



November 2014

## Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Urgent Issues and Recommendations

JOSYANN ABISAAB, SATCHIT BALSARI, ZEINA ALI SIAM,  
ARLAN FULLER, KATHLEEN HAMILL, JENNIFER LEANING

# SUMMARY

The violent conflict in Syria, which has caused the displacement of almost 11 million people to date, has developed into the most urgent humanitarian and security crisis now facing international policymakers and stakeholders. Refugee outpourings into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq – now totaling over 3 million – have severely strained humanitarian capacity. Policy gaps and insufficient funding gravely compromise the protection and well-being of refugee children and their families.

This policy brief, based on an FXB field investigation in Jordan in June 2014 and drawing on a prior FXB field investigation conducted in Lebanon in November 2013, presents an assessment of key problems and provides key recommendations to the policy community aimed at improving life conditions for the estimated 600,000 Syrian refugees now in Jordan.

## *Key problems faced by Syrian refugees in Jordan*

- Syrian refugees are denied legal permission to work in Jordan and cannot survive for long on dwindling donations from financially strapped humanitarian responders.
- School enrollment and attendance of refugee children is grossly insufficient. Additionally, in several parts of the country, refugees have limited or little access to quality primary health care and trauma and post-trauma care.
- Palestine refugees from Syria cannot legally enter Jordan and must go into hiding once they cross the border into safety, as they fear deportation.

## *Key recommendations to policymakers & stakeholders*

- Initiate work permissions in order to provide a modicum of livelihoods protection and family self-sufficiency for all Syrian refugees in Jordan.
- Remove major access barriers facing Syrian refugees in Jordan to education and health care.
- Halt at once the *refoulement* of Palestine refugees from Syria who have entered or are trying to enter Jordan seeking safety from the conflict.

## Discussion 1: Obstacles to building livelihoods and self-reliance

Self-reliance is one of the cornerstones of survival and community recovery from calamity or conflict. Yet most Syrian refugees in Jordan can barely meet their own basic needs. In the face of dire circumstances, Syrian refugees have negligible prospects for economic self-reliance, let alone livelihoods development.

The vast majority (80 percent) of Syrian refugees in Jordan are self-settled in urban and rural areas where they have only limited access to humanitarian assistance.

Because they are heavily restricted from working legally in Jordan, many self-settled refugees are compelled to work illegally in the informal sector while risking detention and deportation in the process.<sup>1</sup> Despite this considerable risk, Syrians comprise an estimated 8.4 percent of the workforce in the informal sector in the four governorates of Jordan most populated with refugees.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the significant influx of refugees into non-camp communities has increased the demand for housing and grossly inflated rent prices across urban and rural Jordan. In addition, the prices of food and essential

<sup>1</sup>Work permits in Jordan can cost more than JD 275 (US \$388) each and require a cumbersome application and renewal process involving formal sponsorship by an individual Jordanian employer. As a result, Syrian refugees rarely obtain work permits in Jordan; the process would also require them to forego their protected refugee status and the administrative basis for their legal residency as refugees in the country.

<sup>2</sup>“Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework for the Syria Crisis,” UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, May 2014, <http://syria.unocha.org/sites/default/files/CRSF%20-%20Background%20Document%20%20May%208.pdf>; and “Needs Assessment Review of the Impact of the Syrian Crisis on Jordan,” Host Community Support Platform, Government of Jordan’s Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and United Nations Development Program, Nov. 2013, <http://arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/Jordan%20Needs%20Assessment%20-%20November%202013.pdf>.

non-food items are becoming prohibitively expensive. For self-settled refugees, the growing cost of survival far exceeds minimal and unreliable assistance from relief organizations. As a result, Syrian refugees quickly exhaust their savings and cash assistance in order to pay for shelter, feed their families, and stay out of camps.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not these refugees have access to credit or remittances from friends, family, or landlords, such compounding expenses lead to steep indebtedness, which, in turn, breeds negative coping mechanisms. The impact on host communities has also been significant, with increased competition for food, water, work and rent.

