

Area Coordination Meeting - Al-Ramtha
Governor's Office, Al- Ramtha
Wednesday, 2 May, 2012

Chair: Al-Ramtha Governor, UNHCR Regional Refugee Coordinator

The Governor opened the meeting with a note of thanks to all participants for supporting the coordination mechanism and welcomed the UNHCR Regional Refugee Coordinator.

As an introduction to the meeting, he gave a quick overview of the latest developments regarding the Syria situation. He underlined the significant drop in arrivals in the last ten days, saying that the reasons for this remain unclear. He announced that Cyber City (CC) transit centre would be ready to receive Syrians within days but that support from the humanitarian partners is still needed. He also gave an update on the situation King Abdullah Park (KAP), mentioning that more than 50 containers would be made available within the next week. As a last point on the sites, he mentioned that the municipality had agreed to make more land available, and that efforts were ongoing to identify a location close to CC and KAP.

As far as the situation in the host communities is concerned, he stressed the fact that all services and infrastructures suffer increased pressure following the presence of the Syrians. The situation in the sectors of water, health and education are particularly worrying. He ended his introduction stressing the fact that despite the drop in arrivals, the urgency remains the same as local communities are overburdened and the possibility of a larger influx should be borne in mind.

The UNHCR Regional Refugee Coordinator welcomed the establishment of the new coordination structures and repeated that all partners' duty is to stand behind the Government of Jordan. He thanked the latter for its continued open border policy. He underlined the fact that local NGOs should be fully on board, as they the beneficiaries the best. He welcomed all contingency planning efforts but expressed his hopes that the opening of camps could be avoided, as the option of hosting Syrians within the communities remains the best solution.

After these introductions and reminders on the overall strategy, the UNHCR Senior Field Coordinator presented the following agenda points: briefing on the maintenance and management activities in the transit centres, construction activities carried out at the sites, overview of the assistance given to Syrians by the host communities and presentation of activities by humanitarian partners.

1) Maintenance and management of the sites

The UNHCR focal point for the Syria operation in Al Ramtha area said he worked closely with the Governor's Office and other actors. The main elements that came out of his situation overview are as follows:

- Two sites are currently functional, one for families (Bashabsheh) and one for single males (sport stadium)
- Cyber City complex soon to be opened and consecutive relocation from Bashabsheh progressively organized
- Focus on Bashabsheh will not be lost though, as 100 to 150 persons still arrive each day (90% of them joining the host communities), but it will become a transit centre *stricto sensu*
- The single males residing at the sport complex will be relocated to KAP as soon as it opens
- In Bashabsheh, main services are provided by the municipality (Admin, security, health, water,...), the rest of the actors come in support of the authorities
- The Governor's Office will nominate a single focal person to organize the administration of Bashabsheh transit centre
- Most of the new arrivals are registered during evening and night, JHAS staff are permanently present in the site
- UNHCR is in the process of handing over computers, printers and other material to the local administration in order to facilitate their work
- On-site coordination meetings have started in Bashabsheh to avoid gaps or duplication of assistance
- Regarding the maintenance of the site, cleaners have been deployed inside and outside the buildings; crowd control agents have also been deployed
- Technical quick fix teams are operational through JHAS (carpenters, plumbers, electricians,...) and are available 24/24

He also underlined three major issues:

- The supply of water is not regular and represents a major constraint
- Standard procedures regarding the distribution of private donations (cash and in-kind) are needed
- 95% of the Syrians in Al Ramtha live in host communities. Local resources are strained. Humanitarian actors must find a way to address this situation

The UNICEF Emergency Coordinator then commented on the issue of water in Bashabsheh. She mentioned that water supply was not considered as an issue after the first assessment. Focus was on hygiene at the time. But water supply has become a constraint now and discussions have been ongoing on water-trucking as an interim solution. But the problem will need to be tackled at the source. UNICEF will keep all actors informed. UNICEF also mentioned the ongoing psycho-social and child protection activities of their partner Noor Hussein Foundation with the Syrian families.

The Governor confirmed a focal point would be appointed to the site. He made it clear that the response in Bashabsheh had been done on an ad hoc basis until now. Means for services as water, health or security had been taken on the resources available for Jordanians in a normal context.

WFP mentioned that hot meals' distributions have started on 19 May (700 meals actually distributed, 1,200 planned). Next step will be the distribution of dry rations (rice, oil,

sugar,...) to 15,000 persons in 4 location across Jordan (including residents of CC). Distributions will start next week through JHCO.

