UNHCR

TITLE: Jordan: Syrian Refugees’ Housing Crisis

SHOOT DATE: February 24, 2014

FILE: 2014-03-10-jordan\_syrian-refugee-rent-crisis-int.mp4

LOCATION: Ramtha, Jordan

SOURCE: Joslyn Massad/Bela Szandelszky

SOUND: Nat/Arabic

RUNS: 02:32

FORMAT: 16:9

**BACKGROUND: More than 90 per cent of refugees in Jordan live in rented accommodation. Rent now accounts for almost two thirds of refugee expenditure, and has emerged as a primary concern for their wellbeing. Roughly 80,000 Syrians have sought refuge in the northern Jordanian border city of Ramtha where they struggle to make ends meet due to the rising cost of living there.**

**SCRIPT:**

Syria lies just beyond these mountains.

The war there has forced millions to flee.

Many have come to Ramtha on the northern Jordanian border.

Majda and her children live in this converted storehouse for more than 280 US dollars a month

She works as a housekeeper or harvesting olives to make ends meet.

But steady work is rare…so she uses food aid to cover the rent.

**CLIP: Majda Ibrahim Hamid, Syrian refugee (Arabic):**

**“We manage with the (WFP food) vouchers we take. We pay the landlord a portion of the rent with the food that we take from the vouchers and we use the other portion to feed our children.”**

Ramtha is now home to roughly 80 thousand Syrian refugees.

Two camps in the area host less than 1,200 – which means the vast majority of refugees live in the city - alongside the local population.

Rents have quadrupled since the war in Syria started.

This complex houses refugees.

The property owner says he donates rooms to the most destitute among them.

**CLIP: Nedal Al-Bashabsheh, Property owner (Arabic):**

**“There are 62 families living here. Twenty two of them who are needy, poor and don’t have money were given free housing. The rest of the families pay minimal fees.”**

Obadah is living here for free.

He came to the complex with thirteen members of his family in January of last year.

Both of his parents are blind – and have been since childhood.

*UPSOUND: “Peace be upon you. And peace be upon you as well.”*

They aren’t able to support themselves.

Here they don’t pay rent, water or power bills.

Such a contribution is vital.

**CLIP: Obadah Al-Mukdad, Syrian refugee (Arabic):**

**“If anything were to happen for us to leave this house we would end up on the street. There are houses for rent, but we have no money and we aren’t allowed to work.”**

Four hundred and fifty thousand Syrian refugees live in Jordan’s urban communities.

To date UNHCR has helped 120,000 vulnerable people with financial assistance.

Surviving is a struggle everywhere.

But in Ramtha family ties and a trade tradition – dating back centuries – have allowed the city to nearly double its population in three years.

Another example of Jordan extending a helping hand for its Syrian neighbors in need.

SHOTLIST:

00:00 – 00:04, Wide of mountains separating Jordan from Syria

00:04 – 00:12, Various of Syrian refugees in Ramtha

00:12 – 00:17, Wide of Majda walking inside her house

00:17 – 00:24, Med of Majda helping her children get ready for school

00:24 – 00:27, Close of children’s clothes in the room

00:27 – 00:37, CLIP: Majda Ibrahim Hamid, Syrian refugee (Arabic):

“We manage with the (WFP food) vouchers we take. We pay the landlord a portion of the rent with the food that we take from the vouchers and we use the other portion to feed our children.”

00:37 – 00:55, Various of Ramtha streets

00:55 – 01:01, Pan of housing compound

01:01 – 01:04, Med of Nedal talking with refugee residents

01:04 – 01:19, CLIP: Nedal Al-Bashabsheh, Property owner (Arabic):

“There are 62 families living here. Twenty two of them who are needy, poor and don’t have money were given free housing. The rest of the families pay minimal fees.”

01:19 – 01:27, Various of Obadah walking into his house

01:27 – 01:32, Wide of Obadah greeting his parents

UPSOUND (Arabic): “Peace be upon you. And peace be upon you as well.”

01:32 – 01:38, Various close ups of blind parents

01:38 – 01:47, Various of Obadah speaking to his father while holding his hand

01:47 – 01:58, CLIP: Obadah Al-Mukdad, Syrian refugee (Arabic):

“If anything were to happen for us to leave this house we would end up on the street. There are houses for rent, but we have no money and we aren’t allowed to work.”

01:58 – 02:14, Various of Syrian refugees in Ramtha

02:14 – 02:32, Various of Ramtha streets.