Despite their pressing survival constraints, the Jordanian government is understandably reluctant to allow Syrian refugees to work legally, since it must also focus on the precarious livelihoods and insufficient work opportunities of its own citizens. But this critical humanitarian situation demands that labor restrictions be eased – if only temporarily – to ensure a basic level of survival for Syrian refugees in the immediate term. It is unacceptable for the government to threaten arrest or deportation of individual Syrian refugees simply for working to provide for their families and trying to achieve a minimal level of self-reliance.<sup>4</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIVELIHOODS

### GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN

- Amend labor policies to facilitate the efforts of Syrian refugees to obtain legal work in Jordan, and also:
  - ♦ Issue temporary work permits and short-term waivers freely to Syrian refugees.
  - ♦ Explore taxation policies toward Syrian workers that can create mutually beneficial outcomes for Jordanian and Syrian refugees alike.
  - ♦ Review all policies that would preclude working Syrian refugees from seeking UNHCR assistance, and instead develop a sliding scale where assistance received is inversely correlated with income generated.
- Expand and improve vocational training opportunities for Syrians and Jordanians in non-camp settings.
- Promote public and private sector initiatives aimed at creating employment opportunities for those trained.
- Extend the scope and enforcement of existing local labor laws in order to encompass refugee children in Jordan (including Palestine refugees from Syria) and to protect them from abuse, exploitation, and the worst forms of child labor.

### INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Support education, vocational training and the creation of jobs in Jordan for host communities and refugees.
- Support community-based initiatives with a particular focus on cohesion between the Jordanians and refugees.
- Provide an evidence-based economic argument to the Jordanian government demonstrating the advantage of formally integrating Syrian refugees into the workforce, even if on a non-permanent basis.

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- Urge authorities in Jordan to halt the current crackdown against Syrian refugees currently working in the country and instead issue short-term work permits and waivers freely for Syrian refugees and their employers.

<sup>3</sup>Refugees receive monthly food vouchers in the amount of JD 20 (US\$ 28.20) or JD 24 (US\$ 33.84) per person from the World Food Programme for use in designated markets.

<sup>4</sup>Syrian refugees are subject to arrest by Jordanian authorities if caught working in the country without a work permit issued by the Ministry of Labor; a significant number have been deported to Syria as a result.

## Discussion 2: Barriers impeding access to education and health care

The Jordanian government, United Nations agencies, and NGOs have made significant strides in accommodating and providing for the continuing and increasing flow of refugees into Jordan. Registration, cash disbursement, access to water, sanitation, food, shelter, schools, and clinics have all been provided, albeit in varying measure, to refugees living in camps and in urban settings. Yet pressing challenges remain for the adequate delivery of education and health care that particularly impact the wellbeing of children and families.

### 2.1 Education

Education, according to UNHCR, is a basic right for refugees, “vital to restoring hope and dignity to people driven from their homes.”<sup>5</sup> Yet virtually all Syrian refugee children in Jordan have suffered severe setbacks in their access to education since the outset of the crisis.<sup>6</sup> The Jordanian government, along with local and international NGOs, has tried to restore education for Syrian refugee children through several policies and initiatives.

Syrian refugee children may attend public schools – either within refugee camps or outside – as long as they have missed no more than three years of formal schooling. Yet only 23 percent of school-aged Syrian refugee children were enrolled in Jordan’s public schools in host communities during the academic year of 2012–2013, with just a slightly higher percentage of Syrian children registered for schools in camp settings during the same period.<sup>7</sup> To meet the currently high demand and that arising from projections of additional new refugee flows, the Jordanian government has introduced double shifts in existing schools, built new schools with the help of UN agencies, hired many new teachers, and launched multiple back-to-school campaigns.

Despite these efforts, the education received by Syrian refugee children is still compromised by myriad factors, including access, quality, discrimination, harassment,

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION

### GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN

- Ensure easy, safe, and affordable access to schools for all Syrian refugee children and provide them with materials needed to succeed in school.
- Increase support for informal learning opportunities, non-formal education and remedial education programs.
- Cease all discriminatory policies toward Palestine refugee children from Syria and allow them access to the same education services and public schools as other refugee children.
- Permit Syrian teachers in Jordan to teach Syrian refugee children in Jordan beyond their currently permitted role as assistant teachers.
- Enforce sanctions in cases of harassment or discriminatory attacks against any Syrian refugee child.

### INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Provide a significant increase in support to the Jordanian government to build and staff an adequate number of new schools.
- Fund more teacher training programs and vocational training programs for young adults that will encourage them to pursue their education.

### UNICEF

- Encourage officials within the Jordanian government to broaden the scope of formal, vocational, and non-formal education available to all Syrian children.
- Support the Jordanian government and humanitarian actors to increase the quality of education available to Syrian and Jordanian children.

affordability, and availability. According to UNHCR, only 44 percent of all Syrian refugee children in Jordan were enrolled in formal education at the outset of the 2013–2014 academic year.<sup>8</sup> While low rates of school attendance are cause for ongoing concern, UNICEF anticipates increased enrollment among Syrian refugees during the 2014–2015 school year.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>“A Basic Right for a Better Future,” UNHCR, n.d. Accessed July 11, 2014 at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cda.html>.

