

## JORDAN

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

August 2016

#### KEY FIGURES

**657,048**

Syrians registered with UNHCR in Jordan, accounting for 7 per cent of the national population

**56,690**

Iraqis registered with UNHCR in Jordan, a third of whom are under 18.

**2**

Jordan hosts the second highest number (87) of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants in the world

**6**

Jordan represents the sixth highest refugee-hosting country in the world

**90**

Percentage of Syrians living outside of camps and below the poverty line in Jordan

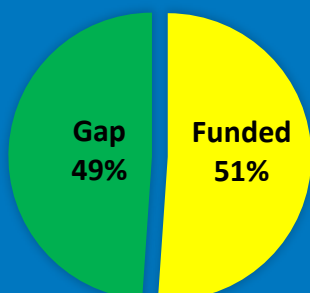
**US \$ 45 million**

Provided so far in 2016 in cash assistance by UNHCR to Jordan's most vulnerable refugees

#### FUNDING

**US \$ 320 million**

requested for the Jordan Operation in 2016



#### HIGHLIGHTS

- **UNHCR welcomed the decision by the Jordanian authorities in July to extend a grace period for Syrians wishing to access legal employment.** Syrians will be given a further three months to obtain a free annual work permit. This coincided with an announcement by the government that over 23,000 Syrians, including refugees, now work legally in Jordan.
- **All refugee households at Zaatari camp in northern Jordan, home to 80,000 displaced Syrians, are now connected to the national grid thanks to the completion of 8.67-megawatt UNHCR project in July.** This represents a major step forward in dignifying the lives of refugees through the provision of more reliable, efficient and safer energy.
- **Iris-scanning identification technology, central to the success of UNHCR's urban cash assistance programme in Jordan, is being rolled out at Zaatari camp for the distribution of cash and the provision of essential humanitarian items.** Jordan broke new ground in 2012 when it became the first country in the world to use iris technology to enable refugees living in urban areas to access cash assistance provided by UNHCR.
- **The provision of desperately-needed humanitarian relief to over 75,000 Syrians stranded on the Syria-Jordan border was suspended following a 21 June attack in Jordan's north-east district.** The attack left six soldiers dead and 14 others injured, leading to the closure of the northern and eastern borders. International organizations were later authorized by the Government of Jordan to proceed with a distribution of one-month rations and other supplies to the population in early August.



Syrians at Rukban gather around two water towers close to the Jordanian berm where many are surviving in desperate conditions. ©UNHCR/M. Hawari

*\*This operational update covers activities for the month of July.*

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

### Operational Context

The distribution of life-saving humanitarian aid to tens of thousands of Syrians stranded on the Syria-Jordan border was suspended on 21 June following an attack on a border post in Jordan's north-east district that claimed the lives of six soldiers and injured 14 others.

The Jordanian authorities closed the northern and eastern borders in the immediate aftermath of the incident, leading to the withdrawal of humanitarian personnel. The delivery of water was later permitted but the quantity supplied considered insufficient given the restricted access to the area.

The incident served to compound an already desperate humanitarian situation at the berm where remote access and extreme weather were already seriously impacting the ability of humanitarian agencies to respond.

The interruption of regular food aid and emergency health care comes during the hottest period of the year, when temperatures can reach 50 degrees Celsius.

Health concerns identified by humanitarian agencies prior to the incident include the widespread prevalence of hepatitis, leishmaniasis, upper respiratory tract infections, diarrhea, and maternal natal deaths due to lack of health professionals and facilities.

Despite continuing security concerns, the Government of Jordan has expressed willingness since the attack to work with the international community to find solutions for those populations stranded at the berm.

In close cooperation with the Government, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were able to proceed with a delivery of aid to both locations - Hadalat and Rukban - for the first time since 21 June between 2 - 4 August. The deliveries included 650 tonnes of food, including rice, lentils and dates, hygiene kits and jerry cans using cranes to deliver supplies to the Syrian side.



