Shelter Working Group
January 31, 2024
Attendees: UNHCR, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Habitat for Humanity (HfH), Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), and Caritas

- **Introductions**
  - The meeting opened with participant introductions.
  - Action Item: Working group leadership will follow up with regular attendees not in attendance.
    - UN Habitat apologized and was unable to attend this month's meeting.
  - Daniella from UNHCR joined in role of protection mainstreaming advisor for working groups. Participating in working group meetings will allow her to better understand the work of partners while also identifying areas in which she can provide support to partners, respond to queries, etc.
  - Saud from UNHCR's Inter-Agency Coordination Unit will be supporting the Shelter Working Group as of February 1. Samira will be rotating to support other working groups. Saud will also be covering the Health Working Group.

- **Review of Action Points from Last Meeting Minutes & Partner Updates**
  - Action Items from November 2023 meeting:
    - "UNHCR noted that it will link UN Habitat with another partner that may fund this type of activity" (historical buildings/homes that support larger community and economic development) – HfH reported no contact and connection yet but coordination is forthcoming as activities will not be taking place until April.
      - Agenda item will be carried over to next month with actors coordinating bilaterally and sector leadership supporting coordination if needed.
      - Action Item: JHCO will reach out to UN Habitat for follow-up on one of the ongoing projects in Zuhoor.
    - "JHCO will follow up with Lina from UNHCR after the meeting on next steps for caravan donation in Syrian refugee camps." – JHCO and UNHCR signed an agreement for 500 caravans. JHCO is working on the internal paperwork to finalize. UNHCR is following up on next steps. Follow-up action point will be for JHCO and UNHCR to have a briefing on this topic.
    - "Several working group members will individually follow up with UNRWA for bilateral discussions." – HfH has completed discussion with UNRWA. Other organizations will do so as appropriate.
  - Regarding the updated Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) questionnaire – UNCR reported that the survey was finalized in and out of camps. Data cleaning is ongoing. The report will be released in the coming months.
    - Action Item: As requested by JHCO, UNHCR will get information on use of Cairo Amman Bank versus U-Wallet.
    - In general, partners are interested in an update from the VAF team and initial results. Action Item: UNHCR will follow up with the VAF team, particularly for the urban results, for a debrief and the opportunity for input prior to release of the report.
  - For ActivityInfo for 2024, the platform will be updated and go live by mid-February.
  - ***Caritas*** reported a project for cash-for-rent funded by the German government for 2024, assisting 195 families for three months with 250 JOD for those under threat of

eviction. The project is currently being registered in JORISS. Caritas will start assisting beneficiaries in March and April. The project selection criteria is according to VAF results, including the shelter and protection scores. Each beneficiary should have an eviction order from the court.

- UNHCR inquired as to whether the amount provided is in line with the minimum expenditure basket (MEB). Caritas noted that it is a flat fee. If the amount exceeds rent, the family can use the extra assistance for debts and other costs.
- JHCO inquired about the selection process. Caritas is in the process of setting up a referral system and can share the process with working group members.
- Action Item: When Caritas is ready, information on the referral process will be shared within the Shelter Working Group and with other actors and groups, as appropriate.
- Caritas has a colleague in the Protection Working Group, as well, which will connect on other relevant points to the project, such as legal aid, with UNHCR, UNHCR partners, and others.
- Action Item: Saud will obtain relevant referral guidelines and circulate accordingly. UNHCR will also support Caritas in briefing the Protection Working Group on the project.

- ***NRC*** reported that procurement of items for the camp for 2024 have begun. Winterization activities have been ongoing, primarily in Zaatari Camp. NRC has a surge Project Manager coming to support the camp, and NRC will be recruiting for the position.
- NRC minimum standards for shelters in the host community are being reviewed, as well as prioritization of shelters given situation on ground and increasing needs to better determine who to assist.
    - IOCC and HfH raised interest in participating in the standards revision process. IOCC noted that the latest sector-level standards were released in 2017 and are in need of updating. Actors discussed a joint process of updating standards for the sector in line with NRC's internal updating.
    - Action Item: NRC will share initial work on minimum standards at the next Working Group meeting.
- NRC is working with UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) on an initiative and will be holding a workshop. All Shelter Working Group members will be invited.
- ***UNHCR*** reported that, in camps, it is continuing work with NRC providing shelter support, providing new shelters, and doing shelter repair and maintenance, highlighting the refugee empowerment component, following success of last year's activities.
    - Regarding upscaling of the cash component, challenges include provision of the cash itself, whether the quantity of the cash is sufficient, and refugees using the cash for the intended purpose, particularly as the needs in the camp are high and cash may be used to meet other urgent needs. Additional data will be collected regarding the impact on the market and prices in the camp.
    - UNHCR Protection discussed the impact of cash when being used for other purposes and then refugees turning to negative coping mechanisms, such as stealing, to get materials needed for shelter rehabilitation. UNHCR and NRC discussed trainings, clarification of roles and responsibilities of participants, and managing expectations in how refugees use the cash. In 2023, of 300 households, all used the cash to repair shelter rather than using the cash for other purposes.

