



Jordan COVID-19 Situation Report

January 13, 2021

Overview

As of January 13, 2021, Jordan has experienced 309,846 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 4,076 deaths, with 1,176 confirmed new cases of COVID-19 that day.¹ While the daily increase in cases has dropped since last fall, COVID-19 infections still inhibit the country's daily functioning. Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh announced on January 3 that Jordan secured three million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, with one million coming from Pfizer and partner BioNTech and the remaining two million from the World Health Organization's (WHO) COVAX Program.² The COVAX program, an initiative designed to equitably distribute COVID-19 vaccines across the globe, aims to provide vaccine doses for at least 20 percent of a country's population.³ The specific rollout date for vaccine doses is currently unknown, but Prime Minister Al-Khasawneh stated in his address to parliament that he expects vaccines to be available in February, signaling hope for both the health and financial well-being of the country in the near future. He also stated that "Jordan's healthcare system had tripled in capacity since October," while Health Minister Nathir Obeidat announced hopes to launch a "free inoculation program for more than 20 percent of the 10 million population" in the near future.⁴ Although this is a step in the right direction, over six million vaccines are still needed to meet the needs of the entire population before the country can recover to pre-COVID conditions.

Economic Impacts

COVID-19 restrictions have negatively impacted the Jordanian economy, hampering movement and the ability of businesses to operate. Between March 15 and April 30, Jordan released 14 defense orders instituting a nationwide curfew and movement restrictions with penalties for violations. These restrictions were eased in late April, signaling a reopening of the economy.⁵

Movement restrictions, though necessary, put pressure on food security within the country. In 2020, 17% of Jordanians, many of whom were female heads of household,

¹ [Jordan: WHO Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Dashboard](#)

² [Jordan secures 3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine](#)

³ [COVAX: Working for global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines](#)

⁴ [Jordan secures 3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine](#)

⁵ [Socio-Economic Framework for COVID-19 Response](#)

permanently lost their jobs, and unemployment rose nationally to a high of 26%. As a result of containment measures and other economic impacts of COVID-19, 53 percent, or approximately three million civilians, are at risk of food insecurity in addition to the three percent, or approximately 219,186 individuals, who are already food insecure. The impacts are worse among the refugee community, 21 percent of whom face food insecurity in Jordan.⁶

Small-medium enterprises reported challenges related to cash flow and supply chain interruptions, with only seven percent of businesses operating at pre-COVID capacity.⁷ Given that only 43 percent of small businesses indicated that they could only continue to pay employee salaries for less than one month and an additional 42 percent indicated that they can only continue to pay employee salaries for less than three months, unemployment is expected to rise. The problem is especially acute among refugees, who face job insecurity at much higher rates.⁸ According to UNICEF, the number of households in Jordan with an income of less than 100 JD (140 USD) per month doubled since the beginning of the pandemic.⁹ Job losses increased poverty rates by 38% among locals and 18% among refugees by December 2020, limiting access to basic needs.¹⁰

Children and Youth

Evidence is showing that adolescents are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its secondary impacts. During lockdowns, 28 percent of Jordanian children went to bed hungry, dropping to 15 percent of children after lockdowns were lifted, due to employment disruptions. Since the pandemic, four out of 10 families in Jordan have not been able to purchase the hygiene products that their households need. Coupled with the facts that 17 percent of children under five years of age have not received their basic vaccinations and 23 percent of children did not have access to medical attention for sicknesses during the pandemic, hygiene is an extremely important defense against contracting COVID-19 and other viruses.¹¹

As of December 2020, Jordan hosts approximately 750,000 registered refugees according to the UNHCR.¹² Nearly half of this population is composed of children under the age of 18 who already faced education barriers before the pandemic.¹³ With a population of 3.2 million students in an area where remote learning was uncommon

⁶ [Jordan Food Security Update: Implications of COVID-19](#)

⁷ [Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enterprises in Jordan](#)

⁸ [Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enterprises in Jordan](#)

⁹ [UNICEF study highlights plight of children and youth in Jordan during COVID-19](#)

¹⁰ [Compounding Misfortunes: Changes in Poverty since the onset of COVID-19 on Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Lebanon](#)

¹¹ [UNICEF study highlights plight of children and youth in Jordan during COVID-19](#)

¹² [Supporting Refugees in Jordan: what we achieved in 2020](#)

¹³ [Syrian refugees | ACAPS](#)

prior to COVID-19, Jordan's education system is strained. Refugee students in particular lack access to technology for remote learning such as computers, televisions, etc.¹⁴

In addition to remote learning barriers, COVID-19 has increased protection risks for children. The economic crisis and the status of out-of-school children has put an unparalleled strain on vulnerable households as families use any available means to survive. Under such difficult economic circumstances, child labour is used a coping mechanism for many families. According to a study conducted by Jordan Labour Watch, "child labour will increase insignificantly due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis and its economic and social consequences, including also a dramatic increase in the unemployment rate and consequently, in poverty rates."¹⁵

Anera's Response

In FY20, Anera delivered two pilot shipments to Jordan as a test to navigate the importation and distribution processes after a several year absence. The shipments, valued at \$18,000 and \$12,000 respectively, included chronic medicines and vitamin D droplets distributed to Anera's in-country partners, Jordanian Medical Aid for Palestinians (JMAP) and Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), who were previously forced to reduce or halt their operations due to COVID-19.

Anera is currently working to secure one shipment to Jordan valued at \$168,000. Despite facing significant delays due to COVID-19 restrictions at the port and with the consignee, the Jordanian Food and Drug Administration (JFDA) approved Anera's shipment and will be shipped from the UK soon. Anera will continue to monitor the situation and to plan additional responses. Through this shipment, Anera will be working with leading health partners such as International Medical Corps (IMC) to provide critically needed medications, targeting vulnerable Jordanians as well as in-camp and out-of-camp refugees.

¹⁴ [Exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on adolescents in Jordan's refugee camps and host communities](#)

¹⁵ [Jordan Labor Watch denounces an increase in child labor](#)