



Jordan Situation Report

February 3, 2023

Background

Information about the current period of COVID-19, educational challenges, and humanitarian needs in Jordan is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report](#).

Overview

Cases of COVID-19 in Jordan have decreased significantly since April of 2022, with zero confirmed cases and zero deaths since October.¹ However, the lasting effects of COVID-19 put further pressure on the lives of vulnerable people, especially refugees. According to UNHCR, by late 2022, Jordan hosted over 670,000 refugees from Syria and 80,000 more refugees from other countries. Over 85% of Syrians lived in rented accommodation.² Due to a lack of funding and unstable conditions, refugees and vulnerable communities are struggling economically from unemployment as well as from issues of food security, water scarcity and sporadic violence.³

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

According to Omar Salameh, a spokesman for the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the average amount of water available each year to a resident in Jordan is about 80 cubic meters, far below the threshold of 500 cubic meters set by the UN.⁴

The country, particularly the agricultural sector, continues to suffer from water scarcity due to the effects of climate change, diminished water supplies, damaged and inefficient infrastructure, and unexpected population increase. **The population has increased from around 8 million to 11 million in a decade.** Groundwater from aquifers is now 60% of the country's water supply.⁵ The challenges of water scarcity affect the most vulnerable communities, particularly refugees.⁶ They are left with poor water quality, and cannot afford private water tankers. Residents of Jordan are now accustomed to 36 hours a week of water supply to a household.⁷ These consequences are exacerbating issues of poverty and public health in Jordan.

In recent years, Jordan has struggled to meet pandemic-induced public health demands due to water scarcity and pollution. These issues have made it difficult for lower income communities to maintain their health, food security, and ability to make a living.

¹ [Jordan | WHO](#)

² [Jordan Events of 2022 | Human Rights Watch](#)

³ [Jordan: Over 750,000 refugees risk facing a stifling humanitarian crisis due to lack of funding | Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor](#)

⁴ [Jordan Is Running Out of Water, a Grim Glimpse of the Future | The New York Times](#)

⁵ [Ibid.](#)

⁶ [Creative solutions needed to fight Jordan's water scarcity | Al Jazeera](#)

⁷ [Jordan Is Running Out of Water, a Grim Glimpse of the Future | The New York Times](#)

According to a research study by Jim Yoon from *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* journal (PNAS), more than 90% of Jordan's low-income population will endure severe water insecurity by 2030.⁸

Food Insecurity

Since 2018, average wages have remained stable while the consumer price index has increased by 26%. Food security is an issue especially due to the high population, including the second-highest share of refugees in the world.⁹ Limited agricultural land and water and energy scarcity also contribute to food insecurity. Refugees and low-income communities are especially vulnerable. Around 3% of Jordanians, 8% of refugees in camps, and 18% of refugees in host communities are classified as food insecure. Smaller families, families with members who have a disability, and households headed by women are more likely to be food insecure.¹⁰ For 2023, The World Food Program estimates that projects providing food assistance in Jordan will cost around \$230 million. These programs will provide food assistance to 465,000 refugees and school lunches for 450,000 children.¹¹

Violence

Violent protests have slowly declined since the early 1990s, but there are continuing occurrences of sporadic violence that highlight the worsening economic situation in Jordan. In December 2022, two incidents related to protests killed four Jordanian police officers in Maan. The incidents occurred regarding protests over high fuel prices in Jordan.¹² According to the World Bank, Jordan is heavily in debt, with an unemployment rate of approximately 23%.¹³ People are protesting against tight living conditions and household incomes, which are affecting lower-income communities disproportionately. There is widespread civil unrest over these conditions. Over 40 security personnel sustained injuries in clashes and instances during which protesters set alight public property. Protesters have vandalized state buildings, smashed cars, burned tires and closed highways.¹⁴

Human Trafficking

In 2023, the Labor Ministry reported that 34 human trafficking cases involving 131 victims and 152 perpetrators were registered in 2022.¹⁵ In addition, the ministry reported that 181 potential victims were housed in shelter centers. Despite improvement, the government of Jordan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, especially in efforts to hold traffickers accountable. For example, more than 88% of sentenced traffickers received fines instead of imprisonment in 2022.¹⁶ The most vulnerable populations are refugees, foreign migrants, and domestic workers, suffering from a variety of disadvantages. Jordan's visa sponsorship system

⁸ [7 FACTS ABOUT WATER SCARCITY IN JORDAN | The Borgen Project](#)

⁹ [Jordan country strategic plan \(2023–2027\) | WFP](#)

¹⁰ [Ibid.](#)

¹¹ [World Food Program's Jordan projects total \\$230m for 2023 | Jordan News](#)

¹² [Jordan's truckers struggle to get by, sparking protests, violence | Al Jazeera](#)

