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Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan

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The 97-page report, Were Afraid For Their Future: Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan, describes Jordans generous efforts to enroll Syrian children in its public school system, which was struggling with capacity and quality issues even before refugees began to arrive from Syria. But Human Rights Watch also documented barriers to education, including asylum seeker registration requirements that many Syrians cannot meet; punishments for refugees working without permits that contribute to poverty, child labor, and school dropouts; and a bar on enrollment for children who have been out of school for three or more years. Jordan has eased some restrictions, but authorities should expand efforts to realize the fundamental right to education for all Syrian children, Human Rights Watch said

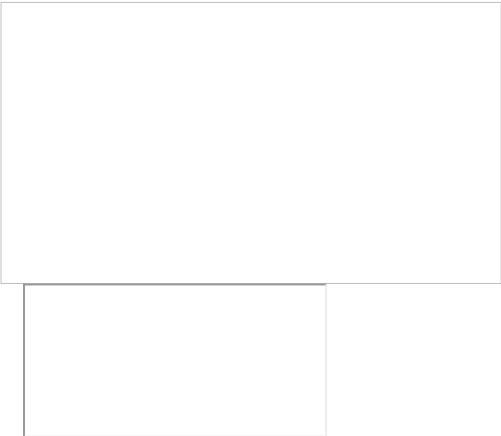
Syrian children attend class in a school in the Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan, October 20, 2015. The school taught Syrian girls in the morning and boys in the afternoon, but lacked electricity, heating, and running water. 2016 Bill Van Esveld/Human Rights Watch

(Amman, August 16, 2016) Jordan should address policies that restrict Syrian refugee childrens access to school to meet ambitious goals of increased enrollment when the 2016-2017 school year begins in September, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. More than one-third of school-aged Syrian children registered with the United Nations refugee agency in Jordan over 80,000 out of 226,000 children were not in formal education during the last school year.

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Today, Syrian refugee children in Jordan face a bleak educational present, and an uncertain future. Close to one in three226,000 out of 660,000Syrians registered with the United Nations refugee agency in Jordan are school-aged children between 5-17 years old. Of these, more than one-third (over 80,000) did not receive a formal education last year.

There are almost 1.3 million Syrians today in Jordan, a country of 6.6 million citizens. Their arrival, and specifically that of Syrian children, since the outbreak of conflict in Syria in 2011, has spurred Jordans Education Ministry to take a number of steps to accommodate their educational needs. These include hiring new teachers; allowing free public school enrollment for Syrian children; and having second shifts at nearly 100 primary schools to create more classroom spaces. In the fall of 2016, the ministry aims to create 50,000 new spaces in public schools for Syrian children, and to reach 25,000 out-of-school children with accredited catch-up classes.



Donor aid, while consistently falling short of that requested by Jordan to host refugees, has played an important role in providing educational opportunities, and is set to increase: in February 2016, donors pledged to give US\$700 million per year to Jordan for the next three years (although World Bank calculations put the cost of hosting Syrian refugees in Jordan at \$2.5 billion annually), with the European Union (EU), United Kingdom (UK), Germany, United States, and Norway pledging \$81.5 million in May specifically to support expanding access to education.

Such initiatives have had impact; between 2012 and 2016, the proportion of Syrian refugee children enrolled in formal education soared from 12 to 64 percent. Moreover, the donor-supported plan announced in February should significantly improve access to education for Syrian refugee children without lowering the quality of education for Jordanian childrena common concern.

Yet tens of thousands of Syrian children have remained out of classrooms, a problem that gets more acute as they get older and enrollment rates plummet.

Map of Jordan

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This report addresses some of the key reasons why Jordan, despite increased efforts, has been unable to enroll more Syrian children in schools and keep them in the educational system. It also highlights key areas that should be addressed if the fundamental right of Syrian children to education is to be realized, and the foundation laid for them to be able to contribute meaningfully one day to Syria's reconstruction.

Part of the solution is economic. Jordan spends more than 12 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on education, more than twice as much as countries like the US and the UK. But its public school system, strained even before the Syria conflict, needs more financial support.

Existing policies that prevent Syrian boys and girls from going to school also need to be removed. For example, **refugee registration policies** that require school-aged children to obtain identification documents, or service cards, to enroll in public schools may have prevented thousands from doing so. Such cards are virtually unobtainable for tens of thousands of Syrians who left refugee camps without first being bailed out of the camps by a guarantor Jordanian citizen, a first-degree relative, and older than 35 after July 2014, when a new policy was introduced. Since February 2015, Jordan has also required that all Syrians obtain new service cards, although schools have allowed children to enroll with older cards. As of April 2016, about 200,000 Syrians outside refugee camps still did not have the new cards, and humanitarian agencies estimate tens of thousands of them may be ineligible to apply.

Certification and documentary requirements create additional barriers to enrollment for older children. Requirements of some school directors that children show official Syrian school certificates proving they completed the previous grade are impossible for many families that fled fighting in Syria without bringing originals. Up to 40 percent of Syrian refugee children in Jordan lack birth certificates, which are required to obtain service cards. Lack of birth certificates will pose a barrier to enrollment to increasing numbers of children as they reach school age.

Education Ministry **regulations that bar school enrollment to all children, Jordanian and Syrian, who are three or more years older than their grade level**, pose yet another barrier to Syrian children: according to a 2014 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimate, the three-year rule barred some 77,000 Syrian children from formal education. A plan agreed upon by the Education Ministry, foreign donors, and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) beginning in the 2016-2017 school year will help to boost enrollment of out-of-school children by allowing up to 25,000 children to enroll in a catch-up program, which will teach two grades of material in a single year, after which they will be eligible to re-enroll in formal education. However, the program will only be open to children aged 8 to 12. The Education Ministry has also accredited a nongovernmental organization (NGO) to teach a similar program for older Jordanian and Syrian children, which is being expanded with donor support. But the program has reached only a few thousand children, leaving many older children with no pathway back to school. In addition to increasing the scope of such programs, Jordan could help out-of-school children older than 12 access education by waiving the three-year rule and regularizing school entrance and grade placement tests, currently offered only once a year.

Poverty and work restrictions further curtail access to education. While Jordan has made public schools free to Syrian refugees, many Syrian parents cannot afford school-related costs, such as transportation (there are no public school buses in Jordan). A 2015 UN assessment found that 97 percent of school-aged Syrian children are at risk of non-attendance because of their families' financial hardship. Nearly 90 percent of Syrian refugees live below the Jordanian poverty line of \$95 per person per month; none of the families that Human Rights Watch interviewed earned that much.^[1] Most Syrians are in debt to their landlords, and rents have increased threefold or more in some communities, according to NGOs; Jordanians have also been affected and some have been evicted by landlords seeking higher rents.

Donor assistance helps counter these pressures, but has been inadequate and unpredictable. The World Food Programme ran out of adequate funds in August 2015 and temporarily cut off all support to 229,000 of the refugees in host communities (and halved it to \$14 per month for the remainder of the non-camp population). The following month, voluntary returns of refugees to Syria accelerated to up to 340 per day.

The impact of poverty on school enrollment and attendance is exacerbated by **Jordanian policies that effectively prevent many Syrian refugees from supporting themselves through work**. Few Syrians have been able to meet the requirements for lawful work permits, which include paying fees that cost the equivalent of hundreds of US dollars annually and finding an employer to sponsor them. Syrians who work without permits face being arrested and sent to refugee camps: Jordanian authorities have arrested more than 16,000 Syrians and sent them to the Azraq refugee camp due to lack of residency documents or work permits.

Increasingly in debt, lacking adequate humanitarian support, and at risk of arrest for working, around 60 percent of Syrian families in host communities **rely on money earned by children**, who consequently drop out of school to work. Very few re-enroll. Several families interviewed for this report said that income earned by their children went towards school transportation for siblings, or medical treatment for sick relatives.

Policies limiting access to lawful work permits also increase the likelihood of exploitation, low wages, and hazardous jobs, since the Syrian employee is at greater risk from complaining than the employer. All of the children whom Human Rights Watch interviewed described work that violated international and Jordanian labor laws, which prohibit work for long hours, in hazardous conditions, and for children younger than 16.

Jordan's effective bar on lawful employment for Syrian refugees has been a disincentive for Syrian children to finish secondary school. Few Syrians can afford to pay for vocational training colleges, while others lack necessary documents to enroll, and some NGOs said that Jordanian authorities had not approved their vocational training projects, possibly due to fears that Syrians will compete with Jordanians for jobs. Donors have offered to fund more technical and vocational education programs for Syrians, and fund some university scholarships for Syrian students, who pay higher rates as non-citizens than do Jordanian students.

In April 2016, Jordan temporarily stopped enforcing penalties against Syrian refugees working without permits and waived the fees to obtain them during a three-month grace period, which it has extended; some 20,000 permits were issued by August. An estimated 100,000 Syrian workers were ineligible, however, because they did not have a service card and were not sponsored by a Jordanian employer. In February 2016, Jordan pledged to issue up to 50,000 work permits for Syrians in sectors where they would not compete with Jordanians, and said it would open depending on future investment and donor support special development zones where up to 150,000 Syrians could be hired to manufacture products for export, primarily for European markets. The Council of the European Union decided in July to grant such products tariff-free treatment. UNHCR had previously negotiated 4,000 work permits for Syrians to produce textiles.

Jordanian registration requirements and policies restricting access to work, healthcare, and education have **pressured Syrian refugees to remain in refugee camps** where life is harsh, despite donor aid to move there from host communities.

In 2015, a lower percentage of Syrian children were enrolled in school in these camps than in host communities. Surveys by UN agencies found that barriers to education in such camps included long distances to school within large camps, and among some children, **a sense of the pointlessness of education as they had limited hope for their future prospects.**^[2] More schools were opened in Zaatari camp, the largest, in 2015 where there were 9 formal schools but at the time of a Human Rights Watch visit in October, some lacked electricity, running water, and windows.

Jordan's generous provision of free access to public schools to Syrian children has also increased the pressure on primary schools in intake areas. This in turn poses **challenges to ensuring a quality education**, and has stoked intercommunal tension in some towns where Jordanians see Syrian refugees as increasing class sizes, and straining school resources. Some Jordanians who had enrolled their children in private schools but could not continue to send them for financial reasons reportedly found nearby public schools were full due to increased Syrian enrollment. Even before the Syria conflict, resources in Jordanian schools were strained, prompting dozens of schools to teach classes in morning and afternoon shifts to increase classroom spaces. The arrival of large numbers of Syrian refugee children forced Jordan's Education Ministry to open afternoon shifts for Syrian students at 98 primary schools. To enroll more Syrian children in 2016-2017, the ministry plans to open second shifts at an additional 102 schools.

Jordanian and Syrian students in schools that operate two shifts have received fewer hours of instruction than children attending schools operating on regular hours. School facilities like libraries were closed during afternoon shift classes, which only Syrian students attend. Students in refugee camp schools also received fewer hours of instruction than students in single shift schools. In one large school in Zaatari, classes run for 35 minutes, with no breaks in between, no recess, no time to eat, and no access to computer facilities. Some teachers in refugee camp schools said they did not receive any teacher training, and only had to show they had graduated from university; in general, public school teachers should receive teacher training, but many have not been adequately trained.

Teachers in host communities and in refugee camps said they found it difficult to teach some Syrian children who showed clear signs of trauma. A growing number of Syrian children receive psychosocial support, but others who need help drop out of school. One boy's mother said his personality changed during the conflict after his cousin was killed in an attack and the boy retrieved his head, and he no longer wanted to go to school in Jordan. Refugee families as well as Jordanian teachers complained of unmotivated teachers and overcrowded classrooms with up to 50 children, particularly in Zaatari camp.

These difficult circumstances have apparently contributed to a preexisting problem of corporal punishment officially prohibited and violence in Jordanian schools. Syrian children described how teachers beat them with sticks, books, and rubber hoses. In other cases, children faced severe harassment by Jordanian children in school or while walking to school; UNICEF reported that 1,600 Syrian children dropped out in 2016 due to bullying. One boy was threatened with being stabbed if he did not give up his pocket change; others were beaten with wires. The parents of a girl with a blood disorder pulled her out of school due to beatings by other children.

Qualified Syrian teachers who fled to Jordan represent an untapped resource: they could lower student-teacher ratios and help Syrian students cope with shared traumatic experiences. Jordan has allowed around 200 Syrian refugees to act as assistants in overcrowded classes in schools in the refugee camps, but not host communities; non-citizens are banned from teaching in public schools and from registering with the Teachers Association. Turkey, by contrast, permits thousands of Syrian teachers to work at fully-accredited education centers that teach a modified version of the Syrian curriculum, in addition to allowing Syrian children to enroll in regular Turkish public schools.

With donor support, Jordan has pledged to allow open 102 more schools on double shifts to accommodate 50,000 more Syrian students in 2016-2017; to open all school facilities, such as libraries, to afternoon shift students; to improve teacher training; and to allow up to 1,000 Syrians, paid with donor support, to act as assistants in schools in host communities. Additional donor support will allow Jordan to substantially increase the amount of time that children in the morning shift spend in class to 30 hours per week, but afternoon shift class time will remain similar to current levels of around 20 hours per week.

Donors including the US, EU, Germany, UK, and Canada have promised to significantly increase support for Jordan to build new public schools, expand and improve existing ones including by making them accessible to children with disabilities, and help subsidize school transportation costs. Donors should promptly and transparently follow through on these multiyear pledges, while also working to ensure that Syrian children in afternoon shift classes receive equal class time to other children in public schools. Jordan should allow regular, independent, quality monitoring in classrooms, and allow qualified Syrian refugee teachers to play a greater role in the education of Syrian children. With international support, it should revise policies that threaten to undermine these significant, positive moves, by ensuring that Syrian children are not barred from school due to difficulties registering with the Interior Ministry.

Better teacher training and accountability is critical to enforce the prohibition on corporal punishment and to deal with harassment by other children. Donors concerned with refugees' rights to education and work and with preventing child labor should encourage and support development projects that support Syrians' ability to support themselves. Jordan should also consider revising its work permit regulations to reduce dependency on sponsorship, and making the fee waivers it introduced during the grace period permanent.

Prior to the conflict, the primary school enrollment rate in Syria was 93 percent.^[3] UNICEF has estimated that nearly 3 million Syrian children inside and outside the country are now out of school, demolishing Syria's achievement of near universal primary education before the war.^[4]

UNICEF calculated that the total economic loss from lower lifetime earnings for 1.9 million Syrian children inside the country who had dropped out from primary and secondary education in 2011 due to the conflict was \$10.7 billion.^[5] The figure did not include the cost of lost education for refugee children. Whether they return to Syria or settle elsewhere long-term, children's lower earning potential could have a deleterious effect on the economies of host countries, while also driving up the cost of aid and government assistance.^[6]

Providing education will reduce the risks of early marriage and military recruitment of children, stabilize economic futures by increasing earning potential, and ensure that today's young Syrians will be better equipped to confront their uncertain futures.^[7]

This report is based primarily on research conducted in October 2015 in Jordanian host communities including in Amman, Baqaa, Zarqa, Mafraq, Salt, Irbid and villages nearby, and in the Zaatari, Azraq, and Emirati Jordanian refugee camps in Jordan. In total, Human Rights Watch staff conducted interviews with 105 refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, including former Palestinian residents of Syria, from 82 households. The interviewed families were identified through local and international nongovernmental organization (NGO) referrals and contacts within the Syrian refugee community of each city.

Not all members of each household were present during each interview. Including members who were not present, Human Rights Watch obtained information on the conditions of 423 Syrian family members, not including 16 family members whom interviewees said had previously left Jordan in an effort to reach Europe. Of the total number of family members, we gathered information about the educational status of 286 children under 18, of whom 213 were school-aged (6 to 17 years old). Of these school-aged Syrian children, 75 were not in school in Jordan, including 18 children who had been enrolled but had dropped out, 25 children who were working, and 13 who had disabilities, according to them or their parents.

Most interviews with refugees and asylum seekers were conducted in Arabic with the assistance of an interpreter. All interviewees received an explanation of the nature of the research and our intentions concerning the information gathered, and we obtained oral consent from each interviewee. All were told that they could decline to answer questions or could end the interview at any time. Participants did not receive any material compensation. Human Rights Watch has withheld identification of individuals and agencies that requested anonymity. Additionally, we have used pseudonyms when requested, and referenced these instances in the footnotes. Pseudonyms may not match the religion or sect of the interviewee.

Interviews in host communities were conducted in Syrian families' homes; in most cases, we spoke to parents as well as children. Human Rights Watch was careful to conduct all interviews in safe and private places. During interviews in the Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps, which required prior Jordanian authorization, a Human Rights Watch researcher was accompanied by a policeman (in Zaatari) and by two Jordanian security officials (in Azraq). In the Emirati Jordanian camp, the researcher was accompanied by members of the Emirati Red Crescent society, which administers the camp. Because of concerns about these circumstances, the researcher limited questions to refugees in these camps to basic information regarding their children's ages and schooling.

We did not undertake surveys or a statistical study, but instead base our findings on extensive interviews, supplemented by our analysis of a wide range of published materials. Human Rights Watch also requested information from and sought the views of the Jordanian Ministry of Education. In addition, we met with representatives from the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, international and local NGOs, donor country embassies and aid agencies, nine Jordanian public and private school directors and teachers, and informal education providers. We also consulted with experts in education in emergencies and Jordanian education policy.

