



# Multi-Year Strategy 2023-2025 | Summary

UNHCR Jordan



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Despite the various challenges the country has faced in recent years, linked to regional instability, the Syria crisis, high unemployment, and lately COVID-19, Jordan continues to be a generous host for refugees, including them in critical areas, such as education and healthcare. Jordan's development vision underpins its cooperation with international donors, and humanitarian, development, and financial stakeholders, primarily with respect to socio-economic growth and the needs of refugee and host communities. As Jordan is not a State party to major international conventions relating to refugees and statelessness, a Memorandum of Understanding sets the parameters for cooperation between UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the government and outlines the major principles of international protection, including the definition of a refugee and the principle of non-refoulement. The country's refugee response is framed by the government-led Jordan Response Plan (JRP), in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

The absence of national asylum legislation and the tightly controlled access to territory and asylum create challenges when pursuing protection and solutions. UNHCR continues to prioritize registration, identity management, and documentation alongside the Refugee Status Determination as needed and in close collaboration with the government, while measures have been adopted to improve access to birth registration and other protection services. Yet, gaps still exist, including limited access to asylum and services for non-Syrian individuals, limitations on freedom of movement for the 17 per cent of refugees residing in camps, protection risks for refugee children, and heightened risk of gender-based violence.

The government has made remarkable efforts to ensure refugee inclusion in national systems, including healthcare and education, but high costs

present a barrier for access for many. As poverty rates among refugees have increased in recent years, especially due to the impact of COVID-19, many have been resorting to negative coping strategies, such as taking children out of school to work.

Unemployment remains high, particularly among youth and women. Refugees who work are mostly employed in the informal labour market, where earnings are low and working conditions often poor, creating significant protection risks. Running one of the organisation's largest cash assistance programmes worldwide, UNHCR in Jordan is working with partners to develop a model to transition the population to economic opportunities, though several challenges remain. The government has demonstrated clear support for refugee self-reliance, through measures including free work permits and frameworks to license home-based businesses. There is however room for expansion of groups and employment sectors covered. Refugee empowerment remains a priority to promote refugees' agency, gender equality, and two-way communication. Shelter continues to be an area with significant gaps in and outside camps, and eviction threats are common. Access to water and sanitation has improved in recent years, with 90 per cent of refugees reporting to have access to safe latrines.

Until such time that voluntary and dignified return becomes attainable, resettlement remains the primary durable solution for refugees in Jordan, but opportunities are still fewer than needed. UNHCR neither promotes nor facilitates the return of Syrian refugees. Refugees continue to exercise their right to return despite an unstable security environment in the south of Syria. While most refugees still demonstrate strong will to return to Syria one day, the latest intention survey revealed the lowest level of return intentions since 2016, with less than one per cent of respondents indicating that they intend to return within the next 12 months.

### POPULATION

Jordan hosts the second most refugees per capita worldwide. The refugee population registered with UNHCR constitutes over 760,000 individuals. This comprises both Syrian nationals (88.5%) and refugees of other nationalities (11.5%), of which Iraqis are the largest group. Most refugees live out of camps, 17 per cent in camps. Over the next three years, UNHCR does not expect any major returns, nor resettlement departures and if at all only incremental increase, and therefore anticipates no significant changes in refugee population size caused by population movements. No significant population movements towards Jordan are expected even as the security situation in the region remains volatile. For more information on the refugee population in Jordan, see [here](#).

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### Planning scenario

The refugee situation in Jordan is increasingly protracted. In the foreseeable future, Jordan will continue to host refugees from Syria, Iraq, and other countries. Humanitarian needs, particularly of the most vulnerable, are also likely to persist. With continued instability in Syria, refugee returns will be limited. At the same time, resettlement quotas may increase incrementally. Humanitarian financing will likely diminish as a result of the protracted nature of the displacement and concurrent humanitarian crises. Humanitarian-development programming will become more prominent to integrate the needs of both nationals and refugees in the national recovery plans. The JRP, the GCR, and the SDGs will maintain their roles as leading frameworks for the refugee response. Potential risks can be mitigated through proactive engagement and strategic planning with the government and other stakeholders to identify and manage risks and opportunities for change.

### Lessons learned

The JRP has represented a positive model for partnership, advocacy, and coordination between the host government and the international community to address the needs of Syrian refugees. The lack of a similar model for non-Syrian refugees limits their abilities to access rights and services.

The protracted nature of the refugee situation in Jordan provides an opportunity to re-examine the impact of UNHCR's work and better align it to Jordan's development goals. Inclusion of refugees in development planning and programming is essential so they can benefit from upcoming reforms. UNHCR also recognizes opportunities to build on existing successes in refugee inclusion and advance on inclusion in national services through strengthened partnerships with international financial institutions and development actors. Access to formal financial services can build economic resilience and absorb economic shocks.

Strengthening data analysis will be crucial to support evidence-based innovation, effective

targeting, and enhanced implementation mechanisms. Advocacy with the government could be better informed through the deeper understanding of the positive contributions that refugees make to the Jordanian economy.