¹³ [Three Jordanian police killed during raid on hideout in Maan | Al Jazeera](#)

¹⁴ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁵ [131 human trafficking victims reported in 2022 – Labour Ministry | The Jordan Times](#)

¹⁶ [2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Jordan | U.S. Department of State](#)

places power and control in the hands of the employers, therefore allowing them to abuse the system and exploit migrant workers.¹⁷ Through this system, workers lack protection and resources to act against potential abuse or trafficking. Many of these workers are also undocumented, making it more difficult for them to complain or leave employers due to a fear of deportation.¹⁸ Women and children are also highly vulnerable to trafficking. There has been an increase in potential forced child labor among Syrian refugee children, Syrian refugee women and girls sold into forced marriages, and refugee boys and young men working illegally and informally in the Jordanian economy.¹⁹

Education

For decades, the Middle East has suffered from outdated curricula, limited access to resources, income and gender inequalities, and lack of teacher training in emerging, 21st century digital literacy. Jordan has the second highest UNHCR-registered refugee population in the world, whose presence puts a huge burden on an already strained education system. Vulnerable refugee and Jordanian children often receive poorer education due to low-quality infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and sub-standard school environments.

During the pandemic, despite national efforts to minimize disruptions in learning, most vulnerable students had no means or access to effective and functional remote learning platforms due to a lack of access to electricity, internet, or devices such as laptops. The non-formal education sector is vital to reaching students who struggle to access or thrive in formal education settings.

Anera's Response

Food Security and Livelihoods

In January 2023, Anera began its rooftop gardens program in Jordan. This is Anera's first agriculture program in the country since programming resumed in Jordan. Anera is targeting food-insecure refugee families by providing rooftop gardens and agricultural training to improve their immediate food security, nutritional needs, and livelihoods. In partnership with a local community-based organization, the project will install 50 new household rooftop gardens, renovate six existing household rooftop gardens, rehabilitate a community garden that serves 10 families, and potentially build one community garden at a school. The community garden will expand much-needed green space in the concrete jungle of East Amman.

Rooftop gardens provide a solution to challenges of arid soil, limited space, and water scarcity in the agricultural sector of Jordan's refugee communities. These interventions will increase families' food security by enabling them to grow nutritious produce. Rooftop gardens are also a livelihood opportunity, with families bringing excess produce to markets and using the additional income to address other needs. The project aims to

¹⁷ [2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Jordan | U.S. Department of State](#)

¹⁸ [COMBATting HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN JORDAN | The Borgen Project](#)

¹⁹ [2022 Trafficking in Persons Report: Jordan | U.S. Department of State](#)

enhance the resilience, local food production, and income of the most vulnerable Jordanian and refugee families in East Amman.

Health

Anera continues to expand its successful medical donations program in Jordan. This past fiscal year, Jordan received two shipments of vital medicines and supplies worth \$1.7 M. In October 2022, the Anera Jordan team cleared its largest shipment of essential chronic medications from International Health Partners. In mid-January, a shipment from Americares of 38,600 pairs of reading glasses arrived in port and will be distributed to partnering health centers. Anera is also working on shipments with new donors, such as Direct Relief, and expanding its reach by establishing two new partnerships with Islamic Relief Worldwide Jordan and UNRWA.

Anera continues to grow its relationship with the Jordan Medical Aid for Palestinians (JMAP) clinic. JMAP is the primary healthcare clinic offering services to vulnerable members of Gaza camp in northern Jordan. Anera supports the JMAP clinic with donations of vital medicines. And, recently, Anera funded a rehabilitation project to install an elevator to improve access to clinics for persons with disabilities (PWDs) or other mobility challenges, allowing them to reach medical services like x-rays, labs, and education rooms. As the only international nonprofit working in Gaza Camp, Anera is both respected and well-suited to support JMAP.

Anera is also exploring a mobile clinic project to serve patients in far and remote areas across the kingdom.

Education

In January 2021, Anera and Thaki launched the Thaki Project, an education program in Jordan. Thaki provides vulnerable students with enrichment materials that are preloaded onto gently used laptops. The laptops provide user-friendly, offline learning content, including teacher-training and student-learning materials. The supplementary educational content is regularly updated to reflect changes in learning trends and the unique needs of each population. Thaki's resources include a digital toolkit of training materials and resources in the form of mini courses, videos, lesson plans, and teaching guides.

Anera's Thaki Project is currently in Phase II. We are partnering with East Amman Charity to target a diverse group of 300 students, including minority refugee groups (Iraqi, Sudanese, and Somali), Syrian refugees, and vulnerable Jordanians. The first cohort of 150 students have already graduated from the program. The second cohort of students will start soon. Anera aims to expand this project by providing more laptops to serve more students.