Note on currency conversion: the Jordanian dinar is pegged to the US dollar at an exchange rate of 1.4 US dollars per Jordanian dinar.

There are about 657,000 Syrians in Jordan who have registered as asylum seekers with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A Jordanian government census carried out in late November 2015 found a total population of 9.5 million people, including 6.6 million Jordanian citizens and 1.265 million Syrians.^[8]

The residency status of the 608,000 Syrians counted in the census but not registered as asylum seekers is unclear. Staff at international humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) said they estimated that up to several hundred thousand Syrians lived and worked there before the conflict, but that most Syrians in Jordan arrived after fighting began in 2011, and noted the census counted as Syrians anyone with a Syrian passport, including those married to Jordanian citizens.^[9] More than half of registered Syrian asylum seekers in Jordan are children, and around 35 percent of the total are school-aged, or 5 to 17 years old, according to UNHCR.

Around 141,000 registered Syrian asylum seekers were living in three main refugee camps as of July 2016. Most of the 516,000 refugees outside the camps live in the Amman, Mafraq, and Irbid governorates, in poor areas where public schools are strained.^[10]

The number of Syrians registered as asylum seekers with UNHCR in Jordan initially accelerated rapidly, from fewer than 3,000 in 2011 to more than 400,000 who registered in 2013 alone.^[11] The rate of arrivals slowed after Jordan began restricting or closing its border crossings with Syria in 2013.^[12] The total registered Syrian refugee population grew from 623,000 at the end of 2014 to 657,000 as of mid-July 2016: an increase of only 34,000 people in more than 18 months.^[13] However, as of July, up to 100,000 Syrians who were not registered with UNHCR were stuck in a remote desert location in the northeast.^[14]

Jordan has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, and Jordanian law does not recognize Syrian refugees as such. Jordan allows UNHCR to register and provide humanitarian assistance to refugees under a 1988 Memorandum of Understanding. This was amended in 2014 to increase the six-month validity period of the temporary protection status that Jordan grants to Syrians; it is now renewable indefinitely for one-year periods.^[15]

Until 2015, Jordanian authorities first sent new arrivals from Syria to reception centers for initial registration, where until December 2013 authorities confiscated and retained some of the refugees' official Syrian documents. Jordan then sent the refugees to camps, of which Zaatari, opened in July 2012, and Azraq, opened in April 2014, are the largest.^[16]

Refugees in the camps who wished to relocate to host communities in Jordan could do so lawfully under a process known as the bailout system, which requires that they be guaranteed by a Jordanian citizen who is a direct relative over the age of 35. Initially, Jordan allowed refugees to leave the camps if their Jordanian sponsor paid a fee of 15 dinars (US\$21) per person.^[17]

For several years, Jordan did not strictly enforce the bailout system. Many Syrians who left the camps without being bailed out were still able to register with UNHCR in host communities and received UNHCR asylum seeker certificates, which identified the bearer as a person of concern.^[18] Syrians with these certificates were eligible to receive humanitarian assistance, such as cash and food aid, provided by UN agencies in host communities. Syrians who left camps without being bailed out were also able to receive identification documents from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) by registering at the local police station, as required by Jordanian law.^[19]

Syrians registered with the Interior Ministry are issued a service card, which is required to access medical care at subsidized rates at public hospitals and to enroll children in public schools.^[20] The service card is valid only in one of Jordan's 52 districts where it was registered; refugees who move must re-register with police in their new location.

Jordan began to strictly enforce the bailout system in July 2014, when it instructed UNHCR not to register Syrians in host communities who had not been bailed out of refugee camps. The Interior Ministry also refused to issue them service cards. As a result, Syrians who left the camps informally after that date cannot obtain the documents required to access humanitarian assistance, subsidized healthcare, and enroll their children in schools. An estimated 120,000 refugees from Syria living outside refugee camps cannot meet the requirements of the bailout system.^[21]

Since July 2014, Jordanian security forces have arrested and involuntarily relocated refugees without UNHCR asylum seeker certificates or MOI service cards to refugee camps. According to available statistics, from April 2014 to September 2015 police involuntarily relocated more than 11,000 refugees to Zaatar and Azraq camps, including dozens of children unaccompanied by their parents, largely because they had left the camps without being bailed out or they were caught working without a work permit.^[22]

A joint report by a group of international humanitarian organizations published in September 2015 described one case in which Jordanian authorities deported a boy arrested in Amman to Syria because he could not produce required documents; staff at an NGO described a similar arrest and deportation of another boy in mid-2015.^[23] In other cases, Jordanian authorities arrested and deported Syrian men who did not have legal documentation, their relatives said. A Syrian man who lives near Irbid said that in the summer of 2015, Jordanian police arrested his 45-year-old brother at work, determined his service card was fake, and gave him a choice of going to Azraq [camp] or to Syria.^[24] His wife first learned of his whereabouts three days after his arrest, when he called her to say he was in Syria and that she should join him with their children, which she did.^[25]

In June 2014, Jordanian security forces also forcibly evicted hundreds of Syrian refugees who had been living in five informal tented settlements in the southern Amman governorate.^[26] In one case, Syrians who had been living in an informal settlement near Sahab were bussed to Azraq camp with whatever possessions they could carry, after which bulldozers demolished their encampments, including two tents that had been used as informal schools, with supplies and teachers supported by an NGO.^[27]

The Syrian refugee population is overwhelmingly poor, and poverty affects Syrian access to education. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that the families of around 15,400 Syrian children were unable to afford to send them to school in February 2016, and that almost another 10,000 children had dropped out or attended school irregularly because of financial hardship.^[28] Most Syrian families, UNICEF found, are trying to cope with poverty while also prioritizing education: 93 percent said they cope with financial hardship by reducing the amount they eat or spend on food, but only 8 percent dropped children from school, despite associated expenses of 20-30 Jordanian dinars (JD)(\$28-\$42) per month per child.

Jordan has worked with international humanitarian agencies to alleviate Syrians' poverty, including a UNICEF program reaching 55,000 children with JD 20 (\$28) per child to reduce pressure for child labor and dropouts, a UNHCR program reaching 30,000 individuals and households; and a World Food Programme (WFP) monthly payment of JD 20 (\$28) to registered Syrian refugees in host communities.^[29] But these programs are undermined by Jordanian policies that restrict Syrians' ability to work, even informally, and contribute to child labor and school dropouts.

Jordanian government figures indicate rent increased 14 percent nationwide from 2013 to 2015.^[32] In some areas, rent prices soared up to 600 percent after 2011.^[33]

Low-income Jordanian families also faced higher rents; unable to pay, some were evicted by landlords, fuelling anti-Syrian hostility in some host communities.^[34] Syrian refugees have also faced increased healthcare costs: Syrians with Ministry of Interior service cards could access free healthcare until November 2014, but now pay at subsidized rates.^[35]

In addition, in August 2015, about 229,000 vulnerable Syrians in Jordan who were below the country's poverty line experienced cut-offs in humanitarian food aid, while aid was reduced by half for the extremely vulnerable, due to lack of funds; the World Food Programme was only able to resume aid at reduced levels in November.^[36] Similarly, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) stopped providing housing assistance to Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan in July 2015 due to funding shortfalls.^[37] More than 60 percent of Syrian refugees living in host communities are highly indebted, even with humanitarian assistance, a UNHCR assessment found in May 2015.^[38] A 2014 study found that a third of refugees in Jordan were in debt to their landlords.^[39]

Increasingly restrictive policies that Jordan imposed after July 2014, combined with unpredictable cut-offs in humanitarian assistance, contributed to thousands of Syrians returning from Jordan to Syria in 2014 and 2015 under an official voluntary process, with the flow increasing dramatically to several hundred daily in August and September 2015, after Syrians in host communities were told their food assistance would be cut off or reduced.^[40] The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimated in August 2015 that the number of returns could reach 50,000 that year.^[41]

One man chose to remain in Jordan after the aid cut-off only because his home in Syria had been destroyed, he said: There's nothing left there in Hama for us now.^[42] Most who did return went to Daraa, a province bordering Jordan, where the largest percentage of Syrians in Jordan came from, despite ongoing conflict there.^[43]

The WFP noted that returns decreased amongst Syrians in refugee camps, where assistance was not reduced, but increased by 17 percent amongst those in host communities.^[44] In some cases, refugees chose to leave Jordan in an effort to reach Europe after relatives were arrested for working without permits.^[45]

At the beginning of the fall semester of 2015, 1.9 million students enrolled in public, private, military, and UNRWA schools in Jordan, from pre-primary to secondary school.^[46]

Jordan spends a substantial part of its gross domestic product (GDP) on education: 12.2 percent of its GDP per capita in 2011 (the last year for which figures are available), compared to 5.1 percent in Syria (2009), 1.6 percent in Lebanon (2011), and 2.9 percent in Turkey (2006).^[47] The US spent 5.2 percent and the United Kingdom (UK) spent 5.8 percent of their GDP in 2011.^[48]

School is divided into two years of pre-primary education, 10 years of primary education, and two years of secondary education.^[49] In 2014, Jordan made the second year of pre-primary school compulsory, but due to a dearth of schools in much of the country, parents wishing to send children to pre-primary education must often pay for private schools.^[50]

Primary schooling in Jordan is free and compulsory.^[51] Students who pass a 10th grade exam are eligible to attend two further years of secondary education, which depending on their grades may be geared to university study in the sciences or humanities, or towards vocational or professional training.

After these two years, students can take the standardized graduation exam, the *tawjihi*. On passing, they receive a General Secondary Education Certificate and are eligible to attend public or private community colleges or universities, or vocational schools. University students are put in academic programs depending on their *tawjihi* grade.^[52]

The Ministry of Education reported net enrollment rates of 38.26 percent in pre-primary school, 98.02 percent in primary school, and 72.56 percent in secondary school during the 2014-15 academic year.^[53] Jordan's net primary school enrollment rate, before and since the Syria conflict began, has remained at around 97 percent, according to the World Bank.^[54]

However, even before the Syria crisis, Jordan's education system faced challenges.

Poverty including inability to pay transport costs has undermined the ability of many Jordanian children to attend school: in 2011, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that around 119,000 Jordanian children were not in school.^[55] In 2014, UNICEF reported close to 77,000 Jordanian children aged 5 to 15 were not in school.^[56]

Public schools have also long been overcrowded: 36 percent of public schools were overcrowded in 2011, according to the Education Ministry, especially in areas where large numbers of Syrian children have subsequently arrived. Overcrowding is now closer to 47 percent.^[57] To make more classroom space available, some Jordanian schools operated on double shifts or in rented buildings even before 2011. This reduced costs per student, but lowered the quality of education. Jordan had committed to move all schools to single, day-long shifts in 2010.

More than half the country's secondary school students who sat for their *tawjihi* examinations failed in 2014 and 2015.^[58] In both years, there were more than 325 public schools in which not a single student who sat for the exam passed.^[59]

About 25 percent of students in Jordan are enrolled in private schools, which range in cost from around \$1,400 to more than \$10,000 annually.^[60] In 2014, around 8,000 of 130,000 percent of Syrian students enrolled in formal education were in private schools.^[61]

Human Rights Watch visited a Christian primary school in East Amman that has made scholarships available to dozens of Syrian students, with private financial support; teachers and administrators described programs offering academic and psychosocial support to Syrian students, and specific measures to prevent discrimination against Syrians by other students.^[62]

Just over one-third, or 36 percent, of Syrian refugee children in January 2016 were school-age, according to Education Ministry estimates.^[63]

From the start of the Syria conflict, Jordan granted refugees with required documents free access to public schools in host communities.^[64] It also opened accredited public schools for them in refugee camps that opened in 2012 (Zaatar) and 2014 (Azraq).

Syrian refugee children in host communities with necessary documentation generally asylum seeker certificates issued by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and service cards issued by the Ministry of Interior can enroll for free in public primary schools, beginning grade one for six-year-olds.^[65] Syrian children aged four and five can enroll in two years of pre-primary school in Jordan, although most such kindergartens are private and charge tuition. Syrian children must meet other requirements to enroll in Jordanian secondary school (see below).

Due to the steps that Jordan has taken to accommodate Syrian refugee children in its school system, UN agency figures show that the proportion of Syrian 5 to 17-year-olds enrolled in school has steadily increased, along with the growing number of refugee children.^[66] As of April 2016, some 145,000 Syrian children were enrolled in formal schools, meaning that around 80,000 school-aged Syrian children were not.^[67] As of April 2015, 35,000 Syrian children were on waiting lists for public schools, according to the Ministry of Education.^[68] Of those not in formal education, around 15,000 received non-accredited, informal schooling from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); 32,000 had no education at all.^[69]

Source: UNHCR and UNICEF data.^[70]

The overall figures may be an undercount, since they are based on enrollment only among Syrians who are registered with UNHCR, and do not capture the number of Syrians who were school-aged children when they arrived in Jordan and who were unable to enroll, have never gone to school, and are now 18 or older. There are no formal educational opportunities for these young Syrian adults. Unless accredited informal or non-formal programs become more widely available, many Syrians in this demographic group have no chance to obtain secondary and even primary education.

The current situation for Syrian refugees contrasts sharply with high education and enrollment rates prior to the conflict in 2010 when net primary and secondary school attendance rates were 93 and 67 percent respectively.^[71]

In 2013, the Education Ministry sought to accommodate the growing number of Syrian students in host communities by splitting the day in some schools into two half-day shifts. By April 2014, there were 98 double shift schools in host communities.^[72] These double shift schools have become the main tool for providing education to Syrian children.^[73]

Each class is shortened and Syrian students attend either in the morning or afternoon.^[74] Jordanian children attend only in the morning. In the Zaatar, Azraq, and Emirati Jordanian refugee camps, the Ministry of Education operates UNICEF- or Emirati-funded schools for Syrian children that also operate on two shifts: girls in the morning, boys in the afternoon.

In total, as of November 2015, 63,088 Syrian primary school students (grades 1-10) were enrolled in the regular curriculum in host communities; 49,064 were enrolled in second shifts in host communities; and 25,736 in refugee camp schools, according to the Ministry of Education.^[81] Enrollment rates decrease even more precipitously for Syrian students in secondary school: there were 3,318 students in regular schools, 1,589 in second shifts, and only 464 in refugee camp schools.

All teachers at public schools, whether in host communities or refugee camps, must be Jordanian citizens and are paid by the Education Ministry.^[82] Teachers in refugee camp schools and in host communities who only teach afternoon shift classes in other words, teachers who only teach Syrian children are hired on contracts and do not receive paid vacations, health insurance, or other benefits that full-time teachers receive. Second shift teachers do not receive the same level of teacher training as do full-time teachers.^[83] Jordan has permitted around 200 Syrian refugees to work as assistants to help classroom management in overcrowded classes of more than 45 students at public schools in the refugee camps.^[84]

Some opportunities for education exist for children who are not in school, including those not eligible to enroll because they do not have the required documents. The largest such program, Makani (My Place) is funded by UNICEF. As of December 2015, 38,400 of the most vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian children were receiving psychosocial support, and another 47,000 had accessed life skills training.^[85]

A number of community-based and religious charitable organizations in host communities offer a variety of non-formal programs. For example, a school operated by an organization established by a Muslim imam in the

city of Mafraq offers three classes per week to students unable to enroll in public schools, based on the Jordanian school curriculum.^[86] Syrian parents in other communities said informal programs taught children to memorize sections of the Quran, and Arabic language lessons.^[87] In general, little is known about the quality or scope of education of informal and non-formal programs.

