Health Sector Working Group Meeting, August 2025
Minutes of Meeting

Date: August 28th, 2025
Place: UNHCR Office
Chaired by: Dr Ruwaida Farajat-MoH, Abdallah Nsour-RHAS, and Dr. Muhammad Fawad-UNHCR
Attendees: UNICEF, UNHCR, SFWS, IMC, IOM, Caritas, IOCC, Health Appeal, CDE, IRC, Medair, TDH Italy, IRJ, CARE, UNFPA, SAMS, HI, and AMR.

Agenda:

- Updates from UNHCR
- Updates from MoH
- Updates on health services mapping exercise (UNHCR)
- Sub-Working Groups (SWGs) Updates
- Partners' Updates
- Any Other Business (AOB)

Action Point:

- Sharing the results if the second round of funding cut exercise.
- Sharing the results of health services mapping exercise.
- Partners are reminded and encouraged to share regular reports on their health projects progress with the Ministry of Health.

1. Opening and Introductions

Meeting started with a welcome note and round of introductions.

2. UNHCR Update

UNHCR - Updates on Refugee Returns

- As of August 23rd, a total of 141,230 UNHCR-registered refugees have returned to Syria. There was a 20% decrease in returns for the week of August 17–23 compared to the previous week. Of the total returnees, 24% originated from the two major refugee camps, Zaatari and Azraq, while the remaining 76% were from urban areas. At the governorate level, the distribution of returnees was as follows:

    1. Amman: 23%
    2. Irbid: 22%
    3. Mafraq: 14%
    4. Zaatari camp: 14%
    5. Azraq camp: 7%
    6. Zarqa governorate: 7%
    7. Other camps: 6%

- These statistics are regularly updated and available on the shared dashboard. Attendees who have not received access or require the data can contact the interagency email for direct sharing. It was highlighted that health programming must continue without interruption, and there should be no significant changes to the 2026 planning. The projected returnees for 2025 remain approximately 200,000.

UNHCR- Updates on service mapping:

- Brief about the purposes and the importance of annual 4Ws exercise. This year inputs were received from 16 organizations implementing humanitarian health projects in Jordan. To enhance visualization, the data received for the 16 partners has been transformed into an interactive dashboard. The dashboard will be shared with the working group members to facilitate easy access to information on service provision. The dashboard allows users to quickly identify service providers by location and service type, including primary, secondary, tertiary, and allied services. It also indicates the target populations served (Syrian refugees, non-Syrian refugees, host communities). Specific features were highlighted, such as the ability to distinguish services provided in urban versus camp settings and the inclusion

of data related to laboratory, pharmacy, and clinic services where available. The final dashboard version with guidance for navigation will be shared soon.

Updates by MoH, UNHCR, IMC and IH on the fund cut and its impact on mental health services

- MoH highlighted the funding cuts in health sector and its impact on the activities of some health partners. MoH commented on the current NGOs focus on humanitarian projects and funding challenges faced in development health projects. The recent funding reductions have adversely affected the progress of several initiatives.
- IMC highlighted that their mental health project implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH) has been closed due to funding cut. The project was providing essential mental health services across all governorates. There is a significant impact of the cuts on the MoH and the broader health sector, as mental health is one of the most affected areas. Despite continued efforts to follow up on cases through hotline services and coordination with MoH representatives, challenges remain significant. Many patients lack access to medication and psychotherapy services, which are scarce nationwide.
- Mental health services within camps (Zaatari and Azraq) continue, as these areas present heightened needs. Other NGOs such as HI have also experienced funding cuts, affecting projects like rehabilitation strategic planning and provision of assistive technologies for refugees and host communities. Ongoing efforts include new projects aiming to support rehabilitation and assistive technologies in coordination with the MoH.

- The second round of the funding cut exercise is ongoing and now includes both humanitarian and developmental health projects. The Ministry of Health is currently providing inputs related to developmental health project funding cuts. The analysis is in its final review stage and the paper aims to support advocacy efforts with donor for funding support.

4. Sub working Updates

a) Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Sub Working Group

- The scheduled meeting did not take place this week due to the unavailability of many members; it has been postponed to next month.
- Work is ongoing to update the mapping of services and to gather current contact information for key personnel. A simplified new template will be shared next week with the MHPSS working group members to collect basic updates on program changes and contact details.
- The group is addressing concerns related to fluctuations in suicide cases. Given the complexity of interpreting such data, efforts are underway to coordinate with government authorities to obtain statistics for this year, enabling comparison with previous years to better understand trends.
- Data from the camps is more accessible through the existing tracker, which is being prepared for sharing with the health sector at the next meeting.
- Attendance at the SWG meetings has declined following recent US cuts, with current participation between 13 to 14 organizations, down from around 25. Most activities are now oriented toward psychosocial support rather than direct mental health interventions.

b) Reproductive Health Sub Working Group

- A call was made for agencies interested in chairing the sub-working groups in Zaatari and Azraq camps. Four nominations were received. The nominations will first be discussed with the health sector to ensure a transparent selection process. The new chair is expected to be announced by mid-next month and to start convening meetings in September.
- UNFPA will continue supporting coordination in both camps, aiming for a more regular and sustainable approach. Emphasis was placed on encouraging agencies already active in the field to take ownership and provide clear solutions for coordination challenges within the camps.

