

# JORDAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2020





**Cover:** A baby boy going having a medical check-up by Islamic Relief doctors.

**Inside cover:** A girl wearing a facemask in a free medical clinic to support families during the pandemic.

# Message from the Country Director

Jordan has one of the highest numbers of refugees per capita in the world, and welcomes millions of people from countries including Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine, who are now living in camps and host communities. The country currently hosts 1.3 million Syrians, accounting for more than 10 per cent of Jordan's total population. This places huge pressures on education, health, housing and water.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated socioeconomic challenges for everyone, refugees and host communities alike. Over a third of Syrian refugees lost their source of income amidst the pandemic, leaving them struggling to pay rent or buy food. The strict ongoing lockdown has resulted in the Covid-19 crisis increasing poverty by around 38 per cent among Jordanians, and by 18 per cent among Syrian refugees.

Women, girls and other vulnerable groups are bearing the brunt of the situation. Over 50 per cent of adolescent girls reported they are doing more household chores as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown measures. Meanwhile, rates of gender-based violence continue to climb, with over 95 per cent of reported cases of domestic abuse targeting women and girls. Almost 90 per cent of perpetrators were husbands or male family members.

Conditions are deteriorating for both refugees and Jordanians, and needs are critical. Almost all refugees and over half of Jordanians report having to resort to measures such as child labour and early child marriage to cover their essential needs. With no end in sight to conflict in the region, donor fatigue and fewer funding opportunities are making themselves felt as international organisations phase out and close projects.

Islamic Relief remains committed to serving those in need in Jordan, providing emergency aid and helping them establish livelihoods so that they can increase their food security and reduce their dependence on aid.

Thank you to all our donors, partners and supporters who have made our humanitarian interventions possible in 2020, and please continue to support us as we remain by the sides of vulnerable people in Jordan.

**Abdelrahim Shawahneh**  
Country Director, Jordan





# Humanitarian needs in Jordan

Since 2011, Jordan has provided a place of safety for more than 1.3 million Syrians, including almost 665,000 refugees. Around 128,000 refugees live in camps, while the remainder have settled in urban and rural areas, primarily in the north and the capital, Amman.

With the Syria crisis in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, Jordan faces many challenges as it struggles to meet the increasing needs of refugees, as well as addressing the needs of its own vulnerable communities. This places critical pressure on the country's resources, with increased competition for access to education, health, housing, water and electricity.

## Number of Syrian refugees in Jordan registered with UNHCR

Governorate	Percentage of Syrian refugees	Total population
Amman	29.5%	195,626
Mafraq	24.9%	165,093
Irbid	20.6%	136,462
Zarqa	14.6%	97,153
Balqa	2.8%	18,284
Madaba	2.0%	13,087
Jarash	1.4%	9,363
Karak	1.3%	8,523
Maan	1.3%	8,399
Ajlun	1.0%	6,513
Aqaba	0.6%	3,718
Tafilah	0.3%	1,699

Jordanians feel the impact of the refugee crisis on their daily lives, particularly in communities who host a greater proportion of Syrian families. Consequently, pressure on local services, natural resources and the labour market for these communities is very high.

The Covid-19 pandemic in Jordan has seen negative consequences for the most vulnerable members of society. The first confirmed case of the virus was reported on 2 March 2020, and since then there have been almost half a million confirmed cases. The deteriorating socio-economic situation has led to reliance on measures such as child labour and child marriage, and cases of gender-based violence are increasing.

The pandemic has also seen fewer employment and livelihood opportunities, severely affecting refugees in particular, who are struggling to pay their rent. There has been a significant increase in evictions as a result, which is a serious protection concern.

An orphaned Palestinian girl living in Gaza Camp, Jordan.

