

Protecting Basic Human Rights of Refugees

Protection lies at the heart of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Protection spans from registering refugees to providing them with legal documentation, ensuring they have access to legal services when needed and protecting them from risks of gender-based violence and child protection issues. UNHCR in Jordan, along with the government, protects the basic human rights of under 720,000 refugees from different countries.

Registration and Documentation. Many refugees who flee from conflicts, persecution and hardships do not have a chance to carry all the necessary documents with them. In Jordan, UNHCR works in close collaboration with the Refugee Affairs Coordination Office and Syrian Refugees Affairs Directorate (SRAD) of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) on registration. UNHCR issues Asylum Seeker Certificates to refugees and asylum-seekers in urban settings while those in the camps are issued Proof of Registration. SRAD issues MOI service cards to Syrian refugees to facilitate their access to government services such as education and health services. Providing refugees and asylum-seekers with legal documentation **prevents statelessness** and enables them to **access services and humanitarian assistance**. As



UNHCR in Jordan was among the first UNHCR operations worldwide to introduce iris-scanning biometrics technology for its refugee registration in 2013. © UNHCR/ Jared Kohler

these documents are valid for one year and renewable, UNHCR conducts in-person and remote registration interviews and renews documents for around 40,000 refugees a month on average in its five registration centres in three urban locations – Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, and in two refugee camps – Azraq and Zaatari. UNHCR staff also travel to remote areas to conduct mobile registration for refugees who cannot come to the UNHCR registration centres.

UNHCR in Jordan undertakes iris **biometric enrolment** for refugees and asylum-seekers above the age of five years. Biometric iris recognition is known for its efficiency, cultural sensitivity, and accuracy, and has many other benefits as it provides a unique identity for every registered refugee or asylum-seeker; it strengthens access to protection and assistance; protects and preserves identities against misrepresentation and fraud; anchors and ensures continuity of an individual's digital identity over time, including tracking movement across sites within a country operation and between operations across borders; and, protects the confidentiality of refugee data.

Legal Protection. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, UNHCR has been working closely with the Civil Status Department within MOI and the family (“Sharia”) Courts within the Supreme Justice Department on **legal identity**. As a result of this cooperation, they mitigated the requirements for issuing documents such as birth certificates and life events documentation (e.g. death, marriage, etc). In 2023, over 19,700 birth certificates and over 10,000 life events certificates were issued. In addition, Sharia Courts established family reconciliation offices in the refugee camps to deal with personal status matters and mediate family disputes.

UNHCR and its partner, the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, **provide legal assistance** (counselling, assistance, mediation, and representation) to refugees facing legal issues such as eviction threats, protection risks, etc besides involvement in court proceedings. About 5,000 refugees benefit from such assistance every month. UNHCR also advocates for individual cases to prevent protection issues and to ensure that refugees enjoy the rights that they are entitled to. To this aim, UNHCR maintains continuous and consistent communication with relevant government partners. On average, in 2023, UNHCR intervened in 100 cases per month on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR also advocates for the protection of refugees through enhanced **dialogue with government officials** and **strengthening the capacity of partners including government institutions**. In addition, UNHCR targets key stakeholders from civil society, including academia, lawyers, and NGOs. UNHCR provides trainings on its mandate, international and national refugee legal frameworks, principles of *non-refoulement*, rights and duties of refugees, and sheds light on legal challenges refugees face in Jordan. In 2023, UNHCR trained over 1,500 officials through more than 70 activities including, training, workshops, roundtables and special events.

Protection against Gender-based Violence and for Children at Risk. In cases of conflicts and crisis, children, youth and women can be at heightened risk of violence. In Jordan, around 27,000 children and 12,000 women and girls are estimated to be at risk (e.g. child marriage, child labour, gender-based violence, child experiencing violence, abuse and neglect, unaccompanied and separated children, etc). UNHCR advances on protection under three pillars.

- I. **Respond:** UNHCR manages cases by providing counselling and referring them for further services and assistance (e.g. cash assistance, resettlement, etc). In 2023, UNHCR and its partners provided counselling and psychosocial support to over 4,100 refugees who experienced gender-based violence or had child protection concerns.
- II. **Prevent:** UNHCR aims to prevent these acts of violence through raising awareness and conducting prevention activities to enhance refugees' understanding of the rights of children and women. Over 3,650 individuals participated in these prevention activities in 2023.
- III. **Strengthen capacity:** UNHCR works closely with government partners to strengthen their capacities, implement joint programmes and support them in developing key strategies. In 2023, UNHCR provided training to nearly 3,000 government and non-governmental staff on various key topics of gender-based violence and child protection such as safe referrals, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, best interest of the child procedures with focus on a survivor-centred approach in general.

In 2022, UNHCR, in partnership with the Jordan River Foundation, launched a pilot project focusing on **refugee and Jordanian youth** to provide them with **guidance** as they transition into adulthood. The youth participate in activities on building emotional intelligence, forging healthy relationships, better managing time and planning for one's future. They also learn skills such as job searching, CV writing and technology tools. Over 250 youth have benefitted so far with over 60 per cent now engaged in education, community activism and livelihood opportunities.

"I used to believe that my situation as a refugee was the reason why I could not advance in life. Now, I realize it was me who had put restrictions on myself and that I can be who I want to be if I take the right steps and believe in myself,"
says Mukhlis Mohammad, a 24-year-old Syrian refugee.

Sustainability and Looking Forward. UNHCR will continue to strengthen the capacities of the government and civil society partners while enhancing collaboration through defining joint priorities and objectives, supporting them in developing legal frameworks and policies relevant to refugee protection. Building on the good practices so far, UNHCR will also continue advocating for stable protection space and the fulfilment of basic rights of refugees in Jordan.



**\$16M
NEEDED**

UNHCR is committed to **protecting refugees** of all nationalities and backgrounds. In 2024, UNHCR will continue to **renew documentation** for refugees to **ensure their legal status** while providing **legal assistance** to those who need it. UNHCR will also protect girls, boys, women and men **from any form of violence**. For this, **we need \$16 million in 2024**.

CONTACT

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