*Eid Mubarak! Two Syrian refugees biking down the "Champs-Élysées" street in Zaatari camp.*  
©UNHCR/M.Hawari

## Achievements



### Achievements and Impact

- Azraq’s population more than doubles in three months:** Since 9 March, Azraq camp has received over 21,700 Syrians from Jordan's north-east border, culminating in a population peak of 37,000 at the end of the reporting period. UNHCR is assisting the Government of Jordan in allocating part of Azraq to allow for the screening of individuals brought from the berm in recent months. The allocation of “Villages” 5 and 2 is meant to ensure that those individuals brought in from the border can be screened thus addressing the legitimate security concerns of the Jordanian authorities. Some 6,121 Syrians of the new arrivals from the berm were screened from these secure areas into the general camp population by 31 July, whilst 15,511 Syrians were still awaiting screening.
- US \$ 7.3 million in cash distributed to refugees ahead of Eid celebrations:** UNHCR’s cash assistance platform delivered US \$ 7.3 million in cash, including US \$ 1.3 from UNICEF, to 32,000 refugee families to coincide with the start of Eid al-Fitr celebrations on 6 July. For more on how the platform works, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOwBcK-d3Sk> in English, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iegYn2Z1RgQ>, in Arabic.
- UNHCR and Jordan’s Family Protection Department launch nationwide campaign on SGBV:** In July, UNHCR and officers from Jordan’s Family Protection Department (FPD) initiated a national awareness-raising campaign to familiarize refugees and host communities with the FPD’s work on issues of violence within the family and referral mechanisms for cases of domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Seven sessions, out of an eventual 20, were conducted in Irbid, Tafileh, Amman, Madaba and Aqaba, reaching 350 refugees and Jordanians. UNHCR’s Community Support Committees were an integral part to ensuring the success of these sessions which reached Jordanians from refugee-impacted communities as well as Syrian, Iraqi, Somali and Sudanese refugees. UNHCR’s partnership with FPD is an important element in ensuring the protection of children and the prevention and response to SGBV. In July, further progress was achieved through the training of 35 FPD officers on case management techniques through UNHCR’s partner, the Jordan River Foundation.
- Strengthening the inter-agency response to child labour:** In July, UNHCR and partner agencies in the humanitarian response strengthened their focus on tackling child labour affecting refugees in Jordan through diverse actions including technical support and guidance obtained from a regional interagency child labour consultant, supported by UNHCR, ILO and UNICEF; and the start of a new project aimed at improving the psychosocial status of refugee children in host communities previously involved in child labour. Save the Children’s Mobile Child Friendly Centers (CFCs) will provide psychosocial support to children, sensitization of parents and business owners on child protection issues, and informal education activities for children in Amman, Zarqa, Balqa, and Karak. The Child Labour Task Force will focus on establishing minimum standards related to child labour, ensuring effective referral pathways, developing outreach messages on child labour for interagency use, and the documentation of good practices in the Jordan refugee response.
- British Council teachers trained on refugee protection:** In July, UNHCR carried out awareness raising and training on refugee protection, including on child protection, for 17 teachers at the request of the British Council in Amman. The British Council works closely with refugees in class, and their teachers sought a better understanding of the status and challenges faced by refugees.

A total of **723,364** people of concern are registered with UNHCR in Jordan, including **657,048** Syrians, **56,690** Iraqis and **9,626** others including, **4,523** Yemenis, **3,068** Sudanese, and **776** Somalis.



## Camp Coordination and Camp Management

### Achievements and Impact

- **UNHCR launches cash distributions through iris-scanning in Zaatari:** Jordan broke new ground in 2012 when it became the first country in the world to use iris technology to enable refugees living in urban areas to access cash assistance provided by UNHCR. Now that technology is extended to Zaatari refugee camp for the distribution of cash and the provision of essential humanitarian items in the camp.