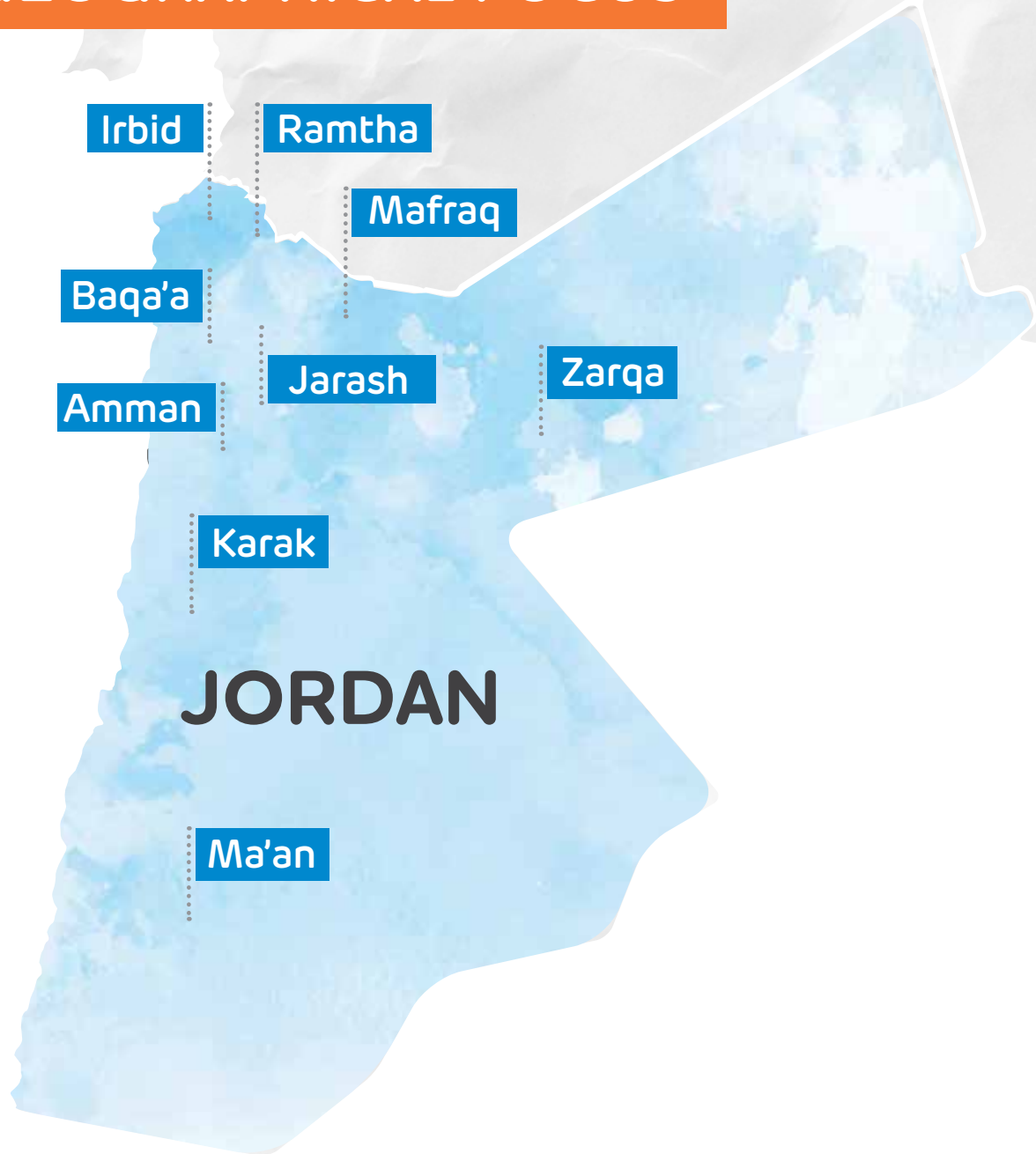


# ISLAMIC RELIEF'S INTERVENTIONS

## £4 MILLION

INVESTED IN HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING IN JORDAN IN 2020