Most non-formal programs do not offer any certificates accredited by the Education Ministry, and students who complete the programs are ineligible to enroll in formal public schools. In the refugee camps, Relief International, a humanitarian NGO, operates remedial education programs for children enrolled in public schools.^[88]

The Norwegian Refugee Council offers an accelerated learning program in the refugee camps to out-of-school children aged 8 through 12, who received a condensed curriculum that covers two years of schooling in eight-month levels, from grade 1 up to grade 6.^[89] As of August 2015, only 1,550 children who had completed such programs had enrolled in public schools.^[90] Outside the camps, accredited informal education programs that can allow children to re-enroll in public school are available only to children aged 13 and older.^[91]

Jordan hosts around 2 million Palestinian refugees who are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). These include some 17,000 Palestinians who had fled to Jordan from Syria after 2011.^[92]

The relatively small number of Palestine refugees from Syria in Jordan reflects harsh restrictions: since January 2013, Jordan has systematically denied Palestinians from Syria access to the country and deported hundreds back to Syria.^[93]

UNRWA provides assistance and services to registered Palestine refugee children in Jordan as well as Palestinian arrivals from Syria, including basic education for grades 1 through 10. In addition to Palestinian children from Syria, some 1,700 Syrian children whose families moved to Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan have also enrolled in UNRWA schools.^[94]

Some UNRWA schools operate on double shifts due to overcrowding and budget shortfalls; around a third of Palestinian refugee children attend Jordanian public schools, particularly those who live far from UNRWA schools.^[95] Other refugee populations registered with UNHCR, which include 50,000 Iraqis and around 5,000 Somalis and Sudanese, largely depend on Jordans public school system.^[96]

Syrian refugees access to education in Jordan depends on government-run or approved programs that, in turn, depend substantially on international humanitarian support. In addition to free primary and secondary education, Jordan provides subsidized healthcare to Syrian refugees and subsidizes a number of basic goods available to all people in Jordan, including refugees, such as bread, fuel, water, and electricity.^[97] Municipal services also bear the strain of population growth:^[98] In May 2014, Jordan told the UN it paid around 80 to 85 percent of the \$4 billion annually required for services to Syrian refugees.^[99]

According to a 2016 World Bank estimate, hosting Syrian refugees has cost Jordan over US\$2.5 billion a year, equivalent to 6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and 25 percent of annual government revenue.^[100] In 2015, the Jordanian international cooperation ministries director general said schooling Syrian refugees at public schools cost \$193 million annually.^[101] In 2014, Jordan also took out a \$150 million loan to cover refugee education and healthcare.^[102] Donors have played an important role in supporting the refugee response.^[103] The European Union provides around 25 million Euro (\$28 million) annually in direct budgetary support to the Ministry of Education for Syrian and Jordanian students.^[104]

Other donors have helped to improve and expand public school infrastructure. USAID stated it had expanded 20 Jordanian schools and opened a new one in 2015, and that from 2016 to 2020 it would invest \$230 million to build 25 new schools and 300 kindergarten classrooms, expand 120 existing schools, and renovate 146.^[105] Canada has pledged \$20 million to improve teacher training. Some donors have significantly expanded programs that pre-existed the Syria conflict, such as a multiyear Education for the Knowledge Economy reform project, to which the World Bank had previously given \$407.6 million.^[106]

However, to date, foreign donations have consistently fallen far short of needs.^[107] In 2015, donations met only 62 percent of the requested humanitarian response in 2015 for Syrian refugees in Jordan, leaving a gap of nearly \$453 million.^[108]

In total, Jordan received \$180,974,150 in grants under the UN-coordinated Syria response plans for the education sector in 2015, including projects directed towards refugee education as well as resilience projects intended to benefit Jordanian host communities.^[109] Although the education sector received 85 percent of the funds requested in 2015 to address Syrian refugee childrens education, much did not arrive until the third and fourth quarter too late to adequately plan for or use in the 2015-2016 school year.^[110]

Funding for education constitutes 7.7 percent of the overall appeal for humanitarian support in the UN-coordinated regional response plans to the Syria conflict in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. Only 37 percent of funding requests for education in these countries was met in 2014, and 20 percent in 2015, leaving a \$178 million gap.^[111]

In February 2016, donors pledged \$700 million per year in grants and concessional development financing for 2016-2018 to support Jordans efforts to host refugees, including funding for infrastructure used by Jordanians and Syrians in host communities, such as for education.^[112]

Jordan has lacked adequate resources to open and maintain enough classrooms for Syrian children; hire and train enough teachers to provide a quality education; or reduce school-related financial hurdles to enrollment, such as transportation costs.

In May 2016, donors and the United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) announced an agreement with Jordan to fund 50,000 additional classroom spaces, in part by placing an additional 102 schools on the double shift system, and improve teacher training. Jordan and donors also agreed to dramatically expand a program that would reach out-of-school children aged 8 to 12, and enable them to re-enroll in public schools.

These steps could address many of the barriers to education that this report identifies. However, as described below, some Jordanian policies also constitute continuing barriers to Syrian childrens right to an education in host communities.

According to official policy, in the years after Jordan opened its refugee camps (beginning in 2012) until it largely closed its borders in 2015, Syrian refugees who entered Jordan were sent to refugee camps, from which they could apply to be bailed out by a Jordanian relative aged 35 or over. In practice, before July 2014, Jordan allowed refugees who left camps without going through the bailout process to receive the Ministry of Interior service cards that are required to access government services.^[113]

But in July, Jordanian authorities began to enforce the bailout requirements more rigorously, and ended the bailout process altogether in 2015. An estimated 45 percent of Syrians left refugee camps without going through the bailout process. These refugees have not been allowed to register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (and thus obtain asylum seeker certificates) or obtain service cards^[114] rendering them ineligible to receive humanitarian assistance or to enroll children in public schools.^[115]

Only two of the six Syrian families interviewed who moved from refugee camps to host communities in or after July 2014 were able to enroll children in public school. Both did so via exceptional circumstances.

In the first case, Abeer, 30, whose family left Azraq camp in October 2014 without going through the bailout procedure only managed to enroll her youngest child nine-year-old twins in school because the director made a special exception and let her use old service cards the family had received in 2013 when it first came to Jordan from Homs for five months.^[116] In the second case, Ghada, 30, said she could only register her three children in primary school after they left Zaatar in October 2014 without being bailed out because an Interior Ministry official with connections helped her because he felt so bad for the kids.^[117]

In the other four cases, parents said they were unable to enroll their children in school because they lacked the required documents. In one case, Rasha, from Ghouta, left Syria in June 2014 and was sent to Azraq camp. She said her family left Azraq in August that year after her daughter, Khadija, developed bad asthma.^[118] The family did not have a Jordanian relative who could bail them out and could not afford to pay other Jordanians to act as one.^[119] Since they left the camp after July 2014, the family does not have asylum seeker certificates or service cards. They moved to Baqaa, a Palestinian refugee camp outside Amman, and were unable to enroll any of their three children in school. Rasha said:

Farah, 30, said that her three school-aged children had been enrolled in first, fourth, and eighth grade in Zaatar camp, where they were sent after they came to Jordan in April 2014, but that because they left the camp without being bailed out in August 2015, she had not tried to enroll them in any schools in the city where they had moved because they lack the necessary papers.^[121] We havent tried registering them in school because wed just be asked for their UNHCR certificates, Farah said.^[122]

According to international humanitarian organization staff, from August 2014 to August 2015, around 11,000 people left Azraq camp without being bailed out, at least one-third of whom are school-aged children. According to Jordanian policy, none of these people is able to receive humanitarian assistance or enroll their children in school.^[123] In January 2015 Jordan effectively suspended the bailout system altogether, leaving refugees in camps with no lawful way to move to host communities and to enroll their children in school.

In another case, a man who arrived before July 2014 but did not register with UNHCR also described difficulty enrolling his children in school. Nasser, 53, came to Jordan in 2012 from Deir Ezzor without registering with UNHCR or the government, and never got asylum seeker certificates...^[124] Two of Nassers five school-aged children never enrolled in school in Jordan, and two others dropped out of school after a two-year period expired during which they were able to attend classes despite lacking the required documents. He is afraid that his only child who is still in school will not be able to enroll next year. Were afraid for their future, he said.^[125]

In early 2015, the Jordanian government began to require all Syrians living outside the camps to re-register with the Interior Ministry, a project called the urban verification exercise.^[126] This requires Syrian refugees and non-refugees to go to a local police station, submit the required documents, and obtain new service cards that include biometric data. Such cards are required to access subsidized public healthcare and public schools.^[127]

The verification exercise should allow refugees who have an asylum seeker certificate to regularize their status and obtain new service cards, even if they left the camps outside the bailout system. However, those who left the camps after July 2014 without being bailed out are ineligible.

Many other refugees who left the camps before July 2014 said they had avoided the reverification process because they could not pay the costs involved. Initially, the re-registration application obliged Syrians to pay for a health certificate from the Ministry of Health, and to present a rental agreement stamped by the local municipality and a copy of their landlords identity document.^[128] These requirements were virtually impossible for many Syrians to meet. The health certificates cost 30 JD (\$42) for each family member older than 12 years; most rental agreements were oral rather than written; and landlords who were behind on their taxes were hesitant to present their identification documents at police stations.^[129] Jordan later lowered the cost of health certificates for Syrians to 5 JD (\$7) per person, and allowed Syrians to present a UNHCR letter confirming their address in lieu of a lease agreement and the landlords identification document.^[130]

The verification exercise also requires Syrian refugees to present official Syrian identification documents in order to re-register. Some refugees did not bring any documents with them.

In addition, from 2012 to 2014, Jordanian authorities retained around 219,000 such documents from Syrian refugees at reception centers, when they first entered the country, and stored them there.^[131] Border authorities initially confiscated passports or other identity documents, but also retained marriage certificates and family books, which Syrian authorities issued to couples who registered their marriages, and to which the names of the married couples registered children would subsequently be added.^[132] Syrians who were bailed out of refugee camps, or who are seeking to re-register under the verification exercise, may request UNHCR assistance to obtain their Syrian documents from the Jordanian authorities. In total, UNHCR and Jordan had returned 81,000 of these documents to families residing in the camps by the end of 2014.^[133]

During a similar re-verification process for refugees in Zaatar camp in 2014, implementing agencies found that about 35 percent of refugees documents have been misplaced by [Jordanian] authorities.^[134] It appears that many documents were eventually recovered; according to international humanitarian agency staff, as of April 2016, only around 930 Syrian documents had been deemed lost.^[135]

Delays in returning documents to refugees has left some families unable to enroll children in public schools. Hassan, 34, left a Syrian army unit three months before the uprising began in 2011, and fled to Jordan in 2013. He tried to enroll his six-year-old daughter in first grade at a public school in Amman. The only school in his area said he had to present her Syrian identification documents to do so, but we had left the documents in Zaatar camp, and then they were sent to Rabaa al Sarhan [the reception center].^[136]

Hassan said police failed to register the fact he had been bailed out of the camp, necessitating his return to the camp, then to Amman, to retrieve the familys documents from two different police stations. The problem is were now a month late to enroll her and the school says it has no space, Hassan said.^[137]

As of March 31, 2016, the Interior Ministry had issued about 319,647 new biometric service cards to registered Syrian asylum seekers in host communities, in addition to 22,623 cards issued to Syrian non-refugees, as a result of the urban verification exercise.^[138] However, around 520,000 registered Syrian asylum seekers are living in host communities, according to UNHCR data, meaning that more than 40 percent of the population

still did not have an updated service card more than 13 months after the policy requiring them was announced on February 15, 2015.[\[139\]](#)

Jordanian policy is that Syrians must provide a new service card to access government services including education and healthcare.[\[140\]](#) Jordan has not enforced this policy to date, and according to staff at humanitarian agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the Education Ministry had also pledged not to enforce this policy in the 2016-2017 school year.[\[141\]](#)

Some refugees faced delays enrolling their children in school because they had moved after receiving a service card but could not update their registration and obtain new cards, or did not know how to do so, prolonging the time they had already been out of school.

Halima, 50, fled from Eastern Ghouta, Syria to Jordan in 2013. Her children had already missed a year of school in Syria due to the conflict.[\[142\]](#) The family obtained UNHCR asylum seeker certificates, but then moved, and were unable to obtain new certificates or service cards valid in their new district from the Interior Ministry. As a result, her youngest son, Hassan, was only able to enroll in school in the fall of 2015, two years after coming to Jordan. I visited so many schools, but they would not register him, Halima said. They would say, If youre Syrian we cant let you in without an ID [i.e., a service card]. She said that two schools in the area where they moved refused to enroll her children because they did not have service cards. Unable to attend school in Jordan, her three older children were working in construction and house-painting.[\[143\]](#)

Noura, 25, said that her family came from Eastern Ghouta in 2013 to Zaatar refugee camp, but left after 10 days without going through the bailout procedure. When she tried to enroll her 7-year-old daughter, Aya, in first grade in a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) school in Baqaa, a Palestinian refugee camp outside Amman, the school asked for a UNHCR asylum seeker certificate, a record of vaccinations, and an Interior Ministry service card, but the thing they really cared about was the area. The problem is that the [service card] says Amman, not Baqaa.[\[144\]](#) With the help of a camp resident who has connections, Noura said, she was eventually able to enroll Aya, but said she was scared that Aya would not be able to re-enroll the following year because school officials told her they expected her to change her official residency. She was unaware of what steps she could take to do so.[\[145\]](#)

A Jordanian Ministry of Education regulation commonly called the three-year rule bars any child, Jordanian or Syrian, who is more than three years older than the grade level for children their age to enroll in formal schooling.[\[146\]](#)

Estimates of the number of Syrian school-aged children who were ineligible to enroll in public school for this reason range widely, from 60,000 in December 2013, to 77,000 children in June 2014.[\[147\]](#)

Jordanian authorities say the three-year rule is necessary to maintain the quality of classrooms. However, the regulation has excluded many Syrian children who had been out of school in Syria because their schools were closed or destroyed, or their families were internally displaced by the conflict, looking for work, or moving to lessen the burden on relatives who were hosting them.[\[148\]](#)

The number of Syrian refugee children in Jordan who were unable to enroll in school due to the conflict is unknown, but UN agencies report that one-quarter of the schools in Syria 6,000 schools have been destroyed or severely damaged; the conflict, which killed 10,000 children from 2011 to 2013, when the last verified figures were available, has left two million children in Syria unable to go to school.[\[149\]](#) One refugee family said that after their children had missed a year in school in Syria, the lack of available classroom spaces in Jordan had prevented them from enrolling their children in school for up to two years, raising the concern that the three-year rule could bar their re-enrollment.[\[150\]](#)

Jordan has accredited one international NGO, Questscope, to teach accelerated classes to children in host communities. But, without substantial donor support, access to accelerated programs for out-of-school children has been limited, and only a few thousand children, including Jordanians and Syrians, have accessed them to date.[\[151\]](#) In February 2016, USAID said it had partnered with Questscope to expand non-formal education to 28 new centers and enroll an additional 1,680 out-of-school children, train teachers (called facilitators), and strengthen programs at up to 115 centers.[\[152\]](#) The programs have not been available to children under 12 or over 15, or to any children barred from re-enrollment by the three-year rule. Some children who obtain an informal qualification equivalent to the 10th grade public school certificate are eligible to continue to secondary school, but only at home.[\[153\]](#)

At least three refugee families whom Human Rights Watch interviewed said their children were barred from enrolling in school due to the three-year rule. The total may be higher, but none of the families was aware of the details of the regulation. In addition, none was able to access the informal education programs required to re-enroll in formal education.

Shamsah, from a village near Aleppo, said that she tried to register her daughter Dou'a, 12, and her son Assad, 11, in lower grades after they fled to Jordan in 2014, so that the children could catch up. Dou'a had only completed grade 1 in Syria, and Assad had never completed a grade. School officials told their mother that the children were too old to be enrolled.[\[154\]](#) Speaking of Assad, she said:

Ahlam, 31, said her eldest daughter Lama, age 15, had been out of school for four years. When the family tried to enroll her in school in Jordan, Lama had only done two months of grade seven in Syria, but she should've been in ninth grade according to her age.[\[156\]](#) School directors first said Lama could not enroll because there was no room for more students; the following year, she had been out of school for too long. Shes engaged to a man in Ein al-Basha and will marry in 2016, her mother said. She always wanted to finish school but since we came here everything changed.[\[157\]](#)

In another family, Naima, a 14-year-old girl, had completed grade 6 in Syria but never been to school in Jordan, and the family had stopped trying to enroll her after school officials said she was too old to enroll.[\[158\]](#)

In order to enroll in public schools, Jordan requires Syrian refugees to present their UNHCR asylum seeker certificates and Interior Ministry service cards. In addition, they may be required to prove that their children have been enrolled in school within the past three years, and students seeking to enroll in secondary school must show they have taken the grade 10 exam in Jordan or proof of equivalent education in Syria.[\[159\]](#)

However, some school directors have refused to allow Syrian families to enroll their children on the basis of other, unofficial criteria. Susan, 33, said that when she tried to enroll her three school-aged children in the 2014-2015 school year in Na'imeh, a town near Irbid, the school director told her that there was a government decision that Jordanians don't learn with Syrians.[\[160\]](#) She tried again in January or February 2015, she said, but the director said the Ministry of Education had rejected my application.[\[161\]](#)

Leila, 33, from Eastern Ghouta, was able to present her Syrian identification documents and UNHCR asylum seeker certificate to school officials when she tried to enroll her 13-year-old daughter Bisan in the fall semester of 2013, but did not have her daughters official school certificate showing she had been enrolled in 5th grade in Syria.[\[162\]](#) On that basis, she said, the school director first rejected her enrollment outright, and then, in a subsequent meeting, offered to let her to enroll in grade 4. The same director rejected my sister Khadijas kids without explanation, too. They ultimately enrolled in another school.[\[163\]](#)

In another case, officials at a school in Mafraq refused to enroll Hala, 7, in the fall semester of 2015 because they said they had no room; but when her mother tried again, the school said her UNHCR certificate mistakenly lists her as born in 2009, instead of 2008, her correct birthdate.[\[164\]](#) The school told us she can register if theres proof shes old enough, but we had to fix the card with UNHCR first. Adding to the errors, her Interior Ministry-issued service card lists her as born in 2005. Yet even if she were 6 years old, not 7, the girl should be eligible to enroll in school.[\[165\]](#)

Syrian asylum seekers may also face difficulties obtaining birth certificates for their children, without which they cannot obtain the Ministry of Interior service cards that are required to access subsidized healthcare, and will be needed to enroll the children in public school once they reach school age.[\[166\]](#) To obtain birth certificates, Syrian parents must apply to Jordans Civil Status Department, which usually requires them to present a valid Ministry of Interior service card as well as proof that the parents are married. Some parents lack valid service cards, for the reasons described above, while others cannot provide proof of marriage.[\[167\]](#)

Some couples who married in Syria fled without bringing the marriage certificates or family books issued to married couples by Syrian authorities. In other cases, Jordanian authorities confiscated these documents when the refugees entered. Other couples were married in Jordan but were unable to register their marriages there because they left refugee camps without being bailed out and therefore lacked valid identification documents.[\[168\]](#) And parents who had children in Syria but who fled before obtaining a Syrian birth certificate cannot obtain a Jordanian birth certificate. Parents who do not register their childrens birth within one year must open a court case to do so, which can be expensive, time-consuming, and requires the same documents.

