



# Jordan Situation Report

January 24, 2025

## Background

The background to water scarcity, refugee livelihoods, and food security in Jordan can be found in Anera's last [Situation Report \(November 2024\)](#).

## Overview

On December 8, 2024, following a swift offensive lasting less than two weeks, Syrian opposition forces entered Damascus and declared the end of Bashar al-Assad's regime.

**Over 600,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan are anxiously awaiting assurances regarding the stability of Syria following the fall of the Assad regime, in hopes it will mark the end of their more than 13-year journey of displacement in refugee camps and host communities.** These years have been marked by severe economic hardship and harsh living conditions. Most refugees remain uncertain whether to return now or wait to see how the situation unfolds. Many are primarily concerned about Syria's devastated economy and its ability to meet the basic needs of those returning.<sup>1</sup>

On January 11, the Jordanian Ministry of Interior reported that 1,053 Syrian refugees voluntarily left camps in Jordan to return to Syria, while 10,262 refugees living outside camps also chose to return. The total number of Syrian refugees leaving through the Jaber crossing in 2024 rose to 52,406, including non-refugee Syrians and those arriving from other countries. Additionally, Jordan announced a new policy allowing Syrian citizens residing in Europe, America, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and Gulf Cooperation Council countries to enter Jordan without prior approval, provided they hold a valid residence permit in their country of origin for at least four months. This policy aims to facilitate the return of Syrian expatriates and assist them in rebuilding their lives.<sup>2</sup>

On December 23, Jordan's Ministry of Interior clarified the criteria for entering Syria via the Jaber border crossing. It specifies two categories: Syrian investors and their

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<sup>1</sup> [Return a 'priority' for Syrian refugees in Jordan once situation stabilises, December 2024 | The New Arab](#)

<sup>2</sup> [UNHCR says 'significant' number of Syrian refugees return home from Jordan, January 2025 | The Jordan Times](#)

families with sufficient capital in Jordan, and Syrians holding Jordanian citizenship. **Most Syrian refugees, however, do not have the right to visit Syria and return to Jordan, leaving many hesitant to risk a one-way journey without securing a stable living situation in Syria.**<sup>3</sup>

The socio-economic conditions of refugees in Jordan remain challenging, with food, rent, and healthcare highlighted as the primary concerns. Many refugees are relying on informal loans to cover basic needs, and the employment landscape is dominated by seasonal agricultural work. Although there are opportunities for some refugees to find work through humanitarian volunteering programs, most refugees continue to experience severe economic hardships. Additionally, overcrowded and aging shelters, insufficient water and infrastructure, and challenges in accessing healthcare continue to compound the difficulties faced by refugees in both camps and host communities.<sup>4</sup>

Among non-Syrian refugees, the 2024 Health Access and Utilization Survey (HAUS) conducted by UNHCR surveyed 560 non-Syrian refugee households revealing an average household monthly income of 194 Jordanian dinars (about \$274). Of those surveyed, 46% of households faced rising healthcare costs, with an average monthly expenditure of 104 dinars. Unsurprisingly, 63% struggled to afford necessary medications, 47% couldn't access medical facilities, and 36% missed essential procedures due to financial constraints. To manage these challenges, 68% of households employed strategies such as reducing medical visits (48%), using savings or borrowing money (35%), cutting back on medications (30%), and seeking more affordable NGO services (23%). Additionally, the survey identified that 8% of non-Syrian household members live with disabilities, primarily physical, sensory, or mental, with 28% requiring medical support and 11% using assistive devices. However, 56% of these households do not receive any disability-related support, primarily due to cost (48%) and the unavailability of services (25%).<sup>5</sup>

## Refugees in Jordan

The UNHCR's 2Q 2024 Socio-Economic Update for refugees in Jordan found that the overall income of refugee households in Jordan decreased, primarily due to a reduction in cash assistance. The report's key findings show that Syrian and non-Syrian refugee households experienced a slight decline in income and spending, with Syrians spending more on essential necessities such as food, rent, and utility bills. Nearly 99% of Syrian refugee households allocated their expenditure to these items, compared to 89% of non-Syrian refugee households. Both groups reported increased debt, with 90% of refugee households borrowing money from friends or neighbors to cover basic needs