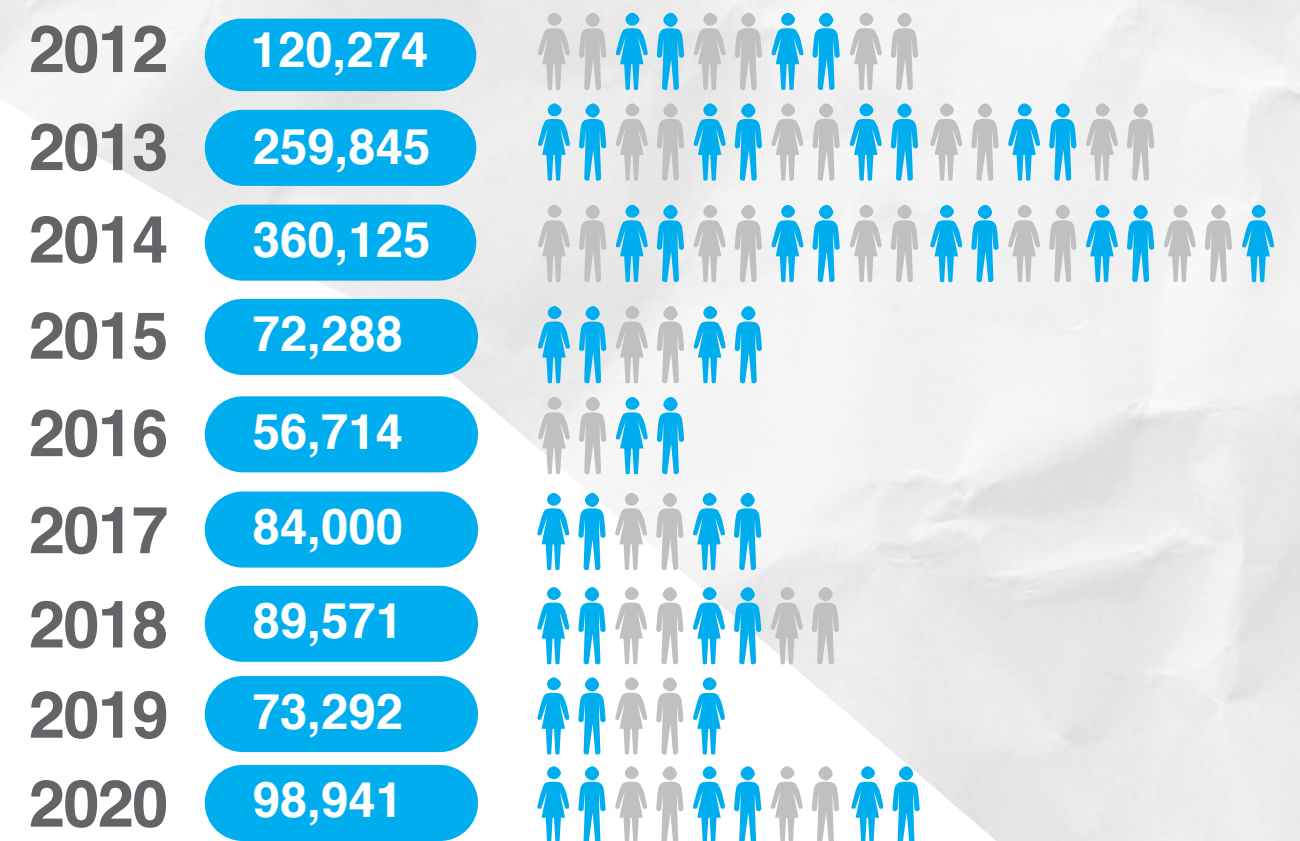
### GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS



### WHAT ARE WE DELIVERING?



### PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN JORDAN





# FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS



A Syrian baby girl carried by her mother to receive a Ramadan food pack at an Islamic Relief centre in Al Ramtha.

Due to high rates of poverty and unemployment, access to food has become increasingly difficult with many people struggling to meet their basic needs. There are limited income opportunities for Syrian refugees as they are prohibited from working legally. Many earn money through unskilled labour practised illegally, but wages are low and there are serious consequences if they are caught.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a direct effect on livelihoods and access to income, particularly for refugees and marginalised host communities. As the economy continues to deteriorate and livelihood prospects decline, more families will be driven into hunger.

In 2020, Islamic Relief supported 70 women in refugee and host communities with the tools and financial resources needed to help them start their own small businesses. As part of the programme, 72 families received cash to pay their rent, allowing them to afford adequate housing.

## “One change can change everything”

“I am a mother who is committed and likes to succeed in her life. Since I arrived in Jordan, I have faced many challenges. I lived in the refugee camp for five months. I did my best to secure schooling for my children, then started to look for a job,” says Afaf, 40.

“I tried hard to improve my income. I worked on farms to earn enough for a sewing machine and then worked from home, but at the beginning it was very difficult. Then people helped me to market my skills, and introduced me to Islamic Relief. I joined a vocational training programme for three months. It was very interesting and turned out to be the most important step in my life.

“I joined the resilience training for more than three months, and it taught me design, marketing, communication and financial management. I forgot all my suffering and my challenges. Whenever you have difficulties, dedication and commitment can help ease your struggles.



Afaf, Syrian refugee living in Jordan, has started her new project in Al Mafrq.

“Islamic Relief supported me with all the sewing equipment I need to run my project with a colleague. It was difficult at the beginning, but then by working together, we succeeded and started to generate an income. My partner – another woman working with me through the project – was really supportive and started to train other women in sewing.

“My advice for all women who dream of changing their situation is to work hard to achieve your goal and to be creative. And all of us are suffering, we need to overcome our challenges and start a new life and become successful. Every woman should have a goal to reach, no matter what obstacles she is facing.”



An older Palestinian woman from Gaza Camp receives fresh meat during our qurbani distribution in 2020.

