Jordan: Azraq Refugee Camp

December 2024

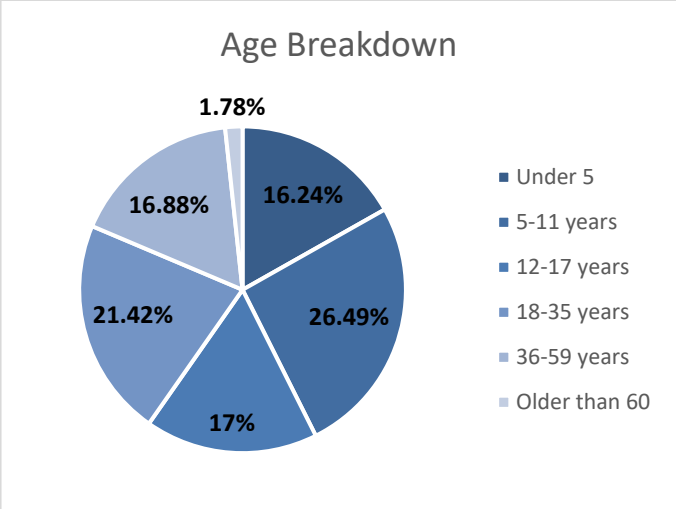
Opened in 2014 to avoid overcrowding in Zaatari camp, Azraq currently hosts around **41,000 Syrian refugees.** About 14.7 km^2 in size, the camp has four operational villages. The village-based approach aims to foster a greater sense of ownership and community among residents. Some of the key facilities in Azraq camp include a hospital, health clinics, a solar power plant, schools, and community centres. The Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, co-coordinate the camp management.

Key Figures

1 in 3 households headed by **women**

4.80 per cent of population are **persons with disabilities**

59.47 per cent of population are children



Main Activities

Registration

UNHCR is committed to ensuring that all residents of the Azraq camp are documented and possess proof of their registration. Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of the camp's population is essential for recognizing and addressing individuals' rights and needs. UNHCR oversees registration activities in both the Azraq camp and the Emirati Jordanian camp. Additionally, mobile missions are conducted to Azraq town to assist refugees residing there, providing various registration services, and issuing certificates to confirm their registration.

Protection

- UNHCR leads the Protection working group and co-chairs with partners like Institute for Family Health (IFH) and CARE the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) sub-working groups in the camp. Through its daily presence in the camp and its leading role in coordination, UNHCR monitors and addresses protection-related concerns including but not limited to documentation, safety, legal assistance, child protection, GBV, and resettlement also ensuring adequate support for disabled people and other vulnerable groups.
- UNHCR ensures partners' and government adherence to the international protection standards on case management through regular monitoring, capacity development, and advocacy with authorities on individual cases and other protection issues.
- UNHCR coordinates with the Civil Status Department of the Ministry of Interior and the Supreme Judge Department (Sharia courts) to facilitate the issuance of the essential civil status documents i.e. birth, death, divorce, and marriage certificates.
- UNHCR and UNICEF implement child protection prevention and response interventions for boys and girls who are survivors or are at risk of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation through specialised case management services.
- UNHCR and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE), oversee the Ma'An programme aimed at reducing violence in schools. This program enhances the MoE's capacity to prevent and respond to cases of child protection and GBV within educational settings. The programme includes school-based

activities designed for students and the broader community to address child protection issues and promote a safe school environment.

Basic Needs

- UNHCR provides refugees with cash package assistance to buy essential household items for their shelters. In 2024, UNHCR distributed more than USD 64,000 in Azraq camp.
- UNHCR also distributes cash assistance to all households residing in the camp every quarter to replenish essential consumables, namely, cooking gas, baby diapers and sanitary pads. As of December 2024, UNHCR distributed more than USD 2 million to refugees in Azraq camp.
- UNHCR distributed more than USD 798,000 in 2024 as top-up cash assistance to all households in Azraq camp. Each household received JOD 70 as part of this support.
- UNHCR, in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and World Food Programme (WFP), continues its two Helpdesks services in Villages 5 and 6 to provide essential troubleshooting for camp residents who face problems with accessing their cash assistance. Furthermore, UNHCR will completely shift to the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system under direct implementation as of January 2025, which means that refugees need to call directly the UNHCR IVR system through the hotline for any issues related to the cash assistance provision programs.
- UNHCR continues to transition refugee households in Azraq camp from distributing cash in hand through our implementing partner NRC, to digital financial services by providing cash transfers directly to mobile wallets owned by the households. Almost all households (98.3 per cent) in Azraq camp now have active mobile wallet accounts. To support this, there are approximately 46 mobile wallet agents in the camp. UNHCR is actively collaborating with various financial service providers to explore more financial solutions and ensure that cash liquidity remains accessible for the refugees.

