



Jordan Situation Report

March 22, 2022

Background

The background to the circumstances of COVID-19, economic recovery, and educational challenges in [Jordan](#) can be found on Anera's last [Situation Report \(December 14\)](#).

Overview

While COVID-19 continues to spread throughout Jordan, already vulnerable populations face increased threats to their education, food security, health, and overall wellness.

COVID-19

As of February 16, Jordan had the highest number of critical COVID-19 cases in the MENA region. Through February 15, 1,234 COVID-19 patients were hospitalized, compared to the countries with the second and third highest numbers, Saudi Arabia and Morocco, with 979 and 293 critical cases, respectively.¹

On February 7, Jordan reached its new highest number of daily COVID-19 cases, with 21,626 cases.² The following day, the daily number of new cases peaked again, with 22,720 reported.³ As of February 10, 90% of the daily new cases in Jordan were the omicron variant.⁴

As of March 21, there have been 1,680,179 cases of COVID-19 and 13,959 cumulative deaths in Jordan. Between March 2 and March 18, Jordan recorded no new cases of COVID-19 each day. So far, the kingdom has administered 9,727,982 vaccine doses, which is enough to vaccinate roughly 48.2% of the population.⁵

In Jordan, COVID-19 vaccines are free for all populations. CARE Jordan's 2021 annual needs assessment found that almost **94% of respondents faced no challenges in accessing vaccinations**. In addition, the assessment revealed the locations with the lowest vaccination rates: Irbid and Mafrqa had vaccination rates of 58% and 59%, respectively. In comparison, Azraq Camp had the highest vaccination rate, at 78%. The assessment also found that **only 59% of respondents believed in the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine**.⁶

¹ [Jordan records highest number of critical COVID cases in region | Jordan Times](#)

² [Kingdom sees daily high of 21,626 COVID cases, 27 related deaths | Jordan Times](#)

³ [Kingdom's daily COVID cases hit new peak of 22,720 | Jordan Times](#)

⁴ [Omicron accounts for 90% of daily COVID cases in Kingdom | Jordan Times](#)

⁵ [Jordan: the latest coronavirus counts, charts and maps | Reuters](#)

⁶ [2021 Needs Assessment Summary | Care Jordan](#)

While Jordan has continued its vaccine rollout, children between the ages of 5 and 12 are not yet eligible for vaccination. In January, the National Epidemiological Committee recommended to the Ministry of Education to begin vaccinations for children aged 5-12.⁷

Education

In early February, the World Health Organization's director of their Infection Risk Prevention Program in the Middle East announced that WHO advises Jordan to resume in-person classes.⁸ The Ministry of Education aimed to restart in-person classes on February 20 and attempted to create a safe and healthy environment in which to return. The ministry is currently running a campaign to encourage vaccination and adherence to COVID-19 guidelines and orders among students.⁹

In addition to the challenges for education created by COVID-19, refugees and other vulnerable groups face education limitations caused by poverty and infrastructure. According to Care Jordan's 2021 annual needs assessment, boys are at the most risk of dropping out of school, most notably Yemeni boys. However, girls are more likely than boys to attend remedial or catch-up school programs. Households that face financial insecurity are more likely to have their children work.¹⁰

Vulnerable children often receive poorer quality education due to low-quality infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and sub-standard school environments. The schools vulnerable children attend also lack resources, and refugee children often face bullying and harassment. For the past two years, Iraqi children have been most likely to be held back in school. One out of four surveyed Iraqi children were a grade behind in school. In comparison, only one in ten Jordanian children had been held back.¹¹

By 2025, the Kingdom of Jordan aims to increase its capacity to enroll kindergarteners in school. It plans to do this by expanding the establishment of classrooms and equipping them with needed supplies to increase enrollment. In addition, it plans to update the current curriculum and training plans and to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Education to monitor and evaluate the quality of services provided. To increase innovation in the classroom, the government plans to provide a computer corner in all government-funded kindergarten classrooms and introduce technology through pioneering projects. It also plans to reinforce parent participation in education by developing a program and mobilizing families to support education, nutrition, and social protection. Finally, the government plans to conduct outreach projects to better prepare children for the first grade. The establishment of these programs and initiatives will likely increase the enrollment of children in kindergartens and improve their future education outlooks by reinforcing the importance of education for all populations.¹²

⁷ [Parents await launch of child COVID vaccinations | The Jordan Times](#)

⁸ [WHO advises Jordan regarding return of in-person education | Roya News](#)

⁹ [Ministry keen on safe return to in-class learning in schools this month | The Jordan Times](#)

¹⁰ [2021 Needs Assessment Summary | Care Jordan](#)

¹¹ [2021 Needs Assessment Summary | Care Jordan](#)

¹² [Jordan Early Childhood Education Executive Plan, 2016-2025 | MOE Jordan](#)

