

Refugee Registration and Profiling in Jordan



General Background

As the conflicts in the region remain unrelenting, Jordan continues to host over 750,000 refugees of nearly 60 different nationalities, the second highest in the world in comparison to its population. The refugees are predominantly from Syria, but also from countries such as Iraq, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia. The majority of refugees, over 83%, live in urban areas across the country, while 123,000 Syrian refugees live in the three refugee camps of Zaatari, Azraq and the Emirati Jordanian Camp.

While the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishes the parameters for cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of Jordan on the issue of refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR's core mandate as an organization focuses on protection of refugees, both legal and physical. At UNHCR, we seek to uphold the basic human rights of uprooted people in their countries of asylum or habitual residence, ensuring that refugees will not be returned involuntarily to a country where they could face persecution.

Registration is one of the main protection activities undertaken by UNHCR in Jordan and worldwide, and is considered a necessity in order to ensure freedom of movement, and access assistance, forming a key component of UNHCR's core mandate of protection. It also serves to help identify vulnerabilities and subsequently refer persons of concern to units within UNHCR or its partners for support.

Continuous registration has been implemented in Jordan for all nationalities. Regular verification and updates of data and processes enables UNHCR to keep information accurate and up-to-date.

UNHCR Activities

The **UNHCR registration process** includes the collecting and recording of personal data of persons of concern required for the provision of protection, documentation, assistance and identification of durable solutions. In Jordan, personal data includes biographic data and biometric data including taking an iris scan and an individual photograph.

The **interview** is the key registration activity that provides an opportunity to the applicant to present his/ her flight story, allows for the collection of the necessary personal data, review of submitted documents, verification of identity, and identification of immediate humanitarian and protection concerns.

An important component of registration is **identity management**, which is the enrolment, identification and management of identities of persons of concern to UNHCR. An identity management approach assists in managing the use of identity records for legitimate purposes, and ensures quality of data, as well as programmatic efficiency and integrity.

A qualitative interview ensures qualitative data recording, which will enable the appropriate protection actions, identification of durable solutions and targeted assistance.

In addition to the detailed registration interview, a critical component of UNHCR's identity management system is the recording of **biometric data**. Biometric iris recognition is known for its efficiency, cultural sensitivity, and accuracy. It has many benefits, including:

- One unique identity for every person of concern registered;
- 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.

In 2018 UNHCR Jordan introduced a **self-renewal methodology** in registration procedures, the first operation globally to include such a methodology. The aim of this innovative project is to empower persons of concern as data owners, by enabling them to validate and update data previously collected on them during registration. Self-renewal will also be time saving for refugees, cutting down sometimes long waiting times in registration centres and increasing accessibility.

The long-term objective of the project is to enable refugees, subject to their agreement, to update their data remotely, and have access to a unique, portable, authenticated digital identity, ideally inter-operable with State population registries and Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems, as this is increasingly a pre-requisite for inclusion into socio-economic life.

The self-renewal process will be managed through kiosks that include an Iris camera for biometric verification, a monitor, and printer.

The self-renewal process consists of the following steps:

- 1) Refugee and family arrive in the REG centre for a renewal interview. Vulnerable families and individuals are prioritized.
- 2) Each member of the family will check their iris through the IrisGuard Eyehood camera.
- 3) Once the iris biometric is verified, a pre-populated renewal form will be generated, with data drawn from proGres.
- 4) The refugee will review, validate and update data as needed on the physical form.
- 5) The process will be repeated for all family members.
- 6) Once the pre-populated form has been checked and updated, the family will go through to a REG caseworker to make the changes on proGres, and to receive an updated Asylum Seeker Certificate.

Registration is conducted at the registration centres in Amman, Mafraq and Irbid where new arrivals undergo an interview, are identified for vulnerabilities (and subsequently referred to other units or UNHCR partners for support), undergo an iris scan, and receive an asylum certificate (valid for six months) and an appointment slip for Refugee Status Determination.