### Vision and strategic orientation

UNHCR's vision is that all refugees in Jordan can enjoy a decent life, become self-sustained, and have access to education and essential services on par with Jordanian nationals during their temporary, if protracted, stay in Jordan. To the extent possible, refugees will continue to be supported in accessing national systems, i.e., in education, health and protection services, through a gradual shift from parallel structures currently providing exclusive services to refugees. Harmonized registration and documentation for all refugees in the country allows them to access services. Refugees, including in camps, are no longer considered automatically vulnerable, and humanitarian assistance is targeted to refugees who have no prospects to sustain themselves. Refugees are empowered to reach their full potential, take on increased responsibilities in the refugee response and contribute to the Jordanian society and economy, including through broader access to the labour market.

### Age, gender and diversity

UNHCR's vision for the empowerment of refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people is that communities are agents of change and social transformation who bring forward longer-term and sustainable solutions. Guided by UNHCR's Age, Gender, and Diversity policy (2018) and the Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected Populations, UNHCR will support communities as protection agents, focusing on the inclusion of refugee, stateless and host community members of diverse age, gender, and backgrounds. UNHCR will help refugees and asylum-seekers take active roles in community-led structures and engage in community mobilization along with members of the host community.

# RESULTS FRAMEWORK

## IMPACT AREA 1 | ATTAINING FAVORABLE PROTECTION ENVIRONMENTS

**Impact statement** | People of concern will enjoy access to asylum in line with international protection standards and enjoy protection from refoulement.

By 2025, legislation, policies and administrative practices with regard to **refugee rights** and access to services, freedom of movement, and the principle of *non-refoulement*, will be further aligned with international standards. UNHCR will work with stakeholders so that processes leading to limitation of freedom of movement, including detention, deportation, and regulation of movement in and out of camps, are more predictable, harmonized, fair, aligned with international standards and consistently implemented. This change will be achieved via a strengthened partnership with the government. Provision of technical support and capacity development combined with advocacy with the key stakeholders will ensure that safeguards are enhanced and implemented in relevant policies and practices, and that all refugees, regardless of nationality, are able to enjoy greater **freedom of movement** and more **equitable access to protection**. In addition, by 2025, refugees will benefit from efficient and harmonized registration and documentation processes, and access to territory will be restored and preserved. UNHCR will continue to provide [continuous] **registration** and documentation services to refugees and asylum-seekers, while strengthening advocacy to ensure the equal enjoyment of asylum space for all who need it, including newly arriving asylum-seekers. UNHCR will also work with the government to ensure the quality and accuracy of population data.

### LINKED OUTCOME AREAS

Access to territory,  
registration & documentation  
Status determination  
Protection policy and law  
Safety and access to justice

## IMPACT AREA 2 | REALIZING BASIC RIGHTS IN SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

**Impact statement** | Refugees shall have access to integrated services to meet their basic needs, including through national systems, as a result of continued advocacy with the Government of Jordan strengthened engagement of development partners and with effective safety nets for people with vulnerabilities.

By 2025, UNHCR will continue to promote systems that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of **cash-based assistance** across all actors in Jordan, including through the roll-out of new targeting criteria for cash assistance and the strengthening of the coordination among other actors providing cash assistance. Basic needs assistance will be maintained for all vulnerable refugees with no prospects to sustain themselves through UNHCR assistance and/or alternative national systems. UNHCR will work on the continuous inclusion of refugee women, men and children into the national systems, for both Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. Concretely, UNHCR will address the uneven access to the **labour market** for refugees of different nationalities, the fragmentation of the **water and electricity** infrastructure in and out of camps, the continued need of vulnerable refugees for **welfare support** and the remaining barriers to access **health care**. UNHCR will also promote the long-term sustainability of the camps, including but not limited to **shelter** maintenance and connectivity of critical utility infrastructure with national grids with development partners and government. UNHCR will make concerted efforts to address critical gaps and their underlying causes by enhancing refugee participation in service delivery and by strengthening strategic engagement with the government and local and international partners.

### LINKED OUTCOME AREAS

Child protection  
Wellbeing & basic needs  
Sustainable housing & settlements  
Healthy lives

**IMPACT AREA 3 | EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY**

**Impact statement |** Refugees are engaged and empowered in attaining protection and solutions, with a focus on education, livelihoods and gender equality; needs of most vulnerable, including people with specific needs, are addressed.

