

Alert

Jordan

Rapid Relief to Iraqi Refugees in Jordan

Geneva, 13 August 2015

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

As of 31 July, nearly 30,000 Iraqis were registered with UNHCR in Jordan. Almost 60% hail from (IS) controlled areas in Ninevah, Salah Al Din and Anbar governorates. Third-country resettlement is expected to remain the primary durable solution for Iraqis in 2015 with approximately 1,500 departures. While the security conditions in Iraq explain the lack of interest in voluntary return, assistance and services are often insufficient to meet the needs of those refugees who remain in Jordan. (<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486566.html>)

Their situation is dire, and could be described to be at crisis levels. A number of contributory factors can be attributed to the prevailing situation; among them lack of funding to respond adequately. They also do not have economic opportunities. Many of these refugees face a number of challenges ranging from the lack of access to life saving medicines and medical care, food and sufficient public health possibilities. A number are staying in host communities, in church centres, community centres among others.

A survey conducted last week by ACT members in Jordan in preparation for this alert shows a desperate need for immediate medication assistance for those suffering from chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, arthritis, cancer; need for minor surgeries for those who have broken and fractured bones among others. Some told stories of how they were shot whilst fleeing, for example could be on a leg, hand in the skull and how they suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. They also need food and basic sanitation items. Those on medication revealed the dilemma of needing to take food on empty stomachs. A number of refugees that ACT members talked to during the survey survive from each day to the next and do not have much hope, but they remain holding on.

Estimating the size of Iraqis in Jordan is difficult, as some Iraqis may have entered without a legal permit, or overstayed their permit. Parts of the Iraqi population in Jordan may therefore be reluctant to reveal their presence, in fear of deportation. UNHCR said on 28 July, 2015 that living conditions for more than half a million refugees living outside of camps in the country had become increasingly tough, swelling the population of other camps. The latest survey showed 86% of urban refugees live below the Jordanian poverty line of \$95 per capita per month.

There is a very high level of unemployment rate for Iraqi refugees in host communities. Some still get remittances from Iraq but this has exposed them to a host of vulnerabilities, and in some cases resulting in cessation of transfers. It's a hard situation.

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

The humanitarian principle of humanity is at the core of this ACT response; the need to help people to live as people with whatever minimum resources might be available drives ACT members to respond. Daily bearing witness of how the situation is difficult for the many Iraq refugees calls on the members to at least do all they can, and with whatever possible means available.

Though the needs are great this response will contribute to reducing the levels of their suffering. It could be a tiny drop in an ocean, but it can help to provide lifesaving support urgently needed now.

Facing a dire situation amid no chances to be employed, poor resettlement opportunities and dwindling savings, some Iraqi refugees in Jordan have started to promote their own resilience and consider means of survival such as relying on charity organizations and individuals, but also negative coping mechanisms or integrate in the Jordanian society by getting married to Jordanians to be granted residency permits.

New arrivals continue to stream into Jordan, with a daily average of 250 people, seeking asylum through the north-eastern borders of Ruwashid. UNHCR has witnessed a sharp increase in Iraqi refugees in recent weeks with 60% of them arriving exhausted. Insufficient financial resources to pay for school supplies and transportation, depletion of savings and remittances are big challenges Iraqis are facing in Jordan.

Most of the Iraqis in Jordan have applied for resettlement. It has been reported by UNHCR that resettlement programs could take more than two years. Most refugees are still afraid to return to Iraq due to the unstable situation.

Funding to assist Iraqi refugees in Jordan is low, as the chances for many to restart a new life now further dim. Funds will soon run out to feed and house thousands of Iraqi refugees sheltering in Jordan. "There is no hope among the people. They believe the world has abandoned them and are leaving them to die", an Iraqi refugee said.

3. National and international response

There is fatigue in financial support to the national and international response of the UN, INGO's and national NGO's, combined with the financial burden and constraints resulting from the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees residing in the country. Besides; the WFP assistance has been reduced to the minimum. These facts have negatively affected the assistance of Iraqi refugees.

Jordan Response came after Jordan's Monarch voiced his support and sympathy with those persecuted groups, and he condemned ISIS violent acts. At the beginning of the crisis, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the working INGOs including UN humanitarian organisations, local churches, parishes and convents, including Caritas Jordan played remarkable deeds by responding to accommodation needs, WASH, food and non-food items, relief aid, care and attention, medical and psychological conditions of people; regardless of faith, ethnicity, colour, gender, political opinion or any other type of discrimination.

4. ACT Alliance response

As a response to the emergency humanitarian needs of Iraqi refugees in Jordan, the ACT members in Jordan conducted a rapid needs assessment survey based on ACT Alliance rapid assessment guidelines. As an outcome of this assessment ACT/JSL Forum members in Jordan prepared this alert in order to respond to the most urgent needs of those refugees with life-saving medication, food and hygiene and sanitation items. This urgent program proposes to target a minimum of 220 Iraqi refugee families which

is approximately 1760 individuals over a three months period and will be jointly implemented by ACT JSL forum members in Jordan.

The current ACT Alliance SYR 151 appeal does not cover Iraqi refugees.

5. Planned activities

The planned response will be implemented in Amman governorate and will include:

- Access to medical care and medication (Free Medical Days, and medical referrals) for about 1670 individuals needing urgent medical care.
- Food Vouchers distribution for 220 families. The targeting is strictly for those at crisis levels.
- Sanitation and Hygiene vouchers distribution for 220 families.

ACT members in Jordan have years of experience in humanitarian response in these suggested sectors from the Syria response.

6. Constraints

The main concern is that needs are greater than the available resources. There are a lot of Iraqi refugees in dire need.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org).

For further information please contact:

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