<sup>6</sup>“No Lost Generation Initiative – One Year Report,” UNICEF, Sept. 2014, <http://childrenofsyria.info/2014/09/24/no-lost-generation-initiative-one-year-on/>.

<sup>7</sup>“Syria Regional Response Plan – January to December 2013,” UNHCR, Dec. 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/syria-regional-response-plan-january-december-2013>.

<sup>8</sup>“The Future of Syria,” UNHCR, Dec. 2013. Accessed July 14, 2014 at <http://unhcr.org/FutureOfSyria/the-challenge-of-education.html>.

<sup>9</sup>“Syria Crisis Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report,” UNICEF. Accessed Nov. 1, 2014 at [http://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF\\_Syria\\_Crisis\\_Situation\\_Report\\_13Oct2014\\_.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Syria_Crisis_Situation_Report_13Oct2014_.pdf).

But even among those refugee children who do attend school, there is significant concern within their families that the quality of education is diminished due to the low levels of training and experience of newly hired teachers and reduced school hours. Additionally, the costs of school fees and materials are often out of reach for refugees, and transportation costs can be considerable, since many schools in urban areas cannot adequately absorb all of the children in their vicinity. There is also consensus among Syrian refugees that their children suffer from discriminatory attitudes and treatment en route to and upon arrival at school; the girls are particularly vulnerable.

These concerns often compel parents to keep their children at home or withdraw them from school entirely. Thus children living in urban areas are often confined in crowded apartments or restricted to their immediate locale. These impediments severely limit the possibilities for formal academic and educational progress.

## 2.2 Health care

In Jordan, as in all refugee settings, needs far exceed resources. The surging Syrian refugee population (now 600,000 individuals in a country of 6.3 million residents) has put extraordinary stress on the healthcare system. Although refugees are eligible to receive free primary health care in Jordan's public healthcare facilities, Syrian refugees continue to face difficulties in accessing health care.

During FXB Center interviews, refugees in camps complained about having limited access to quality health care, while many of the self-settled refugees stated that they did not know where they could seek care. Refugees in and out of camps reported difficulties in obtaining access to complex tertiary care such as cancer treatments or specialized surgeries. Many refugees had no follow-up in Jordan for their chronic ailments or access to regular medications resulting in interruption of treatment for asthma, diabetes and hypertension. A number of war-wounded stated that they had not received adequate trauma care, and had no access to post-operative rehabilitation. Refugees also expressed concern over delayed access to care because of the four-month waiting time for UNHCR registration renewal

and the loss of services including health care as they frequently move from one governorate to another. Refugees explained the extreme difficulty they face gaining access to public health centers outside of the governorate where they first registered in Jordan.

Additionally, access to essential vaccinations of children under five and availability of minimum essential maternal and child health care are two salient, life-threatening gaps in current services available to refugees in Jordan. Despite the nearly universal vaccination coverage for Jordanian children under age 5 reported by the World Health Organization,<sup>10</sup> very few Syrian refugee children in Jordan have completed their full immunization cycle.<sup>11</sup> Comprehensive measles and polio vaccination campaigns have reached close to 250,000 refugee children in Jordan. Yet only about 50,000 Syrian children have received the entire 10-vaccine program.<sup>12</sup> This marked gap in administration of the complete sequence of vaccinations to all Syrian refugee children under five constitutes a major public health hazard.

Another significant gap is secure access to adequate maternal health care. UNFPA and its partners provide a range of services to an increasing number of refugee women and girls every week: antenatal and postnatal care, family planning, safe delivery and other gynecological services, as well as health education and reproductive health awareness. In 2013 alone UNFPA provided reproductive health services to more than 67,000 Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan. The numbers are expected to be much higher for 2014.<sup>13</sup> Yet in FXB interviews conducted in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa governorates, refugee women indicated that they had difficulty accessing these services owing to a variety of factors that included simply being unaware of where and how to access the services, irregularities in their legal status, inability to pay for transport, scarcity of female gynecologists, and prohibitive costs when advanced, emergency, or private care was sought.