The technology was successfully tested at Zaatari in June and July and is expected to go live in August. Previously items were distributed through in-kind donations and aid coupons but the distribution of aid this way in camp settings has shown to be less efficient and effective than providing refugees with cash through the use of iris technology. Using the biometric data of refugees collected at registration, camp officials can now scan the irises of each refugee coming to collect cash assistance. The iris scanning takes less than a minute and verifies the identity of the refugee. Cash distribution will ensure that the list of beneficiaries is accurate, that refugees presenting themselves at the cash window are who they say they are, and that funds distributed go to the right people.

Aside from iris-scanning technology being highly effective at preventing fraud, the distribution of cash to enable refugees to purchase goods and services in the camp marketplace, or in neighbouring Jordanian towns, allows for competitive purchasing power by enhancing the dignity of refugees to choose what to buy and when to buy, away from the stigma of aid queues. What's more, it eliminates the selling of unwanted donations at reduced rates, which in the past has served to create an imbalance in pricing between the refugee and host community economies.

UNHCR has provided more than \$ US 208 million to Jordan's most vulnerable refugees in out of camp settings since 2012 helping hundreds of thousands of refugees to survive. Underpinning this form of assistance is the use, for the first time anywhere in the world, of iris scanning technology to allow refugees to access their funds at the blink of an eye. The out of camp system has very low overheads, meaning that for every dollar donated to the cash assistance programme more than 98 per cent ends up in the pockets of refugees.



## Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

### Achievements and Impact

- **More Syrians accessing legal employment in Jordan:** UNHCR welcomed the Government of Jordan's decision in July to extend a grace period by a further three months for Syrians working informally to obtain free annual work permits. The decision coincided with the Ministry of Labour announcing that almost 23,000 Syrians, including refugees, are now working legally in Jordan, forming part of the commitments made by the Government of Jordan at the Syria Donors Conference in February to encourage more Syrians into the labour market and towards some degree of self-sufficiency.

For its part, UNHCR worked closely with the Jordanian authorities to ensure that Syrians seeking to regularize their employment status are being provided with the correct information in regards to new work permit regulations. As part of this effort, UNHCR, in cooperation with the Jordanian authorities, sent several text messages to heads of urban households, whilst posters were distributed in labour directorates, and partner agencies and organizations informed of the policy changes and refugees through UNHCR's Helpdesks, "town hall" meetings and Community Support Committees. In recent years UNHCR Jordan has advocated for refugees to be allowed to enter the Jordanian labour market, and prior to the Syria Donors Conference in February, UNHCR was able to obtain the government's approval for a pilot project that provided an initial 4,000 refugees with work permits.

The Government also exceptionally agreed that refugees could use their Ministry of Interior cards in place of their passports, which many refugees had to temporarily surrender when seeking asylum in Jordan, for documentation purposes. In addition, several major donors made their aid to the government conditional on the number of work permits issued to refugees throughout 2016. This led to the Government's announcement in April that it would

provide a three-month initial grace period for Syrian nationals to obtain free annual work permits, a development which has now been further extended.

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR advocacy success on documentation required for refugees to enter higher education: In 2015, the Minister of Higher Education sent an official communication to all tertiary institutes stating that only the original copies of secondary and tertiary qualifications would be considered acceptable for entry into higher education. Since then UNHCR has been advocating for the acceptance of certified photocopies given that most refugees flee their countries of origin in a hurry without the necessary documentation.

In July, these efforts culminated in an agreement to accept certified photocopies of diplomas, if accompanied with official stamps from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education in Syria and Jordan. This advance was agreed between UNHCR and the Minister of Education alongside representatives from the German Embassy, the EU and UNESCO in Jordan, and is significant given that a lack of original documentation has remained a key barrier to refugees accessing tertiary education in Jordan.