Livelihoods

- A limited number of income-generating opportunities are available in the camp including through the Incentive-Based Volunteering (IBV) scheme, or through private businesses, either home-based or in the local informal market. Also, refugees with work permits have access to work outside of the camp.
- The IBV scheme enables refugees to engage in volunteering activities, such as translation, cleaning, administrative work, and more, with organizations that work in the camp and to receive financial compensation for their contribution. The scheme is an important means of allowing refugees to earn extra income to support their livelihood. During the second half of 2024, there were about 2,800 refugees (49 per cent female) engaged in IBV opportunities in Azraq camp.
- The marketplace, one each in all the four villages, in the camp hosts around 390 shops run by refugees and Jordanians. Refugees can earn a living through working in the shops and selling different things, namely, food, clothes, accessories, bikes and more.
- In addition, refugees can obtain work permits for work opportunities outside the camp, through the Azraq Camp Employment Office (ACE), established in 2018. ACE operates in collaboration with UNHCR, and the Ministry of Labour. It facilitates the issuance of work permits and provides refugees with work-related counselling services, information on labour rights, training opportunities and job matching services. By end of December 2024, about 308 active work permits were registered in Azraq camp with 14 per cent for females.

Food Security & Nutrition

- WFP provides all refugees living in camps with JOD 15 (approximately USD 21) per person every month to meet their dietary needs. Due to limited funding, this amount has decreased to 65 per cent of what they used to receive in previous years.
- A card-less EyePay system that uses blockchain and iris scanning technology is used to facilitate payments in WFP facilities. The system helps enhance the efficiency and accountability of food assistance, while also making shopping easier and more secure for refugees. WFP is also expanding the delivery of assistance through mobile wallets which supports financial inclusion of refugees.
- WFP operates a school feeding programme for students enrolled in formal schools within the camp. Specifically, students receive fortified date bars daily throughout the school year.
- UNICEF and its partner International Medical Corps address malnutrition by monitoring and treating moderate acute malnutrition cases in children under 6 years of age (children with disabilities can be treated for longer periods exceeding 6 years of age) and providing ready to use supplementary food (RUSF) PlumpySup to address malnutrition in children and pregnant and lactating women. UNICEF also provides counselling and education to new mothers, promoting exclusive early initiation of breastfeeding, and has counselling group sessions for mothers, encouraging timely introduction of complementary feeding practices to their toddlers as a part of their Infant and Young Child Feeding Program (IYCF).

Refugees can buy a variety of food items in WFP-contracted supermarkets and bread shops in the camps. @UNHCR/Mohammad Alyounes

Education

- UNICEF support the MoE to enable access to quality education for children of all ages in the camp. Over 10,700 refugee children from kindergarten 2 to Grade 12 are enrolled in formal education, while 162 children are enrolled in non-formal education accredited by MoE. Half of them are girls.
- UNICEF support operations in all 15 schools and 6 stand-alone kindergarten centres in the camp, with more than 200 refugee volunteers working as assistant teachers and another 280 volunteers supporting the operations of the schools through cleaning, maintenance and other activities.
- UNICEF run different reading programme for students with reading difficulties (Grade 5 and 6 students who cannot read at Grade 3 level) or for refugee children (KG2) to improve their foundational reading skills. Around 2,900 students and children have benefited from these programmes.
- UNICEF support disability-inclusive education through transportation for 323 children with disabilities attending MoE schools in Azraq camp.
- UNHCR works to expand prospects for higher education which is a priority for refugee students. Currently, there are around 50 refugees from Azraq camp who are studying in universities either by self-sponsoring their tuition fees, or through different scholarship schemes facilitated by UNHCR including the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative, better known as DAFI, and the Edu-Syria programme.
- UNICEF run eight Makani centres offering a safe and inclusive space where vulnerable children, youth, and parents can access an integrated package of services tailored to their age group and needs. These services are linking interventions in Early Childhood Development, Education, Child Protection and Youth Empowerment. By December -2024, Makani centres in Azraq Camp had reached more than **10,000** unique beneficiaries from Syrian refugees (**87** per cent children, **18** per cent Parents and caregivers, **58** per cent female).

Health

- UNHCR and partners continue to support refugees with access to quality primary health services in the camp including acute and chronic health consultations, sexual reproductive health, routine Immunisation, mental health, dental health, nutrition, and paediatric services. Secondary services, including laboratory tests, X-ray imaging, an emergency department, general surgeries, and delivery and paediatric admissions, are available in the camp's hospital.
- UNICEF, with partner IFH, have worked to address visual, hearing and mobility disabilities in school-aged children to improve quality of life.
- There are three primary healthcare centres and one hospital operating in Azraq, which handle a weekly average of over 4,400 consultations, refer 73 emergency, life-saving cases to secondary and tertiary facilities outside the camp and operate an average of 15 live births per week.
- While a large number of patients require specialised healthcare services that are not available in the camp, only life-saving emergency cases are referred to health facilities outside the camp and further limitations on the referral services have been applied since May 2024 due to a decline in funding.
- The primary challenge lies in ensuring the continuation of the services to meet the healthcare needs of refugees, given the constraints of the current funding situation.