- An agreement has been reached on the referral pathway from camps to the nearest Ministry of Health hospitals. Collaboration between IMC, JIHAZ, and UNHCR ensures updated criteria and appropriate service provision for women from Zaatari. Referral pathways from IMC hospital in Azraq to the next referral point are also clear.
- The assessment of North Badia Hospital is currently pending due to ongoing infrastructure rehabilitation, which limits current evaluation efforts. Once rehabilitation is completed, an assessment will inform policymakers and donors about needed support for hospitals handling refugee healthcare burdens, aiming for a more sustainable health system.

C) NCD

- Due to fund cut, no role from UNHCR side in co-chairing the SWG and now it is just under WHO and MoH.

Partners updates:

CDE

- The final round of training for the specialized doctors has been completed. Additionally, some specialized instruments have been delivered to the Ministry of Health for their use.
- Regarding the DDS screening protocol, it is now ready. We can provide further updates on its implementation in the next meeting.

SAMS:

- Planning is underway for a medical mission in October, which will include special services such as dental surgeries for children and ophthalmology consultations.
- The Zaatari camp clinic continues to operate. Offering general practice, dental, and ophthalmology clinics, supported by an on-site lab.

- The mental health project in Irbid and Amman remains active, with ongoing service provision, invitations, and sessions.
- A rehabilitation project is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health at two locations, Bayader and Hashmia. Services include physical therapy sessions, treatment, assessments via an application, and the provision of assistive devices to patients.

Caritas

- Caritas has been affected by the funding cut and the UNHCR supported primary health care project located in downtown has been suspended.
- Other cartas projects are still ongoing. More information on funded projects will be available next month.

IRC

- Extension of cash-for-health services to East Amman, expanding beyond the previous coverage areas of urban areas, Mafraq, Irbid, and Ramtha.
- Challenges encountered in patient identification due to discrepancies in insurance directories; names provided lacked NCDS (non-communicable diseases) classification, which is essential for cohort inclusion (primarily diabetes and hypertension patients).
- Current approach involves direct community outreach and collaboration with UNHCR and Caritas to recruit patients who have discontinued their services to join the cohort.
- Health system strengthening activities are underway, including visits to Primary Healthcare Centers in Ramtha, Mafraq, and Irbid.
- Engagement with respective departments to identify service gaps, needed equipment, and training requirements.
- Planned trainings will focus on heart protocol, infection control, and overall quality control for healthcare providers.

AMR

- Continues to provide primary healthcare services through three centers in Zaatari Camp, as the sole primary healthcare provider in Azraq Camp with three centers, and across six centers in urban areas.
- AMR has completed the establishment of an additional medication warehouse in Azraq, enabling us to accommodate the full stock of medications.
- In partnership with UNICEF, AMR will begin implementing the Nutrition Project in both Azraq and Zaatari Camps starting in October.
- The second phase of the NCD Patients Project in southern Jordan was launched this month, reaching five remote areas and serving more than 200 patients with chronic conditions through a variety of specialized clinics.
- The Mobile Clinic recently conducted a one-day mission in Sarout/Zarqa, providing medical services to 400 beneficiaries.

SFWS

- Brief about the main activities carried out which fall under the reproductive health for Syrian and Jordanian in Zarqa governorate.
- They do also MHPSS diagnosis assessment where psychologist and psychiatrist are involved.
- Some other activities in collaboration with the military services.

Care

No major updates. Focusing on the planning for 2026

IOM updates:

- A joint mission by IOM and UNHCR was conducted smoothly, with refugees voluntarily agreeing to return home. Medical screenings were provided before bus departures.
- The mission confirmed the refugees' willingness to return and highlighted their concerns about moving until reaching the border.
- IOM is collaborating closely with the respective national bodies and the National AIDS Program.
- With support from the ministry, efforts are ongoing to advocate with donors to secure funding for Jordan.
- Future lifesaving activities will continue without interruption. Only workshops and training sessions will see reduced scope.
- Essential services, including medical screening, medication provision, and testing, will be maintained.

Medair

- No major updates. Regular activities are ongoing.

TDH

- No major updates. Regular activities are ongoing.

IOCC

- No major updates. Regular activities are ongoing.

Islamic Relief

- Ten dialysis machines have been distributed to hospitals based on recommendations. Work on the mobile clinics is ongoing.
- Able to receive any referral regarding the medical assistive equipment's.

IMC

- Operations continue as usual in both Zaatari and Azraq camps across primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare levels.

- Nutrition component is being implemented within primary healthcare services in AMR facilities in both camps.
- A partner to take over the nutrition program was identified through a competitive process; six organizations applied, and AMR was selected based on technical and financial criteria.
- The contractual agreement for nutrition services will be directly between UNICEF and AMR, a change effective a few weeks ago.
- IMC's role will transition to capacity building and light supervision of AMR until the end of the year; AMR will fully take over from October onward.
- A new pilot referral activity has been developed to improve maternal case referrals from Zaatari to Azraq hospital, with criteria established and Ministry of Health approval obtained.
- The pilot is ready to launch, aiming to assess the effectiveness of this referral system.

7. Other Business

Discussion on regular sharing for information in returns health and protection related aspects and the consequences impact on the response.

MOH emphasized on the importance of sharing information on the health projects progress as per the official letter sent from the ministry to all health partners. If the project timeframe is relatively long, they respective partners can send the report biannually. While if the project timeframe is relatively short, the respective partners can send the progress report on quarterly basis.

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