

Jordan

January 2024

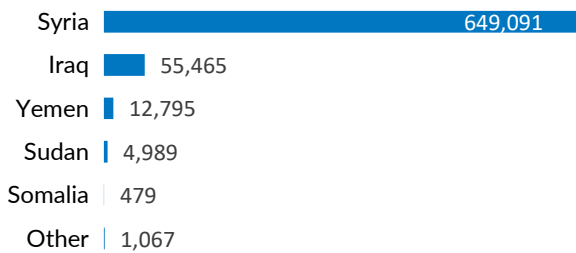
Jordan hosts over 720,000 refugees and has been an example of **including refugees in key national systems** such as healthcare and education. Jordan was also a co-convenor for the **Global Refugee Forum** in Geneva in December 2023.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, continues to ensure **refugees are protected** through registration, legal documentation, counselling and more. UNHCR also provides **cash assistance** to over 300,000 refugees to meet their basic needs.

Humanitarian funds for refugees in Jordan have been decreasing fast. UNHCR calls for **sustained donor and development actor engagement** to sustain progress and to avoid the situation slides back into a humanitarian crisis.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS*

Countries of Origin



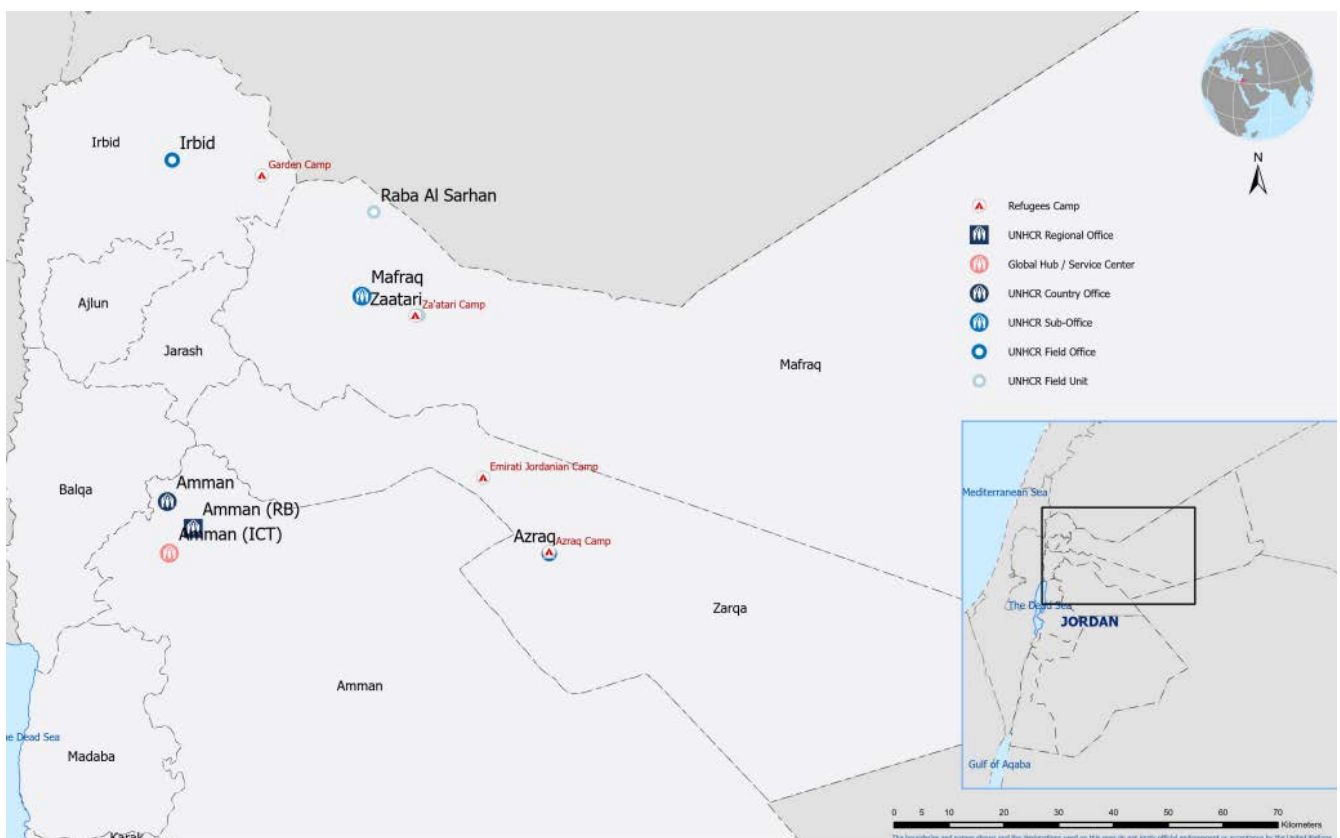
723,886 Registered refugees and asylum-seekers

