



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Executive Committee Summary

Country: Jordan

Planning Year: 2005

UNHCR Branch Office Amman, Jordan
Country Operation Plan (1 January – 31 December 2005)

Part I – Executive Committee Summary

I (a) Context

(i) Context and Beneficiary Population(s)

UNHCR Jordan's primary responsibility is to support the Hashemite Kingdom Government of Jordan (GoJ) to provide protection and assistance to individual asylum-seekers and refugees.

Given the government's humanitarian commitment to Palestinian refugees, it grants asylum to non-Palestinian UNHCR-recognised refugees for only six months. This six month period is mandated by the MOU between GoJ and UNHCR signed in 1998. UNHCR is expected to identify durable solutions during this six-month asylum period. As the promotion of voluntary repatriation for most of the refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan presently (i.e. Iraqis) is not applicable at the moment and local integration is currently excluded, the primary durable solution has been so far UNHCR-facilitated resettlement to a third country. The temporary protection regime for Iraqis was declared on 19 March 2003 and subsequently RSD interviews for the majority of the Iraqis have been suspended until further notice. It is expected that the temporary protection regime will continue, followed by possible voluntary repatriation in the future. The solutions capacity has changed significantly in Jordan; resettlement is not any longer the only viable durable solution in addition to the significant changes in the policy of resettlement countries with regard to Iraqi refugees.

UNHCR Jordan also seeks to develop national legal and institutional mechanisms to process the claims of persons seeking asylum. This process was initiated following the signature of the MOU which may precipitate Jordan's eventual signatory status to the 1951 Convention. As such, local capacity-building and the development of an institutional refugee framework are prerequisites for eventually considering UNHCR's gradual reduction of its operational responsibilities in Jordan.

In Jordan, UNHCR's profile is protection, assistance and the search of durable solutions for urban refugees in accordance with UNHCR's Mandate, in addition to the camp caseload, which arrived after the Iraq war. Due to the coalition forces invasion of Iraq, Jordan's country program expanded with the addition of a supplementary budget (SB). The events leading to the war and unstable security situation within Iraq after the war continued to have a significant impact on the operations.

The annual program main objectives are to provide refugees and persons of concern with basic assistance while working toward durable solutions. These objectives were set in the context of the constraints of the host government as noted earlier. The protection objectives included RSD, monitoring of asylum/non-refoulement and durable solution. BO Amman's protection strategy included building the capacity of the government and local NGOs coupled with institution building and networking activities carried out to create and enhance the legal infrastructure for human rights awareness and comprehension for the humanitarian aspects of asylum. Objectives to provide basic assistance include access to healthcare, counselling services and material assistance in order to ensure basic needs are met until a durable solution can be found. UNHCR works through its IPs to identify local resources to compliment project activities,

mobilize funding and in-kind donations along with building the capacity of local NGOs.

(b) Detailed Contextual Background

Despite the continued pressure posed by the unresolved Palestinian question and the situation, Jordan is continuing on the way of democratization and respect of human rights and freedom of expression. In particular, there is a high level, of co-operation on refugee matters with operational arrangements, uncommon in countries non-signatory of the 1951 Convention.

Ever since the conflict in Iraq, UNHCR discontinued individual Refugee Status Determination for Iraqi asylum seekers and is discharging its protection through Temporary Protection Regime, monitoring of asylum/non-refoulement, standards of treatment and durable solution. At the same time, UNHCR pursues the development of a domestic protection regime through institution building. The main institutions responsible for protection are within the Ministry of Interior, including the Refugee Unit, the Residency and Borders Department (RBD) and the General Intelligence Department.

To further enhance its effort to strengthen institutions, UNHCR will continue to host seconded staff from government departments to provide an in-depth training and strengthen liaison with relevant Government entities.

The respective focal point in the MOI and PSD are responsible for the printing of documentation for both recognised refugees and asylum-seekers and to issue instructions and provide guidance to governorates and police points to ensure that the provisions of the MOU are respected.

NGOs, PARinAC and capacity-building

With regard to the urban caseload, UNHCR has developed an extensive network of NGOs involved with medical assistance and counselling and particularly concerned with the women and children. UNHCR has also secured alternative funding sources for interested NGO's to provide legal counselling to asylum seekers. Further, UNHCR has concluded a sub agreement with the National Centre for Human Rights in order to strengthen refugee protection regime to national institutions and to enhance the capacity of the institution as well as Government counterparts. With regard to the camp caseload, UNHCR is working closely with government counterparts, a national NGO and international partners.

I (b) Main Programme Goals and Principal Objectives

Goal 1: To promote durable solutions for non-Palestinian refugees in Jordan, through resettlement and voluntary repatriation.

UNHCR will actively pursue durable solutions for the refugees of the urban caseload in Jordan in accordance with Convention Plus strategy and the Agenda for Protection. This will include resettlement as a tool of protection as well as a tool of solutions. In the case of Jordan, selected groups of refugees in need of solutions may be processed through the group resettlement referral format. Resettlement will remain the most viable durable solution for non- Iraqi refugees, and a selected group of Iraqi refugees such as survivors of torture, women at risk, and other groups with special protection needs.

Goal 2: To provide counselling, assistance, medical care, educational assistance for children, language and vocational training to refugees and other persons of concern of the urban caseload to facilitate durable solutions. To apply the Community Development approach, High Commissioner's

commitments to refugee women, increase refugee and asylum seeker participation and build the community services capacity of implementing partners.

Goal 3: To conduct Refugee Status Determination in a timely manner.

UNHCR aims at increasing its capacity to deal with registration and processing of individual applications for refugees status predominantly through enhancing Government's capacity to deal with asylum applications. Therefore the joint registration of new arrivals in Amman, as well as the joint processing of asylum applications will be given priority in the Programme. The time frames that have been set for asylum applications should be maintained, i.e. maximum 3 months waiting period for first instance interviews, followed by a first instance decision within 4 months.

Goal 4: To promote awareness of refugee law in the Government of Jordan and among law enforcement personnel to strengthen capacity with an overall view to promote accession to the refugee convention.

UNHCR aims through its capacity building programme to address fundamental issues of asylum in Jordan and to encourage Government's responsibility in asylum questions including registration and processing of asylum applications. The approach to enhance the discussion on asylum and the creation of a better understanding of asylum will be through appealing to Jordan's strong commitment to Human Rights issues. The knowledge of Academic institutions and civil society will be enhanced through strengthening the cooperation and making use of the lobby capacity/ expertise amongst those groups.

Goal 5: To provide protection and basic humanitarian assistance to camp-based refugees.

Goal 6: to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of individual refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern wishing to return to Iraq.