In addition, child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan is on the rise. While early marriage is culturally accepted in Syria and traditionally practiced in rural areas, the incidence has been steadily increasing among Syrian

*(Continued on page 7)*

<sup>10</sup>WHO Vaccine-Preventable Diseases: Monitoring System. 2014 Global Summary. Accessed Nov. 1, 2014 at [http://apps.who.int/immunization\\_monitoring/globalsummary/countries?countrycriteria%5Bcountry%5D%5B%5D=JOR&commit=OK](http://apps.who.int/immunization_monitoring/globalsummary/countries?countrycriteria%5Bcountry%5D%5B%5D=JOR&commit=OK).

<sup>11</sup>See footnote No. 9.

<sup>12</sup>"Impact of Syrian Refugees on Jordan's Health Sector." Presentation by Dr. Ahmad Abu Slaih, Ministry of Health, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, December 2013. Accessed Nov. 5, 2014 at [data.unhcr.org](http://data.unhcr.org).

<sup>13</sup>"UNFPA Response to Syrian Humanitarian Crisis in Jordan. Year 2013." Accessed Nov. 5, 2014 at [http://www.unfpa-jordan.org/images/stories/Publicaton\\_2014/UNFPA\\_Response\\_to\\_Syrianfinal.pdf](http://www.unfpa-jordan.org/images/stories/Publicaton_2014/UNFPA_Response_to_Syrianfinal.pdf).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE

### GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN

- Ensure that health personnel working in Jordan, whether licensed by the state or privileged by humanitarian status, work to establish policies and procedures to facilitate the implementation of country-wide vaccination campaigns for all refugee children under five years of age. Work with the international community in assisting and funding these comprehensive vaccination campaign procedures.
- Eliminate current restrictions so that Syrian refugees may obtain access to Ministry of Health public health facilities regardless of their governorate of registration.
- Require all hospitals of secondary rank or higher to admit and care for pregnant refugee women according to the highest standards practiced in the country. For emergency obstetric care, waive all administrative and financial barriers.
- Require UNHCR or humanitarian NGOs contracted by UNHCR to provide basic maternal health care to all refugee women requiring these services.
- Initiate a national healthcare strategy to provide for Jordan's growing refugee population. Strengthen the medical infrastructure in Jordan with a focus on quality primary health care by training more physicians, nurses and mid-level providers. Establish additional, well-equipped field hospitals at the Syrian-Jordanian border to care for trauma patients and to provide post-operative therapies.

### INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND NGOS

- Make it an urgent priority to raise funds for the Jordanian government, UNHCR, and humanitarian actors to support their implementation of basic maternal healthcare for pregnant refugee women, vaccination and care of children, and a system with fewer administrative and financial barriers to refugees needing health care. Take the minimum basic measures as described above.
- Allocate a portion of NGO resources to stocking essential medications for chronic conditions in local community centers and healthcare clinics in order to provide refugees with easy and regular access to the health care they need.
- Disseminate information and amplify outreach campaigns by NGOs via various communication channels to facilitate refugees' access to local and regional healthcare clinics and hospitals in all governorates in Jordan.
- Broaden awareness about the health hazards of early marriage and associated teen pregnancy by reaching out to refugee communities in camps, urban areas, and health clinics.

### UNHCR

- Work together with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to support Jordan's Ministry of Health in taking steps to monitor and improve the comprehensive coverage of routine vaccinations among all Syrian refugees.
- Implement policies to provide or ensure access to adequate maternal health services and secondary obstetrics care for all refugee women requiring these services, and direct UNHCR staff and humanitarian personnel under contract to follow these policies.
- Develop and implement policies to allow registered refugees to seek care in any approved public healthcare facility in Jordan. Do not restrict refugees' health care only to their governorate of registration.
- Streamline the UNHCR registration renewal process to avoid delays (which sometimes last up to four months) in access to health care for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

refugees since the beginning of the conflict in 2011.<sup>14</sup> In many instances, Syrian refugee girls under the age of 18 years have been pressured into marriage, some as early as 12 years old, in search of financial, physical, and livelihoods security for themselves and their families.<sup>15</sup> As a result, a significant number of Syrian refugee girls have experienced serious health risks – such as anemia, high blood pressure and preeclampsia, as well as life-threatening seizures – due to teen pregnancy. Furthermore, the increasing incidence of cesarean section, with its associated complications, as well as the emotional and psychological repercussions of early marriage, interruption of schooling, and vulnerability to domestic violence all represent significant health hazards for teenage Syrian refugee girls.