43 refugee nationalities

81.1% refugees living in host communities

18.9% refugees living in three camps: **Zaatari, Azraq, Emirati Jordanian Camp**

* Registered with UNHCR by end of 2023



UNHCR PRESENCE: 1 Country Office in Amman; 1 Sub Office in Mafraq (also covering Zaatari camp)
2 Field Offices in Irbid and Azraq; 3 Urban Registration centres in Amman, Irbid and Mafraq

Main Activities

Registration

In Jordan, UNHCR registers refugees and issues legal documents that prevent statelessness, enabling refugees and asylum-seekers to access services and humanitarian assistance. These documents have a one-year validity, requiring refugees to visit UNHCR registration centres for renewals. In 2023, more than 471,000 refugees renewed their UNHCR-issued documents, and UNHCR also assisted Jordan's Civil Status Department in registering over 20,000 girls and boys at birth.



UNHCR interviews refugees to update their data, renew their documentation and guide them to counselling on different services if needed. © UNHCR/Shawkat Alharfoush.

UNHCR in Jordan was among the first UNHCR operations worldwide to introduce iris-scanning biometrics technology for its **refugee registration** in

2013. Since then, the operation has moved from using biometrics only for registration, to using it for identity management: This allows to 'validate' identities of refugees registered with UNHCR when they receive partner services, withdraw cash, buy groceries at the supermarket, and more, simply by scanning their iris. In 2023, UNHCR shifted its registration database from existing servers to the cloud to enhance data security and maximize performance. UNHCR Registration Centres receive refugees for different services, including renewal of documentation and counselling.

Protection

Together with partners, UNHCR continues to provide **counselling and support** to refugees and asylum-seekers on legal services, psychosocial support, mental health, child protection, and more. On **gender-based violence (GBV)** issues, survivors receive psychosocial support through UNHCR, complemented with emergency cash assistance and partnerships with local NGOs who provide specialized assistance in safe spaces across Jordan. Survivors are referred to health, legal, safe shelter and other services. UNHCR also supports women's empowerment workshops, self-defence classes led by refugee women and various gender-based violence awareness activities within communities.

UNHCR also offers a variety of **protection hotlines**, including the [Amaali services app](#), detention and legal hotlines, and the UNHCR Helpline, which manages over 200,000 monthly calls through the Integrated Voice Recognition system and ten dedicated staff.

Community Empowerment

UNHCR, and its partners have adopted and continue to advocate for the **"One Refugee" approach** for all refugees and asylum-seekers, irrespective of nationality, to be treated equally in all sectors and services in Jordan. This approach seeks to reduce and eliminate differences in rights and services based on nationality. The strategy has been particularly successful in community-based protection, where Jordanians and refugees of different nationalities and religions participate in activities together, promoting social cohesion between refugees and host communities, and within refugee populations.

UNHCR continues to support a network of 22 **Community Support Committees (CSCs)** across Jordan, jointly run by Jordanian and refugee representatives of different nationalities. CSCs provide a novel community-led approach to responding to the needs of urban refugees, bridging gaps between refugees and Jordanians, and helping UNHCR give the proper assistance to those who need it most. CSCs regularly offer a range of activities, including for women, children, people with disabilities, older people and the youth, such as sports and games livelihood training. CSCs also provide libraries with computers. CSCs remain one of UNHCR's key channels of communication with refugee communities.

In 2023, with decreasing humanitarian funding and regional political developments, UNHCR strengthened its **communication efforts with refugees** to ensure their voices are heard and that refugees receive the correct information to preserve their protection, access to services, and well-being and prevent fraud and protection risks. UNHCR travelled to remote areas and met refugees in their localities, reaching more than 11,000. On top of this, UNHCR continued online engagement, reaching refugees 1.5 million times in 2023 through its **digital channels**, including Helpsite, Facebook page, and the newly launched WhatsApp Chatbot.