**LINKED OUTCOME AREAS**

Gender-based violence  
Community engagement & participation  
Education  
Self-reliance, economic inclusion & livelihoods

Over the next three years, UNHCR will work on empowering refugees, particularly women, to act as agents of protection and solutions, and thereby enhance their access to services, education, and livelihoods. To achieve this, UNHCR will advocate on behalf of refugees, using its role as coordinator of the refugee response to bring together key actors for advocacy and engagement, while expanding partnerships, including with the private sector and humanitarian and development actors. Specific focus will be on access to financial services for all refugees, as well as ensuring that **economic opportunities** are inclusive of women and youth. UNHCR will additionally promote narratives that highlight the economic benefits that refugees can bring to the Jordanian economy. Growth of home-based business programming across the refugee response will remain a priority, offering tangible possibilities for both women and refugees with disabilities to earn independent income. Attention will be given to the situation in camps, to ensure that camp-based refugees have increased access to economic opportunities both inside and outside of the camps. Furthermore, UNHCR will explore opportunities for alignment between the camp and local economies to support economic growth at the local level. Building on existing community networks and communication channels with refugees, UNHCR will further strengthen two-way communication and **community empowerment**, by supporting community structures so that refugees take the lead in achieving longer-term solutions. UNHCR will coordinate with other actors, including UNICEF and the GOJ, to find solutions for refugees in terms of access to, and retention in, schools, as well as higher **education** and vocational training.

**IMPACT AREA 4 | SECURING SOLUTIONS**

**Impact statement |** Refugees are informed decision-makers with increased access to protection sensitive solutions, which in turn demonstrates responsibility sharing with the Government of Jordan.

By 2025, refugees will be informed and empowered decision-makers with the ability to secure solutions. Refugee voices and intentions will guide durable solutions programming, including voluntary return, resettlement, but also other solutions such as complementary pathways. UNHCR will continue to directly identify and refer refugees in need of **resettlement** and refine identification processes with a focus on refugees with heightened protection needs, including Syrians and non-Syrians, in and out of camps. Processing will focus on outreach and communication, counselling, and feedback mechanisms to ensure refugees have accurate information to manage their expectations. Furthermore, UNHCR will invest in partnerships and coordination with a diverse range of stakeholders to facilitate refugee access to **complementary pathways** on a greater scale. Together with refugees and partners, UNHCR will support the development of comprehensive information on complementary pathways for refugee communities to increase awareness and knowledge. Lastly, while the current conditions do not allow for the promotion or facilitation of **return** to Syria, UNHCR will maintain capacity to support individuals choosing to return and engage in monitoring and evidence-based planning. Return conditions and refugee intentions will inform the narrative around returns. If and when protection thresholds are met in line with the regional strategy, refugees will receive support from UNHCR and the international community to ensure that return is safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable.

**LINKED OUTCOME AREAS**

Voluntary return  
Resettlement & complementary pathways

## RESOURCES

The resource management plan for UNHCR's Jordan operation over the next three years includes robust cost-efficiency measures that while enhancing operational effectiveness also reduce UNHCR's environmental impact. The planned budget reduction is in line with operational priorities centred on refugee inclusion, funding projections and refugees in need of assistance. Major changes introduced in the operational budget concern the areas of policy and law, wellbeing, health and livelihoods.

UNHCR will reinforce the environmental interventions, installing solar panels at premises across Jordan, replacing 50 per cent of its vehicles with electric cars by the end of 2025, and introducing water harvesting systems across all offices.

UNHCR's [resource mobilization strategy](#) will concentrate on fundraising for its prioritized response, diversify its donors base and secure multiyear and flexible funding. The office will continue focusing on better communicating key developments and priorities of the operation and demonstrating the impact and value of UNHCR's refugee- and protection-centric work, as well as highlighting the impact of donor contributions. The office will enhance collaboration with development actors to identify collective solutions and explore opportunities for funding from development assistance agencies.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In 2023-2025, UNHCR in Jordan will prioritize three areas to enhance monitoring and evaluation (M&E). First, UNHCR will focus on [M&E capacity building](#), developing innovative and collaborative M&E plans and enhancing M&E capacities and skills of UNHCR staff, partners, and refugee communities. This will enable teams to make evidence-based decisions, better measure changes in baseline data, and strengthen performance monitoring to determine the level of success of various interventions. Second, the operation will put specific emphasis on [improving data quality and sources](#), by streamlining and managing the wide variety of data sources. A repository of data collection tools will ultimately reinforce M&E implementation for activities where outputs are achieved in collaboration with partners. Furthermore, UNHCR will continue its cooperation with the World Bank and, where feasible, expand its cooperation with other stakeholders for an integrated approach to key assessments about refugees. Lastly, UNHCR in Jordan will [engage refugees and asylum-seekers in monitoring](#) through a feedback tool for community-based project evaluation. This will provide concrete data for monitoring indicators related to UNHCR services. Through this tool, UNHCR will ensure meaningful engagement across all phases of the Operations Management Cycle allowing for an improved performance in line with prioritized needs.

More information on UNHCR's multi-year strategy in Jordan can be found [here](#).

**CONTACT:** Roland Schönbauer, Senior External Relations Officer, [schoenb@unhcr.org](mailto:schoenb@unhcr.org)  
Evie Prastakou, Associate External Relations Officer, [prastako@unhcr.org](mailto:prastako@unhcr.org)