

Communication with Communities (CwC)

December 2020

Over **916,000** SMS sent to more than **165,000** persons of concern, covering different topics.

67 posts made through Facebook and Twitter with a combined reach of about **1,256,043** individuals, covering different topics.

579,824 phone calls handled by UNHCR Helpline (IVR), with basic needs (assistance) being the top reason for calls at **68%**.

7 messages sent through WhatsApp to front line colleagues, CSCs and community groups.

Community-Based Protection colleagues unit provided counselling for **1,791** Persons of Concern through phone calls, and **127** online and in-person activities attended by **4,988** participants.

Increase in followers by **8,051** on Facebook and **278** on Twitter.

Background

Communication with Communities (CwC) is a key element of UNHCR's protection and operational response. The priority of CwC activities is to ensure that refugees receive the right information in a timely manner, in order to preserve their protection, access to services, well-being, and to prevent fraud and protection risks.

UNHCR pays close attention to the occurrence of rumours by monitoring social media platforms, considering fraud and protection risks that they may generate, especially with the increase of resettlement opportunities. To prevent such risks, UNHCR shares information both proactively and reactively through various communication channels.

Using different communication tools is essential considering that the refugee population in Jordan is diverse in origin, backgrounds and locations and the fact that some messages concern either the entire refugee population or specific groups.



UNHCRJordan/Lilly Carlisle

Communication Channels

Social Media remains the most powerful communication channel in Jordan. It allows UNHCR to publish different information at no cost* and is a key tool in communicating with refugees given its popularity:

- **Facebook:** UNHCR Jordan's Facebook page currently has **159,395** followers, a significant majority of whom are refugees, and with a growth of **5%** compared to the previous month. In December, **19** posts were published on UNHCR Jordan's page, of which **10** are related to CWC, reaching a combined total of **1,099,196** individuals, and covering topics such as information and news for refugees, general news, donor highlights, among other. In December, activity maintained a high level compared to previous months, in terms of engagement and reaction. Link to page: <http://bit.ly/2HjRBn5>

Furthermore, UNHCR Jordan's Facebook page receives messages from its followers, requesting information on certain aspects of files for registered POCs. For reasons of capacity and protection concerns, UNHCR Jordan does not provide any tailored answer through its social media portals, especially because administrators cannot verify the identity of the sender. For that reason, an autoreply was enabled to the messenger tool; the script is available in **Annex I** (below).

Finally, comments on all published posts are being monitored to make sure none of them contain any details that could affect the protection status of persons of concern; comments containing file numbers, phone numbers, contact details, addresses, insults, or swear words are being removed on the spot. Simultaneously, comments that are considered harmful or containing hate speech or discriminatory/derogatory material that might seem offensive to followers or persons of concern are also being removed. Any comment that may be considered spam or an advertising attempt is also being removed and the user gets blocked; this is to avoid the possibility of exploitation or harassment of any of UNHCR's persons of concern. As of September, **UNHCR Jordan started replying to comments** of the users by providing standard answers, in line with the general FAQs and messaging. This initiative, continuing throughout December, increased the engagement of users on the posts and helped clarify certain announcements/messages.

*In addition to UNHCR Jordan's official social media accounts, an agreement has been set in place with two independent pages ("Syrians Gathered in Jordan" and "Syrian Diaries in Jordan"), with a combined number of followers exceeding **120,000** people, to take content from UNHCR Jordan's Facebook page and share it further through their pages. The support comes in a will to spread any announcement or piece of information that could of use to persons of concern in Jordan.*

Links: <https://goo.gl/jBc49L> and <https://goo.gl/deKPxS>

- **Twitter:** UNHCR Jordan's account is followed by some **27,855** followers, but with the help of the "retweet" tool, certain Tweets reach a larger audience. In December, **48** Tweets were created to disseminate information of interest to refugees and general public, reaching a combined total of over **156,847** individuals.

Link to account: <https://twitter.com/UNHCRJordan>

Note: in case any person contacts UNHCR's Facebook page or Twitter account by any form (comment or message) to report a claimed fraud issue, exploitation attempt, or any type of misconduct, the message gets forwarded to the concerned unit, copying the Anti-Fraud focal points.

COVID-19 and Remote Services remain the major highlights of CwC during the month of December. However, a focus was set on assistance and registration-related content with the beginning of winter cash assistance programme and roll out of remote services processing. CwC content covered social media posts (**19** posts on Facebook and Twitter combined), **2** Facebook Live sessions of the #AskUNHCR series, WhatsApp messages (**7** messages), SMS and e-posters.