2) Construction activities in the sites

Cyber City:

- 600 to 700 could be accommodated
- Owner and Ministry of Interior thanked for efforts
- Kitab al Sunna have done excellent work, almost finished
- JHAS has done the levelling and cleaning
- UNICEF and ACTED are working on the issue of water, water and septic tanks are on site already
- UNICEF says people can move in progressively from Monday 7 onwards; step by step approach in order not to overwhelm the site
- Opening of the site and beginning of relocation announced for Monday 7 May (all services, including NFIs, food and water will be ready by then)
- A relocation plan should be drafted in order to organize transport of beneficiaries (manifest)
- Owner of CC suggests he could provide busses for the transport
- All actors should be present before the arrival of the first convoy (maintenance team, service providers and Government)
- It might take some time for the six planned containers to arrive at CC, in the meantime UNHCR will provide local authorities with office space in its rub hall.

King Abdullah Park:

- Kitab al Sunna has done the works so far in close collaboration with JHCO
- 80 containers will be on site soon (50% Kitab al Sunna, 50% UNHCR)
- UNICEF works on the water installations (3 septic tanks on site)
- JHCO will do the electricians
- The issue of idleness in the site still has to be tackled

3) Assistance given to the Syrians by the host community

Head of Ramtha hospital

- All Syrians are welcomed in local hospital and health centres
- Health services for Syrians are free
- Most of cases are chronic diseases, cases of wounds (gunshots) are also reported
- A well-functioning referral system is in place with other hospitals
- 100 surgeries have so far been conducted on Syrians, important burden on medical staff
- Referrals from the clinic in Bashabsheh are transported by ambulance
- Needs are medication, ambulances, computers, ICU, beds and rehabilitation works.

Mayor of Al Ramtha Municipality

- Confirmation that all services are overburdened

- More support of the humanitarian partners is needed to avoid protests of the population
- Willing to give perfect services but additional means are required

Mayor of Sahel Horan Municipality

- Most people crossing arrive here
- 200 families present at the moment
- Cooperates with local organizations to lessen the burden on the Municipality

Head of Water Authority

- Jordan is already one of the poorest countries when it comes to water
- Transport of water to the sites is done by municipality trucks, more means needed
- The sources of water are underground and some pumps are in a bad state, rehabilitation needed
- The presence of Syrians is very costly
- Will join the meeting on QIPs next week

4) Presentation of activities by humanitarian partners

Kitab Al Sunna

- 35,000 Syrian individuals identified over the country (6,000 families)
- 1,200 families present in Ramtha area
- Assistance provided by KAS ranges from rental assistance, over NFIs, cash, to food packages
- Will open health centre in Ramtha next week
- Additional housing units might be made available
- Assessment of a new site will take place on Wednesday 9, UNHCR Site Planner to accompany the mission

Takaful Association

- non-political, non-religious, respects the international standards of relief
- Active in three fields: relief, social and sensitization
- A special committee has been created for the Syria situation
- Assist Syrians arriving both legally and illegally
- Rely on UNHCR certificate to deliver aid
- Carry out complete screening and have biodata of beneficiaries
- A clinic established in Ramtha works three days a week
- Work under the umbrella organization, JHCO
- Suggested a mass info tool (leaflet) should be created to inform Syrians on services provided
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UNICEF

Reminds the existence of an agreement between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, all requests in this particular sector should be channelled through the Ministry

UNFPA

The Reproductive Health Emergency Specialist said UNFPA is pleased to have access to Bashabsheh clinic. She expressed the willingness of her organization to be present in the other sites as well and mentioned UNFPA might provide in-kind help to the hospital.

As a conclusion, the UNHCR Senior Field Coordinator listed two last action points coming out of the discussions:

- 1) Production of an information leaflet – all actors should liaise with Bashir (UNHCR focal point in Ramtha), for him to compile a list of activities carried out
- 2) Many technical discussions have taken place during the meeting – UNHCR will follow up with sectoral groups in Amman to see how to reach out to Ramtha

The Governor closed the meeting with a note of thanks to the participants.

Action points:

- Management system for local donations in Bashabsheh needed
- Schedule for water trucking and sewage cleaning to be shared by UNICEF
- Needs of the health sector to be channelled through the Ministry of Health, but also envisage QIPs at the local level
- Site assessment mission to be carried out on Wednesday 9 May
- Opening of Cyber City on Monday 7 May, all actors must be ready
- UNHCR focal point in Al Ramtha to come up with relocation plan from Bashansheh to Cyber City
- UNHCR provides office space for local authorities in Cyber City prior to site opening
- UNHCR will follow up with sectoral groups in Amman to see how to reach out to Ramtha
- Production of an information leaflet – all actors should liaise with Bashir (UNHCR focal point in Ramtha), for him to compile a list of activities carried out

Next meeting: 16 May 2012 at the office of the Al-Ramtha Governor

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