Cash Assistance for Basic Needs

UNHCR in Jordan has the second largest cash programme in the region and, in 2023, provided cash assistance to almost 310,000 individuals in camps and communities to **help refugees meet their basic needs**. UNHCR continues to improve the efficiency of its cash assistance by reviewing its targeting criteria and continuously optimises how it distributes cash to refugees. Refugee beneficiaries have been increasingly moving from bank ATM withdrawals to mobile wallets as a more flexible and efficient modality to receive cash assistance. **Mobile wallets** allow refugees to manage their finances and make transactions, thus improving their financial inclusion. By 2023, UNHCR had transitioned more than 70 per cent of the refugees receiving cash assistance to mobile wallets.

Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

The Government of Jordan has taken significant steps in facilitating **Syrian refugees' access to the Jordanian labour market**, including waiving fees to obtain a work permit or simplifying the documentation requirements, steps which have gradually expanded refugee access to work. In 2023, more than 90,000 work permits were issued for Syrian refugees, the highest figure since 2016.

About 18 per cent of the population in Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps are of working age. UNHCR and the International Labour Organization, in coordination with the government, operate **employment offices** in the camps to facilitate refugees' access to formal work across Jordan through providing work-related counselling services, facilitating the issuance of work permits, and advertising job vacancies and training opportunities.

UNHCR also works on several initiatives to further support refugees' **economic inclusion**. UNHCR and its partners identify the skills refugees have connect them with job opportunities, engage with the private sector to raise awareness of refugees' skillsets and build their capacities and skills through providing vocational training.

Despite these milestones, refugees continue to struggle, not least due to economic shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, high cost of living and inflation. **Recent data** on the socio-economic situation of refugees in Jordan indicate high levels of poverty and increasing vulnerability, with more than 90 per cent of refugee households holding debt. At the same time, humanitarian funding for refugees in Jordan has been decreasing rapidly. Against these backdrops, expanding livelihood opportunities for refugees is critical.

Health

Health care has been an example of Jordan's hospitality and response to refugees for years. Refugees in Jordan can access hospitals and medical facilities run by the Ministry of Health at the non-insured Jordanian rate, UNHCR is making efforts to maximize the utilization of public health services by refugees. Thanks to these efforts, refugees using public healthcare facilities (instead of private facilities or pharmacies) increased, and the cases of public facilities refusing to treat refugees decreased significantly. In addition, UNHCR and health partners continue to support **access to primary and secondary healthcare services** for refugees in camps and communities through the referral system and its **cash-for-health programme**. UNHCR also runs a number of health clinics in the camps. With decreasing humanitarian funding, many health-sector partners have left the camps, leaving the remaining healthcare facilities under pressure.

Education

In addition to higher education, UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Education to provide quality education for school students. Jordan has introduced two school shifts to accommodate refugee children in urban areas and camps. Syrian students are exempted from school and textbook fees. In recent years, Jordan has exempted fees for UNHCR-registered non-Syrian refugee children.

Under the 15by30 Goal, which aims for 15 per cent enrolment of refugee students at **higher education** institutions by 2030, UNHCR is working with Jordan universities to broaden refugee students' access. As a result of UNHCR's advocacy, for the academic year 2023-2024, refugee students in Jordan, regardless of their origins, can study any course at several universities across Jordan at lower fees, same as those paid by Jordanian students. UNHCR and the

newly formed Higher Education Alliance in Jordan also submitted a pledge for the Global Refugee Forum, focusing on expanding access to higher education for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians.

UNHCR's Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative programme, better known as DAFI, has been implemented in Jordan for several years. The DAFI programme enables young refugees to unlock their **potential** by addressing key barriers to higher education and opening doors to complete their bachelor's degrees at Jordanian universities. Scholarships for undergraduate refugee students cover tuition fees, study materials, transportation, and other allowances. There are currently over 160 students pursuing education on DAFI scholarships.

UNHCR aims to integrate refugee data into the national information management system. This integration will offer valuable insights into the refugee student population, informing decision-makers and donors in crafting effective strategies for inclusive higher education in Jordan. As a result of UNHCR's advocacy towards an inclusive information management system, the Ministry of Higher Education mandated that all public universities in Jordan add a "refugee code" alongside the personal identification number for refugee students who hold UNHCR asylum-seeker certificates.

Shelter

In its role as camp manager along with the government, UNHCR provides **shelter** to refugees living in Azraq and Zaatari camps and works to improve infrastructure. Almost all shelters in the camps have exceeded their life span and need maintenance or even replacement. However, due to funding constraints, UNHCR and its partners have only been able to repair and replace eight per cent of the containers. Since 2023, UNHCR and its partner have also been piloting a **self-repair project** to empower refugees, where families receive the needed materials, trainings, and cash to repair the shelters themselves.



