



Inter-agency Update: Syrians in Jordan

General Situation and Response

November 24 – December 08
2011

This update provides a snapshot of the United Nations inter-agency response to the influx of Syrians into Jordan. The response is led by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and is undertaken in full coordination with the Government of Jordan.

I. Highlights of the week

Numbers:

The number of registered Syrians with UNHCR since March up to 5 December 2011 is 1,554.

Outreach:

A UNHCR/Unicef mission visited the southern city of Ma'an, where some 45 Syrian families (206 individuals) are sheltering. The mission undertook extensive home visits, and distributed the following items: 35 kerosene stoves; 35 blankets; 45 mattresses; 6 bags of toys.

External Relations:

Two diplomatic groups visited the north: a ten person EU delegation; and an American Deputy Assistant Secretary of State.

Distribution:

UNHCR continues to deliver targeted assistance to affected populations. To date this has included regular feeding of Syrians in Salt and Ramtha, along with distribution of NFIs and the provision of one-time cash assistance to extremely vulnerable individuals. While support has thus far been concentrated on guesthouses, the next phase will focus on urban refugee support.



Children in Ramtha collecting water, 2011.

Education:

UNHCR, together with UNICEF is advocating for enrolment of children in the public school system. Differences in school curricula between Jordan and Syria are presenting a challenge, and UNICEF is due to deliver remedial education classes in Ramtha facility next week. UNICEF provides psychosocial services for children and mothers in Ramtha through a local NGO.

Health:

UNHCR and UNFPA's implementing partner, the Jordan Health Aid Society (JHAS, has from October 2011 begun to extend its services to Syrians, conducting regular weekly visits to Ramtha and Mafraq. Primary health care assistance and medication are provided at the site. Emergency cases are also referred to Government Hospitals and fees covered by UNHCR through JHAS.

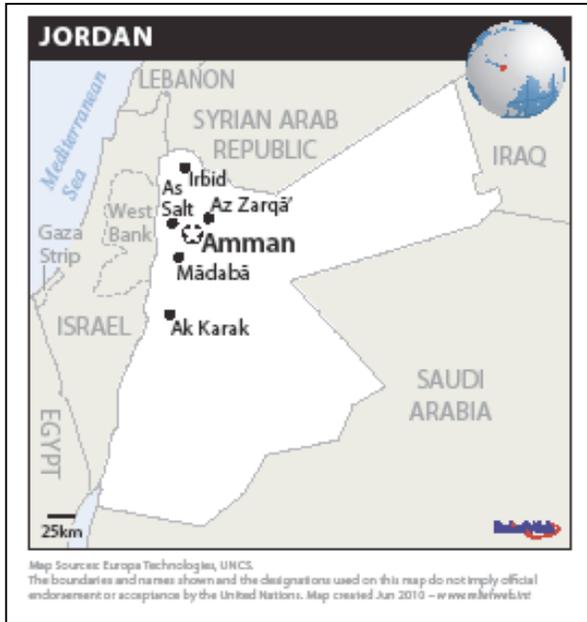
Shelter and other projects:

Rehabilitation and refurbishing facilities at Ramtha and Salt continues as part of a UNHCR winterization plan.

Protection:

Syrians arriving in Jordan continue to express concern for their safety in Syria. New arrivals describe scenes of intensifying violence inside Syria and a recent shooting at a group of Syrian individuals entering from Deraa has caused considerable concern to both Syrians and the local community.

