

## Alert note

## Jordan Humanitarian Protracted Crisis

**Completed by:** Fares Swais, ACT Jordan Forum Convener  
**Date completed:** 13/1/2023  
**Forum:** ACT Jordan Forum

**Type of emergency:** Protracted  
**Date of emergency (if rapid onset):**

### 1. The nature of the emergency

Reaching its thirteenth year of war, Syria remains a complex humanitarian and protection emergency both inside Syria and the neighbouring countries. Jordan hosted more than 672,000 registered Syrian refugees, however the total number is estimated at around 1.3 million refugee when those not registered are considered. Over 19,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria were also registered in Jordan. Around 90% of the Syrian refugees live outside the camps in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, Jerash, Madaba, and Zarqa. Around 130,000 Syrian refugees live in Azraq, Emirates Jordanian Camps, and Za'atari.

Around 80% of the Syrian refugees outside the camps live below the poverty line in Jordan. Most Syrian families are relying on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Before the COVID -19 pandemic, Syrian refugees living outside of camps spent more than two-thirds of their monthly household budget on shelter, leaving few resources for food, health, or education. They often resorted to negative coping mechanisms such as cutting meals, child labor, or early marriage. Urban refugees and host communities faced increased difficulties accessing basic services and earning an income because of the COVID-19 impact on wages and employment opportunities.

The impact of Syrian's refugee crisis on the Jordan's economy is high. There are significant structural issues facing the Jordanian economy: insufficient revenue, costly subsidies and a large public sector, water scarcity, and dependence on energy imports. These continue to impact growth, and the situation of Jordanians, particularly in the hosting communities, is becoming more difficult.

The crisis also has its huge impact on the socio-economic situation of Jordanians and other population segments such as Palestinian refugees and other refugee population. The crisis has incredible cost for Jordanian families, specifically the younger Jordanian workforce. Most of these Jordanians were dismissed and replaced by Syrian refugee workers, who are willing to work at a quarter of the net salary and at any time, even during weekends and national holidays. Consequently, there is an increase in the unemployment rate, which directly or indirectly influences Jordanian families

As the Syrian crisis becomes protracted, and the return of refugees in the next several years appears less and less likely, the challenges are increasing. The international community's provision of humanitarian aid is diminishing and unsustainable over the long-term. Pressure on services and infrastructure in Jordan is growing. Refugees are becoming increasingly impoverished and desperate, with negative coping mechanisms such as child labour being seen.

The crisis added increasing competition on natural resources and added more pressure on protected areas especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. It has created more pressure on ecosystem goods and services and had very negative impact on waste management that increased by 30% which was generated because of receiving more than a million of Syrian refugees<sup>1</sup>. With less than 50mL of rainfall a year, Jordan is one of the driest places in the Middle East – and one of the most water-scarce in the world. Rising temperatures and decreased rainfall are causing aquifers all over the country to dry up. Less water means fewer crops and higher food prices, which in turn puts more pressure on vulnerable households including refugees. Natural resource scarcity and import dependence are exacerbating climate change risks for Jordan. Women who are the heads of their families and are struggling to provide essentials such as food, medicine and now water, are forced to ration their water use. As prices continue to rise, they will face even more difficult decisions about how to spend their limited funds. "We cannot leave millions of

<sup>1</sup> UNDP; May 2022

refugee people and their hosts to face the consequences of a changing climate alone.” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. The impact and scale of the crisis

The scale of emergency is on large scale intervention, and the interventions of ACT members are concentrated on host communities all over Jordan where Syrian refugees. Over 750,000 people need humanitarian assistance, of those it is estimated at around 400,000 at risk of food insecurity. In addition, more than 80 % of Syrians in Jordan lives in poverty.

The protracted crisis puts extreme pressure on the essential services, infrastructure, and social sectors in Jordan<sup>3</sup>. The pressure on the kingdom’s schooling system is at its highest degree, and as a result, negative consequences for local citizens and the kingdom’s schooling system have been observed including UNRWA schools who are already overcrowded with refugee students. Some of around 40% of children, aged 5-17 years, are out of school, and they fall prey to child labour, early and forced marriage, and trafficking. More children are likely to miss out on education and are at risk of permanently dropping out.

The ability of humanitarians to deliver specialized protection services is limited, in addition to limited health care, including mental health and psychosocial support. As people are increasingly forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms given the lack of the very basics, protection risks are further compounded. According to the national strategy for health sector in Jordan 2019-2022, the main challenges faced the health sector due to the Syrian crisis were: the increasing demands for health services at a rate that exceeded the capacity of health sector, increased workloads pressure on hospitals staff, and infrastructure and facilities, negative effect on Jordanians, Palestinians, and other population segments as they are competing with Syrian refugees for the available but scarce resources<sup>4</sup>.

The primarily geographical focus of the intervention of the forum’s capacity will be governorates at North of Jordan, South, East and Amman the capital. The joint work of the Jordan Forum members has long years presence implementing activities in the proposed areas. The protracted crisis contributes directly to the increasing vulnerability of most of the Syrian population. It directly affects the development of internal economic structures and lead to rapidly increasing inflation and the loss of purchasing power of Syrian refugees.