## Durable Solutions

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR assisting Jordan's most vulnerable refugees with a future in a third country: During the reporting period the Jordan operation began the processing of 1,750 refugees for resettlement to Canada using the "Identification Based Methodology" - an expedited resettlement processing model presented to resettlement states for their consideration in February 2016. The submission to Canada was due to be completed on 17th August. In light of resettlement upscaling in the MENA region, such expedited methodologies are being tested to assist in reducing duplication between UNHCR and resettlement states, as well as permitting UNHCR to increase resettlement outputs but with resettlement states performing a commensurate part in adjudication. Canada and the United States have welcomed this approach and are processing close to 10,000 via this revised methodology.

Separately, following a resettlement mission conducted by the Government of France to the operation in July, 443 Syrian refugees were accepted for resettlement. UNHCR also completed the submission on dossier basis of 600 Syrian refugees for resettlement to the United Kingdom. By the end of July, the operation had submitted a total of 22,005 Syrian refugees for resettlement in 2016 with 18,594 for submission to the U.S. Resettlement activities with regard to non-Syrians during the reporting period included 188 refugees (79% Iraqi and the rest predominantly Sudanese and Somali) interviewed and referred for resettlement (91 % to the USA and 3 % to Australia and 4% to Canada) and during the same period, 339 refugees (85% Iraqi, 8% of Sudanese and 5 % Somali) departed to a resettlement country (70% to the USA, 15% to Canada and 14% to Australia)". By the end of July, the operation had submitted 785 individuals, mostly Iraqi, but also Sudanese and Somali refugees, for resettlement out of which 342 refugees to the USA.

## Access to Energy

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR completes work on an electrical distribution network to supply all households in Zaatari camp: Refugees at Zaatari camp now have access to a safe, reliable and sustainable energy supply thanks to a Czech Republic and United States of America funded 8.67-megawatt upgrade that has transformed the network from a basic electricity grid powering street lights to a network connecting 80,000 refugees to the national grid. The installation of the grid finally concluded on 14 July but work to connect shelters to the network, as well as the internal wiring, is being undertaken by a team of 56 refugees who have all volunteered to assist in the project.



*Before and after photos showing the progress made to the electrical network in Zaatari after the completion of the Czech Republic-funded project on 14 July. ©UNHCR*

A solar power plant, funded by the German development bank, KfW, is also being developed in Zaatari village which will provide a renewable source of electricity for the camp and the surrounding host community. The project is expected to become operational in 2017.

Meanwhile, at Azraq refugee camp, work is continuing on the development of an electrical network, funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United States of America, and a renewable source of electricity for the camp generated by solar power, which is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2016. The solar plant, funded by IKEA Foundation, will also be a first for UNHCR as the first large-scale source of renewable energy to power a refugee camp in the world.

- UNHCR's "Connectivity for Refugees" project powers up in Jordan: UNHCR is rolling out a range of activities in Jordan to help refugees stay connected through its "[Global Programme for Connectivity for Refugees](#)", launched in Geneva in July 2015 to help refugees stay in touch with their families across the world, access important information, increase economic opportunities, and become more self-reliant.



*Syrian refugees making use of the new mobile charging stations at Azraq camp in May 2016, part of a series of initiatives undertaken through UNHCR's "Global Programme for Connectivity for Refugees". ©UNHCR/Marilyn Virrey-Raguin*

The program was launched in Jordan in October 2015 with a sampling and connectivity needs assessment that found that whilst the majority of refugees use smart phones the preferred method of communication is through the “Viber” and the “Whatsapp” messaging services that allow voice messages to be sent and received by friends and family.

This year the project became fully operational with multiple charging stations installed in Azraq camp and at the Raba’a Al Sarhan Registration Centre in July to ensure that refugees’ phones are functional. The next phase of the project included the completion of technical testing in June at the UNHCR/CARE community centre in Azraq camp for Skype calls to pave the way for the distribution of Skype vouchers to refugees to enable them to stay in touch with their families. The distribution of Skype vouchers to non-Syrian refugees and to those who have been approved for resettlement is currently being reviewed. UNHCR is grateful for the generous donation of 20,000 Skype vouchers by [NetHope](#), which are being used by refugees across the world.