II. Situation Overview:



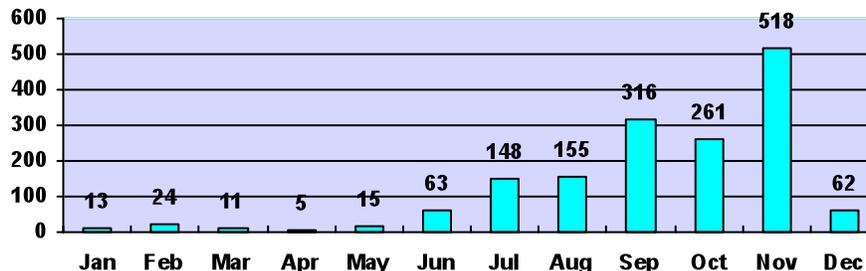
Jordan has witnessed a slow but continuous influx of Syrians into Jordan since the beginning of the disturbances in Syria in March 2011. The Government of Jordan has kept its border open.

IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO and WFP, in an inter-agency task force led by UNHCR, are providing relief assistance (food, non-food items) and other support such as refurbishment of shelter, psychosocial care and facilitating the enrollment of Syrian children in public schools. Syrians are residing in urban centers throughout the Kingdom, mainly in border towns such as Mafraq and Ramtha, but also in Amman and as far south as Ma'an and Madaba.

The UNHCR response thus far has involved concentrated efforts in the guesthouses in Ramtha, as the most vulnerable populations have been gathered there, however the next phase will be a concerted focus on urban refugee support. UNHCR is in the process of reaching out and providing basic NFIs with a view to capturing the totality of needs and numbers, and mounting a systematic programme of support to refugees and their hosts.

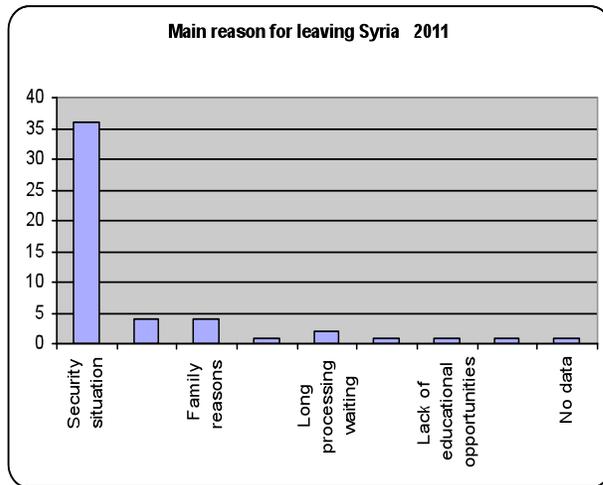
The total number of Syrians registered with UNHCR Jordan since March 2011 is 1,554. This figure does not include the Syrians that have been in Jordan for years and registered with UNHCR earlier. Below is a table showing the registration trends for 2011 up to 5 December.

Registered Syrian Individuals 2011



According to a recent survey of 78 adult Syrians over the past two weeks, 32.5% of this group come from Daraa, followed by Damascus 23.3%, Homs 18.18%, Idleb 12.9% and Hama 9.09%. The rest are from various Syrian cities. The majority reside in Irbid (Northern Jordan), followed by Amman, Mafraq and Zarqa.

Movement of Iraqi Refugees between Syria & Jordan:



Regarding the movement of Iraqi refugees in Syria, recent research found that while there has always been some movement from Syria to Jordan, this movement has increased somewhat in 2011.

Whereas in 2010 an average of 64 Iraqis arrived from Syria per month; in 2011 this had increased to 90 per month. In 2010 there is no particular pattern to the monthly arrivals, in 2011 an upward trend since July is discernible. The results of a questionnaire administered in October 2011 on 51 cases indicated that an overwhelming majority (71 per cent) left Syria owing to the security situation there.

III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

❖ **Coordination:**

UNHCR continues to maintain regular, multi-level and multi-ministry contact with the government in order to ensure that borders remain open, protection considerations are accounted for, and coordination and policy direction are shared. These positive working relations have resulted in close partnerships with the government, in particular the Ministry of Interior where UNHCR has had the opportunity to discuss and advise the MoI on plans to prepare a site for a proposed reception center/ transit facility in case of a sudden mass outflow from Syria.