## Ramadan and qurbani food distributions

Among Islamic Relief’s key programmes in Jordan are the Ramadan and qurbani programmes.

In 2020, Islamic Relief provided refugee families with food parcels, reaching 3,330 vulnerable families through Ramadan distributions while 6,331 families received fresh qurbani meat.



# SHELTER AND WINTER SURVIVAL

Winters in Jordan are cold – not just because of the drop in temperatures and the winter rains, but because refugees often live in homes that are poorly insulated, with unsealed windows, leaking roofs and damp walls covered with mould. Basement apartments flood in heavy rains, resulting in illness and destruction of household items such as blankets and mattresses. Our winter assistance package covers heating costs for a period of four months (November-February).

Islamic Relief Jordan provides winter and survival items for Syrian refugees and host communities, partnering with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). Together, we have supported Syrian refugees to protect themselves against the cold weather, prioritising the most vulnerable families. In 2020 we provided families with financial aid, giving them the choice of how best to spend this depending on their most pressing needs. In total, we have helped 2,238 Syrian refugees and 1,040 households in host communities to get through the difficult winter months.



A Syrian child happily receives a blanket as part of Islamic Relief winter survival programme.

For Shatha, Islamic Relief helped her family keep a roof over their heads. “It helped a lot – we could pay our rent and utility bills, which we couldn’t pay before. Thank you very much for your efforts in helping people in need,” she says.

During the 2019/2020 winter, our winter survival programme supported 11,962 vulnerable people.

The harsh winter season adds to the everyday challenges faced by Syrian refugees, including the struggle to find heating, clothing and medication. Most Syrians are forced into debt in order to meet their basic needs.

“I am getting threatened most of the time to move out of the house, because I am unable to pay my rent on time. What will happen to my children if we are forced to move out? We are freezing while we sit here, then what should we do if we find ourselves homeless? At least here there is a roof over our heads, but outside nothing will keep my children warm. Paying the rent is a nightmare for me – and for other families as well – but we don’t have a choice,” explains Amal, a Syrian refugee living in Ramtha, Jordan.



An Islamic Relief engineer checks the quality of construction works.

## Safe shelter for Palestinian refugees

Jerash camp was constructed in 1968 as an emergency camp for Palestinian refugees and those displaced by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Today, nearly 32,000 Palestinian refugees still call it home. The majority have little hope of earning an income, leaving them unable to repair or extend their shelters to accommodate their family’s basic needs. A survey conducted by the UN’s relief agency for Palestinian refugees found almost 80 per cent of families faced critical shelter issues in winter such as leaking roofs and flooding.

In 2020/21, Islamic Relief Jordan implemented a project to repair and improve shelters in Jerash, targeting vulnerable Palestinian refugee families living in substandard shelters. We repaired 15 shelters and built two new shelters to support the most vulnerable families. After the completion of building work, project staff educated families on good hygiene practices that will help stop the spread of Covid-19. Additionally, we distributed winter survival kits to families to help them to cope with harsh weather conditions. Each kit contained a gas heater, gas cylinder, two gas refill vouchers, blankets and clothes vouchers.



# EDUCATION FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for a comprehensive approach to education in Jordan. As schooling moved to home-based learning, it highlighted an extreme lack of access for disadvantaged children, exacerbating pre-existing gaps in access to education.

Refugees, children with disabilities, girls and children from poor households are among those most likely to be affected. Education systems must prioritise addressing learning losses and preventing dropouts, particularly among disadvantaged communities, as well as providing skills-based programmes for out-of-school children and preparing teachers for home-based learning.

Sufficient, predictable internet and/or telephone-based technology is needed for consistent access to learning. In order to achieve this style of learning, children need living environments that accommodate learning at home, as well as counselling and other forms of support.

Many families cannot cover the cost of education due to their increasingly fragile financial situation, particularly those living in northern and eastern Jordan. Younger children and girls are among those most likely to miss out on education, as travelling to school is a major concern for their parents. Children with disabilities also experience challenges due to physical and cultural barriers, as well as a lack of specialist staff to support their integration.

In 2020, Islamic Relief provided educational activities and psychosocial support to 597 of the most vulnerable children, in an effort to enhance inclusive access to education for all. Due to the lockdown that the Jordanian government imposed after the first Covid-19 cases, all international and national charities were asked to suspend any type of gatherings until further notice. However, Islamic Relief was able to continue a large amount of work remotely. For education projects, teachers used new methods to provide children with the materials they need through recording videos and sharing them with students via WhatsApp.

## Helping Aisha gain an education

For Aisha, a Syrian girl who fled to Jordan with her mother and four siblings, life has been a struggle, and she was forced to drop out of school.