<sup>3</sup> [Relatively few Syrians in Jordan risk one-way trip home, January 2025 | Syria Direct](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Socio-Economic Update on Refugees in Jordan – Q2 2024, November 2024 | UNHCR](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Health Access and Utilization Survey Non-Syrian 2024 | UNHCR](#)

including food and rent, reflecting the continued financial strain. In the two camps, the average monthly income for refugees in Zaatari and Azraq camps was slightly different, with Zaatari households earning 229 dinars, while Azraq households earned 223 dinars, likely due to seasonal agricultural work.<sup>6</sup>

As of December 2024, the economy in Zaatari camp, Jordan's largest Syrian refugee camp, has sharply declined, with shop values plummeting due to economic uncertainty and fears surrounding the future of Syrian refugees in the country. The camp's 80,000 residents, already struggling with limited income, are now hesitant to buy or sell anything beyond basic needs, exacerbating the downturn. Zaatari's economy has faced setbacks before, but nothing to the extent of the current crisis, which intensified after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024. The value of goods and inventory has also been affected, with some shopkeepers unable to sell their products at all.<sup>7</sup>

In December 2024, UNHCR and Qatar Charity signed two agreements totaling approximately \$1.3 million to support over 18,000 refugees in Jordan and Ethiopia. In Jordan, this funding will provide cash assistance to 6,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees, helping them cover essential needs like shelter, food, and healthcare for three months.<sup>8</sup>

In 2024, the Republic of Korea significantly enhanced its support for Syrian refugees in Jordan through UNHCR with a two-pronged approach: an increased financial contribution and a dedicated shelter intervention. The Korean government raised its donation to UNHCR from \$1 million in 2023 to \$1.5 million in 2024, making it one of the few countries to increase aid rather than reduce it. This funding enabled UNHCR to continue assisting Syrian refugees in Jordan. The Korea International Cooperation Agency also pledged \$6.6 million to improve shelter conditions in Azraq and Zaatari camps from 2024 to 2026, benefiting over 9,000 refugees. This support would become vital as UNHCR faced funding shortfalls and ongoing challenges related to damaged shelters that exposed refugees to harsh weather conditions.<sup>9</sup>

UNICEF's Humanitarian Response 2025 will focus on providing immediate relief and addressing the long-term needs of refugees, host communities, and vulnerable populations. This includes cash transfers, integrating out-of-school children into education systems, mental health support, WASH services, health and nutrition services, and immunizations. UNICEF also aims to support survivors of harmful practices and gender-based violence while promoting livelihood skills development. To

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<sup>6</sup> [Socio-Economic Update on Refugees in Jordan – Q2 2024, November 2024 | UNHCR](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Zaatari camp's economy collapses with the fall of the Assad regime, January 2025 | Syria Direct](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Under two agreements signed at Doha Forum 2024, Qatar Charity helps UNHCR support refugees in Jordan and Ethiopia, December 2024 | UNHCR](#)

<sup>9</sup> [The Republic of Korea scales up support to refugees in Jordan through UNHCR, December 2024 | UNHCR](#)

meet the critical needs of 2.9 million people, including 2.1 million children, UNICEF requires \$282.3 million in 2025. In Jordan, specific funding requirements include \$9.5 million for health and nutrition, \$17.5 million for child protection, gender based violence in emergencies and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, \$22.2 million for education, \$34.9 million for water, sanitation, and hygiene, \$54 million for social security, security for cross-sectoral efforts, and \$31 million for adolescents and youth, totaling \$174.7 million.<sup>10</sup>