Rumours and misinformation, especially in the current circumstances, still take place more than usual. During the month of December, rumours that UNHCR was alerted of by field colleagues, POCs and community representatives covered mostly fraudulent or incorrect information on certain services – resettlement namely. UNHCR Jordan develops messages in a timely manner and circulates these announcements to wide audiences through all necessary channels (social media, WhatsApp, Info-Sharing Group, CSCs, JOHUD’s online magazine, etc.)

#AskUNHCR: a new initiative, launched during the month of September, it is a series of Facebook live Q&A sessions on different topics. During the month of December, two episodes were held on **resettlement** (<https://bit.ly/348f0DK>) and **the UNHCR Helpline** (<http://bit.ly/37szXeO>). This allowed POCs to ask questions directly and receive answers on access to these services and related information. These two episodes were successful in terms of reach, garnering around **420,000** views combined and exceeding **140,000** in engagements (comments, post clicks, shares and reactions) alone. These sessions were put on hold during the holiday season and are set to relaunch towards the end of January 2021, to occur once biweekly addressing different services of UNHCR. Reception by POCs is positive and encouraging, measured by the level of engagement and interest displayed.

Help Site Jordan was launched on 8 April 2020. It is a **website** addressing POCs in Jordan and displaying detailed information on services provided by UNHCR and partners, in addition to links to other platforms, phone numbers, and media. The information is available in Arabic and English to ensure accessibility to all POCs in Jordan. During the month of December, the Help Site Jordan received **23,156** visitors on **34,117** sessions and **87,816** pageviews. **87.5%** of users are in Jordan, while the remaining **12.5%** are in Lebanon, Turkey, USA, Egypt and over 80 other countries respectively.

Frequently Asked Questions are published on the site to provide POCs in Jordan with more details and information on certain services. Furthermore, a ‘**How To**’ template is available on the site, connecting Google search engines with the site to redirect users, based on pre-identified keywords. To date, **12 FAQs** and **4 How To’s** are marked up, with an expected expansion in the coming weeks to include more services.

Info-Sharing Group: in order to increase awareness of all actions taken in terms of communication among all units and offices of UNHCR Jordan, the Info-Sharing Group continued to be a key platform to disseminate information among staff ensuring that all front-line colleagues are on the same page when it comes to communication with communities and are aware of any recent announcements. This group was heavily relied on for colleagues to disseminate CwC material among counterparts, refugee groups and partners.

During the month of December, **7** announcements were shared through this group, mostly echoing posts published on social media, with topics covering **COVID-19 awareness**, **education opportunities**, **updates on services** and **anti-fraud awareness messages**. Members of the group are engaging to clarify certain matters when approached by POCs on selected topics, such as assistance, resettlement and access to services.

Bulk SMS Messaging facilitated by Zain Jordan has also been a powerful communication tool, allowing UNHCR Jordan to target audiences based off any set of criteria (nationality, location, education level, age, gender, marital status, etc.). During the month of December, over **916,000** SMS were sent to more than **165,000** recipients to communicate information on different topics, related to education, assistance, registration, resettlement, etc.

UNHCR Helpdesks are one of the face-to-face communication tools that UNHCR depends on to deliver services of counselling, protection or assistance related. In-person Helpdesks activities remain on hold

during the month of December. Nevertheless, the Community-Based Protection team is handling outreach and counselling activities through phone calls (remote counselling). Cases are referred by the Helpline IVR, CSCs, and UNHCR partners. Throughout 2020, **40,245** individuals received counselling and **59,500** participated in online and in-person activities.

UNHCR Helpline (064008000) answered **579,824** phone calls from persons of concern through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in December on all services provided by UNHCR (assistance, resettlement, protection, education, health). **Basic needs** (assistance) remains the top reason for calling.

Bridges of Communities is a group that was established in April 2019 to enhance the operation's Communications with Communities (CwC) and Accountability to Affected Population (AAP). Comprising of 18 Syrian, Iraqi, Sudanese, Somali and Yemeni community leaders/representatives, the group meets on regular basis with UNHCR to discuss issues and challenges they face.

WhatsApp Tree: facilitated by UNHCR and the Bridges of Communities group, UNHCR has established a WhatsApp tree where information related to services available, recent announcements and addressing rumours among the community are shared alongside it acting as a two-way communication tool such as referral of vulnerable cases. In total the WhatsApp tree consists of around **85 groups** comprising of over **11,000** refugees.