## 3. Local and national capacity

The crisis contributes directly to the increasing vulnerability of most of the Syrian refugee population, their Jordanians host, and other refugee population segments, mainly to the development of internal economic structures and lead to rapidly increasing inflation and the loss of purchasing power of Syrian people. The current hard economic situation in Jordan directly affects the Syrian refugees and the local communities, they also heavily rely on UN organisations, as well as local and international NGOs to support them to address their humanitarian and recovery needs. The emergency response in Jordan is coordinated under the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) and currently being led by the UNHCR. All agencies, local and international, are working in a challenging environment, with decreasing financial support despite increasing needs.

The joint work of the Jordan Forum members has allowed a facilitation of implementation of proposed activities to be carried out within a transparent work implementation. ACT Jordan Forum members will coordinate with each other to ensure the proposed activities are not duplicated in the same areas. ACT Jordan Forum members will maintain communication and collaboration through monthly Forum meetings and/or through side meetings if needed. Finally, Jordan Forum members will liaise with ACT secretariat in Jordan to get any required technical assistance upon revising the appeal or consolidating the reports. All requesting members have developed their EPRP including the contingency plans. Additionally, the EPRP will be reviewed in the mid of 2023.

## 4. Key needs and gaps

Economic deterioration is now a major driver of needs. Protracted nature of the crisis has also created a situation of hopelessness. People find themselves in a desperate situation, with many unmet vital humanitarian needs such as access to 1. sufficient food, 2. safe shelter and basic non-food items, 3. basic health services and facilities, 4. livelihood activities, 5. protection services, and 6. education opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR; July 2022

<sup>4</sup> National Strategy for Health Sector in Jordan

The dire situation has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups, people with special needs, and disadvantaged communities, such as female-headed households, older persons without family support, persons with disabilities, and children<sup>5</sup>.

There are key priorities to support Syrian refugees in Jordan:

**Livelihood:** Access to employment remains low (135,000 work permits issued) and restricted in terms of sectors. Only 5% of work permits were assigned to women. The perception that works permits will impact assistance, lack of civil documents, stigma, and transportation and childcare arrangements is limiting refugees' access to work. More than 65% of women need livelihood assistance

**Food Security:** About 21% of Syrian refugee households are food-insecure, and 67% are vulnerable to food insecurity. COVID-19 compounded their economic vulnerabilities and led to an increase in the number of people adopting negative coping mechanisms. Food prices are on the rise while food availability is decreasing. The top barrier to accessing food is the inability to afford essential food items.

**Shelter:** Refugees living outside of camps spend a large portion of their income on expensive, unsafe accommodation. Refugees in camps often occupy hazardous, inadequate, or overcrowded shelters.

**Protection:** Women and girls face multiple forms of gender-based violence. The most significant threats include sexual harassment and assault, emotional and verbal abuse, domestic violence, and early marriage. Violence levels and intensity have notably increased since the onset of COVID-19. In addition Women and girls are subjected to increased denial of economic resources and education and movement restrictions.

**Health:** Refugees lack of medical and health care and access to basic health care.

**Education:** More children are likely to miss out on education and are at risk of permanently dropping out.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund ( <i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i> )	
Appeal ( <i>intended for large scale emergencies</i> )	<b>X</b>

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
DSPR	Jerash, Souf, Amman, Madaba, Zarqa Governorates	Food Security, Livelihood, Protection, Health, Capacity Building	Financial	623,417 USD
MECC	Mafraq, Amman, Balqa, Madaba, Kerak	Food Security, Livelihood, Health	Financial	460,323 USD
ELCJHL	Amman, Madaba	Education, Health, Food security	Financial	92,510 USD

## 5. Potential responses

The ACT Jordan Forum members in Jordan, and their work on the ground, has observed the increasing needs of directly and indirectly affected populations including host communities and other refugee population, especially among children and youth. In responding to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people affected, ACT Jordan Forum will continue to provide humanitarian assistance. Sectors of response include Food security, Health, livelihood, education, protection, and capacity building. ACT members in Jordan will coordinate their work collaboratively in the ACT Jordan Forum.

**MECC interventions cover:**

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR

Food security, Livelihood program that includes sewing training courses, elderly home care, hair dressing and make up, health that includes awareness sessions.

**DSPR interventions cover:**

Food security, health services such as awareness sessions on health and nutrition, conducting free medical days, and referral system. Livelihood program that includes graduation out of poverty approach that includes consumption support, cash for protection, small business grants, soft life skills training, wage subsidy, livelihood assists, and awareness raising on protection, production kitchens, and Start Your Business training courses. Protection programs that include psychosocial support sessions, SGBV sessions, and establishing children forums. Capacity building of voluntary committees who will be working with DSPR on livelihood programs.

**ELCJHL interventions cover:**

Food security through food vouchers, education through paying part of tuition fees for colleges and schools' students, Health needs such as provide chronic medicine, and medical tests.