### Discussion 3: Profound insecurity for Palestine refugees from Syria

The vulnerabilities discussed above are multiplied manifold among Palestine refugees from Syria. This final section draws urgent attention to the alarming plight of Palestinian refugees from Syria who, because of the Jordanian government's refusal to allow them in, are forced to live in hiding within Jordan's borders, and are under the constant threat of *refoulement*. The international community's protest against the plight of the PRS has been conspicuously muted.

Nearly 270,000 of the approximately 540,000 Palestine refugees living in Syria have been displaced since the beginning of the conflict, and thousands have fled to Jordan. In early 2013, the Government of Jordan announced a policy of no-entry to Palestine refugees from Syria.<sup>16</sup> Despite this, the United Nations Relief

Works Agency (UNRWA) has thus far recorded 14,000 Palestine refugees from Syria who have sought UNRWA services in Jordan since March 2011. The actual number of Palestine refugees from Syria in Jordan is probably higher because many are afraid to identify themselves as Palestinian refugees due to the threat of deportation back to Syria by Jordanian authorities.

This existential insecurity means that Palestine refugee families from Syria are invariably forced to live in extreme isolation. Their children are often confined indoors, out of fear that any interaction with the outside world would risk discovery and the family's subsequent *refoulement*. They are also unable to request birth certificates for their newborns, which denies these children legal citizenship, passports, and travel documents. Further hardships arise: Palestinian-Jordanian women married to Palestinian men who are recent refugees from Syria encounter difficulty extending their legal status to their children. These children and families, therefore, may remain at risk of separation and deportation. Jordanian women who marry non-Jordanian husbands have traditionally faced a similar predicament in extending their legal status to their children.<sup>17</sup> However in January 2014, the Jordanian Government decided that the children and husbands of Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian nationals could claim civil rights in Jordan (but not citizenship) although this ministerial-level decision has yet to be fully implemented.

As another consequence of their precarious legal status, Palestine refugees from Syria are denied identification cards that would allow them to access services available to other refugees through humanitarian aid organizations and United Nations agencies. Palestinian members of mixed Syrian refugee families are also denied these essential documents. As a result, four out of every five Palestine refugees from Syria are wholly dependent on the limited services available through

<sup>14</sup>"A Study on Early Marriage in Jordan 2014," UNICEF, June 2014, [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/UNICEFJordan\\_EarlyMarriageStudy2014-email.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/UNICEFJordan_EarlyMarriageStudy2014-email.pdf).

<sup>15</sup>"Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian Refugees in Jordan, with a Focus on Early Marriage," UN Women, June 2013. <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/7/Report-web%20pdf.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup>After Jordan's prime minister, Abdullah Ensour, announced the government's official non-admission policy in early 2013, it was widely understood to reflect (1) the Jordanian Government's reluctance to alter the country's demographic balance or to increase Jordan's pre-existing Palestinian population and (2) the Jordanian Government's fear of becoming the long-term "alternative home" country for Palestinians. Nevertheless, Jordan's strict no-entry policy generally excludes Palestine refugees from Syria who have a Jordanian national number. Other exceptions to the no-entry policy occur sometimes for those Palestinians from Syria who (1) are eligible to receive a Jordanian national number, including those who possess a royal acquittal form issued after their ancestors' expulsion from Jordan due to the events of September 1970, and (2) have applied for political asylum through the Jordanian embassy in Syria.

<sup>17</sup>Younes, A. "Jordanian Women Who Marry Immigrants Denied Civil Rights." Accessed Nov. 5, 2014 at <http://fpif.org/jordanian-women-marry-immigrants-denied-civil-rights/>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA

### GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN

- Immediately cease the deportation and *refoulement* of Palestine refugees from Syria, whether from camps, the Cyber City detention facility, or elsewhere in Jordan.
- Reverse the discriminatory policy of non-entry to Palestine refugees from Syria.
- Allow all Palestine refugees from Syria to register as refugees in Jordan and to remain in the country legally. Recognize at once the same legitimate status and rights for all refugees from Syria.
- Provide Palestine refugees from Syria with the same access to public services, including health care and education, as other refugees from Syria.
- Provide Palestine refugees the same equal and safe access to legal documents afforded to non-Palestinian refugees from Syria, such as official birth registration and certificates.
- Allow Palestine refugees from Syria to have the same freedom of movement as any other refugee in Jordan.
- Provide support to establish a family reunification unit for Palestine refugees from Syria – possibly within UNRWA – dedicated to tracking, maintaining communication with, and reuniting family members between Syria and Jordan. Ensure that this would not compromise the safety of those Palestinians who have been blacklisted in Syria.

### INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Press upon the Jordanian government the importance of abiding by the obligations as described above, obligations that are enshrined in the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Jordan is signatory.
- Seek assurance that the Jordanian government will respect customary norms of *non-refoulement* and will respect the spirit of these norms as they are set out in the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.<sup>20</sup>

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- Exert diplomatic influence to ensure that the Government of Jordan does not deport or deny entry to Palestine refugees from Syria.
- Increase funding and support for UNRWA's recently established protection unit in Jordan to address the unique protection challenges facing Palestine refugees from Syria.

UNRWA which is already under severe financial constraints in Jordan.<sup>18</sup> The fear of deportation extends to Syrian refugee families with Palestinian refugee relatives in their midst; they are in many cases reluctant to approach UNHCR to seek humanitarian assistance or services.

In addition, Palestine refugees from Syria can only enroll in UNRWA schools, with no further recourse to education beyond the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Adolescents cannot pursue formal education or vocational training or work,

and are often confined to bleak hopelessness and despair as a result.

The predicament of Palestine refugees from Syria is intensified in places like Cyber City, an industrial complex in northern Jordan where the government has operated a closed refugee camp since 2012. Palestine refugees from Syria are held there in indefinite detention, under a constant and real threat of *refoulement*.<sup>19</sup> Refugees in Cyber City receive aid only through UNRWA and other agencies approved by Jordan's government. Palestine

<sup>18</sup> "Syria Regional Crisis Response January – December 2014 Mid-Year Review," UNRWA. [http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/syria\\_regional\\_crisis\\_response\\_midyear\\_review\\_2014.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/syria_regional_crisis_response_midyear_review_2014.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Palestine refugees from Syria may only leave Cyber City with government authorization and typically only if they need emergency medical care or if they are deported back to Syria. The Government of Jordan does allow individual refugees to leave the facility on occasion to visit family members outside the complex, though the duration and location of such visits are highly restricted and monitored.

<sup>20</sup> Jordan is neither signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor to its 1967 Protocol; however, the government has committed to protect and assist all refugees and asylum seekers in its 1998 Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR. See "2014 UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Jordan." Accessed Nov. 5, 2014 at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486566.html>.

refugee families detained in Cyber City report regular instances of *refoulement*, and numerous cases of attempted suicide among adolescents there have been reported.

These barriers and others have created fractures and distress within Palestine refugee families from Syria,

either due to those lost or separated during attempts to cross the border illegally, or through *refoulement*. Such separations have resulted in a significant number of female-headed households among refugee families in Jordan.

## CONCLUSION

The policy recommendations outlined in this brief derive from interviews with refugees and stakeholders conducted in Jordan by a team of FXB researchers during June of 2014. Interviews were conducted within refugee camp settings, self-settled areas, host communities, UN agencies, local, national, and international non-governmental organizations throughout the governorates of Mafrq, Irbid, Amman, and Zarqa. The main goal of this brief is to suggest ways of improving the survival conditions of Syrian refugee families and children and to alleviate the strain on Jordanian host communities as well. In complex and protracted humanitarian crises such as this one, survival is a challenge for refugees fleeing from violence and struggling to meet their basic needs.

While the Jordanian government has generously welcomed hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees to settle throughout Jordan, urgent improvements to numerous policies and practices relating specifically to *non-refoulement* and access to livelihoods, healthcare, and education are needed.

It is imperative to improve the conditions of Syrian refugees whether living in camps or non-camp areas and to improve the situation confronting Jordanian citizens, too. Both groups face increasingly dire living conditions in overstretched neighborhoods, schools, and healthcare facilities throughout the country. Ideally, these policy recommendations will serve to ensure the fastest possible response in the path to bettering the lives of hundreds of thousands of displaced Syrians and their host communities in Jordan.

### Correction

*An earlier version of this brief misquoted the number of women and girls that were beneficiaries of UNFPA reproductive health services. The figure of 11,000 in the previous version referred to services provided in the month of May 2014.*



The FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University is an interdisciplinary center that works to protect and promote the rights and wellbeing of children, adolescents, youth, and their families trapped in extreme circumstances throughout the world. The center pursues this goal by conducting and supporting research, advocacy, and targeted action.

Contact: 651 Huntington Avenue, FXB Building, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02115; 617-432-0656; [fxb.harvard.edu](http://fxb.harvard.edu)

