

## UNHCR Jordan COVID-19 response

### 2021 begins with an improved epidemiological situation, first vaccinations administered

The last month of 2020 saw an improvement of the epidemiological situation in Jordan, with the number of daily cases decreasing significantly. The total case count currently stands at 310,967, with 4,091 deaths. The first batches of the COVID-19 vaccine from Sinopharm and Pfizer-BioNTech, approved by JFDA, arrived in Jordan in the end of December and beginning of January and vaccinations started on 13 January. The government also announced a lift of some of the restrictive measures, including Friday lockdowns, and a gradual reopening of many sectors, including schools.

In refugee camps, COVID-19 cases currently stand at a total of 2,094 of which 1,891 (90%) have recovered, while nine persons of concern (PoCs) have passed away because of COVID-19. The number of PoC cases remains below the national average, with 1.7% of the refugee camp population having tested positive, compared to 3% of the total Jordanian population. Aligned with national policy so far, refugees are included in the national COVID-19 vaccination plan and, as such, are entitled to receive the vaccine free of charge. The fact that Jordan has been one of the **first countries** in the world to start vaccinating refugees has been highly praised by top UN officials, including at **UNHCR** and **WHO**, as an example to follow to reduce the spread of the virus.

### In focus: COVID-19 vaccination for refugees

As Jordan has begun to carry out the national COVID-19 vaccination plan across the country, UNHCR together with MoH initiated preparations in Azraq and Zaatari camps, including identifying vaccination locations and preparing lists of the first groups of refugees to be prioritised. UNHCR has also been supporting PoCs to access the government COVID-19 vaccine platform and register.

The vaccination of refugees **commenced**, with groups of refugees living in **Irbid** and **Zaatari** receiving the first dose of the vaccine on 14 January at local health centers. UNHCR is aware of 48 refugees who have been vaccinated already and many more who have received vaccination appointments.



First refugees in Irbid receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

With the aim to combat misinformation among the population in Jordan around the COVID-19 vaccine, UN agencies in Jordan are working to encourage registration for the vaccine, through a campaign targeting refugees and Jordanians alike to promote messages and key facts about the vaccine. UNHCR is focusing its efforts on **sensitising** PoCs and **raising awareness**, both in camps and the urban population, while also continuing to ensure that all activities and services are in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures.

### UNHCR response: stay, deliver, adapt

In parallel to the launch of vaccination of the population to reduce the spread of COVID-19, UNHCR continues to respond to limit the spread in **camps**, working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate to carry out surveillance and contact tracing exercises, while confirmed cases follow the established quarantine or isolation protocols. In **urban areas**, UNHCR community-based protection teams are following-up on individual cases through phone counselling, to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on urban refugee populations and assess the needs and existing gaps in assistance. In addition to a number of health preventative measures, UNHCR continues its key activities through remote modalities:

- remote protection hotlines and newly launched **Help website** platform
- emergency **cash assistance** to over 50,000 newly identified vulnerable families
- support refugee access to **e-learning** platforms
- regular **communications** via SMS and WhatsApp to refugee populations
- upgrade of **quarantine facilities** in camps
- health screening **procedures**
- PPE provision for frontline workers/refugees