



1 family torn apart by war
is too many.

PRESS RELEASE

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UNHCR STUDY SHOWS RAPID DETERIORATION IN LIVING CONDITIONS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

AMMAN, Jordan, 14 January 2015 – The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, says large numbers of Syrian refugees are sliding into abject poverty, and at an alarming rate, due to the magnitude of the crisis and insufficient support from the international community.

He made the statement at the launch of a new UNHCR study, “Living in the Shadows,” which reveals evidence of a deepening humanitarian crisis. Mr. Guterres is on a two-day visit to Jordan, where he will meet with refugees profiled in the study in Amman and with others at the Za’atari refugee camp.

“I am here to express my solidarity with Syrian refugees, as the impact of snowstorm Huda is still tangible and posing an even greater strain on their already dire living conditions.” Mr. Guterres is also meeting with Jordanian officials and with donors to coordinate efforts to improve living conditions for Syrian refugees and support the communities hosting them.

Conducted by UNHCR and its partner, International Relief and Development (IRD), the study is based on data from home visits with almost 150,000 Syrian refugees living outside of camps in Jordan in 2014.

According to the study, two-thirds of refugees across Jordan are now living below the national poverty line, and one in six Syrian refugee households lives in abject poverty, with less than \$40 per person per month to make ends meet.

Almost half of the households researchers visited had no heating, a quarter had unreliable electricity, and 20 per cent had no functioning toilet. Rental costs accounted for more than half of household expenditures, and refugee families were increasingly being forced to share accommodations with others in order to reduce costs.



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“Unless the international community increases its support to refugees, families will opt for ever more drastic coping strategies,” Mr. Guterres said. “More children will drop out of school to work and more women will be at risk of exploitation, including survival sex.”

As the Syrian conflict enters its fifth year, many refugees are becoming increasingly dependent on assistance. Jordan’s resources and infrastructure, too, have been stretched to the limit.

In an effort to address this critical situation, UNHCR is providing monthly cash assistance to 21,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian families, or 14% of the Syrian refugee population living outside camps. As of the end of 2014, over 10,000 additional Syrian refugee households have been identified as eligible for such assistance but, due to lack of funds, cannot be provided with support.

Overall, the report’s findings make it clear that any further reductions in the current levels of support will have immediate and serious consequences for Syrian refugees living in Jordan. The situation is particularly worrying for the most vulnerable populations, such as female-headed households and elderly refugees.

Mr. Guterres emphasized that this crisis can be mitigated if the international community steps up efforts to alleviate the suffering of the refugees. He praised efforts of the Jordanian authorities, UNHCR and its partners to address the urgent needs of refugees during last week’s heavy snowstorm.

In total, Jordan has a registered Syrian refugee population of 620,000, some 84 percent of whom live outside camps.

“This represents a dramatic pressure in the economy and the society of the country not to mention the terrible security impact of the Syria crisis in itself,” Mr. Guterres said. “The generosity of the Jordanian people and the Government needs to be matched by massive support from the international community - support for the refugees themselves and for the local populations hosting them, but also structural and budgetary support to the Jordanian Government for education, health, water and sanitation and electricity to enable it to cope with this enormous challenge.”

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