More than 500 IBVs help collect and sort waste and raise awareness on waste management. @UNHCR/Mohammad Alyounes

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF leads the WASH sector in Azraq camp, providing essential water and sanitation services. The water supply system in the camp consists of two boreholes, two storage locations, and a distribution system that serves the four villages and service areas. Refugees receive between 55 to 60 litres of water per person per day in summer, and over 45 litres in winter.
- Wastewater in the camp is collected from communal tanks and transported to the nearest treatment plant. Solid waste is also collected and then sorted for recycling. The rest are disposed in a landfill.
- Partners in the camp conduct awareness raising sessions and community engagement activities on hygiene issues. Private latrines have been installed for the most vulnerable families including people with special needs or serious medical conditions, covering 20 per cent of the overall need. The rest of the population in Azraq camp uses communal latrines.

Shelter

- UNHCR provides "caravan"-like shelters called transitional shelters to refugees in the camp. There are more than 10,500 shelters of which around 9,000 are allocated to refugees. UNCHR conducts regular monitoring to assess the shelter situation, provides maintenance support, and updates the shelter allocation system.
- UNHCR upgraded all shelters in Azraq camp, adding kitchens and expanding the shelter space to 32m^2. All shelters in the camp are connected to electricity with regular maintenance provided through a private contractor.
- UNHCR provided some accessibility measures in several shelters to address the needs of those with special needs (e.g., concrete slabs for enhanced accessibility, private latrines, etc.).
- Shelter's for Azraq camp were constructed in 2014 and they are currently in need for regular maintenace, rehabiliation and repair. As such, UNHCR and its partner NRC, have established a quick-fix team to address these needs based on vulnerability criteria.

UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council Quick Fix Team repaired over 1,600 shelters in 2023. @ UNHCR / Mohammad Alyounes

- On top of providing direct shelter support, UNHCR and NRC also provide materials and capacity building for refugees enabling them to fix their shelters independently.

Access to Energy

- Azraq became the first refugee camp in the world to be powered by renewable energy when its solar power plant opened in 2017 with support from the Saudi Fund for Development and IKEA Foundation. A grid-connected solar plant, with a total capacity of 5 MWp, saves up to USD 2.75 million per year in electricity consumption costs and reduces CO^2 emissions by 6,300 tons per year.
- The power plant provides between 9 - 11 hours of electricity a day to approximately 42,000 refugees living in Azraq camp. On average, each shelter consumes around 4 kWh/day depending on the season, sufficient to operate lights and appliances. The solar plant covers up to nearly 80 per cent of the electricity needs in the camp depending on the season.
- In 2023, UNHCR signed an agreement with the government which allows for the transfer of solar energy from a newly built solar power plant in South Amman to Azraq and Zaatari camps. This complements the energy generated from the solar plant in Azraq. Thanks to this green deal, Azraq camp has been running almost entirely on solar energy, significantly reducing the environmental footprint of the camp.
- UNHCR installed fused disconnect switches in Azraq camp which disconnect and shut the circuit in case of a problem. This helped save approximately 87 per cent of the electricity bill compared to previous years and contributed to protecting electricity infrastructure.
- Energy usage in Azraq camp has grown significantly in past years due to the natural growth of the population, the impact of climate change and other factors. To ensure equitable distribution of energy, UNHCR will install smart meters enabling refugees to manage energy consumption efficiently.

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR identifies cases to be considered for third-country resettlement, coordinates and advocates with authorities to facilitate the movement of resettlement cases, enhances referral pathway with partners, and expedites the response to cases with urgent protection risks. UNHCR continues to identify highly vulnerable refugees residing in camps for resettlement.

Working with Partners

- **Governmental partners**: Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Social Development, Sharia'a Court, Civil Registry Department, and Family and Juvenile Protection Department
- **UN agencies:** International Organization for Migration, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Office for Project Services, UN Women, World Food Programme
- **International NGOs:** Action Against Hunger, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, Danish Refugee Council, International Committee of the Red Crescent, International Medical Corps, International Orthodox Christian Charities, Institute for Family Health, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, and World Vision
- **National NGOs**: Al Hussein Society, Arab Medical Relief, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, Business Development Centre, Holy Land Institute for Deaf, Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Save the Children Jordan, Institution of Family Health.

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