European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Jordan

Introduction

As the civil war in Syria continues unabated, Jordan has contributed substantial and generous assistance to refugees from Syria. As of January 2019, Jordan hosts over 655,000 Syrian refugees — around 48 percent of them children. The vast majority (83 percent) live in cities and towns, while the remainder reside mainly in two refugee camps, Azraq and Zaatari. Zaatari is the world’s second largest camp with close to 80,000 residents. The influx of refugees from Syria, and of people fleeing the conflict in Iraq, has put substantial pressure on Jordan’s overstretched resources at one of the most difficult economic periods in the country’s history.

What are the needs?

According to the UN, in Jordan, 57 percent of working age Syrian refugees are unemployed and 80 percent of Syrian refugees outside of camps are below the poverty line. With their savings depleted, many now face poverty. To date, a majority of Syrian families rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs. At the same time, increasing shortages of essential aid are worsening their plight. As a result, families have been forced to cut out meals, spend less on healthcare and take their children out of school, and sending them to work. Meanwhile, a generation of Syrian refugee children has been unable to access formal education. At the same time, refugees cite education for their children, boys as well as girls, as a top priority.

Following a 2016 attack near the Jordan’s border with Syria, the Jordanian army declared the northern and northeastern border with Syria as closed military zones. As a result, some 50,000 people, mostly women and children, have been left stranded in a remote border area known as “the berm” with limited access to food, water and humanitarian aid. Humanitarian access to the area remains difficult due to security risks and border closures, and international aid organisations have been unable to resume the delivery of humanitarian assistance with any regularity.
How are we helping?

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the European Union has channelled roughly €2.1 billion to Jordan through humanitarian, development and macro-financial assistance. Of this, humanitarian aid amounts to over €360 million, providing services such as healthcare, food and basic needs assistance, support during the winter months, shelter, water and sanitation, psychosocial support and protection programmes.

The aid has benefitted refugees living in the Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps, as well as Syrians in urban settings and at the berm. The provision of basic services in villages and towns across the country also includes vulnerable Jordanian families. Specific programmes support women and children’s needs as they account for approximately 51 percent of the total refugee population. To address the educational needs, the EU has initiated a programme that will ensure hundreds of Syrian children complete primary and secondary education in Jordanian schools. In 2018, the EU’s humanitarian contribution is worth €36 million.

Syrian refugees in Jordan without updated government and UNHCR documents risk deportation, which limits their freedom of movement, as well as preventing them from accessing basic services including healthcare, education and the labour market. The EU has supported the UNHCR and a consortium of partner organisations to help regularise the civil and/or legal status of refugees lacking proper registration.

In 2016 and 2017, a set of mutual commitments were adopted by which the EU and Jordan will fulfil the pledges to Syria and the region they made at the London conference in February 2016 and at the Brussels conferences in April 2017 and 2018. To date, over 110 000 working permits have been delivered to Syrian refugees.