



Jordan Situation Report

January 30, 2024

Background

The background to the circumstances of water scarcity, refugee livelihoods, and food security in Jordan can be found in Anera's last [Situation Report \(October 2023\)](#).

Overview

As of December, Jordan hosts 723,886 refugees registered with UNHCR, nearly 90% of whom are from Syria. The lives of vulnerable refugees have become increasingly difficult over the past several months, notably in the form of heightened food insecurity in refugee camps.¹ Unemployment, especially among youth, continues to affect the livelihoods of refugees and Jordanian citizens alike.² Jordan's economy is also facing additional challenges as the war on Gaza has stalled Israeli support for infrastructure projects in Jordan and shifted the attention of the international humanitarian community.³

Refugees in Jordan

Hosting the second-highest share of refugees per capita in the world, Jordan faces significant challenges in supporting both the refugee population and vulnerable Jordanian citizens. The high refugee population puts a strain on the country's limited natural resources, meaning that refugee families often resort to harmful coping mechanisms to support their livelihoods.⁴

Overall in 2023, Jordan saw a 20% increase in applications for resettlement and a 60% increase in departures compared to previous years, with 10,700 refugees leaving Jordan throughout the year. Since Anera's last situation report, this represents around a 2% decrease in the total number of UNHCR-registered refugees in Jordan, as well as a 0.4% decrease in refugees living in communities outside of refugee camps.⁵

Livelihoods & Unemployment

¹ [Jordan Country Brief December 2023 | World Food Programme](#)

² Ibid.

³ [Jordan's PM says peace with Israel remains strategic choice despite Gaza war | Reuters](#)

⁴ [Jordan Country Brief December 2023 | World Food Programme](#)

⁵ [December 2023 Jordan Operational Update | UNHCR](#)

For the 723,886 UNHCR-registered refugees who remain in Jordan, Human Rights Watch reported that despite legal changes in recent years that grant employment and education access, the majority of professions and educational opportunities are still extremely limited for non-Jordanians.⁶ UNHCR issued 90,000 work permits to Syrian refugees in Jordan in 2023, which is its highest number since 2016.⁷ This includes 8,962 flexible permits issued in the last quarter of 2023.⁸

It is important to note, though, that for non-Syrians, UNHCR registration is often not an option due to a 2019 ban on registering non-Syrian refugees for a variety of reasons.⁹ This means that for these families, access to UNHCR services like employment and livelihood support is not an option. Additionally, only 10% of the flexible work permits in 2023 were issued to women – yet women of working age make up 24% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan.¹⁰

Youth unemployment in Jordan also remains disproportionately high; the Jordan Department of Statistics reported a 49% unemployment rate for young adults aged 15-24 in the third quarter of 2023, with 52% of the same age group not currently enrolled in education programs.¹¹

To spur job growth and encourage economic stability in the country, the International Monetary Fund approved a new funding arrangement of 1.2 billion USD on January 10. This extends and increases funding from a previous funding arrangement that was set to end in March.¹²

Food Security

Jordan's food inflation rate fell from October to November 2023 by 1.4%, which indicates a change in the rate's upward trend from the previous five months. The World Food Programme (WFP) attributes this decrease to lowered willingness to spend during the ongoing war in Gaza.¹³ However, food and consumer inflation showed a general upward trend throughout the year, increasing by 2.2% at the end of December.¹⁴ Specifically, cucumbers and eggs underwent notable price increases.¹⁵

⁶ [World Report 2024: Jordan | Human Rights Watch](#)

⁷ [Jordan Year in Review 2023 | UNHCR](#)

⁸ [Document - Jordan: Livelihoods Dashboard \(December 2023\) | UNHCR](#)

⁹ [World Report 2024: Jordan | Human Rights Watch](#)

¹⁰ [Document - Jordan: Livelihoods Dashboard \(December 2023\) | UNHCR](#)

¹¹ [Tables of Employment and Unemployment Third Round - 2023 | Jordan Department of Statistics](#)

¹² [IMF Executive Board Approves US\\$1.2 Billion Extended Arrangement Under the Extended Fund Facility for Jordan](#)

¹³ [Document - Jordan: Livelihoods Dashboard \(December 2023\) | UNHCR](#)

¹⁴ [Jordan's food prices surged 2.2% in 2023 | Jordan News](#)

¹⁵ [November 2023 Jordan Market and Price Overview | WFP](#)

