European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Jordan

Introduction

Since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011, Jordan has been a safe haven for Syrians. The country is the third largest host country for Syrian refugees. The majority of refugees live in cities while others reside in camps, mainly in Azraq and Zaatari. The refugee influx has put immense pressure on Jordan’s economy and resources, but there is relative harmony between Jordanians and refugees. The European Union is a big contributor of aid, helping Jordan to shoulder the consequences of the influx.

What are the needs?

In Jordan, 78% of Syrian refugees outside camps live below the poverty line, according to the UN; and almost 6 in 10 Syrian refugees of working age are unemployed. The majority of Syrian families rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs at a time of aid cuts and economic downturn. As a result, many families are forced to miss meals or spend less on healthcare. Economic circumstances sometimes force families to send their children to work instead of school. Many refugee children have difficulties accessing formal education.

Up to 15,000 people continue to be stranded in a no-go military zone at the northeastern border with Syria. The population of the informal settlement called Rukban consists mostly of women and children. Restricted access for humanitarian organisations means that they have limited access to food, water, healthcare and other basic services. There is concern over deteriorating living conditions after several children died of preventable causes. With no immediate prospects of returning home, refugees need access to social services, healthcare services, and economic opportunities to become less reliant on aid.
How are we helping?

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the European Union has channelled roughly €2.7 billion to Jordan through humanitarian, development and macro-financial assistance. Of this, humanitarian aid amounts to over €375 million for the provision of services including healthcare, food, multipurpose cash assistance and other basics such as shelter, water and sanitation, education, psychosocial support and protection. Vulnerable people have received additional humanitarian support during the harsh winter months. In 2019, the EU contributed €20 million of humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian aid goes to refugees living in Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps, as well as Syrians in urban settings and in Rukban. The provision of basic services in villages and towns across the country also benefits vulnerable Jordanian families. Various programmes address the specific needs of women and children who make up more than half of the refugee population.

To address educational needs, the EU initiated programmes that ensured quality education for hundreds of Syrian children, including those with disabilities. Innovative approaches help out-of-school children find their way into the formal education system. The aim is to achieve inclusive education and an environment that systematically protects vulnerable children.

Syrian refugees in Jordan without updated documentation are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The lack of official documents limits their freedom of movement and prevents them from entering the labour market and accessing basic services such as healthcare and education. The EU is therefore supporting the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR and a consortium of partner organisations to help regularise the status of refugees without proper registration.

Mutual commitments exist between the EU and Jordan following pledges that were made to address the Syria crisis at the London conference in 2016 and the Brussels conferences in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The Brussels conferences have been successful at mobilising international financial support for Syrians, including humanitarian aid both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.