UNHCR recognizes the impact of the global advances in technology on the accessibility on its operations, and with 39% of refugee households owning at least one internet capable phone, the reach of UNHCR’s services is wider than it has ever been. The July 2015 global connectivity assessment study showed that despite the fact that only 7% of refugee communities lack digital networks, the primary challenge for the majority of those who have access to basic coverage is affordability. For this reason, UNHCR Jordan, is working with governments and the private sector to ensure that refugees can access affordable internet and mobile connectivity.

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

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### Better eyes for better marks at Azraq Camp

Almost 300 children living in Azraq camp passed the academic year with full vision thanks to glasses provided by the [Malala Fund](#). Back in December, a team of 24 refugees at the camp volunteered to visit children in each of the camp’s shelters to identify those with sight problems and to recommend them for eye examinations. For a week, part of one of Azraq’s clinics was allocated for the purpose of conducting comprehensive eye examinations for the children.

Several tests were put in place to check if the children actually needed glasses or not. Mustafa, one of the two optometrists involved in the project, explained the process. “First, a machine helps us diagnose if the child suffers from any ophthalmologic disease. Then, those children who are identified as needing glasses are transferred to a second shelter from where additional tests are conducted and frames selected. Then in a week the glasses will be ready, so the kids will have no excuse to do badly at school!”

Mariam, 11, enters the first shelter, sits down in front of the machine, places her chin on a chin rest, and then looks into the view finder to gaze at an image of a hot air balloon zooming in and out of focus. “Sometimes studying is difficult for me as I can’t recognize the words and my eyes start hurting. I have to read my books at a distance”, says she says alongside her father, Saamer, and her sister Jinan, a talkative 7 year-old girl.

“Jinan loves studying and is now learning how to read and write Arabic as she started first grade this year”, explains Saamer. “I got the best mark in English and Arabic; with glasses I will do even better”, says Jinan proudly who presents herself as a future dentist as she wants to fix her teeth. “It gets harder the smaller the letters are!” she says laughing while trying to concentrate on her test. With the academic year now over both girls are waiting for their final results. Saamer explains that Mariam has corrected her position while studying as before she used to get very close to the book and adds that “the girls are very happy because they look very nice in their glasses”.



*Manal enjoying the pink frames donated to the children of Azraq refugee camp by the Malala Fund.  
©UNHCR/Ayman Bino*

For Saleha, a 17 year-old-girl enrolled in twelfth-grade, it is also the end of the year. “This year is decisive for my future because if I don’t pass my final exams I won’t get the opportunity to go to university”, she explains before addressing her dreams of becoming a pharmacist. Saleha realized something was wrong with her eyes soon after arriving at the camp. “I could not see anything that teachers were writing in the blackboard. The doctor told me that I have been like this suffering for years because I have a weak left eye and the right one was doing all the work until now”.

Saleha is also awaiting her examination results and has not taken her glasses off once, except to sleep, since receiving them. “The glasses have made this year so much easier. It made a big difference for me while reading books. Passing the tests is the most important thing but I’m also glad the headaches have stopped. When I chose the frames, I never thought they would look this nice!”

Mustafa explains that most of the visual disorders identified are myopia, astigmatism and hypermetropia but in an environment like Azraq, where the sun hits hard, other ophthalmologic diseases are prevalent.

For Manal, a charming 9-year-old girl, glasses for her are all about fashion. She is in third-grade and proudly announces that she is very good at Maths. Her eyes are surrounded by pink frames. Firaz, her father, explains that she was having terrible headaches so they decided to visit a doctor. “We brought her to the doctor in Syria for her first eye test but we didn’t have time to collect the glasses as we had to leave very suddenly in 2013”.

The family entered Jordan and moved to Azraq town, a few kilometres from the camp, where they spent over a year. “As Manal was suffering, I brought her to the doctor again”. Firaz confesses he had to borrow money to pay for the consultation and the glasses. “It was very expensive, about 50 Jordanian Dinars (\$ US 70), a big sacrifice, but I could not see my daughter suffering while studying”.