Nutrition and Food Security

A study of nutrition in Jordan published in December 2021 revealed that **a mere 23% of children aged 6-23 months met the minimum acceptable dietary standards**, compared to 33% in 2012. In addition, national surveys reveal a trend of increasing prevalence of low birthweight in Jordan, with 11% in 2007, 14% in 2012, and 17% between 2017 and 2018.¹³

Significant January snowfall increased Jordan's water reserves, but the snow and frost damaged agriculture in Jordan, most notably in the Jordan Valley. The weather caused significant damage to livestock and open field crops, including winter vegetables, fruit trees, and potatoes. Up to 90% of the production of these crops sustained damage in some areas. The farmers who suffered as a result of the weather are eligible for compensation from the Agricultural Risk Fund, but the damage sustained by crops could negatively impact the food security of already-vulnerable groups.¹⁴

Following Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, it is likely that food insecurity in Jordan will increase further. **Fifty percent of the Middle East and North African region's wheat comes from Russia and Ukraine**, which will create additional challenges in access to food for already vulnerable groups, as these imports are halted due to the conflict.¹⁵ However, as less than 7% of Jordan's total imports come from Russia and Ukraine, the majority of Jordanians will likely not feel the effects of increased food insecurity.¹⁶

Health

During a meeting on February 8, the Secretary General of the Economic and Social Council revealed the challenges facing Jordan's health sector. They include "weak governance and poor management," poor private sector monitoring, and lack of coordination throughout the government. In addition, the health sector is facing a staff shortage and lacks a unified system of information.¹⁷

CARE Jordan's 2021 annual needs assessment highlighted the limited access to healthcare faced by Syrian refugees in Jordan. According to the assessment, refugees in urban areas and Azraq Camp struggle to access healthcare services, which is exacerbated by COVID-19. Participants in focus groups reported lacking necessary medications, most notably for chronic diseases including diabetes and hypertension. Participants also lacked vitamins and medical devices including glasses, walking sticks, and hearing aids. These challenges were most significant for non-Syrian refugees and persons with disabilities.¹⁸

¹³ [Review of the Nutrition Situation in Jordan | MDPI](#)

¹⁴ [GIEWS Country Brief - Jordan | FAO](#)

¹⁵ [The Hunger Clock is Ticking Across the Middle East and North Africa | Care](#)

¹⁶ [Agriculture: Jordan's Imports from Russia and Ukraine Do Not Exceed 7 Percent | Roya News](#)

¹⁷ [Staff shortage, lack of unified information system pose major challenge to health sector | The Jordan Times](#)

¹⁸ [2021 Needs Assessment Summary | Care Jordan](#)

WASH

On February 6, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation announced that the annual rainfall rate increased to 59% of the long-term annual average.

According to the Minister of Water and Irrigation, Jordan's water resources are being stretched due to climate change and rapid population growth. **The country receives 20% less rainfall than it did 50 years ago, and its aquifers are depleting rapidly.** In 2022, the government expects that the unmet water demand will increase from 50 to 70 million cubic meters. In order to address the lack of water, Jordan made an agreement with Israel, the US, and the UAE to import water from Israel, and it aims to have the capability to desalinate water by 2027. Without these interventions, the unmet water demand will reach an annual 300 million cubic meters by 2040.¹⁹

Economy

In January 2022, Jordan's consumer price index rose by over 2%. It reached nearly 104, compared to 101 in January 2021. According to Jordan's statistics department, the increased inflation is due to the increase in prices for transportation, food, fuel and lighting, and entertainment. Transportation prices saw the highest increase, rising by more than a percentage point, followed by the prices of vegetables and legumes, which increased by 0.4 percentage points.²⁰

Shelter

According to Care Jordan's 2021 annual needs assessment, vulnerable populations in Jordan faced barriers to accessing quality housing, transportation, and electricity. Urban refugees reported housing and high rent as challenges. They reported allocating more than half of their monthly expenses to housing costs. In addition, the participants reported inadequate housing to accommodate for family size and fear of eviction or having electricity or water shut off.²¹

Anera's Response

This year, Ramadan will take place from April 2 to May 2. During Ramadan, Muslim families fast from sunrise to sunset and break their fasts over a shared *iftar* meal, which must meet the families' nutritional needs to fuel their bodies after long hours of fasting. This presents a challenge for vulnerable households who already struggle to put food on the table, especially in light of the economic challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to meet the food security needs of vulnerable families during the month of Ramadan, Anera will distribute food parcels and hot meals to vulnerable families with support from the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) and I Learn. Anera and JHCO plan to deliver parcels to 1,200 families, providing food for the whole month. Hot meals will be distributed to 100 families once a week for the four weeks of Ramadan, with an additional meal for Eid al-Fitr.

¹⁹ [Running Low on Water, Jordan Looks to Imports and Desalination | Bloomberg](#)

²⁰ [Consumer Price Index up by 2.46% in January](#)

²¹ [2021 Needs Assessment Summary | Care Jordan](#)