

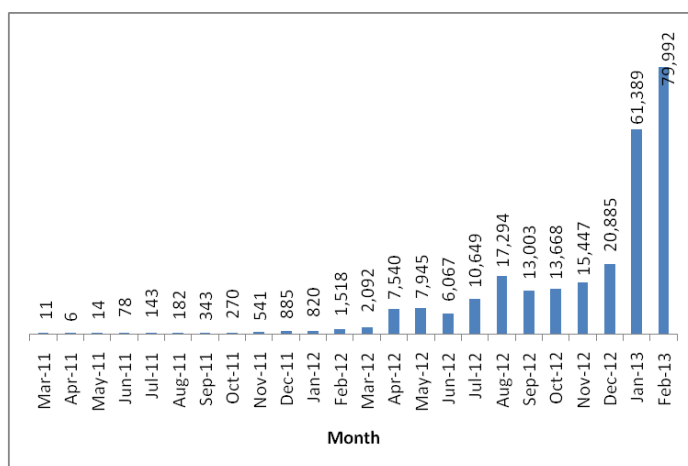


Joint NGO/UN briefing of the current shortfalls in aid and ability to meet humanitarian needs of refugees from Syria in Jordan

The scale of the humanitarian crisis

Around the region there are more than 1 million refugees, and the shortfall in support for all countries cannot be ignored. The number of internally displaced Syrians, as well as Iraqis and Palestinians trapped in Syria, demonstrates the huge potential for the refugee crisis to escalate.

Jordan currently hosts the highest number of refugees fleeing the crisis in Syria, amounting to one third of the total number of refugees in the region. As of 3 April 2013, 401,610 persons had arrived in Jordan, out of which 337,285 are registered with UNHCR and 64,325 are believed to be awaiting registration. There has also been a huge increase in the numbers arriving monthly (see graph).



Influx of refugees to Jordan March-11 to Feb-13

The Government of Jordan estimates that more than 460,000 refugees from Syria have entered the country since March 2011. This represents over 6 per cent of Jordan's population and is placing severe strain on the country's resources including limited water resources, education and health services, as well as state-subsidized electricity and wheat flour for bakeries. The government estimates it incurred \$251 million in costs to host Syrian refugees in 2012, and by the end of 2013 this figure may reach \$1 billion.

The vast majority of refugees from Syria (over 70%) are staying within host communities and Jordanians have generously shouldered much of the burden in welcoming refugees. As refugees often come to areas which are already poor, the mass influx has led to overcrowding, placed a strain on demand for local goods and services, and has left Syrians vulnerable to labor exploitation. Such factors threaten to exacerbate tensions between host communities and refugees from Syria and increase risks of exploitation, especially towards women and children.

A third of refugees from Syria are staying in three camps in Jordan, the biggest of which is Za'atri. As 1 April 2013, Za'atri refugee camp accommodates over 100,000 people, nearly matching the population size of the nearby city of Mafraq. With up to 3,000 refugees entering daily, aid agencies are struggling to respond to growing needs. The camp is overcrowded; there are shortages of food, water, sanitation and health facilities. Household sanitation (makeshift toilets and showers constructed by camp residents) endanger public health, as grey and black water builds up within the camp. This could be exacerbated in summer months, especially given the break-down of control over accommodation allocation. Poor living conditions, discontent and frustration have led to frequent riots at the camp. These are likely to increase as the population density increases and living conditions deteriorate due to the lack of funds to offer services according to international standards.

Shortfall in funding

As of 15 March 2013, the Regional Response Plan (RRP) is 31 percent funded, with the Jordan response receiving \$132,438,786 out of \$495,030,847 - or 27 percent of its RRP4 requirements. In addition, the RRP was developed on the estimation that the number of refugees from Syria may reach 300,000 by the end of June 2013 yet this figure has already been surpassed and there are still over 10,000 people seeking refuge in Jordan each week. The limited funding affects the ability of agencies to meet growing needs, reduces the quality of the refugee response in Jordan, and ultimately increases the poverty, vulnerability and suffering of those that have fled their country in search of refuge and protection.

Unmet and growing needs

- Within host communities many refugees are not able to afford rent prices and avoid eviction, are living in sub-standard accommodation and are unable to afford adequate food or other basic necessities. Of 73,000 individuals considered vulnerable, 40,000 are receiving cash assistance (typically offered for three months only) and 33,000 remain unserved.
- In camps an estimated 183,000 new tents are needed to meet the expected new influx of refugees at an expected total cost of \$146 million. This figure is for an expected six month tent life span only.
- \$34 million is required for all food assistance programmes from April to June 2013, including voucher assistance in Jordanian communities, welcome meals for new arrivals and the continued food assistance in Za'atri camp. This not only fulfills the nutritional daily requirements but also helps prevent negative coping mechanisms. Food voucher assistance provided to refugees living in Jordanian communities builds links as refugees participate in the local communities and stimulate the local economy including the promotion of local production and markets.
- \$18 million is needed for water and sanitation services in camps and host communities to avoid a drastic scale down before the end of June.
- Currently 29,400 Syrian children are enrolled in Jordanian public schools, putting pressure on the public education system. A further 5,400 children are enrolled in the school in Za'atri and construction of two additional schools is underway. However, thousands of newly arrived children will not be able to get an education unless the response receives \$1,100,000 for the next six months to cover teacher's salaries and

school supplies. Resources also need to be available to reach the 75% of school-aged children who will not attend formal education, as well as the 25% who will.

- Although the Government of Jordan has committed to provide health services to Syrian refugees staying in host communities for free, access to health care remains a problem; demand being higher than capacity available. Inside the camp, health facilities cannot cope with the increasing numbers. Hospitals and clinics are situated far away from some areas of the camp and there are limited ambulances available. An increase in respiratory infections, watery diarrhoea and influenza-like illness has been reported. This may be exacerbated with the onset of summer and high temperatures.
- There is a need for increased psycho-social support and mental health service provision for those who have experienced severely distressing events related to the conflict such as the loss of family members, subjection to or witnessing of violent acts, and conflict-induced physical disabilities.
- While protection programs have increased in 2013, programs for child protection and response and prevention of gender based violence are underfunded. Minimum standards of child protection and for preventing gender-based violence are not being met. This means organizations are unable to invest in specialized medical care, emotional support, safe spaces for children to learn and play, family tracing and safety and prevention information for women and children. It also means that protection is not adequately mainstreamed throughout shelter, water, sanitation, and economic assistance.

Recommendations

We urge the international donor community to:

- 1) Act to ensure that the pledges made in Kuwait on 30 January are delivered as soon as possible and provide additional funds to meet spiralling needs. These funds should be provided through a variety of funding mechanisms including UN, NGO and Government. Ensure that host countries and local host communities also have the support and access to resources required to deal with the influx of refugees, recognising that this is a humanitarian crisis for host communities as well as refugees.
- 2) Coordinate assistance with the UN response plans to ensure efficient use of resources. The Organisation for Islamic Co-operation and League of Arab States could play a role in facilitating coordination between the Gulf donors and the UN.
- 3) Be transparent in where they are targeting their humanitarian funding so that gaps can be identified and addressed under the leadership of the HCT.
- 4) Ensure that flexible, longer-term funding is available to enable aid agencies to prepare for the summer and provide sustainable livelihoods options, which will allow Syrians to provide for themselves and maintain their dignity.

For more information, please contacts:

Claire Seaward, OXFAM Syria Response Campaigns and Advocacy Manager.
CSeaward@oxfam.org.uk +962 (0) 776738595

Tala Kattan, UNHCR External Relations Officer. Kattan@unhcr.org +962 (0) 799783186