benefited from these programmes.
- UNICEF Makani centres offer an integrated approach and provide safe space and learning opportunities for children, adolescents, youth, and parents/caregivers. These include early childhood development, reading recovery and accelerated learning programs, skills-building training (digital and financial literacy courses), child protection services and recreational activities, environmental clubs, and positive parenting sessions. By mid-year 2024, over 8,700 refugees (89 per cent children, 55 per cent female) have been supported.

- UNICEF Horizon Youth Center has offered diverse capacity-building opportunities for camp youth, including digital skills, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism. In January 2024, the center provided services to over 380 youth. Additionally, UNICEF's youth centers serve as safe spaces for young people, particularly young girls, to connect, learn, develop their skills, and share experiences.
- Higher education is also a priority for refugee students. Since 2014, over 300 refugees from Zaatari have earned various scholarships including the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI scholarship) and EDU Syria to support their studies.



*Children in Zaatari are committed to going to school. In this photo, Khadeja (Left) and Bisan (Right), 7 years old, are wearing plastic bags on their feet to reach school clean as the roads are full of mud. ©UNHCR/ Shawkat Alharfoush*

### Health

- Six medical facilities in the camp offer primary health care, in addition to two health facilities providing 24/7 ER services, including the Emergency Department and sexual and reproductive health and basic obstetric care (Normal Vaginal deliveries). A referral mechanism is also in place to facilitate refugees' access to tertiary and specialized health services at health facilities outside the camp.
- Decreasing funding has led some health service providers to close their clinics in the camp, limiting the range of available primary, non-emergency secondary, and tertiary health services and stretching the daily intake capacity of the remaining health care providers.

### Food Security & Nutrition

- The World Food Programme (WFP) provides all refugees living in camps with JOD 15 (approximately \$21) per person every month to meet their dietary needs. This reflects a 65 per cent decrease of what they used to receive in previous years due to limited funding.
- A card-less EyePay system that uses blockchain and iris scanning technology facilitates payments in WFP-contracted facilities. The system helps enhance the efficiency and accountability of food assistance while also making shopping easier and more secure for refugees. WFP is also expanding the delivery of assistance through mobile wallets, which supports the financial inclusion of refugees.
- WFP also runs a school feeding program for the children enrolled in school. In line with the national school feeding program, students receive 80 grams of fortified date bars daily to help meet their nutrition intakes.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF provides at least 55-60 litres of clean and safe water per person per day (4,500m<sup>3</sup>) in summer and between 35-40 litres in winter; these are provided through three boreholes in the camp, external trucking and an extended pipeline from Zaatari village. UNICEF is looking for future alternative water resources to address the deterioration of the three main boreholes.
- UNICEF and its partner conduct regular social mobilization activities on water conservation, increased community ownership, equitable water distribution, and network operation and maintenance. Hygiene promotion and climate education including menstrual hygiene management are also rolled out in schools and Makani centres.
- UNICEF ensures safe wastewater management in the camp through operating and maintaining wastewater network and the on-site wastewater treatment plant in collaboration with the Water Authority of Jordan.

### Shelter & Settlement

- UNCR provides and coordinate shelter assistance and infrastructure improvements in the camp. There are over 26,000 prefabricated shelters, each including a latrine and kitchen to ensure privacy. Shelters of people with disabilities have been adapted to their needs and conditions. While 95 per cent of the prefabricated shelters have exceeded their life span and require maintenance or replacement, UNHCR can only cover less than three per cent of the needs for 2024 due to the limited funding.

- UNHCR, in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council, offers shelter support to the camp community through three different methods: shelter rehabilitation, which involves major maintenance of damaged shelters; shelter replacement for those beyond repair; and a self-rehabilitation approach, where refugees receive materials and cash to carry out their own maintenance. The self-rehabilitation, or refugee empowerment modality, is the latest addition to the shelter support efforts, enabling refugees to actively address their shelter maintenance needs.
- During winter, certain areas in the camp become impassable, exacerbating hardships for numerous families and impeding emergency teams' timely interventions. In response, UNHCR initiated a road construction endeavour to improve road conditions, mitigate the associated risks for refugees, and enhance access within the camp.



*Most of the caravans in Zaatari camp have exceeded their designed life span of 5-6 years, and most families do not have the financial resources to consistently maintain their homes. ©UNHCR/ Shawkat Alharfoush*

### Access to Energy

- Zaatari camp relies on the world's largest solar power plant in a refugee camp to supply electricity to refugee households. As electricity provision fluctuates based on production capacity, weather conditions, and energy needs, the solar plant, initially designed to offer nearly 12 hours of energy, provides six to nine hours of electricity every day, to the camp population depending on consumption levels during different seasons.
- UNHCR and the government agreed to transfer solar energy from a solar plant in South Amman to Zaatari camp, complementing solar energy from the existing solar plant in the camp. Since the new agreement, the camp has been running almost exclusively on sustainable energy, significantly reducing its carbon emissions.
- As part of the shift towards a more environmentally friendly camp, all streetlights in Zaatari have been replaced with low-energy consumption LED lights. At the same time, smart meters were installed on the 12 transformers to monitor energy consumption better. Additionally, a separate electricity network for the market street was established to reduce the pressure on the camp network, providing electricity mainly to shelters.

## Working with Partners

- **Jordanian Government:** Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, Sharia'a Court, Civil Registry Department, and Family Protection and Juvenile Department
- **Other Governmental Partners:** Japan International Cooperation Agency, King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Center, and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).
- **UN Agencies and International Organizations:** Food and Agricultural Organization, International Labour Organization, International Committee of the Red Crescent, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, UNOPS, UN Women, World Food Programme.
- **International NGO:** Blumont, Business Development Center, Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network, Finn Church Aid, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Korea Refugee Project, La Liga, Lutheran World Federation, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council, OXFAM, Save the Children, Qatar Red Crescent, Qatar Charity, Questscope, Relief International, Syrian American Medical Society Foundation, International Committee of the Red Crescent and War Child.
- **National NGOs:** Arabian Medical Relief, Blumont, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, Holy Land Institute for Deaf, Jordan Health Aid Society, and Institute of Family Health.

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