        - Regarding vandalism issues, especially in Azraq Camp, UNHCR noted that the concrete flooring will help to prevent this and movement of caravans. Additionally, when families move out, teams go in as soon as possible to dismantle shelters. In Azraq, the type of materials are easily dismantled and can be taken and used by other refugees. UNHCR Protection discussed the need to promote behavior that does not break laws or rules in the camp – such as vandalism or stealing. UNHCR Protection discussed brainstorming deterrents to avoid potential deportations. UNHCR conducts regular visits to households prior to providing cash or materials, visits following provision, and then visits as and after work is completed. Additionally, NRC only looks at the shelter and not at extensions.
    - UNHCR is working to increase the recycling of dismantled shelters with youth centers in the camp as part of training facilities, as well as for external use.
    - UNHCR is working to provide new shelters, including through the private sector. UNHCR is working to unify the caravan specifications, particularly so that fairness is applied to all families in the camp.
        - Action Item: UNHCR can share technical details of shelter components and plans for the camp with interested members, particularly NRC and JHCO.
    - UNHCR will also continue road repair and accessibility repair with a focus on Azraq Camp. Additionally, UNHCR will conduct rodent and vector campaigns.
    - UNHCR has refugee UN Volunteers in the camps in shelter, settlements, and energy sectors.
    - In the host community, UNHCR is working with partners, such as UN Habitat, on development plans. For example, in Mafraq, the plan will include urban areas and also Zaatari Camp. A report should be shared in mid-2024.
    - ***IOCC*** will be starting a new shelter project in March. Finalization of the project plans are being completed with the donor during January and February. The project will focus on sustainable shelter solutions, particularly for women at risk, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and populations with specific vulnerabilities (such as non-Syrian refugees). Activities will include cash-for-rent, shelter rehabilitation, and training of refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in shelter rehabilitation fields with support of small grants to conduct this work on their own. IOCC will be hiring additional staff, including a Project Manager and engineers. Qualified candidates can apply via Akhtaboot.
    - As provided for IOCC, UNHCR noted that it can provide letters of support to accompany proposals if partners are interested and coordinate with UNHCR accordingly.
    - ***HfH*** reported that a global catalogue is released by the organization focused on humanitarian responses. The upcoming catalogue will highlight the Jordan response. HfH will be implementing its communal project in Palestinian camps, in coordination with UNHCR, UNRWA, and others. The project approval process is ongoing. For its Home Equals camp, HfH has been requested to submit a proposal, and this will be underway.
    - ***JHCO*** has no additional updates beyond the ongoing coordination with UNHCR, previously mentioned.
    - Regarding the Jordan Response Plan (JRP), UNHCR has been working to align it with the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP). UNHCR expects the platform for reporting (ActivityInfo) to be launched in mid-February. Training sessions will be held with nominated organization focal points.

- **Reflections on 2023 and Thoughts/Expectations for 2024**
    - Ideas for 2024 raised by members include:
        - Go back to the shelter strategy and review within the updated context (on the ground and also 3RP vs. JRP);
        - Resume outreach and coordination with government focal points – some in roads were made with the Government [particularly Ministry of Interior (MoI)] in 2023 and now is the time to build on that;
            - The formal MoI focal point has been promoted within the ministry.
            - Action Item: Coordination should take place to meet with him and to be put in touch with his replacement.
        - Regarding Government participation, it was raised not to limit it to only Working Group attendance and participation but also larger work of the Government and its strategies;
        - Thematic areas could be the focus of working group meetings in 2024 (potential topics could be cash in shelter programming);
        - Rotating host of each meeting was successful in 2023 and should continue in 2024, including meetings at field locations;
        - Regarding visibility of the sector, there are opportunities to share success stories and information beyond only sector members and present on these at the Inter-Sector Working Group;
        - Future meetings could potentially be held in Arabic to be more inclusive of local actors and Government;
        - Request to update the standards the Working Group has previously developed, including the cash-for-rent standards and shelter rehabilitation standards;
        - Like to see Working Group continue to be at forefront of thinking for the response – for example, what does the shelter response look like in 2025;
        - Successes includes expansion of Shelter Working Group in 2023 (including UN Habitat, Qatar Charities, Green Building Council, UNRWA, and others);
        - Topic to be looked into in 2024 could be homelessness and begging (these topics are of particular interest to Ministry of Social Development) and also those leaving SOS Villages or orphanages then do not have homes;
        - Engage with other sectors in inter-sectoral linkages with an initial focus on the Protection Working Group in 2024 and to resurrect engagement with the WASH sector from what began in 2023; and
            - UNHCR Protection noted that the UNHCR protection and gender mainstreaming training could be included in the workshop with WASH.
            - Action Item: UNHCR Chair will re-engage with WASH Working Group on inter-sector linkages next steps, such as a joint workshop between members in each group.
        - Updating of the MEB was discussed with one member interested to compare the amount of cash provided by each beneficiary versus the VAF data and MEB *by governorate* with it likely that the MEB will be updated in the coming year.

- **AOB**
    - Thank you for Samira and recognition of her support by Working Group members.
    - Next week, the UNHCR Global Sector Shelter will be holding a workshop. A presentation has been requested from the Jordan Shelter Sector Working Group. Loren will be doing a presentation on Shelter in the Urban Environment in Jordan. Bernard will be doing two

additional presentations. The workshop was initially planned to be in Amman but was postponed and then rescheduled due to regional events.