UNHCR is leading the UNCT Jordan response to the Syrian situation through chairmanship of the Task Force and coordination of activities. The Task Force comprises of UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP (RC), UNFPA, UNESCO and WFP.

UNHCR has also met with heads of several community based organizations that are providing assistance to the displaced groups.

The above partnerships have allowed for a positive protection environment where the needs of persons of concern and affected communities are being holistically addressed, including the following: assistance to meet basic needs; education and remedial classes; provision of medical and psychosocial care.

❖ **Protection:**

The vast majority of Syrians who have arrived in the past many weeks have expressed fear and anxiety about returning, and most do not feel that the situation is safe enough for them to do so.

Those who have arrived have entered both legally and illegally at borders, and encountered a positive protection space in Jordan.

❖ **Community Services**

Outreach workers continue to visit the displaced Syrians in Ramtha, Mafraq and Salt in order to counsel them, assess their needs, and refer new comers to UNHCR for registration if they wish to do so.

UNHCR and UNICEF staff often in coordination with UN partners conduct weekly missions to the North (Ramtha and Mafraq) for the purpose of assessing the protection needs and the socio-economic situation of the Syrians, in addition to distributing food and non-food items. UNHCR meets with local CBOs that are in touch with families as well as with local governmental entities to try to coordinate assistance efforts and target needs as well as address gaps.

❖ **Shelter**

Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. The border city of **Mafraq** (close to Al Jaber border crossing) located 80 Km to the north of Amman. UNHCR is aware of 227 families dispersed within the local population. Other groups of Syrians are reportedly in Ramtha, Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Salt and Amman.

In **Ramtha**, another border city, near to Deraa on the Syrian side, 110 Kilometers from Amman, there are currently 110 Syrians being accommodated. The facility in Ramtha consists of six buildings – five of which are used (maximum capacity around 350 persons), privately owned and normally used to accommodate guest-workers. Their freedom of movement is restricted as a result of their illegal entry. On the other hand, the possibility of bailing continues to be implemented, allowing Syrians who wish to move out of Ramtha to do so after providing the GoJ with a Jordanian sponsor. Almost 500 persons have passed through this facility so far.

The buildings were not well equipped initially (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) but are currently being refurbished in preparation for winter. Repairs are expected to be completed before the end of the year. As part of the winterization plan, UNHCR will be providing vouchers for winter clothing, heaters, high thermal fleece blankets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, kitchen sets as well as other needed items.

In addition UNHCR has identified a number of families that entered the country legally and who are dispersed within the community of Ramtha, living with relatives or in rented houses. UNHCR is currently aware of 121 families.

In **Salt**, a group of army deserters is being hosted in a separate facility by the GOJ. The numbers are increasing and are currently at 126 persons. UNHCR is currently carrying out a profiling of this group and has been supporting them with the provision of various NFIs as well as weekly and monthly food packages and a one time equipment of the kitchen.

❖ **Distribution (Food/NFI)**

UNHCR regularly distributes food and non-food items to displaced Syrians. UNHCR has entered into a contract with "Food Security", a distribution company for the provision of food packages to the Syrians residing in the Ramtha facility. Comprehensive food packages are delivered on a monthly basis, with fresh food supplements and bread delivered on a weekly basis. UNHCR will be equipping the kitchen facilities with utensils, pots and pans, as well as electrical appliances (i.e. fridge, stove, water coolers) once the refurbishment is completed. Kitchen equipment with utensils and electrical appliances as well as NFIs were delivered to Salt.