UNHCR estimated in 2014 that up to 30 percent of Syrian refugee children in Jordan where, as of March 2016, more than 108,000 Syrian children have been born since 2011 did not have birth certificates.[\[169\]](#) The lack of birth certificates could prevent tens of thousands of children from enrolling in school in coming years.[\[170\]](#)

According to international humanitarian agency staff, special committees comprising representatives of the Interior, Education, and Justice ministries, as well as security officials, meet weekly in cities around the country to resolve cases of Syrians who entered Jordan without documentation, or whose marriages or children were incorrectly registered.[\[171\]](#) In 96 percent of cases the special committees have resolved the problems, humanitarian staff said, but in total, are able to process only 35 cases per week.[\[172\]](#)

A 2015 UN-coordinated survey that addressed the educational needs of Syrian refugee children with disabilities in Jordan found lack of physical accessibility, specialist educational care, and psychological effects of the Syria conflict were key barriers to education. Jordanian teachers identified lack of training to support children with disabilities as a key need.[\[173\]](#)

Many Syrian parents said their children had witnessed apparently traumatizing events in Syria before fleeing to Jordan, including in detention.[\[174\]](#) In some cases, these experiences led them not to enroll in school in Jordan.

Ahmad, 15, had already dropped out of school in Syria at age 9 to take care of his fathers small store when his father was detained, but had wanted to go back to school until experiences during the conflict changed his personality, his mother said.

Maya, 12, is extremely self-conscious about the scar from a shrapnel wound that runs from her wrist to her finger, wets her bed at night, is not in school, and does not want to attend school, her mother said.[\[176\]](#) In one case, a Syrian father who lived near a Jordanian air force base described how an apparent military training exercise terrified his seven children, who refused to leave the house to go to school for several days.[\[177\]](#)

Humanitarian organizations including Mercy Corps, and UNICEF-supported Makani centers for children and youth have provided tens of thousands of refugees in Jordan with psychosocial support services in host communities and refugee camps a significant improvement over international responses to the 2003 Iraqi refugee influx in Jordan.[\[178\]](#)

A 2015 UNICEF review of its psychosocial support response in Jordan found it had appropriately used the Minimum Standards for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in emergencies as a starting point and evaluation tool, but that support centers were overcrowded and should be open longer, staff lacked adequate training to deal with issues such as child labor and early marriage, and as a result, almost all staff seemed to struggle with their intended role of identifying and addressing psychosocial or mental health needs. Some staff felt more serious cases needing referral were sometimes missed.[\[179\]](#)

While greater access to sustained psychosocial support for Syrian children is needed, such interventions may be insufficient to counter the loss of self-sufficiency and hope resulting from work-permit restrictions.[\[180\]](#)

Some parents whose children were enrolled in school in Jordan said that traumatic experiences in Syria badly affected their ability to study and to function socially. Kunuz, 34, from Homs, said her son Mahmud, a nine-year-old in third grade at a public school, had memorized the [Arabic] letters in Syria, he was a good student there, but now he cant learn, after the childrens neighbors were burned during an attack in their small village.[\[181\]](#) He doesnt want to go to school. If he gets homework and cant do it hes afraid hell get in trouble. Mahmuds father had been missing for three years and was presumed dead. The boy had received some psychosocial support from Terre Des Hommes, an NGO, but told a Human Rights Watch researcher: I liked my school back in Syria.[\[182\]](#)

There were no psychosocial support services to help Hanas three children, who were struggling at their public school in Jordan after witnessing a neighbors house in Syria get blown up and subsequently fleeing from town to town:

A teacher at a primary school in Zaatar camp said that he had received no training to deal with injured children including one in a wheelchair and another who cannot see following eye surgery and that he found it difficult to deal with traumatized children, who share their emotions loudly and unpredictably, or are just silent in class. One boy, he said, is not present. You talk to him and hes always looking far away.[\[184\]](#)

The large number of Syrian students is a part of the challenge of ensuring the quality of education. Syrian students fare much worse in school than Jordanian students.

A joint 2015 study of children aged 9 to 17 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Fafo, a Norwegian research foundation, found:

A 2014 survey found that around 60 percent of Syrian refugees had not completed primary education, compared to 25 percent of Jordanians; while 42 percent of Jordanians had completed secondary education, only 16 percent of Syrian refugees had.[\[186\]](#) Jordanians were four times more likely than Syrian refugees to have pursued post-secondary education.[\[187\]](#)

School infrastructure varies widely but is often poor in both host communities and refugee camps. In Jordans refugee camps, the Education Ministry has established and accredited formal schools that teach a modified version of the Jordanian curriculum. The quality of school infrastructure in the camps varies widely. Human Rights Watch visited a school in the Emirati Jordanian refugee camp where classrooms had electricity and windows, and two schools in the Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps that had no electricity, lighting, heating, or cooling. In each camp, the same buildings were used as girls schools in the morning and boys schools in the afternoon.

Bassam, who teaches three different classes with a total of 120 students in Zaatari camp, said, There's no drinking water at school, no food, and no electricity, which left classrooms exposed to desert heat in late spring and early fall, and very cold in winter.^[188]

Some schools in refugee camps as well as host communities suffer overcrowding. Marwan, a 12-year-old student in fourth grade in Mafraq, is enrolled in the afternoon shift at a public school, where normally there are almost 30 children in his class, but teachers sometimes combine their Arabic or science classes, so they teach us all together.

He and his brother were not learning much, their mother said: It's as if they weren't going to school.^[190] Teachers and administrators in some refugee camp schools described overcrowding of up to 50 students per class, and wide age ranges of students in each grade, which made it impossible to reach each child at the appropriate level of instruction.^[191]

Children at schools operating two shifts receive fewer hours of instruction than children at other public schools operating on a regular schedule. Second shift classes in host communities and all classes in refugee camps, which are attended only by Syrian refugee children, offer fewer subjects than morning shift and single shift classes, which are attended by both Jordanian and Syrian children. The reduced class time was necessary to keep classes short enough to operate the double shift, but has resulted in a two-tier education system, with reduced quality for Syrian and Jordanian students in double shift schools, and for Syrian students attending afternoon shifts in particular. Bassam teaches grade 7 classes at an accredited public school in Zaatari camp. He described the differences between the curricula:

Bassam and an administrative official at his school said that they were not aware of any visits from external quality monitors or observers.^[193] Bassam said he had not received any kind of training before he began teaching:

Jordanian teachers at public schools are government employees who should receive teacher training, divided by classroom study and on-the-job training, and donors have supported projects to increase the number of teachers trained by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy.^[195] In practice many public school teachers have still not received adequate training.^[196] Second shift teachers in public schools in both host communities and in the refugee camps are hired on a temporary contract, and should receive at least 10 days worth of training, but in practice many have received less or even, as in Bassam's case, none.^[197]

Second shift teachers do not receive health insurance or paid vacation during the winter and summer school break. There's a lot of turnover among the teachers here, Bassam said. The ones who stay are retired teachers who are mostly living on their pensions. But the younger ones don't stay, if they can find better jobs. Several teachers left this year already, he said in October 2015, around one month after the school year began.^[198]

Jordanian teachers who taught Syrian students in host communities had varied experiences, but some who taught in relatively poor, rural areas described less-crowded classrooms and better facilities than in refugee camps.^[199] Parents whose children had been enrolled in school in Zaatari before leaving the camp said that schools in host communities provided better-quality education, including during the afternoon shift.^[200]

In April 2016, staff at international humanitarian agencies and foreign aid agencies, and at the Education Ministry, tentatively agreed to ensure that all second shift teachers in host community and refugee camp schools receive at least 10 days of teacher training.^[201] As of July, the Education Ministry had agreed to increase classroom instruction for children in morning shift classes to 30 hours per week.^[202] However, doing so required reducing weekday classroom instruction for children in afternoon shifts, and making up for the reduced time by adding six hours of instruction on Saturdays. Afternoon shift students would receive 21 hours of instruction per week, about the same as previously.

A foreign donor agency also described an ongoing project of external quality assessments at Jordanian schools, which as of April 2016 had completed baseline and follow-up surveys based on questionnaires, focus group discussions, and classroom visits, and which formed the basis for interventions that had led to measurable improvements in quality of education.^[203]

Qualified Syrian teachers who have fled to Jordan are an unused resource that could help meet the need for more teachers. Research indicates that involving teachers from refugee communities in education can improve the performance of students whose experiences they shared, and support greater parental and community involvement in education.^[204]

A May 2015 report by the International Peace Institute, an NGO, found that lack of funding to hire qualified Jordanian teachers for Syrian children is prolonging the time refugee children and youth spend outside of formal education [and] creating a risk that many Syrian youths will drop out of formal education.^[205]

Under Jordanian regulations, only Jordanian citizens who are members of the teachers syndicate can be employed in schools. Jordan has allowed around Syrian refugees to act as assistants to help manage overcrowded refugee camp school classes with more than 45 children, but otherwise bars refugees who were qualified teachers in Syria from teaching. In 2015 there were approximately 200 Syrian assistants in refugee camp schools.^[206]

While the number of qualified Syrian teachers in Jordan is not known, overall, the Syrian school system has lost more than 52,000 teachers and 500 school counselors due to the conflict, and the lack of opportunities for professional development along with the recruitment of unqualified teachers on a temporary contractual basis is seriously impacting the provision of quality education in host countries.^[207]

As of July 2016, Jordans Education Ministry had tentatively agreed to allow up to 1,000 Syrian assistants, with stipends paid by donors, to support overcrowded, afternoon shift classrooms in host communities, outside refugee camps. However, the ministry had indicated it would not allow Syrian teachers to teach, citing regulations that only permit Jordanians to teach.^[208]

Harassment and violence by other children on the way to school or just outside schools have caused some Syrian refugee children to drop out of school; take longer, alternate routes; and altered their perceptions of school and their families' views of Jordanian host communities. UNICEF reported that nearly 1,600 Syrian children dropped out of school in 2015-2016 due to bullying.^[209] In poorer host communities, residents sometimes view Syrians as straining already limited municipal and educational resources.^[210]

Fatma, 12, is the only one of three school-aged children in her family who had enrolled in school in Jordan, but her parents pulled her out.^[211] Fatma suffers from thalassemia, a blood disorder, and her parents were afraid that an assault by other children, who would harass her as she returned from school in the Baqaa Palestinian refugee camp northeast of Amman, could seriously hurt her. Her mother, Hanan said:

Abdelaziz, 14, dropped out of school in Mafraq after one semester because the Jordanian kids hit him, his father said.^[213] His brother, Jihad, 16, said he was enrolled in grades 7 and 8 in Jordan but dropped out before the fall 2014 semester, for the same reason.

The boys' father, Nasser, 53, brought his family to Jordan from Deir Ezzor in 2012. According to Nasser, no school officials followed up with the family after Jihad and Abdelaziz dropped out.^[215]

Another Syrian family in Mafraq described a Jordanian child who waits for [their children] by the road to the school and says It's not for Syrians. On several occasions, there were 10 kids who brought wires, and they hit the Syrian kids, including brothers Faaz, 13 and Marwan, 10. The boys' mother believed that the double-shifting of schools was part of the problem.

Some children said they had to take longer detours on their way to school to avoid being attacked by other children or even blocked by adults. Mohamad, a nine-year-old, is enrolled in third grade in Salt, at a school that is not double-shifted and teaches both Jordanian and Syrian students. Sometimes other boys wait for him at the school gate to hit him, said his 11-year-old sister Selsebil, who walks to school with him.^[217]

The siblings now take a much longer route to walk to school to avoid getting hit, Mohamad said. Their mother, Hana, says their behavior has changed. Mohamad and Selsebil are getting very aggressive and hot tempered after school. They now curse as well. They hit each other, which they didn't used to do at all.^[218]

Other children continued to go to school, despite violence on the way. Abdulrahman, a 12-year-old with physical and intellectual disabilities, was still going to school after children threw a rock that hit him outside his school in Zarqa, Jordan, because his older brother Talal walked with him to provide some protection.^[219]

Education specialists have argued that double-shifted schools have been necessary to enroll more Syrian students in the short term, but blending Syrian and Jordanian children in the same classes could reduce tensions between the communities, including bullying and harassment.^[220] Staff at humanitarian agencies and donor country aid agencies said they supported a plan proposed by the Education Ministry to move from double-shift to integrated schools by 2019.^[221]

Corporal punishment in schools existed in Jordan before the Syrian crisis. A 2007 study commissioned by UNICEF found that 57 percent of schoolchildren in Jordan were subject to physical abuse by school officials, an average of 10 times per month.^[222] With the support of Jordans Education Ministry and Queen Rania, UNICEF launched a three-year campaign against violence in schools in 2009, aimed at reducing violence in schools by 2012.^[223]

Because classrooms are often overcrowded, students in the same classroom have different levels of education and may have spent long periods out of school or experience trauma, and teachers are relatively less experienced and well-trained, corporal punishment may be exacerbated in afternoon shift classes, according to a child protection specialist at an NGO that operates education programs in Jordan.^[224] The Education Ministry noted in January 2016 that school violence has been a generalized issue [] particularly in boys' schools, and requested more donor support to reduce increased violence via teacher training.^[225] UNICEF reported in May 2016 that 78 percent of Syrian parents with children in public schools complained that teachers had used physical violence.^[226]

Jordan bans corporal punishment in schools; teachers who violate the rule can be terminated.^[227] However, there is no enforcement against teachers in Jordanian schools, said an NGO staff member, who added enforcement was much better in UNRWA schools for Palestinian refugees, which some Syrians and Palestinians from Syria attend and where UNICEF provides positive discipline training for teachers to manage classrooms without the need for verbal or physical violence. In general, international and local NGO staff who work with Syrian families said they received fewer complaints of corporal punishment in UNRWA schools than in Jordanian public schools.^[228]

Teachers at a school in Zaatari refugee camp regularly meted out corporal punishment, a 7th grade teacher there said, due to a lack of training on classroom management and frustration at difficult classroom environments. Some teachers respect boys whose mustaches are starting to grow. But others hit kids on the palms with sticks or a rubber hose.^[229] The teacher said that he and his colleagues had received no training specific to teaching Syrian refugee children, and that some teachers received no training at all. ^[230]

Rouqiya, 33, from Houleh village outside Homs, said that teachers in a Jordanian public primary school hit one of her daughters, Sawzan, 9, when she forgot a book, and that another daughter, Rawa, 11, felt discriminated against in the school she attends with Syrian and Jordanian girls because she had been punished unfairly and harshly.^[231]

Brahim, a student in the second grade at a public school in Mafraq, said the teachers at his school hit boys who are annoying, and they use a stick, about two-and-a-half feet long.^[232] Ahmad, a 12-year-old in fourth grade in a different school in Mafraq, said that teacher hit students almost every day, using their hands.^[233] Marwan, 12, said that a fourth-grade teacher at his school in Mafraq hit him on the head with an iron bar, but only when I do something wrong.^[234] Abdulrahman, 12, and his brother Talal, 11, said their teachers in Zarqa hit them. The teachers aren't good, they hit us with a hose, Talal said. I hate math class because the teacher always hits me. ^[235]

The inability of Syrian refugees to obtain permits to work lawfully, exploitative low wages, or non-payment for many who work informally, increases family dependence on children to earn income in turn impacting their education by either preventing enrollment or compelling them to drop out.

