FSBN Working Group Meeting, June 2025

Date: September 8th , 2025
Place: UNHCR Amman Office
Chaired by: Hala Alnawaiseh -UNHCR, Osama Muhsen WFP
Attendees: WFP, IRW, Caritas, Medair, UNHCR, TUA, Plan International, ACF, and COOPI.

Agenda:

1. **Welcome & introductions.**
2. **Syrian Returns update.**
3. **Brief on cash for return.**
4. **ISWG updates.**
5. **Winter assistance 2025/2026.**
6. **Member updates.**
    a. **Funding updates**
5. **AOB**

Action Point:

- Sharing the used tools in the gender and protection mainstreaming training.
- UNHCR co-chair to organize a meeting with 2025-2026 winterization taskforce members to agree on guidelines of the assistance provision.

The co-chairs started the meeting and welcomed the participants.

- **Syrian Returns update.**

- As of August 30, 2025, approximately 145,000 Syrian refugees have returned from Jordan to Syria since December 8, 2024.

- In August, returns declined to about 22,000 after peaking at 27,000 in July and 25,000 in June.

- The decline is partly due to the start of the school year; however, some returns are anticipated in September due to the delayed school calendar inside Syria.

- Stability is expected in Q4, though insecurity persists, especially in southern Syria due to recent developments.

- **Brief on cash for return**

- Since January 2025, UNHCR has been providing transportation assistance via private bus to refugees wishing to return to Syria.

- As of September 1, a new pilot program provides an unconditional cash grant of 70 JOD per family member for eligible camp-based refugees expressing interest in returning voluntarily.

- The grant aims to cover costs such as transportation and other essential services, based on feedback that high transport costs hinder return.

- Eligibility criteria include having members with disabilities or chronic illness, households with children under six, and large family sizes.

- The pilot targets 10,000 refugees in camps only, while urban refugees continue to receive transportation support via bus.

- The process includes an interview and eligibility assessment through help centers, followed by cash disbursement via wallet or withdrawal. Cases are closed in the data system after cash receipt.

- Monitoring and follow-up with Syrian authorities are planned to track returns and program impact.

- **ISWG updates.**

- No ISWG meeting conducted in August; recent updates were shared from summer recaps on returns and cash grants.

- Gender and protection thematic focal points have conducted trainings and prepared tools to support mainstreaming in sector programming.

- The used tools in the gender and protection mainstreaming training will be shared after the meeting as voluntary resources to assist sector members' programming stages.

- Discussions on potential camp consolidation due to possible population reductions are ongoing, with scenarios ranging from 30% to 50% reductions considered, but no concrete decisions made yet.

- Most returns remain urban rather than camp-based; camp return rates remain below 10%.

- **Winter assistance 2025/2026**

  - Several agencies plan winter assistance, including multi-purpose cash (MPC) and in-kind support, targeting vulnerable families in various governorates.

  - Caritas: No winter assistance planned for refugees but will provide in-kind assistance (gas, blankets, jackets) for local communities.

  - IOM: Plans to provide cash winter assistance to approximately 800 families nationwide, targeting those not registered with UNHCR or not receiving any assistance, subject to funding availability.

  - UNHCR: Will provide cash winter assistance to 60 families with amounts based on family size; some agencies have fixed cash amounts for winter aid.

  - Coordination on targeting and booking to RAIS platform is ongoing to avoid duplication and ensure alignment across agencies.

  - Discussions raised on implementing fuel vouchers and gas refill mechanisms for heaters, with partners exchanging practices for distribution efficiency.

- **Members and funding updates:**

❖ UNHCR cash-for-return pilot started with positive initial interest; monitoring and evaluation planned.

❖ Ongoing livelihood programs for refugees with long-term support, including inclusive education and protection-focused projects funded by Italian Cooperation.

❖ MPCA programs under various donors (e.g., Germany, SDC) continue with some projects ending by December 2025.

❖ Verification exercises completed for 95% of assisted cases confirming active and eligible status; 5% deactivated or returned.

❖ Plans for winter-related CBI programming and employment projects discussed, pending funding approvals and ongoing consultation.

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