UNHCR has provided the following materials since March 2011:

Item	Quantity Distributed	Item	Quantity Distributed
Mattresses	160	Newborn kits - layettes	2
Pillows	100	Clothing	30 T-shirts & 30 underpants
Quilts - Generously provided by IRD	370	Food Items to the value of 44961.67 USD	Meals, meat/Poultry, vegetables, fruits, dry/canned food, bread and water
Plastic Mats	68	School kits	48
Kitchen Sets	17		
Plastic sheeting/tarpaulines (4x5)		Electrical Appliances 1 fridge, 2 washing machines, 2 gas cookers, 2 water coolers & 4 water kettles	11
Kitchen Utensils	cutlery, plates, pots, pans	Ramadan Food Packages	100 packs
Hygiene kits	290	Ramadan Dates	40 kg
Tooth brushes / toothpaste	96	Eid Adha Sweets	50 kg

❖ **Education**

UNICEF as lead agency for education, has been advocating with the Government of Jordan to provide access to public education for Syrian children. At this time, the Jordanian Government policy states that Syrian children whose family have a work permit can access public schools while those without are referred to private schools which many cannot afford. UNICEF is working the Ministry of Education to find a longer term solution to meet the education needs of Syrian children. The MOE has indicated that a solution involving access for all Syrian children to the public school system would require financial support.

In Ramtha facility where some 20 children are housed along with their families (illegal entrants), UNICEF has been providing psychosocial services through Noor Al Hussein Foundation. Remedial education classes will commence beginning of next week. UNICEF continues to coordinate, through the existing Education Sector Working Group, to discuss displaced Syrians with education and psychosocial partners.

UNHCR in coordination with the local governor of Ramtha and the Ministry of Education managed to register 10 students in a private school in Ramtha. The school has graciously agreed to waive the school fees for elementary level.

❖ **Health**

The Medical Mobile Unit of the Jordan Health Aid Society (JHAS), an implementing partner of UNHCR and UNFPA, has begun to extend its services to Syrians since October 2011, conducting regular weekly visits to Ramtha and Mafrq. Primary health care assistance and medication are provided at the site. JHAS has started to provide medical services related to reproductive health targeting vulnerable-Syrian-pregnant women in Mafrq and Al Ramtha governorates through conducting home visits by a medical team consisting of a gynecologist and a nurse. The team is responsible for assessing the needs of the pregnant women, providing them with necessary medical tests and helping them with referral to public hospitals. The visits also include raising awareness on family planning methods, antenatal and postnatal care and other issues related to reproductive health.

❖ External Relations

UNHCR Acting Representative, Mr. Arafat Jamal, recently welcomed Ms. Kelly Clements, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration to Jordan as part of a visit to the region. The visit focused heavily on the Syrian situation with Ms. Clements visiting Ramtha and meeting with the sub-governor who was very positive regarding his cooperation with UNHCR. It was noted that UNHCR leadership on the Syrian situation was highly appreciated.

Other missions have included a 10 person delegation of EU member states, who also visited the Ramtha facility. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) also undertook a mission, along with a delegation from Canada, both of whom expressed a desire to focus on an urban refugee assistance approach which was welcomed by UNHCR. Finally, in recent days, Mr. Jamal undertook a mission to Ma'an in the south of Jordan, in an effort to assess the numbers and needs of the population there. The vast majority of Syrians in Ma'an face difficulties in obtaining shelter, as the city of Ma'an has little vacant housing coupled with expensive rents. UNHCR will endeavour to provide NFI assistance to vulnerable families and individuals and explore alternative shelter options in Ma'an.

IV. In the Press

Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake in Bangkok on the Human Rights Council Resolution on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic on December 2nd.

UNICEF is greatly disturbed by the confirmed reports of violent attacks on children in Syria. We share the deep concerns presented in the recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, and welcome the Human Rights Councils Special Session that addressed, among other things, these grave violations of children's rights.

The HRC's resolution reflects global outrage over the more than 300 children killed by state forces in Syria since March 2011 and confirmed reports of abhorrent abuses, including sexual violence against children in places of detention.

Such blatant disregard for children's lives must not be ignored. UNICEF urges the government of Syria to abide by its commitments to uphold the rights of children, and in particular to protect them from arbitrary arrest, detention, torture or sexual violence."