Jordan bars Syrians who entered the country irregularly or who live in refugee camps from applying for work permits; as well, under Jordanian regulations applicable to foreign workers, Syrians must show that they have specialized skills and would not compete for jobs with Jordanians to be eligible for work permits, which is not possible for many low-skilled jobs.^[236] Some professions and jobs are also closed to non-Jordanians, and in all sectors, Jordan imposes quotas on foreign employees.^[237] In addition, many Syrians find work permits prohibitively expensive: the permits must be renewed annually at a cost ranging from Jordanian dinars 170-370 (\$240- \$522), and up to 700 dinars (\$986), depending on the sector and type of work.^[238]

While Jordanian law formally requires employers to pay for work permits, in practice, employees are forced to pay, and the costs are unaffordable to most Syrian refugees.^[239] The minimum monthly wage in Jordan is 190 dinars (\$265) for nationals, and 150 dinars (\$210) for foreign workers.^[240] Some experienced, skilled Syrian refugees said that because they were unable to obtain permits needed to practice their professions, they

resorted to occasional, unskilled agricultural work in Jordan; one former electrician said the need to follow the harvest season meant he had moved seven times in two years, and was unable to enroll his three school-aged children as a result.[\[241\]](#)

Syrian refugees, like other foreign workers, must also be sponsored by a Jordanian employer, produce Syrian passports, and meet administrative requirements, including background security checks, a process that took six months in one case documented by the International Labour Organization (ILO).[\[242\]](#) Syrians may face exploitation by employers and arrest by police if caught working without the government-issued permits that Jordan requires all foreigners, including refugees, to obtain.[\[243\]](#) Jordan, which has barred entry to Palestinians from Syria and confined around 200 in the Cyber City Refugee Camp, similarly bars most from obtaining work permits.[\[244\]](#)

Some of the estimated 120,000 to 200,000 Syrians working in Jordan entered the country before the conflict under the two countries 2001 Agreement of Workforce Cooperation, but most are assumed to be refugees without work permits.[\[245\]](#) Few Syrians have applied for permits because the cost is too expensive or administrative requirements are too difficult.[\[246\]](#) Syrians had work permits in fewer than one percent of households outside refugee camps that were assessed by UNHCR in 2014.[\[247\]](#)

The Jordanian Labor Ministry has stated that at the beginning of the conflict it gave Syrian refugees priority over other foreign nationals to apply for work permits, but most of them were not qualified for skilled labor and were ineligible for permits to compete for low-skilled jobs with Jordanian workers; by the end of 2013, only 2,600 Syrians had received Jordanian work permits.[\[248\]](#) The ministry issued 5,700 work permits to Syrians in 2014, but did not give work permits to Syrians who entered as refugees.[\[249\]](#)

Jordanian officials have argued that permitting Syrians to work would drive down Jordanian wages and displace Jordanian jobs.[\[250\]](#) Evidence for this argument, insofar as it is based on Jordanian unemployment rates before and after the Syria conflict began, appears inconclusive.[\[251\]](#)

Although Syrians have pushed some Jordanian workers out of the construction industry, the ILO and Fafo found that competition for jobs is limited by the fact that Syrians are viewed as willing to accept jobs, wages, and working conditions that Jordanians would reject.[\[252\]](#) Unemployment among Syrians in host communities was around 57 percent in 2015, one survey found.[\[253\]](#)

Jordanian police arrest Syrians for working illegally in host communities and have, in some cases, forcibly transferred them to refugee camps, including children. More than a third of the 15,800 illegal foreign workers arrested in Jordan from January to November 2013 were Syrians, a government press statement said.[\[254\]](#) A later government press statement said the authorities had rounded up 23,000 foreign workers for working without permits in 2013, but did not specify how many were Syrians.[\[255\]](#) Most of those arrested are men, more of whom are working or looking for work than Syrian women.[\[256\]](#) Jordanian police have also arrested Syrian refugee children. At one point in 2015, an NGO worker said, a center for unaccompanied children in one refugee camp had 130 children who had been transferred there without their families for working without permits.[\[257\]](#)

Several refugees described being made to sign pledges not to work after being arrested by Jordanian police, on pain of being sent to the camps.[\[258\]](#) An illiterate Syrian man arrested for working said police told him he had to sign a written pledge not to work although he could not read it and that if arrested again, he would have to pay a 500 dinar (\$700) fine and spend 12 days in prison, and that if he could not pay, he would be deported to Syria.[\[259\]](#)

Despite the risk of arrest, many Syrians in host communities said they had no alternative to working illegally. An ILO survey in 2015 found that around 60 percent of Syrian refugee households in host communities reported some income from informal work, but that for two-thirds, the households' entire monthly earnings fell into the category of JD 1 to JD 199 (\$1.40 to \$280), and that these earnings went to support an average household of 10 people.[\[260\]](#) By contrast, in 2012, 12.4 percent of working Jordanians earned less than JD 200 (\$280) a month, and 1.4 percent earned less than JD 100 (\$140).[\[261\]](#) Most Syrians interviewed for this report who said they were working in Jordan said they did not earn enough money to cover basic expenses such as rent and food.[\[262\]](#)

Others said that despite their urgent need for additional income, they were not seeking work because they were afraid they would be sent to refugee camps for working without permits.[\[263\]](#) There is an informal economy in Zaatari camp (roughly 80,000 people), and some camp residents appear able to leave to work nearby.[\[264\]](#) It is also easier to access international humanitarian assistance in refugee camps than in host communities.

However, most refugees interviewed said they would prefer to stay in host communities; one woman said she would risk anything not to go back to Zaatari, because when it snowed, the tents collapsed.[\[265\]](#) Refugees described even harsher conditions at Azraq camp, and said that because it is isolated and difficult to leave informally, it is very difficult to find any informal work near the camp. One woman said, Its too hard to live in Zaatari, and Zaatari is like Paris compared to Azraq. At least there are markets.[\[266\]](#)

Syrian refugees and NGO staff described a number of cases in which Jordan allegedly deported men arrested for working without a permit. In these cases, their families sometimes followed. A foreign volunteer with an NGO said that after Jordan deported a 20-year-old Syrian whom police arrested for working in October 2014, his wife and children had no more ways to earn a living, so they left too, back to Syria.[\[267\]](#)

Forcibly returning Syrians creates a risk that their children will also return to the violence in Syria, which UNHCR described in late 2015 as prevalent in all parts of the country and is very likely to disrupt the childrens education, since around a quarter of schools in Syria have been destroyed or severely damaged in attacks, used as shelters or for military purposes.[\[268\]](#)

Several parents said that they had taken their children out of school before fleeing Syria due to the risk of attacks or because schools had been closed or destroyed in attacks.[\[269\]](#) Jordan denies that it deports Syrians who work without permits, and acknowledges that doing so would violate the prohibition on refoulement.[\[270\]](#)

The ILO has warned that the current situation, with most Syrian refugees working outside any legal framework, will lead to the detrimental informalization of Jordans labor market and downward pressure on wages in some sectors.[\[271\]](#) A 2015 Chatham House report concluded that a policy that denies Syrian refugees the ability to work and support themselves, and forces them to depend on international assistance, threatens to erode Jordans economic potential and social stability.[\[272\]](#) Allowing more Syrians to support themselves could increase the economic contribution Syrians make to Jordan, and their ability to send their children to school.[\[273\]](#)

At a donors conference on February 4, 2016, the Jordanian government stated that it would take steps that could, depending on donor support, provide about 200,000 job opportunities for Syrian refugees [] without competing with Jordanians for jobs.[\[274\]](#)

Jordan pledged that by the summer of 2016, it would allow Syrian refugees to formalize their existing businesses and to set up new, tax-generating businesses; provide for a specific percentage of Syrian involvement in municipal projects funded by donors; and lift restrictions preventing small economic activities within the camps hosting Syrian refugees, and on commerce with people outside the camps.

The Jordanian statement forecast that roughly 50,000 jobs could be created in sectors like construction, agriculture, and cleaning, in areas where there is low Jordanian participation and a high ratio of foreign workers. In addition, Jordan pledged to make the necessary administrative changes to allow Syrian refugees to apply for work permits, renewable annually, for work in these areas and also for a new pilot project that would designate five development zones in which Syrians and Jordanians will work.[\[275\]](#) To create a market for goods produced under the new plans, the Council of the European Union (EU) agreed in July to relax preferential rules of origin for a period of 10 years in order to increase imports from the planned development zones.[\[276\]](#) In cooperation with UNHCR, Jordan had previously opened up to 4,000 work permits for Syrians in the textile industry.

In March 2016, the World Bank issued a \$100 million low-interest-rate loan to Jordan, to spur job creation spending for Syrians and Jordanians.[\[277\]](#)

The positive Jordanian announcement in February appeared to have unintended consequences, because Labor Ministry inspectors substantially increased arrests afterward, due to a mistaken understanding that many new work permits had already been issued.[\[278\]](#) In response, Jordan declared a three-month amnesty period, beginning in April, during which Syrians could seek to obtain work permits, and waived the fees that are normally required.[\[279\]](#)

Jordan issued 13,000 work permits to Syrians before the grace period ended in July. The International Labour Organization found that the number of applicants was limited due to the need to pay social insurance fees and to obtain Jordanian employers as sponsors.[\[280\]](#) Syrians employed in seasonal agricultural or short-term construction work did not have contracts with their employers and many went into debt to middlemen who helped them fulfill the sponsorship requirement, a situation that created vulnerability to exploitation. With support from the ILO, some 2,300 Syrians were able to obtain permits through agricultural cooperatives rather than individual employers.[\[281\]](#)

The inability of Syrian refugees to gain lawful employment harms their childrens ability to go to school. Nasser, a 53-year-old former truck driver who came to Jordan in 2012 from Deir Ezzor, is unemployed and has no further savings.[\[282\]](#) Nasser said he could not afford to apply for a Jordanian work permit as a driver, which cost hundreds of dollars annually. None of Nassers four school-aged children is enrolled in school. Nasser said he would like to enroll his youngest son Bilal in pre-primary school, but could not afford to pay the fees. His 17-year-old son left school in 4th grade in Syria and has never gone to school in Jordan, and he works to support his family in a car sales store. Nassers 18-year-old son had also never enrolled in school in Jordan and was looking for work.[\[283\]](#) UNICEFs Jordan office reported in 2016 that child workers are four times more likely to be out of school than other children.[\[284\]](#)

A substantial percentage of Syrian children in Jordan are working or looking for work, and although child labor existed in Syria before the conflict, rates have increased for Syrian refugee children. Studies have found rates of child labor among Syrian refugees in Jordan up to four times higher than in pre-conflict Syria.[\[285\]](#) More than a quarter of Syrian households rely on children as the primary breadwinner, and around half depend on child labor for some household income, surveys found.[\[286\]](#) Most of the Syrian children in host communities who work do so six or seven days a week, an ILO survey found, and one-third work more than eight hours a day, for a daily income of \$4-\$7.[\[287\]](#)

Because few working children stay in school, many work long hours, and many work in jobs that are likely hazardous, the ILO and Fafo concluded it is likely that a vast majority of working Syrian children are subject to child labor in violation of international standards.[\[288\]](#) In 2014, Ministry of Labor inspections identified 1,060 child laborers, of whom half were Syrian refugees.[\[289\]](#) A joint ILOFafo survey found that 37 percent of Syrian refugee children employed in Jordan work in construction, and 48 percent of boys aged 15 to 17 work in manufacturing, where there is a substantial probability of hazardous working conditions.[\[290\]](#) In Zaatari camp, around 75 percent of working children reported health problems and almost 40 percent reported an injury, illness, or poor health; in Mafraq and the Jordan valley, 22 percent of working children had been injured.[\[291\]](#) Studies in the Jordan Valley found that about 18 percent of Syrian children working in agriculture are under 12 years old.[\[292\]](#) In urban areas, 34 percent of working children are under 15, one study found.[\[293\]](#)

Syrian families rely on children to earn income in order to cover necessities such as rent.[\[294\]](#) Families interviewed by Human Rights Watch universally said that they would prefer to send their children to complete their primary and secondary education rather than send them to work. However, for 16 families, childrens work was a source of income required to pay for basic needs.[\[295\]](#) As the Ministry of Education noted in January 2016:

Child labor existed in Jordan before the Syria conflictUN statistics from 2011 reported that 0.8 percent of Jordanian children aged 5 to 14 were working. But studies have found rates of Syrian child labor up to five times higher than for Jordanian children.[\[297\]](#) Employers surveyed in Jordanian cities in 2014 had greatly increased employment of children after the conflict began: 84 percent of employers said they had employed children for one to two years, compared to only 11 percent who had employed children for three to four years.[\[298\]](#)

Jordanian law provides for 10 years of compulsory education, from around ages 6 to 15. A far smaller percentage of Syrian children than Jordanian children who are working or trying to find work are enrolled in school.[\[299\]](#) Refugees and NGO workers said that Syrian children in rural areas of Jordan who are enrolled in school often missed the first weeks or even months of the fall semester because they work full-time during the harvest season.[\[300\]](#)

Yassir, 38, said that his 12-year-old son is not in school, but worked along with him and his wife farming tomatoes.[\[301\]](#) Yesterday he told me he wanted to go back to school. We had an argument. I said, Its impossible, you have to go to the farm. Whos going to feed us? At the height of the tomato season, Yassirs wife also takes their 7-year-old, 9-year-old, and 10-year-old sons out of first grade to work, but sometimes the farmers kick them out because theyre too young to work in tomatoes, Yassir said. They live with about 14 other families from Hama in a cluster of tents outside the city of Mafraq. The families do not pay rent for the land, which they say they could not afford, but pay Jordanian neighbors whose electricity and water services the tents are connected to. The families collectively owe about 1,200 dinars (\$1,680) for water and electricity. Theres nothing left in Hama for us, said Yassir. This is our country now.[\[302\]](#)

Where a husbands income is lacking, women may be unable to afford the childcare needed to work outside the home and unable to pay up to 350 JD (around \$500) in rent each month in large households of up to 10 children.[\[303\]](#) Halima, whose husband is in Syria with his second wife, said she relied on the income of her oldest sons, aged 16 and 17, who had found occasional work building and painting homes.[\[304\]](#) The brothers work from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., they said, after having dropped out of school to work when they were 14 or 15. How are we going to live if they go to school? Halima asked.[\[305\]](#)

In another family, Mohamad, 14, is not in school but looking for work; he is typically able to work one or two days per week loading vegetables onto trucks in order to take responsibility for the family, his mother said, after his father was disabled by a head injury during the Syria conflict; two of his siblings are enrolled in school.[\[306\]](#) The family has no other source of income and had previously resorted to selling humanitarian food aid to pay rent, before the World Food Programme cut assistance due to budget shortfalls.[\[307\]](#)

Not all working children drop out of school, but long hours of work harm their school experience. Fifteen-year-old Ahmad goes to school from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., and then works delivering bottled water from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m., six days per week, for 3 dinars (\$4.20) per day. I can see he's tired and not feeling good about it, his mother said. He can only manage to do it because he knows how important the three dinars are for us. We make him stop work to study for his exams, but his employer doesn't like it.[\[308\]](#)

Girls and boys as young as 7 skipped school on two or three days each week whenever work was available, such as during the tomato and olive harvests, to work alongside their parents in farm fields.[\[309\]](#) Mahmud, 41, who came to Jordan from Hama in early 2013, takes his 11 and 10-year-old daughters out of their 5th grade class to work with him on a farm two school days a week to pick tomatoes, he said. Each of us gets one dinar [\$1.40] per hour and we get our wages paid every 10 days. But little girls can't work more than four or five hours at a time.[\[310\]](#)

In other cases, children attended non-formal education rather than public schools in order to be able to work, or because transportation costs to public schools were prohibitive. Abeer, 30, said that her 13- and 10-year-old daughters had never been to public school in Jordan, and had last attended 3rd grade and 2nd grade in Syria.[\[311\]](#) They were attending an informal school that had classes only two hours per day, three days per week, which was free, nearby, and made it possible for them to work:

The family earns 10 piasters (14 cents) per kilogram of stale bread they collect.

Every case that Human Rights Watch documented in which Syrian children were working appeared to violate Jordanian labor law. For example, although Jordanian law sets the minimum age for work at 16 (it is 15 in Syria), Human Rights Watch met 13 children aged 14 or younger who were working full-time.[\[312\]](#) One eight-year-old boy sold packets of nuts that he carried in a cardboard box, and said that he worked standing on busy street corners from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day.[\[313\]](#)

Jordanian law restricts 16 and 17-year-olds from working more than 6 hours per day or 36 hours per week, forbids hazardous work, requires employers to obtain the written consent of the child's guardian and a health certificate, and prohibits children from work during the weekends, holidays, or after 8 p.m.[\[314\]](#) Yet a survey found that nearly half of working Syrian children aged 12 to 17 work 60 or more hours per week, as opposed to less than 10 percent of working Jordanian children.[\[315\]](#)

The policy of arresting illegal workers has led some Syrians to rely on their children to work where the male head of household had been arrested, or where he was afraid he would be but believed his children were less at risk of arrest. Nejwa, 28, who fled Homs and lives with her children in Amman, said her husband was arrested for working without a permit in early October 2015, and sent to Azraq camp.[\[316\]](#)

The eldest of her four children, 12-year-old Abdelwahad, was already working in a butchers shop to help support the family before his father's arrest. His employer raised his salary after his father was arrested, Nejwa said. Abdelwahad works from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day except for Friday, when he works until 4 p.m. He finished first grade in Syria, then completed two more years of school in Jordan before the family had to pull him out so he could work. He asked me to put him back in school but he understood when I explained we needed the money.[\[317\]](#)

In some cases, Syrian parents said they sent their daughters to work because they believed police were more likely to arrest boys than girls. Shamsah, 38, fled to Jordan with her eight children in February 2014 from their village near Aleppo. She works with her daughters, Houda, 13 and Dou'a, 12, during the olive and tomato seasons, from 4 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. We go from farm to farm, the three of us. Sometimes we get one dinar [\$1.40] for a box of olives, or six dinars [\$8.40] for tomatoes, Shamsah said.[\[318\]](#) All the children whom Human Rights Watch interviewed who were working in urban areas were boys, but in some rural areas, Syrian girls worked seasonally to pick olives and tomatoes, alongside their parents and other relatives.[\[319\]](#)

Refugees who live in host communities but cannot meet registration requirements are unable to obtain the Jordanian service cards required to access subsidized medical care, and relatives' medical expenses have added to the financial pressure that drives families to rely on child labor.