## Food Security & Livelihoods

According to UNHCR, in the second quarter of 2024, the unemployment rate increased by seven percentage points, indicating that more refugees are actively seeking work. Many households have resorted to severe coping strategies, such as taking loans or withdrawing children from school, likely driven by a lack of available work opportunities. Employment rates in camps remained relatively low, with 20% of refugees in Azraq and 25% in Zaatari engaged in seasonal agricultural work. **Women's employment rates were significantly lower than men's, with only 6% of women in Zaatari employed, compared to 45% of men.** To cope with the economic challenges, refugees in both camps increasingly relied on negative coping strategies.<sup>11</sup> HAUS 2024 highlighted that 21% of non-Syrian refugee children under five faced growth or nutrition challenges, yet only 3% participated in a professional nutrition assistance program. Among children aged 6-23 months, 85% consumed solid or semi-solid foods, but only 14% met the minimum dietary diversity indicator, indicating a lack of variety in their diets.<sup>12</sup>

The Ministry of Agriculture in Jordan, in collaboration with the FAO and UNIDO, launched a Joint Programme in December funded by the Joint SDG Fund to enhance the sustainability and resilience of Jordan's agri-food system. This initiative aims to operationalize systems-based programs that address climate change, food insecurity, and the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and refugees. Aligned with Jordan's National Food Security Strategy, the Joint Programme will assess the current agrifood context, focusing on upgrading value chains and business models. The Joint Programme will build institutional capacity and support the government in transforming Jordan's food systems through a multi-stakeholder approach.<sup>13</sup>

December was a challenging month for agricultural workers in Jordan as winter set in, bringing harsh conditions and increased demands. Farmers face fluctuating market

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<sup>10</sup> [Syrian Refugees and Other Vulnerable Populations, December 2025 | UNICEF](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Socio-Economic Update on Refugees in Jordan – Q2 2024, November 2024 | UNHCR](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Health Access and Utilization Survey Non-Syrian 2024 | UNHCR](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Ministry of Agriculture, FAO and UNIDO launch Joint Programme on agrifood system sustainability and resilience in Jordan, December 2024 | FAO](#)

prices, limited resources, and the ongoing impact of economic pressures and climate change. Financial strains are significant, with rising fertilizer and transportation costs pushing many farmers into debt. Female agricultural workers, a vital part of the workforce, also endure difficult physical labor, including planting, sorting, and preparing produce for market, often under low-wage and high-stress conditions.<sup>14</sup>

Jordan's 2024 cereal production is estimated at slightly over 110,000 tonnes, about 3% below the average, due to below-average rainfall in the Irbid, Balqa, and Madaba regions. Planting for the 2025 winter cereal season began in late September 2024 in Irbid, a significant production area, but forecasts predict drought conditions will negatively affect yields. As domestic cereal production covers only a small fraction of the country's needs, the anticipated shortfall will likely increase reliance on imports. As of August 2024, food insecurity among refugees in Jordan has worsened, with a significant deterioration in the second quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. In host communities, approximately 92% of humanitarian aid beneficiaries are food insecure, while about 50% of the population in refugee camps face a high risk of hunger.<sup>15</sup>

In 2024, Jordan's agricultural exports experienced a significant rise, valued at 1.276 billion dinars by the end of October, a 37% increase compared to the same period in 2023. This growth was primarily driven by livestock exports, which rose by 38% to 157 million dinars, and fruit exports, which surged by 80% to 263 million dinars. Vegetable exports also saw a 15% increase to 175 million dinars. The export of live sheep reached 754,000 head, marking a 48% rise, while the total quantity of vegetables and fruits exported grew to 586,700 tonnes. Specifically, vegetables rose 8% to 405,900 tonnes, and fruit exports increased by 20% to 180,800 tonnes. Additionally, data exports climbed by 7% to 16,280 tonnes, and table egg exports rose by 8%, totaling 94 million eggs.<sup>16</sup>

## Health

A recent UNHCR survey found that over 90% of refugee households reported a need for healthcare services. Still, many could not access them due to financial constraints and logistical barriers, such as distance from healthcare facilities. Expenditure trends showed that Azraq households had increased spending, while Zaatari households' spending remained stable. The most notable difference in spending between the two camps was healthcare, where 17% of Zaatari households allocated funds to healthcare expenses compared to 11% in Azraq. Refugee households in both camps continued to