The main needs voiced by refugees and captured through the different channels are as follows:

- **Financial assistance to cover rent and essential basic needs** remains the most-commonly expressed topic by refugees;
- **Winterization:** many followers continue asking about winter cash assistance, as we go are in the middle of the winter season now; some refugees expressed confusion between the different types of assistance (COVID emergency assistance, winter cash assistance and monthly financial assistance); some content was created to address this misunderstanding;
- The second most-common topic trending among refugees is the remote services such as registration/renewal of **Asylum Seeker/Refugee Certificate, Resettlement, and Refugee Status Determination**. Some questions still revolve around the appointments of the remote interview and the collection of the certificate. CwC messages and material was developed to address the questions. Replying to comments continues to help contain the spread of misinformation;
- Increase in requests by Yemeni POCs for UNHCR to cancel their ASC/RC – de-register them – in order to enable them to issue formal residence permits/work permits in Jordan;
- Fewer awareness material on COVID-19 is published on social media. Help site remains the main platform to host the awareness material, as the reception by the public on social media remains rather negative towards such content;
- **Rumours and misinformation** spread at a slower and less frequent rate within the community than during the previous months; nevertheless, anti-fraud material is still being published as a reminder throughout the different digital platforms on a monthly basis.

Expected projects to be implemented in 2021

- More Help site pages on remote services
- Anti-Fraud campaign to launch in January to fight fraudulent activity on digital platforms
- 3 episodes of #AskUNHCR on COVID-19 Vaccines, Anti-Fraud and Livelihoods in January and February
- Launch of a series of animated videos on UNHCR services in January
- Engage a few more independent Facebook groups/pages run by the community to take content from UNHCR Jordan's Facebook page and share it further (discussion currently ongoing)

Annex I

Message was temporarily changed to reflect the changes in working modalities in Jordan due to COVID-19.

Facebook autoreply in Arabic and English:

“مرحبا،
كي نتمكن من تطبيق أعلى معايير الحماية وسرية المعلومات والشفافية، يوسفنا إعلامكم بأنه لا يمكننا الإجابة عن أسئلتكم عبر مواقع التواصل الإجتماعي.
نعذر عن عدم قدرتنا للاستجابة لأي اتصالات من خلال خط المساعدة التابع للمفوضية (064008000) في الوقت الحالي، حيث أن المجيب الآلي فقط هو المتاح في الظروف الحالية.
لطلب المساعدة بأية مسائل قانونية أو بما يخص الاحتجاز، يرجى الاتصال بقسم الاحتجاز التابع للمفوضية (0796742200)، أو أرض – العون القانوني (0777387221) والمتاحين على مدار الساعة طيلة أيام الأسبوع.
إذا كان لديكم أسئلة حول فيروس كورونا أو الوصول إلى الخدمات المتعلقة بهذا الفيروس، يمكنكم الاتصال بالخط الساخن التابع لوزارة الصحة من خلال الرقم 111 والمتاح على مدار الساعة طيلة أيام الأسبوع.
إذا كانت لديكم أية حالة طوارئ صحية تهدد بالحياة وكنتم بحاجة إلى الحصول على خدمة أو رعاية طبية، يرجى الاتصال بخط الطوارئ الموحد 911 والمتاح على مدار الساعة طيلة أيام الأسبوع.
شاكرين تفهمكم،
المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين في الأردن.”

“Dear Sender,

To maintain the highest standards of protection, confidentiality and anti-fraud measures we cannot answer your questions through our Facebook portal.

In the time being, the UNHCR Helpline (064008000) will only be operating through its interactive voice response system. We apologize for not being able to answer any calls.

For assistance in legal issues or detention, please call the UNHCR Detention Line (0796742200) or ARDD Legal Aid Emergency Line (0777387221). Both lines' working hours are 24/7.

If you have questions about corona virus or access to related services, you may get in touch with the Ministry of Health through the hotline number 111. Working hours are 24/7.

For emergency medical cases, you must call the Civil Defense through their unified emergency hotline number 911, who will provide the best advice.

Thank you.

UNHCR Jordan”

Contacts

Francesco Bert, Senior External Relations Officer, bert@unhcr.org

Hassan Mohammed, Protection Officer (Community-Based), mohammeh@unhcr.org

Lilly Carlisle, Associate External Relations Officer, carlisle@unhcr.org

Meshal El-Fayez, Senior Communications Associate, elfayez@unhcr.org