Omar, 14, began working part-time in a market when he was 13 and then dropped out of school to work in a bakery, where he earned 5 JD (\$7) per day. Each week, his family takes around 13 dinars (\$18) of Omars salary to pay for medicine and occasional X-rays that his brother, Ahmad, 1, needs due to lung problems. Omars father has back problems and cannot do physical work, and the family does not have access to subsidized healthcare because they are not registered with the Interior Ministry in the district where they are living. To register, the family needs to submit blood tests for all seven members, which at the time of the interview cost 30 dinars each (later reduced to 5 dinars, or \$7 each); Omars mother said the family was trying to save Omars salary to pay for the tests.[\[320\]](#)

Another family without subsidized healthcare is using the salary of a 17-year-old boy who dropped out of 11th grade to pay 1,700 dinars (\$2,380) in hospital costs for his older sister's C-section. The hospital was holding her UNHCR asylum seeker certificate and service card until the family paid, they said, and threatened to take them to court if they did not pay within three months.[\[321\]](#)

Fifteen-year-old Alis parents and two of his sisters suffer from thalassemia, need bloodwork that costs a total of 45 dinars (\$63) per month, and have been prescribed medicine that the family cannot afford. Ali, the sole breadwinner, had previously tried unsuccessfully to enroll in school, and now works selling head scarves in the public market in Baqaa, from 6:30 or 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., six days per week, and earns 30-35 dinars (\$42-49) per week.[\[322\]](#)

The family arrived in Zaatari camp from Eastern Ghouta in 2013 and moved to Amman in order to be closer to a hospital, but could not afford rents. The family moved to Baqaa, a Palestinian refugee camp, where their service cards are not valid to access subsidized medical treatment there. To obtain new cards, the family said they needed to submit Syrian identity documents, but Jordanian authorities had confiscated the documents when the family first entered the country. The family applied through UNHCR for the documents to be returned in March 2015, but waited more than eight months to receive them.[\[323\]](#)

In 2011, Jordan formed a National Framework to Combat Child Labor, including a national committee. The Ministry of Labor stated in 2013 that the influx of Syrians had set back efforts to fight child labor practices in Jordan.[\[324\]](#) While some Jordanian employers hire Syrian children to help their families earn income, the lack of accountability for child labor has also contributed to abuse by employers, including sexual abuse.[\[325\]](#)

Jordans Labor Ministry secretary general has stated that the national committee needed better coordination; a Jordanian NGO, Tamkeen for Legal Aid and Human Rights, has recommended that the committee should increase penalties for employers who violate child labor laws and increase resources for the Labor Ministrys child labor inspection unit.[\[326\]](#) The ILO found that the national committee had not engaged community-based organizations with successful track records in identifying child labor cases and helping them re-enroll in school or providing them with vocational training.[\[327\]](#) Jordan should either revitalize the National Framework to Combat Child Labor or create a more effective mechanism, and work to implement ILO recommendations.

The ILO has consistently recommended increased cash assistance for refugees to mitigate the need for child labor, and also noted that such assistance will not be adequate without improved access to the labor market, vocational education, and income-generating activities.[\[328\]](#)

Few Syrian refugee girls in Jordan who marry and even some who are not yet married, but engaged complete their education, and early marriage appears more prevalent among Syrians in Jordan than it was in Syria generally before the conflict.[\[329\]](#)

According to UNICEF, child marriage accounted for 13 percent of marriages in Syria before the conflict, and 12 percent of Syrian marriages registered in Jordan in 2011, but increased to 32 percent of Syrian marriages in Jordan in 2014.[\[330\]](#) More than half of married Syrian women in Jordan were married before the age of 18, and nearly half of married girls aged 15-17 are married to men who are at least a decade older than them.[\[331\]](#)

Jordanian law sets 18 as the minimum marriage age, but allows for Sharia court judges to make exceptions for children as young as 15 years old.[\[332\]](#) Because of the costs involved, some Syrian families do not register their marriages with Jordanian Sharia courts.[\[333\]](#)

Many Syrian refugee parents whose daughters marry early view child marriage as a way to cope with poverty and insecurity, and yet early marriage also increases the danger that girls may be subject to domestic abuse or exploitation.[\[334\]](#) More than 16 percent of Syrian girls in Jordan who were married between the ages of 15 and 17 married men who were 15 or more years older, compared to 6 percent of married Palestinian girls and 7 percent of Jordanian girls.[\[335\]](#) In surveys, Syrian mothers have said they did not want their girls to be married as children, but that marriage could alleviate poverty, provide protection (*sutra*) for young girls, maintain traditions, and help girls escape an abusive home situation. Early marriage is most often instigated by a parent, and the ultimate decision usually lay with the male head of household, UNICEF found.[\[336\]](#)

In one case, Jordanian policies exacerbated the poverty that led a family to marry off their daughter. Nour, 15, was married in Jordan in July 2015, and did not re-enroll in school that fall.[\[337\]](#) Her father is unable to work due to illness; her brother Omar, 14, works full-time in a bakery; her infant brother has lung problems; and because her familys registered address is different from the host community where they are actually living, they need to collect money from Omars salary to pay for mandatory blood tests in order to re-register with the Interior Ministry and obtain new service cards. Nours father said that her new in-laws were in a better financial position to be able to support her.[\[338\]](#)

The lack of publicly-funded transportation to schools in Jordan was identified as a barrier to education for poor Jordanian children long before the Syria conflict; it is now also a barrier for Syrian children. The majority of Syrian families interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they faced difficulties getting to school. The distance to schools is most significant as an obstacle in host communities, but the distance to school from some parts of the sprawling Zaatari refugee camp, and the need for children to return home at night along dark, unlit paths during the winter, has also been one of the main obstacles to education there, particularly for younger children.[\[339\]](#)

Nearly all of the Syrian families interviewed in host communities said they had difficulty paying transportation costs to send their children to school, and many parents whose children were not in schools or had dropped out said that their inability to pay for transportation was the main reason. In most cases, families said that private microbus drivers usually charged around JD 10- 15 (\$14- \$21) per month per child, but sometimes much more, depending on the location and the distance to school.

Transportation fees are the largest public school-related expense for Syrian families in Jordan, where it costs an average of JD 26 (\$36) per month to send a child to public school, according to humanitarian NGO staff.[\[340\]](#) Susan, 33, said that she had tried unsuccessfully to enroll her three school-aged children in nearby schools in the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015, before enrolling them in another public school that was farther away from their home outside Irbid, but the children stopped attending after a month because transportation fees cost a total of JD 30 (\$43) per month, which she could not afford.[\[341\]](#)

Abdel Hakim, 55, and his wife Sabaa, 30, said they could not afford to send any of their six school-aged children to school in Mafrqa.[\[342\]](#) Abdel Hakim has heart problems and lost a leg in an accident in Syria, and cannot do physical work. Sabaa said, I can't pay the bills as it is, and theres no money to pay for them to go to school. A microbus would cost 10 JD per month per child, she said.[\[343\]](#)

Families in rural areas often pay even higher transportation fees to send their children to school. Yassir, 38, who came to Jordan from Hama in early 2013, said he paid 100 JD per month (\$140) for transportation to send four of his six school-aged children to school from an area outside Mafrqa where they live in a tent.[\[344\]](#) He had to take his son Hossein, 12, out of school because the bus driver wanted twice the price for him, because hes at a different school. Although Hossein was now working as an agricultural laborer, his family was JD 2,000 (\$2,800) in debt. Yassirs desire to keep his other children in school meant he needed to stay in the same area all year round, even though theres no work here after the end of the tomato season. In the winter, Yassir said, most Syrian families in his area moved to the Jordan Valley, where the warm climate meant there was farm work available. If I didnt have kids Id move too, but then I wouldnt be able to put them in school.[\[345\]](#)

The wages of two sisters, ages 10 and 11, who miss school two days a week to work with their father as agricultural laborers, help pay the microbus that takes them and two of their younger siblings to school, which costs 10 JD per month per child. A few weeks ago, they all missed school for two days because we couldnt pay the bus driver, their father said.[\[346\]](#) He said he hoped the girls would be able to continue their schooling, but did not know if it would be possible: I hope so, but I dont know.[\[347\]](#)

The lack of affordable transportation to schools, which in some cases are only reachable by walking along main roads, puts young children at risk of road accidents and can lead to dropouts. Amal, 8, from Homs, dropped out of 2nd grade in February 2015 after she saw a car hit her cousin as they were walking back from school together in the Jordanian city of Zarqa.[\[348\]](#) resulting in a broken leg. She, her cousin, and her sister Sawzan, who was also present, did not attend school for the rest of the spring semester. No one from the school followed up with us, her mother, Rouqiya, said, until the end of the school year [around May] when the principal called and asked why the girls werent coming to school and that they had to do final exam. The girls did not take the exam, but the school allowed them to enroll in the fall 2015 semester. Amal attended school for one week in the fall but then dropped out again. Shes still afraid, her mother said. If Amal could take a microbus, she would go back to school, but that was unaffordable, her mother said. My husband is in Syria and he managed to sell our furniture and send us some money, but Im three months behind on our rent.[\[349\]](#)

Staff from foreign donor state agencies and international humanitarian agencies said in April that donors had tentatively agreed to fund Jordans Education Ministry to provide transportation for both Syrian and Jordanian children. Jordans Education Ministry proposed in January a program to provide subsidized transportation for younger children and for girls who were enrolled in afternoon shift classes to return home from school.

Such a targeted program would help address key security concerns; Syrian parents told Human Rights Watch, consistent with the findings of several UN agency surveys, that they were particularly afraid for their childrens safety when they returned home in the dark after the end of afternoon-shift classes, and were afraid that younger and teenaged girls would be harassed or sexually abused.

Around 31 percent of Jordanian children attend pre-primary school, which is not free or compulsory under Jordanian law.^[350] In 2015, Jordan initiated a plan to enroll 3,750 Jordanian and Syrian children in host communities in free, double-shift kindergartens, at a cost of around \$2.1 million.^[351] In cooperation with Jordans Education Ministry, foreign donors tentatively pledged, as of April 2016, to fund a revised plan to open more kindergartens to accommodate both Jordanian and Syrian children, including by opening afternoon shift kindergartens.^[352]

Donors and the Education Ministry should follow through on these efforts. Research on education and on brain development indicates that early childhood education is a critical factor in childrens development, and that it can play an important role in helping children cope with the toxic stress of humanitarian emergencies such as forced displacement.^[353]

Only one of the Syrian parents Human Rights Watch spoke to said they were able to afford sending their child to pre-primary school, temporarily, because a family friend had paid the costs but then left Jordan; three other families said they had tried to put their children in pre-primary school but could not afford the costs including an initial payment of 30-50 dinars (\$42-70) plus monthly fees of 15-20 dinars (\$21-28).^[354] Some public schools and humanitarian organizations operate free kindergartens, but some refugees said they were unable to enroll their children because the kindergartens were already full, or were too far away and they could not afford the cost of transportation.^[355]

Many factors may dissuade Syrian students from attempting to finish secondary school in Jordan. At each level of education, opportunities for Syrians decrease and costs increase. In host communities, only primary schools operate double shifts for Syrian students; no secondary schools do.^[356]

In refugee camps, secondary schools may be closer to childrens homes than in many host communities; humanitarian assistance has been higher and more consistent; and access to work opportunities is less, reducing pressure for child labor. Yet a United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) assessment in Azraq camp in June 2015 found that only 22 percent of girls and 32 percent of boys age 16 and 17 were in school.^[357] The Ministry of Education reported net enrollment rates of 72.56 percent in secondary school during the 2014-15 academic year.^[358]

A UN survey in Zaatari camp found that children dropped out or did not go to school because of the need to do housework or paid work, perceptions the education was low quality, and a sense that there was no point receiving an education.^[359] Only 464 Syrian students were enrolled in secondary education in the countrys three refugee camps in the fall of 2015, according to the Ministry of Education, out of roughly 6,440 secondary school-aged students in the camps.^[360]

Outside camps, there are fewer secondary schools, and they are often farther away and more expensive for families to send children to attend. Lack of public transportation to schools affects both Syrian and poorer Jordanian childrens access to education.

Leila, 33, said she wanted her daughter, Bisan, to go to high school, but would not be able to send her the next year because the family cannot afford to pay for a bus.^[361] They fled to Jordan from Eastern Ghouta in 2013 and were able to enroll their three school-aged children at that time because they could walk to school safely. Bisan, 13, is enrolled in a grade 8 class at a school that teaches up to grade 9. We dont know what will happen after grade 9, Leila said. Theres a high school, but its not close. We cant send the kids to [walk in] unsafe areas we dont know. Her husband only found work occasionally, and it was impossible to pay the rent, particularly after the World Food Programme halved their monthly food assistance to 10 JD (\$14) per person a few months previously.^[362]

Some families said they could not afford to send their children to secondary school because they needed them to work. Aisha, 43, said her son Zoheir, 18, had been a good student in Syria but dropped out of grade 9 when he was 16 to support the family after his father became ill.^[363] When the family fled to Jordan in February 2013, they tried to enroll Zoheir in 11th grade, but they told him he had to go into tenth grade, unless he had a certificate [showing] that he had already finished it, Aisha said. The family of seven now depends on the income that Zoheir earns working at a restaurant in Amman, but hes always worried theyll catch him for working without a permit. He leaves the house at 7 a.m., returns at 10 p.m., and earns 250 JD (\$352) per month, she said.^[364]

For many families, the costs of secondary education are not offset by any clear benefits. Most Syrian labor is unskilled and informal, since it is illegal to work without permits, which few can obtain. In such a labor market, higher levels of education do not appear to be of help to job seekers. An International Labour Organization-Fafo joint survey of Syrian refugee children who were not in school found no relationship between the level of education that the children had completed, and whether or not they had found employment.^[365]

Hana, 32, who fled to Jordan in April 2013, enrolled her school-aged children in school, and wants them to complete secondary school, but worries their education will end at that level. Her oldest children, 15-year-old twins, are in 10th grade. Safaa is the top of her class, and she used to love school, but after the *tawjihi*, will that be it for my children? Hana asked.^[366]

In some cases, Syrian parents have considered returning to Syria so their secondary school-aged children can finish their studies and enroll in university. In October 2015, a Syrian father living in Irbid said he planned to take his 19-year-old daughter, Ayat, back home to Daraa so she could finish secondary school and be eligible to enroll in university, while his wife remained in Jordan with their other children.^[367] The familys monthly expenses were around \$847, and their savings had run out.^[368]

Jordanian authorities have permitted international humanitarian agencies to operate job-skills programs in the camps^[369] but have limited nongovernmental organization (NGO)-run vocational training programs in host communities due to political sensitivities around the integration of Syrians on the labor market, where they would compete with Jordanians.^[370] Staff at international humanitarian NGOs told Human Rights Watch in October 2015, consistent with earlier reports, that Jordanian authorities had not approved a number of projects that include vocational training components for Syrian refugees.^[371] Several NGO staff said that Jordan appeared to be relaxing restrictions on NGO-run vocational training projects in 2016, but that there were still too few.^[372]

UNDP is the focal point for vocational training programs for Jordanian young adults, as part of the Jordan Response Plan to the Syria conflict, but these programs were intended to ease the burden on host communities, not to train Syrian refugees.^[373]

Jordanian secondary schools have both academic and vocational streams, which Syrian students can access. Donors supported 800 scholarships in vocational training for Syrian students at Jordanian community colleges,^[374] which few could otherwise afford.^[375] Some refugees benefited from these donor-funded technical training programs but were unable to obtain work permits.^[376]

The enrollment rate in tertiary education among Syrian refugees has declined since before 2011.^[377] Jordan is not obliged to provide access to tertiary education to refugees, but has worked with donors to create scholarships for Syrian students at Jordanian universities. The European Union, United Kingdom, and Germany provided donations to sponsor more than 300 Syrian students to enroll in university programs in Jordan, and 750 students in distance learning and online university courses in 2016.^[378] Policy improvements could increase university access for Syrian refugees and thus provide an additional incentive for Syrian children to complete primary and secondary school.

In some cases, students were unable to continue with their university education because they did not have proof that they had been enrolled in university in Syria. Alaa and Duaa, twin sisters from Daraa, said they had each completed one year of university in Damascus in education and information technology respectively before their family fled to Jordan in August 2011. They did not have any certification of their university-level study, and were ineligible for subsidized tertiary education. Since coming to Jordan, we stayed at home. We didnt have the money to go to any private schools, Duaa said.^[379] Instead, the family was funding the lower university costs of their 19-year-old brother, who was in his second year of studying Arabic literature at a university in Zarqa. He was able to study at less expensive rates because he had completed high school in Jordan and had scored very well on his *tawjihi*.^[380]

Amal, a 20-year-old from Nasriyya and a volunteer second-gradeteacher at a non-formal school for Syrian children near Azraq camp, experienced similar problems.^[381] She had completed all her *tawjihi* exams in Syria except the very last one, and they wouldnt let me finish it here, she said.

They said they needed proof I had passed 11th grade, but they wouldnt accept my faxed form, and told me I needed to send in the original. But the border is closed, and anyway it is dangerous for me to go back to Syria.