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<sup>14</sup> [Farmers in Jordan grapple with rising costs, harsh winter conditions - stakeholders, December 2024 | The Jordan Times](#)

<sup>15</sup> [GIEWS - Global Information and Early Warning System, November 2024 | FAO](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Agricultural exports up by 37% in 2024 — minister, January 2025 | The Jordan Times](#)

face financial hardship, with a significant portion of them borrowing money from informal sources, such as friends, neighbors, or shopkeepers, to cover basic costs like food and healthcare. On average, households in Azraq reported 870 dinars in debt.<sup>17</sup>

HAUS 2024 revealed that over half of surveyed non-Syrian refugee households were aware of subsidized healthcare at Ministry of Health (MOH) facilities. Private medical facilities were the most commonly visited (38%), followed by government facilities (31%) and private pharmacies (26%). While 92% of those seeking care accessed services, 34% of individuals faced barriers due to cost, and 23% experienced service refusals. Additionally, 12% sought care at a second facility, with 36% going to private medical centers and 35% to government hospitals. Among non-single women of reproductive age, 30% were mothers, and 27% of those who received antenatal care encountered affordability issues. At the household level, 23% had chronic conditions, with hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease being the most prevalent. Of those with chronic conditions, 81% received care or medications primarily from private pharmacies, but only 19% received care at no cost, with most paying an average of 46 JOD. The primary barrier for 76% of those who did not seek care was the cost.<sup>18</sup>

## **Anera's Response**

### **Health**

Anera in Jordan is committed to maximizing healthcare for beneficiaries through collaboration with local partners and donors like Direct Relief and International Health Partners – UK. To achieve this, Anera has broadened the range of medications received to include those targeting complex medical conditions, such as chronic kidney disease and pulmonary embolism. Thanks to the organization's collaboration with Direct Relief, Anera has successfully secured significant quantities of sevelamer carbonate, which is used to control elevated phosphorus levels in dialysis patients with chronic kidney disease. This medication will directly benefit the Jordan National Red Crescent Society in their efforts. Furthermore, leflunomide, an effective immunomodulatory drug for treating rheumatoid arthritis, has been allocated to support the Syrian American Medical Society in providing care for Syrian patients with arthritis for six months.

Our donors, Direct Relief and International Health Partners - UK, support Anera's continuous efforts to supply essential medications for both non-communicable diseases and acute conditions. They have provided substantial quantities of medications, including insulins, antimicrobials, painkillers, and other treatments for various non-communicable diseases, to support all of Anera's local partners in Jordan.

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<sup>17</sup> [Socio-Economic Update on Refugees in Jordan – Q2 2024, November 2024 | UNHCR](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Health Access and Utilization Survey Non-Syrian 2024 | UNHCR](#)



## Food Security, Livelihood and Social Development

The Rooftop Gardens project, supported by a private family foundation and Alumbra Innovations Foundation, has completed a full engineering assessment for the houses, and the families' selection, plus finalizing a contractor procurement for building the 79 rooftop gardens. The procurement of contractors for the maintenance of old gardens is currently ongoing.

The participating youths, in the Youth for Sustainable Environment project, are currently in the idea validation phase, where each group is conducting sessions to gather data using the tools introduced during the participatory research workshop. These youths are also receiving mentorship to refine their ideas, making them more sustainable and feasible.

Through the Youth Entrepreneurial Pathways for Resilience project, supported by Abdallah Ghurair, Anera started the implementing process by signing agreements with local institutions and properly selecting the youths to benefit from the objectives of the projects, as follows:

The WASH pathway has started to provide diploma training in plumbing mechanic assistance for the 30 youths selected through specified selection criteria. The training is managed by iLearn, while Anera continuously monitors and oversees the ongoing training process.

The TVET pathway to provide 95 youth with training in digital skills, hospitality, and tourism has started by signing an agreement with the Vocational Training Corporation to act as a co-implementing partner to Anera for this pathway. The company has started the outreach process to select the 95 youths to receive the training.