There are currently over 37,000 prefabricated transitional shelters in Azraq and Zaatari camps. © UNHCR/Mohammad Alyounes

Access to Energy and Climate Action

In line with [UNHCR's Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy](#), UNHCR in Jordan provides **access to clean and renewable energy** in Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps with the first-ever solar plant in a refugee camp and the largest one in a camp worldwide. They provide around 60-70 per cent of the electricity needed in the camps. UNHCR purchased the other 30 per cent from the national grid, which relies on carbon-based power plants.

With increased electricity demand and fluctuating production capacity of the plants, UNHCR has been striving with partners and national authorities to find solutions. In 2023, UNHCR reached a multi-stakeholder agreement, including with the Government, which allows for the transfer of green energy from a solar power plant in South Amman to the camps to complement electricity generated there. Thanks to this **green deal**, the latest figures reveal that 97 per cent of electricity needs in Azraq and Zaatari were provided by solar energy, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the camps. UNHCR will pay for operational and maintenance costs, which is anticipated to bring down its expenditure on energy in 2024 to a fraction of previous years.

Building on its innovative solar projects in Azraq and Zaatari camps, UNHCR is also working to **improve energy efficiency** through strengthening the monitoring and control measures. Additionally, UNHCR offices in Jordan work to **reduce their environmental footprint** by adopting LED-efficient lighting and boosting the efficiency of air-conditioning systems and already use nine electric vehicles with chargers on the premises, a first in the region.

Durable Solutions

For some particularly vulnerable refugees, such as those with legal and physical protection needs, critical medical needs, and those who have survived violence or torture, UNHCR facilitates resettlement, which allows refugees from an asylum country to another country that grants them permanent residence and legal status. Resettlement is both a durable solution and protection tool, and an important act of responsibility sharing and solidarity with the host government.

In 2023, UNHCR submitted over 8,500 women, men, and children for resettlement to several countries. In addition, over **10,100 refugees left for resettlement countries**. While around 14 per cent of the refugee population in Jordan meets the resettlement criteria, the limited availability of resettlements only allows for one per cent to be resettled.

UNHCR in Jordan explored **different third-country options** available to refugees, including educational programmes, family reunification and labour mobility schemes. These pathways serve as a legal way for refugees to relocate to third countries. UNHCR works to raise awareness of these pathways and expand access. UNHCR also supported the first-ever **Global Refugee Labour Mobility Summit**, which took place in Amman, bringing together international actors working to expand labour mobility opportunities for skilled refugees.

In 2023, UNHCR assisted nearly 1,200 refugees in accessing different pathways through counselling, referral, and support with travel formalities. UNHCR knows cases of over 450 individuals who left Jordan in 2023 on different pathways. As refugees can arrange and facilitate these opportunities on their own, the figure only reflects what UNHCR is aware of through partners, embassies and UNHCR's records. For this reason, figures are likely to be significantly higher.

Working with Partners

UNHCR coordinates the refugee response in close collaboration with the Government of Jordan, donors, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, refugees, and host communities. Following the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) 2020-2022, which was extended to cover 2023, UNHCR has supported the Government in developing the next-generation JRP 2024-2026. UNHCR also works with the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate – the government body in charge of managing and coordinating Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps – to ensure that assistance is provided most effectively and efficiently by international humanitarian standards and protection principles.

UNHCR leads and coordinates Jordan's refugee response through the Refugee Coordination Model, primarily within the Inter-Sector Working Group, which it chairs. Currently, seven sectors provide support within the Jordan refugee response. UNHCR co-chairs several sector working and sub-working groups, namely the Health Working Group, the Protection Working Group, the Shelter Working Group, and the Economic Empowerment Working Group. Along with UNICEF, UNHCR also co-chairs the Assessment, Analysis, Learning Hub, an interdisciplinary and collaborative learning platform established in 2023 to strengthen evidence-based analysis to better feed programming and advocacy. These working groups provide information, advice, and advocacy to high-level decision-making bodies in Jordan.

External / Donors Relations

Special thanks to the donors who contributed to UNHCR Jordan in 2023

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CONTACTS

Roland Schönbauer, Senior External Relations Officer, schoenb@unhcr.org

Yujin Chang, Associate External Relations Officer, changy@unhcr.org

LINKS

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