Amal, who hopes to study psychology, said the Ministry of Education denied several requests she made to finish her exams in Jordan.^[382]

Jordanian education authorities, concerned by reports of fake school certificates, are demanding original *tawjihi* certificates from Syria.^[383]

Research conducted by international NGOs in late 2013 found that 26 percent of all Syrian refugees in Jordan had a physical, sensory, or intellectual impairment, 1 in 15 had been injured, including wounds sustained due to the conflict, and nearly 5 percent of all Syrian refugee children in host countries had an intellectual disability.^[384] The research found that schools often lacked accessible toilets, access ramps, handrails, or doors wide enough for wheelchairs, or inclusive teaching methods adapted to children with disabilities.^[385]

The most common reason children were not in school was because the school was not physically accessible to them. Another 20 percent of disabled children had intellectual or mental disabilities.^[386]

A centralized United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refugee database, ProGres, classifies physical and mental disabilities, as well as visual, hearing, and speech impairments, and mental illness. In order to identify Syrian refugees with disabilities, the agency has developed a Vulnerability Assessment Framework; it also leads an Age and Disability Taskforce in Jordan, which includes partner organizations and meets regularly.^[387]

Access to education for disabled children was an issue in Jordan before the Syrian crisis. In 2007, there were 1,450 students with mental disabilities in Jordan, 800 deaf students, and one primary and secondary school for blind students.^[388] Government figures identified 16,451 Jordanian children with disabilities in 2015.^[389] Among Jordanian citizens, a 2004 census found most disabled persons aged 15 years and older were illiterate.

In 1990, Jordans national charter established the right to education of persons with disabilities.^[390] Its national education strategy refers to the need to provide diagnostic testing, programs, and resources to support children with disabilities.^[391] Jordan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2008, which applies to refugees.^[392] From 2010 to 2015, the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities noted Jordan had made progress in education integration for persons with disabilities but cited weak linkages with detection and early intervention programs.^[393]

The Law for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasizes the right of disabled persons to education and higher education commensurate with his/her abilities. It allows for import-duty and tax exemptions for educational materials, school-related products, and land for schools for people with disabilities; established the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities,^[394] which leads and coordinates projects such as teacher trainings to improve inclusive education;^[395] and obliges the Ministry of Education to teach mathematics and computer skills for blind students. It also stipulated that integration programs should teach people with disabilities and avoid separating them, except for cases of severe disabilities that the government should accommodate with special institutions to rehabilitate and educate. Despite these provisions, math and computer skills have been taught only in special schools for the blind and no educational diagnosis center had been established at time of writing.

The Education Ministry, in consultation with NGOs, has recognized the need for inclusive education. Some Jordanian schools have accepted Syrian children with physical disabilities; according to UNICEF, 134 Syrian children with disabilities were accepted into public schools in May 2016.^[396] However, public schools lack necessary facilities for children with movement-related disabilities. In four of five cases, Syrian parents of children with multiple disabilities usually intellectual and physical told Human Rights Watch they could not enroll their children, or did not attempt to because they assumed they would be rejected.

Hanin and Bayan, sisters who attend 4th and 1st grade at a Jordanian public school in Mafrqa, have difficulty walking.^[397] Although it has taken several steps to accommodate them including letting the girls skip the assembly line and allowing them to enroll despite it not having a double-shift the school has no elevators or wheelchair ramps, said their mother, who added she fears her daughters will have to drop out next year:

Hanin was the second-best in her class and even the principal told me not to take her out of school. But it takes them 30 minutes to get to school, and I have to be with them and help carry them. Theyre getting heavier, and their bags are heavy. I can only afford to pay a car one dinar [\$1.40], but the drivers asked for 25 dinars (\$35) a month. I dont want the girls to be at home, and they told me they want to study, so theyll be able to read, unlike me. But Bayan has to go to another floor with the first graders, and there are two big steps. I dont think theyll be able to stay there.^[398]

Other children with physical and intellectual disabilities had never attended school in Jordan. Amal, who came to Jordan in 2013 from Homs, said she tried to enroll her 12-year-old son, Ali, who has physical and

intellectual disabilities, at one school but was told no schools will take him.[399]

Jordans healthcare system provided Ali with free physiotherapy at the Princess Basma Hospital in Amman in 2014, but after a month they called us and said it was all they could do. Amal said the family had received one-time cash assistance from Save the Children, and a wheelchair and diapers from a local charity, but that for almost three weeks she had not been able to afford Alis prescribed medication, a psychostimulant/nootropic sometimes prescribed for children with attention deficit disorder. [400]

Hamda, 42, said her daughter Heba, 6, cant walk or balance, or study very well, and was not in school.[401] The family was unable to find a doctor to diagnose and treat her physical and intellectual disabilities, and Hamda does not believe any school will accept Heba.

Hind, 50, lives with her seven children, of whom five are younger than 18 years old, in a small village north of Irbid.[403] Hinds 12-year-old daughter, Nada, has Down Syndrome and had been enrolled in a special school for Downs kids, a very good and free school run by a charity after the family arrived in Jordan in 2012. But Hind pulled Nada out in 2014 because she could not afford a bus to the school. Plans to enroll her in a nearby public school with some of her other children collapsed when the school director said there was no room. Now she stays at home, Hind said. [404]

Ahlam, 31, said her son Mohamad, 10, was burned on his neck and lost sight in one eye in Syria during an accident at a school where 4,000 displaced persons were sheltering in July 2014. Mohamad has had two surgeries and always has headaches, his mother said. His teacher follows up with the family, but the only special help he receives at school in light of his impaired vision is that she lets him sit in the front of the class.[405]

Abdulrahman, a 12-year-old with intellectual disabilities and difficulty walking due to a congenital leg malformation, gets help walking to school from his brother Talal, 11.[406] Both have trouble seeing in class due to occluded retinas, for which they had surgery in Syria, but cannot afford medical follow-ups or glasses. Their mother, R., asked for their teachers to seat them at the front of the class at a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) school.[407]

Jordan has not ratified the 1951 Convention on Refugees or its 1967 Protocol that expanded its territorial and temporal scope beyond Europe. However, in 1998, Jordan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which recognizes UNHCRs mandate to determine the refugee status of asylum seekers, and pledges to respect the customary norm of non-refoulement.[408] The agreement accords refugees treatment equal to nationals regarding the religious education of their children, but does not otherwise refer to the right to education.[409] The parties revised the MOU in 2014, increasing the amount of time UNHCR has to review asylum applications from 30 to 90 days, and increasing the validity of a refugees renewable residency from 6 months to one year.[410]

An International Labour Organization (ILO) research paper notes that in practice, Jordan avoids the official recognition of refugees under its domestic laws and prefers to refer to Syrian refugees as visitors, irregular guests, Arab brothers, or simply guests, which has no legal meaning under domestic laws.[411]

Article 21 of Jordans Constitution prohibits the extradition of political refugees. The 1973 Residency and Foreigners Affairs Law allows exemptions to the requirements for the entry and residence of foreign nationals on account of special consideration connected with international or humanitarian courtesy or of the right to political asylum, and provides that *laissez-passeurs* shall be issued to stateless persons and refugees recognized as such.[412]

Jordan also ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1991, which prohibits refoulement in article 3(1).[413]

All children have a right to access education without discrimination. Jordan is party to a number of international treaties that outline this right, including the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention Against Discrimination in Education,[414] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),[415] the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), [416] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),[417] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[418] Jordan has not made reservations to these treaties relevant to the right to education.

The ICESCR and the CRC provide that primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all[419] and that secondary education shall be made generally available and accessible to all.[420] For children who have not received or completed their primary education, [f]undamental education shall be encouraged or intensified.[421] Governments also have an obligation to [t]ake measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates. [422]

International law prohibits discrimination on grounds such as religion, ethnicity, social origin, or other status.[423] Education should foster development of respect for a childs cultural identity, language and values.[424] According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the international expert body that monitors implementation of the ICESCR, prohibition against discrimination is subject to neither progressive realization nor the availability of resources; it applies fully and immediately to all aspects of education.[425]

According to the committee, a government that fails to provide a significant number of individuals the most basic forms of education is, *prima facie*, failing to discharge its obligations under the right to education.[426]

The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that states parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.[427]

Jordan is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which provides that refugees shall receive the same treatment as nationals with respect to elementary education, and treatment not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances regarding other levels.[428] Nonetheless, under the international legal principles codified in the conventions on childrens rights; on economic, social and cultural rights; and on the elimination of discrimination, Jordan is obliged to provide Syrian refugee children with free primary education and generally accessible secondary education without discrimination.

Jordan has ratified the key international conventions concerning child labor, the International Labor Organization Minimum Age Convention (ILO C.138)[429] and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (ILO C. 182).[430] as well as the CRC and the ICESCR. These conventions acknowledge that a child engaged in labor is less likely to access a proper education.[431] Furthermore, they require governments to protect children and young persons from economic and social exploitation[432] and any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the childs education[433]

Under Jordanian law, the legal minimum age for work is 16, and the minimum age for hazardous work is 18. [434]

Jordans Child Law defines "juveniles in need of protection" to include child laborers, such as street vendors and garbage collectors; under the law, the Ministry of Social Development is responsible for a Child Labor Unit to work with the Ministry of Labor's Child Labor Unit. The Ministries of Labor, Education, and Social Development established a child labor monitoring system (CLMS) for data collection, coordination and referral.[435]

Jordan is entitled to regulate access to employment through relevant labor laws and systems, but its human rights obligations means that there should be no blanket exclusion on refugees from the right to earn a living. Fulfilling these obligations would not require Jordan to give refugees unfettered access to the labor market, but rather to ensure that they have a meaningful opportunity to engage in wage-earning employment in non-discriminatory conditions, under the law.

Jordan is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which gives refugees who are lawfully staying in a countrys territory the right to engage in wage-earning employment.[436] However, Jordans Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR states: In order to enable a refugee to provide a living for his family it was agreed to accord a refugee who is legally residing in Jordan to work for his own account whenever the laws and regulations permit.[437] The executive committee of the UNHCR has stated that the enhancement of basic economic and social rights, including gainful employment, is essential to the achievement of self-sufficiency and family security for refugees and is vital to the process of re-establishing the dignity of the human person and of realizing durable solutions to refugee problems.[438]

Jordan is a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), both of which also include obligations with respect to the right to work and encourage states to allow non-nationals, including asylum seekers, enjoy the right to work.[439] Article 6 of the ICESCR declares that States Parties recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.[440]

The convention imposes this obligation as one of progressive realization and allows countries to determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognized in the present covenant to non-nationals.[441] However, the committee that oversees compliance with the ICESCR has emphasized that nationality should not bar access to Covenant rights and that the right to work applies to everyone including non-nationals, such as refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, migrant workers and victims of international trafficking, regardless of legal status and documentation.[442]

Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) guarantees the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of therights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration.[443]

In 2004, the conventions treaty body acknowledged states' right to differentiate between citizens and non-citizens, but said that human rights are, in principle, to be enjoyed by all persons. It called on States specifically to remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights by non-citizens in the area of employment[444] and to take measures to eliminate discrimination against non-citizens in relation to working conditions and requirements.[445]

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[208] Human Rights Watch interviews with donor agency and humanitarian agency staff, Amman, April 19, 20, and July 25, 2016.

[209] Valenza and Alfayez (UNICEF), Running on Empty: The situation of Syrian children in host communities in Jordan, May 2016, p. 32.

[210] See, e.g., Mercy Corps, *Mapping of Host Community/Refugee Tensions in Irbid, North Jordan*, February 2014, p. 14 (Conflict in the schools namely, bullying and jeering by Jordanian classmates as well as verbal and physical abuse at the hands of stressed teachers emerged as one of the main reasons that Syrian mothers were taking their children out of school), copy on file with Human Rights Watch; REACH, Education and Tensions in Jordanian Communities Hosting Syrian Refugees, August 2014, <http://www.alnap.org/resource/12711> (accessed August 4, 2016), p. 11; (11 percent of Syrians and 2 percent of Jordanians reported security issues as a reason for tension in access to educational services leading some Syrians to withdraw children from school); Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF), Access to Education for Syrian Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities: Joint Education Needs Assessment, March 2015, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_JENA_HC_March2015_.pdf (accessed August 02, 2016), pp. 21, 38. (The most commonly stated primary reasons for boys aged 12-17 that had dropped out were that they had to work to earn money, due to aggression or violence from teachers, or due to lack of resources).

[211] Human Rights Watch interview with Fatma and her mother, Hanan, Baqaa, October 8, 2015.

[212] Ibid.

[213] Human Rights Watch interview with Nasser (pseudonym), Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[214] Human Rights Watch interview with Jihad, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[215] Human Rights Watch interview with Nasser (pseudonym), Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[216] Human Rights Watch interview with Sanaa, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[217] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamad, Selsebil, and their mother Hana, Salt, October 14, 2015.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Human Rights Watch interview with Abdulrahman, Talal, and their father, S., Zarqa, October 9, 2015.

[220] Human Rights Watch interviews with education specialists at foreign donor agencies and humanitarian NGOs, Amman, April 18, 20 and 21, 2016.

[221] Human Rights Watch interviews with humanitarian NGOs and donor aid agency staff, Amman, April 18, 19, 21, 2016.

[222] UNICEF, Violence against children study in Jordan: Summary, 2007, http://www.unicef.org/jordan/VAC_Study_English_FOR_SCREEN%282%29.pdf (accessed April 15, 2016).

[223] See, e.g., UNICEF, Maan Campaign to reduce violence in schools 2009-2012, undated, http://www.unicef.org/jordan/protection_6079.html (accessed April 15, 2016).

[224] Human Rights Watch meeting with international NGO child protection staff, Amman, October 13, 2015.

[225] Jordanian Ministry of Education, Impact of Syria Crisis on Education in Jordan and Accelerating Access to Quality Formal Education for Syrian Refugee Children, January 2016, p. 8, copy on file with Human Rights Watch.

[226] Valenza and Alfayez (UNICEF), Running on Empty: The situation of Syrian children in host communities in Jordan, May 2016, p. 27.

[227] School Discipline Regulation, Instruction No. 4 on School Discipline 1981, issued in accordance with Law No. 16 1964, cited in Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Corporal punishment of children in Jordan, September 2015, www.endcorporalpunishment.org (accessed August 4, 2016), p. 2; L. Khatieb, The Status of Corporal Punishment in Jordanian Primary Schools from the Perspectives of Teachers, Students and Parents, *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 6, no. 27, 2015, p. 162.

[228] Human Rights Watch interviews with NGO and community-based organization (CBO) staff in Amman, Baqaa, and Zarqa, October 2015.

[229] Human Rights Watch interview with Bassam (pseudonym), Zaatari camp, October 20, 2015.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Human Rights Watch interview with Rouqiya, Zarqa, October 9, 2015.

[232] Human Rights Watch interview with Ibrahim and his mother, H., in Mafraq, October 12, 2015.

[233] Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmad and his mother, Hiyam, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[234] Human Rights Watch interview with Marwan and his mother, Sanaa, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[235] Human Rights Watch interview with Abdulrahman, Talal, and their father, S., Zarqa, October 9, 2015.

[236] International Labour Organization (ILO), Work Permits for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, 2015, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-arabstates/-ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_422478.pdf (accessed March 26, 2016), p. 5.

[237] Ibid.

[238] The Closed Professions List published by the Ministry of Labor specifies 16 job types closed to all non-Jordanians, including medical and engineering, teaching, service sector and industrial jobs, clerical and telephone jobs, driving, guard and servant positions. ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan: a discussion paper on labour and refugee laws and policies, 2015, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-arabstates/-ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_357950.pdf (accessed July 24, 2016), p. 14.

[239] Jordanian Labour Law, Labour Code, Law No. 8 of 1996, <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/45676/65048/E96JOR01.htm> (accessed August 3, 2016), art. 12 (employers bear the cost of foreigners work permits); ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015, pp. 15-16.

[240] ILO NATLEX, Tripartite Commission for Labour Affairs Order of 31/12/2011, setting the monthly minimum wage, December 31, 2011, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=90853&p_country=JOR&p_classification=12.02 (accessed January 28, 2015).

[241] Human Rights Watch interview with Abu Mohammed, Na'imeh, October 11, 2015.

[242] ILO, Work Permits for Syrian Refugees in Jordan, 2015, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-arabstates/-ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_422478.pdf (accessed March 26, 2016), p. 8. The UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Jordan mentions the need for refugees to provide a living for their family (art. 8) and authorizes those with degrees recognized by the Jordanian authorities to practice certain professions (art. 9). ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015, p. 14.

[243] Abu Mohammed, 53, said that because he did not have a work permit, he could not complain to police after Jordanian employers had repeatedly failed to pay him after hiring him for electrical repairs. Human Rights Watch interview with Abu Mohammed, Na'imeh, October 11, 2015. See also Joint Agency, Right to a Future: Empowering refugees from Syria and host governments to face a long-term crisis, Joint Agency Briefing Paper, November 9, 2015, <https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/Report%20final-%20Syria.pdf> (accessed January 28, 2016), p. 7.

[244] UNRWA Representative Office to the European Union, Helping Vulnerable Palestine Refugees from Syria Meet Their Essential Needs, August 11, 2015, <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en/unrwa/stories/palestine-refugees-syria-jordan-cash-assistance> (accessed February 12, 2016). In January 2016 Jordan began to require even Palestinians who fled to Jordan from the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 to obtain work permits as though they were foreign workers. Palestinians in Jordan outraged over new work permit requirements, *Al-Monitor*, February 8, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/jordan-work-permits-palestinian-refugees.html> (accessed March 26, 2016).

[245] JT, Around 200,000 Syrians illegally work in Jordan ministry, *Jordan Times*, June 20, 2015, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/around-200000-syrians-illegally-work-jordan-%E2%80%9494-ministry> (accessed August 2, 2016); Joint Agency, Right to a Future: Empowering refugees from Syria and host governments to face a long-term crisis, Joint Agency Briefing Paper, November 9, 2015, <https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/Report%20final-%20Syria.pdf> (accessed January 28, 2016), p. 11; ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015, p. 10, citing Agreement Of Workforce Cooperation Between The Government Of The Hashemite Kingdom Of Jordan And The Government Of The Syrian Arab Republic, October 8, 2001.