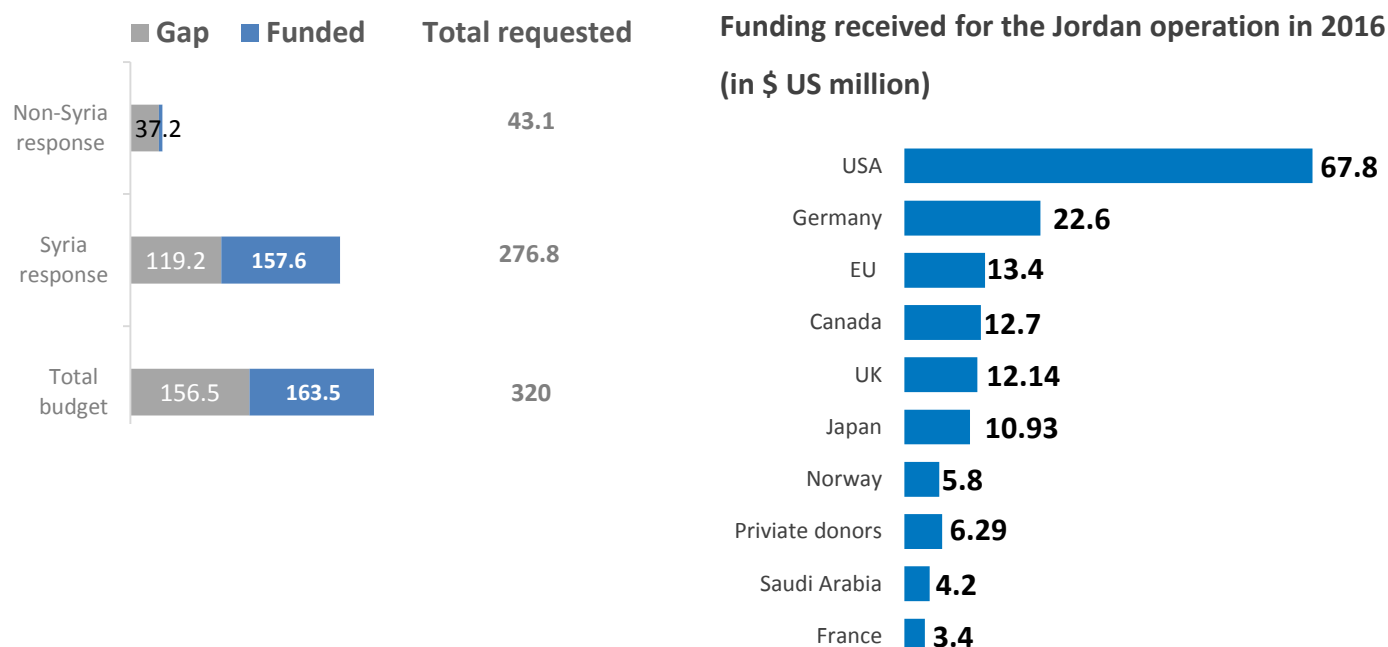
Firaz is happy to have the opportunity to correct his daughter’s vision at no cost: “We don’t have any money left from our savings in Syria so it is very difficult to put money aside for these basic things that have now become a luxury for us”.

Olga Sarrado Mur, Associate External Relations Officer, Azraq Camp



## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 163.5 million** including **US\$ 157.6 million** for the **Syria response** and **US\$ 5.9 million** for the **Iraq situation** at the country level.



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

**Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2016: United States of America (181 M) | Sweden (78 M) | Netherlands (46 M) | Norway (40 M) | Australia (31 M) | Priv Donors Spain (25 M) | Denmark (24 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Germany (13 M) | Italy (10 M)**



*Dusk sets over Azraq refugee camp in Jordan's eastern desert.  
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