A WFP funding shortage in July 2023, which forced it to scale back cash-based food assistance by one-third for at least 410,000 vulnerable refugees, persisted into December.¹⁶ This means that, for the 723,886 UNHCR-registered refugees who remain in Jordan, purchasing power has decreased by 40%.¹⁷ According to WFP, 86.7 million USD is needed to sustain and appropriately scale up food interventions in Jordan for the first half of 2024.¹⁸

Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, & Environment

Jordan depends on exports for over 90% of its energy. Land degradation has been a consistent challenge due to overgrazing, land erosion, harmful irrigation practices, and urban sprawl. The country is prone to desertification. Because of the environmental deterioration and climate change impacts, food imports constituted about 20% of Jordan's overall imports in 2019.¹⁹

Zaatari Refugee Camp is the seventh-largest refugee camp worldwide, hosting around 80,000 Syrian refugees. The camp generates 34 metric tons of waste. The disposal of solid waste is considered one of the most severe environmental issues in Jordan, as it pollutes landfills. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in Jordan built a 16 metric tons capacity waste-processing facility in the context of one of their running projects in Jordan. The facility transforms 1,000 tons of waste into compost every year.²⁰

Studies expect Jordan's per capita water supply - around 90 cubic meters per person annually - to decrease further to 60 cubic meters per person by 2040.²¹ Contributing factors include low rainfall, unsustainable agriculture/irrigation practices, and climate change. To promote more sustainable activities in this regard, Jordan's Royal Scientific Society announced a collaboration with the FAO on January 24 that will promote smart agricultural practices and increase environmental awareness.²²

Interventions to more efficiently use Jordan's limited energy supply also include humanitarian aid in the form of solar panels for refugee camps. As of December, UNHCR reports that 97% of the electricity in Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps comes from solar power.²³

¹⁶ [Jordan Country Brief December 2023 | World Food Programme](#)

¹⁷ [November 2023 Jordan Market and Price Overview | WFP](#)

¹⁸ [Jordan Country Brief December 2023 | World Food Programme](#)

¹⁹ [Jordan Country Climate and Development Report, November 2022 | World Bank](#)

²⁰ [Compost as solid waste management in Jordan, 2023 | FAO](#)

²¹ [Jordan - Environment and Water Sector.](#)

²² [RSS launches sustainable land management project with FAO | Jordan Times](#)

²³ [December 2023 Jordan Operational Update | UNHCR](#)

Anera's Response

Refugees & Livelihoods

Anera's partnership with Thaki, which began in 2020, has recently closed its second phase. During this time, 156 students in Baqa'a and Souf refugee camps completed the digital literacy skills program, demonstrating a 38% increase in the group's ability to use a laptop. Of the 156, 56% of the group was female. Additionally, every student in the program improved their school performance. Anera endeavors to continue this program into 2024 by maintaining its partnership with Thaki and extending the number of laptops and students. Students in the program include Palestinian and Syrian refugees as well as vulnerable Jordanian students.

Digital literacy skills and improved educational performance prepare students for the job market, thereby addressing high youth unemployment and targeting girls and women to decrease the high female unemployment rate.

We identified the economic and social aspirations of the refugee youth between 18 to 30. And explored their priorities and experiences. This allowed us to understand their experience with education. As well as their transition from school to work. And their readiness for the labor market and their skill level. We also looked into the relationship between economic independence and family formation.

The project delivered six paper briefs on the refugees' priorities. It mapped realities in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco). And issued a final report compiling the six papers.

The project produced six Videos in each country featuring debates on youth aspirations. The videos showed youth advisors and refugee experts during discussions with stakeholders. The project concluded with a regional final event to present the results and offer networking opportunities.

Food Security & WASH

Anera will continue to expand its rooftop gardens program in Jordan, which supplements fresh produce needs for families and supports the economic independence of vulnerable households, especially woman-headed households. Bringing food production into individual homes also helps to contextualize the importance of smart agriculture and water conservation, bringing awareness to environmental issues in Jordan. Anera expects to expand on the existing 50 households gardens in 2024.

Health

With support from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Anera is also working to procure and distribute chronic illness medications for Syrian refugees in Zaatari and Azraq camps. These camps host a high number of families living in debt and below the poverty line, and chronic illness medications can be far too expensive. This project helps to alleviate the burden of these costs and ensure more equitable access to necessary medicines.