[246] Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafraq, 2015, pp. 6364.

[247] Norwegian Refugee Council, In Search of a Home: Access to Adequate Housing in Jordan, June 2015, <http://reports.nrc.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/In-search-of-a-home-final-design-14062015-hi-res.pdf> (accessed February 2, 2016), p. 25; citing UNHCR, Living in the Shadows, January 14, 2015, <http://unhcr.org/jordan2014urbanreport/> (accessed January 30, 2016). Surveyed 150,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan in 2014.

[248] ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015, pp. 15-16.

[249] JT, Around 200,000 Syrians illegally work in Jordan ministry, *Jordanian Times*, June 20, 2015, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/around-200000-syrians-illegally-work-jordan-%E2%80%9494-ministry> (accessed January 20, 2016).

[250] Jordans Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Imad Fakhoury, explained at the World Economic Forum in May 2015 that Jordan had not given work permits to Syrians because they were displacing Jordanian jobs and pushing wages down, and warned that pushing [host] countries like Jordan to give Syrians jobs could overwhelm their absorptive capacity, especially when international donors had only funded a fraction of Jordans refugee response plan. Responding to the Refugee Crisis, World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa, May 21-23, 2015, <https://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-middle-east-and-north-africa-2015> (accessed July 27, 2016).

[251] Doris Carrion (Chatham House), Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Confronting Difficult Truths, research paper, September 2015, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150921SyrianRefugeesCarrion.pdf (accessed July 26, 2016), pp. 5-6. The official unemployment rate in Jordan was 12.9 percent in the first quarter of 2015, compared with 12.2 percent in 2012, before the majority of Syrian refugees arrived. However, an ILO report calculated that the actual unemployment rate in Jordan prior to the Syrian conflict was about 14 percent, but that by 2015, unemployment had risen to 22.1 percent, and was highest among youth [and the] lowest-educated and poorest segments of the population, Joint Agency, Right to a Future: Empowering refugees from Syria and host governments to face a long-term crisis, Joint Agency Briefing Paper, November 9, 2015, p. 11, footnote 59; ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015, pp. 6-7.

[252] Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafraq, 2015.

[253] ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015, p. 5. The labor market participation rate for Syrian men fell from 63 percent in Syria before March 2011 to 51 percent for refugees in Jordan; it remained around the same as it was before the crisis for Syrian women (around 7 percent) and Jordanians (67 percent among men and 18 percent among women).

[254] 15,800 illegal foreign workers arrested in security sweep, *Petra News Agency*, October 20, 2013, http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=127346 (accessed February 1, 2016).

[255] 2,000 illegal foreign workers arrested, 500 deported, *Petra News Agency*, January 26, 2014, http://petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?Site_Id=1&lang=2&NewsID=137912 (accessed February 1, 2016).

[256] Police have also arrested Syrian women caught working without permits. In the summer of 2015, police arrested a 24-year-old woman who was working as a hairdresser in Amman and transferred her to Azraq camp, which she had left without going through the required leave process, an acquaintance said. Human Rights Watch interview with Hassan, Amman, October 5, 2015. An ILO study found 67 percent of Syrian men in Jordan were working or looking for work, compared to 8 percent of Syrian women. ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan, 2015.

[257] Human Rights Watch interview with child protection staff member at an international humanitarian NGO, Amman, October 13, 2015.

[258] Human Rights Watch interview with Sanaa, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[259] Human Rights Watch interview, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[260] Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafraq, 2015.

[261] Hani Hazaimah, 1.4% of workforce paid less than minimum wage DoS [Department of Statistics], *Jordan Times*, March 5, 2013, available at <http://vista.sahafi.io/art.php?id=d0fa75c4bb81a60cfe39d60c66f0aca1be21003> (accessed August 2, 2016).

[262] Human Rights Watch interviews, Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Salt, Baqaa, and Mafraq, October 2015.

[263] Some Syrians said they were in debt as a result of fines incurred for working without permits. A 20-year-old man said he was in debt to Jordanian neighbors who paid his fine after police jailed him for four days for working without a permit at a butchers shop. He was not paid, and the police confiscated and did not return money he was carrying and his mobile phone, he said. Human Rights Watch interview, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[264] Human Rights Watch observations, Zaatari camp entrance, October 21 and 22, 2015. Human Rights Watch is not aware of cases in which Jordan has transferred Syrians arrested for working illegally to the isolated Emirati Jordanian camp, with around 6,000 people, where some refugees work for a salary in a workshop. The United Arab Emirates-funded camp, also known as Muriyep al Fhoud, provides jobs for refugees willing to work, who receive monthly salaries. Keeping Refugees Occupied, *Jordan Times*, August 3, 2014, <http://www.jordantimes.com/opinion/editorial/keeping-refugees-occupied> (accessed January 13, 2016).

[265] Human Rights Watch interview, Mafraq, October 12, 2015.

[266] Human Rights Watch interview with Sanaa, Mafraq, October 13, 2015.

[267] Human Rights Watch interview with J., Amman, October 3, 2015.

[268] UNICEF, Education Under Fire: How Conflict in the Middle East is Depriving Children of Their Schooling, September 3, 2015, http://www.unicef.org/mena/Education_Under_Fire.pdf (accessed July 20, 2016), p.

[269] Human Rights Watch interviews with Hayat, Amman, October 5, 2015; Halima, Baqaa, October 8, 2015; Abeer (pseudonym), Zarqa, October 9, 2015; and Ali, Zarqa, October 9, 2015.

[270] Labor Ministry Secretary General Hamada Abu Nijmeh reportedly stated that Syrian workers without permits are not sent back to Syria because of the political and security situation JT, Around 200,000 Syrians illegally work in Jordan ministry, *Jordan Times*, June 20, 2015, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/around-200000-syrians-illegally-work-jordan-%E2%80%9494-ministry> (accessed August 02, 2016)

[271] ILO Regional Office for Arab States, The Impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on the Labour Market in Jordan: A preliminary analysis, 2014, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_242021.pdf (accessed August 4, 2016) ; Joint Agency, Right to a Future: Empowering refugees from Syria and host governments to face a long-term crisis, Joint Agency Briefing Paper, November 9, 2015, p. 11.

[272] Carrion (Chatham House), Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Confronting Difficult Truths, 2015, pp. 8-9.

[273] Ibid.

[274] The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis, February 4, 2016, <https://2c8kkt1ykog81j8k9p47oglb-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Supporting-Syria-the-Region-London-2016-Jordan-Statement.pdf> (accessed February 6, 2016), p. 2.

[275] Ibid.

[276] Ibid.; Council of the European Union, Decision 10882/16, July 12, 2016 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10882-2016-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed July 28, 2016).

[277] \$100 million from World Bank to create 100,000 Jordan jobs, *Daily Star*, March 28, 2016, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2016/Mar-28/344319-100-million-from-world-bank-to-create-100000-jordan-jobs.ashx> (accessed March 28, 2016).

[278] Human Rights Watch interviews with two foreign donor agency officials and humanitarian agency staff, Amman, April 19, 20 and 21, 2016.

[279] UNHCR, Frequently Asked Questions: Work Permits for Refugees in the Urban Environment in Jordan, April 14, 2016, <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=10686> (accessed August 3, 2016).

[280] ILO, Results of Focus Group Discussions on Work Permits with Syrian Refugees and Employers in the Agriculture, Construction & Retail Sectors in Jordan, April 2016, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/briefingnote/wcms_481312.pdf (accessed July 26, 2016), p. 4.

[281] Hannah Patchett, Why Jordans plan to integrate Syrian refugees into workforce has faltered, *Al-Monitor*, July 5, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/jordan-free-work-permits-syrian-refugees.html> (accessed August 3, 2016), citing Labor Ministry spokesman Mohammad Khatib.

[282] Human Rights Watch interview with Nasser (pseudonym), Mafrq, October 13.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Valenza and AlFayez (UNICEF), Running on Empty: The situation of Syrian children in host communities in Jordan, May 2016, p. 16.

[285] In 2013, according to one study, 30,000 Syrian children in Jordan were working, and the rate of child labor was four times higher among Syrians in Jordan than in Syria before 2011., Hani Hazaimh, Rising number of working Syrian children hinders efforts to combat child labour, *Jordan Times*, 11 June 2013, <https://business-humanrights.org/en/%E2%80%98rising-number-of-working-syrian-children-hinders-efforts-to-combat-child-labour%E2%80%99-jordan> (accessed August 3, 2016). A survey from 2015 found that 8 percent of Syrian refugee children in Jordan aged 9 to 15, and 37 percent of those aged 15 to 18, are working quadruple and double the rates for Jordanian children in the respective age groups. Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafrq, 2015, pp. 6-7.

[286] One study found 47 percent of Syrian families in Jordan depended on a child to earn household income. Child Protection and Gender Based Violence sub-working Group in Jordan, Interagency/UN Women Assessment of Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among urban Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on early marriage, 2013, cited in Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF), Access to Education for Syrian Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities: Joint Education Needs Assessment, March 2015, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_JENA_HC_March2015_.pdf (accessed August 2, 2016). An NGO study found 29 percent of Syrian households in Jordan rely on a child as their primary breadwinner. Human Rights Watch interview with international humanitarian NGO staff, Amman, October 5, 2015.

[287] ILO, Report of the rapid assessment on Child Labour in the Urban Informal Sector in three governorates of Jordan (Amman, Mafrq and Irbid), 2014, p. 31, cited in Save the Children and UNICEF, Small Hands, Heavy Burden: How the Syria conflict is driving more children into the workforce, July 2, 2015, <http://childreinfofryia.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CHILD-LABOUR.pdf> (accessed August 3, 2016), p. 2.

[288] Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafrq, 2015, p. 101.

[289] US Department of Labor, 2014 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Jordan, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ilab/reports/child-labor/findings/2014TDA/jordan.pdf> (accessed August 3, 2016).

[290] Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafrq, 2015, p. 107.

[291] UNICEF and Save the Children, Baseline Assessment of Child Labour among Syrian Refugees in Zaatari Refugee Camp Jordan, November 2014, http://www.unicef.org/jordan/ChildLabourAssessment_ZaatariCamp_2015.pdf (accessed August 3, 2016), pp. 67; ILO, Rapid assessment on child labour in the agricultural sector in Mafrq and the Jordan Valley, 2014, p. 52, cited in Save the Children and UNICEF, Small Hands, Heavy Burden: How the Syria conflict is driving more children into the workforce, July 2, 2015, p. 8.

[292] ILO Jordan, Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in the Agricultural Sector in Jordan/Mafrq and Jordan Valley, (Ghor) Jordanians and Syrians working children, November 2014, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/genericdocument/wcms_246206.pdf (accessed August 3, 2016), p. 28

[293] Save the Children and UNICEF, Small Hands, Heavy Burden: How the Syria conflict is driving more children into the workforce, July 2, 2015, pp. 4-5.

[294] Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF), Access to Education for Syrian Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities: Joint Education Needs Assessment, March 2015, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_JENA_HC_March2015_.pdf (accessed August 02, 2016), p. 13.

[295] Human Rights Watch interviews, Jordan, October 4-21, 2015.

[296] Jordanian Ministry of Education, Impact of Syria Crisis on Education in Jordan and Accelerating Access to Quality Formal Education for Syrian Refugee Children, January 2016, p. 13, copy on file with Human Rights Watch.

[297] US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Jordan: 2014 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/jordan.htm> (accessed February 2, 2016); Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafrq, 2015, p. 100 (about 14 per cent of Syrian boys aged of 15 to 18 are employed, compared to 8 per cent of Jordanian boys); UNICEF and Save the Children Jordan, Comprehensive Outreach Assessment on Education Needs of Syrians in Ghor and Irbid, 18 Feb 20 Mar 2013 (rates are five times higher for Syrian children), cited in Education Sector Working Group (UNICEF), Access to Education for Syrian Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities: Joint Education Needs Assessment, March 2015, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_JENA_HC_March2015_.pdf (accessed August 2, 2016).

[298] ILO, Report on the rapid assessment on child labour in the urban informal sector in three governorates of Jordan: Amman, Mafrq and Irbid, 2014, p. 40, cited in Save the Children and UNICEF, Small Hands, Heavy Burden: How the Syria conflict is driving more children into the workforce, July 2, 2015, p. 11.

[299] Sixty-two percent of Jordanian children who are seeking work are still in school, as opposed to 8 percent of Syrian children; of children who are working, 23 percent of Jordanians and only 3 percent of Syrians are in school. Stave and Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafrq, 2015, pp. 105-106. An ILO survey in the Jordan Valley and in Mafrq, areas with substantial agriculture, found in 2014 that 28 percent of working Jordanian children were able to attend school, compared with only 2.4 of working Syrian children. ILO Jordan, Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in the Agricultural Sector in Jordan/Mafrq and Jordan Valley, (Ghor) Jordanians and Syrians working children, November 2014, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/genericdocument/wcms_246206.pdf (accessed August 3, 2016), p. 35.

[300] Human Rights Watch interviews with NGO staff, Azraq al-Janoob, October 8, 2015; Shamsah, Mafrq, October 13, 2015; and NGO staff, Amman, October 13, 2015.

[301] Human Rights Watch interview with Yassir, tented settlement outside Mafrq, October 22, 2015.

[302] Ibid.

[303] Mercy Corps, *Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Irbid, North Jordan*, February 2014, p. 29, copy on file with Human Rights Watch.

[304] Human Rights Watch interview with Halima, Baqaa, October 8, 2015.

[305] Ibid.

[306] Human Rights Watch interview with Hiyam, Mafrq, October 13, 2015.

[307] In Zaatari camp, where one in five households are headed by women, a random survey of 518 children in 2014 found 179 were working. UNHCR, Zaatari Factsheet, December 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/FACTSHEET-ZaatariRefugeeCamp-December141215.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2015), p. 1; UNICEF and Save the Children, Baseline Assessment of Child Labour among Syrian Refugees in Zaatari Refugee Camp Jordan, November 2014, http://www.unicef.org/jordan/ChildLabourAssessment_ZaatariCamp_2015.pdf (accessed August 3, 2016). Women head one in three households in Azraq camp, but rates of child labor appear to be much lower, as it is difficult for any refugees, including children, to leave the isolated camp to find work. UNHCR, Azraq Factsheet, December 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/unhcr-jordan-factsheet-field-office-azraq-camp-december-2015> (accessed August 3, 2016), p. 2.

[308] Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmad and his mother Aisha, Salt, October 14, 2015.

[309] Human Rights Watch interviews, informal tented settlement, Mafrq, October 22, 2015.

[310] Human Rights Watch interview with Mahmud (pseudonym), tented settlement outside Mafrq, October 22, 2015.

[311] Human Rights Watch interview with Abeer (pseudonym), Zarqa, October 9, 2015.

[312] Jordanian Labour Law (with amendments), Law No. 08 of 2006, unofficial English translation, <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/45676/84920/F-1672011876/JOR45676%20Eng.pdf> (accessed February 4, 2016), arts. 73-76. See also Ministerial Order of 2011, concerning occupations that are dangerous or tiring or harmful to the health of youth [under 18], June 2011, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=90849&p_country=JOR&p_classification=04 (accessed February 4, 2016).

[313] Human Rights Watch interview with Mohamad (pseudonym), Mafrq, October 13, 2015.

[314] Jordanian Labour Law (with amendments), Law No. 08 of 2006, unofficial English translation, <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/45676/84920/F-1672011876/JOR45676%20Eng.pdf> (accessed February 4, 2016), arts. 73-76. See also Ministerial Order of 2011, concerning occupations that are dangerous or tiring or harmful to the health of youth [under 18], June 2011, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=90849&p_country=JOR&p_classification=04 (accessed February 4, 2016). The minimum age for hazardous work is 18 in both Jordan and Syria. US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Jordan: 2014 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 2014, <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/jordan.htm> (accessed February 2, 2016).

[315] Svein Erik Stave and Solveig Hillesund (ILO and Fafo), Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the governorates of Amman, Irbid and Mafrq, 2015, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_364162.pdf (accessed December 24, 2015), p. 107. Overall, Syrian children work regardless of their families former income and education level, unlike most working Jordanian children, who come from families in the bottom income quintile and in which the head of household has had few or no years of school. Ibid., p. 104. Of working children, 41 percent of Syrian 16 to 17-year-olds, and 49 percent of 12- to 15-year-olds work more than 60 hours per week.

[316] Human Rights Watch interview with Nejwa, Mokhayam Hossein, Amman, October 8, 2015.

[317] Ibid.

[318] Human Rights Watch interview with Shamsah, Mafrq, October 12, 2015.

[319] A UN report found that girls were working in 15 percent of on refugee households in which children worked, almost half of them as domestic workers. UN Women Inter-Agency Assessment, Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian Refugees in Jordan, With a Focus on Early Marriage, July 2013, <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/7/Report-web%20pdf.pdf> (accessed January 2, 2016), pp. 3637.

[320] Human Rights Watch interview with Brahim, Baqaa, October 8, 2015.

[321] Human Rights Watch interview with Duaa, Alaa, and Alia, Salt, October 14, 2015.

[322] Human Rights Watch interview with Hanan, October 8, 2015, and telephone interview, Baqaa, November 10, 2015.

[323] Ibid.

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