

OUTREACH ANALYSIS

Background: Since August 2012, ICMC, with funding from BPRM, has been conducting a comprehensive outreach to vulnerable Syrian refugees in northern Jordan (Al-Mafraq, Ramtha, Irbid and Zarqa, Amman). To date a total of 925 Syrian households have been interviewed, collecting data on the family overview, health conditions, economic situation, the situation of children, housing conditions and gaps in assistance.

Overview: The biographical data collected during the interviews reveal that the majority of Syrians are married (89%), though a significant number are widowed (6%) and overall, the educational level is low: 70% either have no formal education or did not continue their studies past the primary level (grades 1 -10). Only 4% completed further education at university or college. All households included in the outreach to date are Muslim. Of the 925 cases interviewed, 98% stated that they were unemployed. ICMC identified 14 households comprising only elderly people without relatives.



Figure 1: Syrian refugee family outside their home in Al-Mafraq

Increasing numbers of households are registered with UNHCR as compared with preliminary outreach findings from March to June 2012. As of 14 November, UNHCR had registered 88,026 Syrian refugees in Jordan, representing 28,119 households. Of the households included in ICMC's outreach, a total of 84% were registered with UNHCR. When asked specifically if they would like to return to Syria, in the eventuality that the situation improves, 98% expressed their desire to return home. A total of 63% left Syria due to the general insecurity, while 36% fled due to perceived specific threats to their family.

The vast majority (87%) has received assistance since their arrival to Jordan – 95% have received food assistance and a further 70% received basic NFIs. However, 123 cases claim they haven't received any assistance. Overwhelmingly, assistance received to date has been from local organisations and charities (83%) and UN agencies (43%). When asked about their urgent needs, respondents claimed that the assistance they have received is insufficient and said they are in desperate need specifically for rental assistance, winterisation assistance, help with sending the children to school (uniforms, transportation, books etc) and cash for food and bills.

Fifty-five per cent of Syrian refugees included in ICMC's outreach suffer from a health condition, including chronic illnesses (50%), physical disability (35%) and psycho-social disorders, including trauma.

Situation of Women and Children: The Syrian refugee population in Jordan is young, with approximately 54% of all Syrians registered with UNHCR under the age of 18 years. Of the 5,433 individuals represented in the 925 households included in ICMC's outreach, 3,065 (56%) are children under the age of 18 years. A total of 21% are under the age of six years. Altogether, ICMC identified 295 female-headed households - representing 32% of households included in the outreach to date. This correlates with UNHCR statistics which notes that 27% of registered Syrians are female-headed households, with women and children under 18 making up 73% of registrations with UNHCR.

When asked about specific needs for children, a total of 491 families (53%) underlined a need for baby milk and nappies. Given that not all households include children aged 0-3 years, this underlines the very real need for these items by nearly all families with young children.



Figure 2: Born in exile, three generations of women, Al-Mafraq

Of the households included in the outreach, 63% of children are not enrolled in school (although it should be noted that many households were interviewed before the start of the new school year). Furthermore, ICMC identified 27 orphans, seven unaccompanied minors, nine separated children and 16 children who were sent out to work. Many more families admitted that they did not want to send their older children to school as they were looking for jobs for them, but as yet couldn't find their children any work.

Housing / Shelter: ICMC has a permanent presence in northern Jordan (with a sub-office in Al-Mafraq) and has identified rental assistance as a foremost need for the majority of vulnerable Syrians in Jordan who don't live in the camp. This has also been underlined in ECHO's Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) for Syrian refugees, as well as various INGO assessments.

ICMC interviewed families who share houses with Jordan host families, or with other Syrian refugee families, live in cramped conditions with no privacy, or are forced to rent sub-standard accommodation at inflated prices (see figure 1). Some have even tried to return to UNHCR facilities as, unable to pay rent, are faced with eviction. Since the opening of Za'atri refugee camp in July 2012, new arrivals are being sheltered in the camp. However, the majority of refugees in Jordan still reside within the host community. Refugee camps are an option of last resort and it is essential to support the families within the local community wherever possible.

According to the outreach, 97% live in unfurnished accommodation. As seen during the home visits, these refugees live in bare rooms with only the basic household items, such as mattresses and blankets, pots and pans. Regarding housing conditions, 27% of respondents report that there are more than 8 occupants sharing the accommodation and 8% reported more than 12 residents. Some 12% of respondents live in a one-room accommodation and 52% live in two rooms. The overwhelming majority of households has access to a private bathroom and kitchen, and has water and electricity supply, and feel safe in their homes. However, housing conditions are not ideal and respondents complain of damp (23%) and the lack of privacy (14%).

Syrian Refugee Story

Rima* fled to Jordan with her four daughters in July 2012. In April her husband, a rebel fighter, was killed. A month later, her youngest daughter was born. Rima now heads a female-only household, struggling to make ends, raising a baby in exile and relying entirely on humanitarian assistance.

The family applied to register with UNHCR and have been given an appointment in February 2013. Until then, with no documents to prove they are Syrian refugees, the older daughters can't attend school.

Rima's main concern, however, is eldest daughter, Muna, who is eight months pregnant. Without papers she has no right to access the health facilities. And her husband is in detention in Syria. *"Every hour of every day I worry about him,"* she told ICMC. *"He doesn't know he will soon be a father."*

"Of course we want to return to Syria, it's our home," Rima told ICMC, trying to hold back her tears. *"But I don't know when it will be safe for us to go back. Until then what can we do? We have no money, I can't pay the rent. Soon we will have two babies in the house ... how will we keep warm this winter?"*

* Names have been changed

Rent and bills constitute a significant percentage of most families' expenditure, whereby 52% of respondents spend more than 101 JD / month in rent. Given that 32% of respondents have monthly expenses of between 101 – 300 JD /month, and a further 61% have monthly expenses of between 301 – 600 JD /month, rent represents a very significant percentage of the average refugees' expenditure. Meanwhile, 25% of households claim they have no income whatsoever and only 2% earn an income in Jordan: Refugees are relying on humanitarian assistance and meagre savings from Syria and women are selling their dowry gold to survive.



Figure 3: ICMC interviewing family in Al-Mafraq



Figure 4: Female-headed household in Al-Mafraq