"I want to be educated. Education is so important, especially for girls. We need it so much. How will girls shape their future without it?" says the 15-year old, who lives in Al Mafraq. The governorate is one of three areas that have been affected by the huge influx of Syrian refugees over the past nine years. The education sector has faced challenges in handling the increasing student numbers.



An Islamic Relief teacher conducts an online session with children during the Covid-19 outbreak.



An Islamic Relief teacher conducts an online session with children during the Covid-19 outbreak.

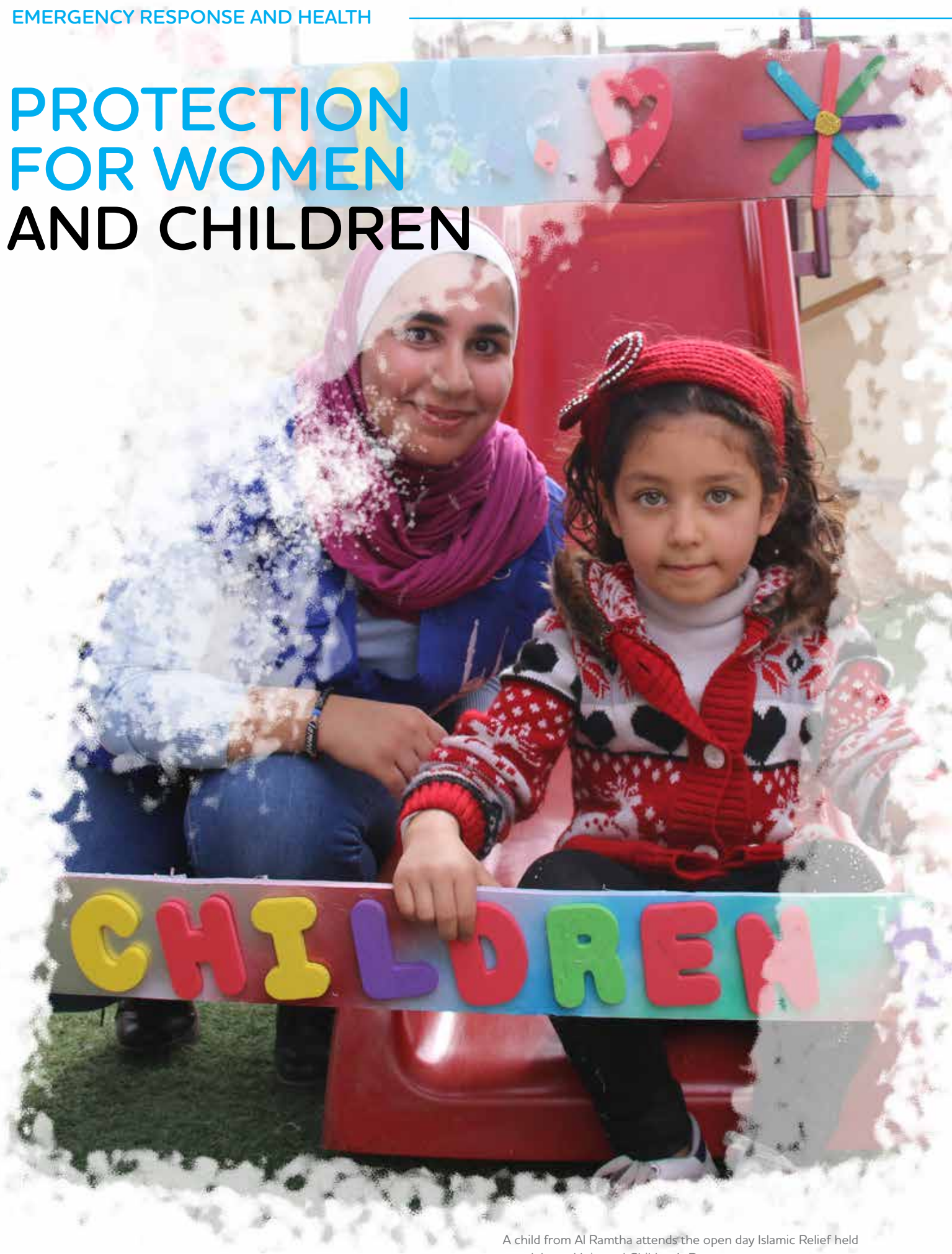
In response, Islamic Relief Jordan has implemented several educational projects for Syrian children in Al Mafraq. Through generous funding from Islamic Relief Mauritius, we were able to support 70 children with lessons in Arabic, English and Maths by qualified, specially trained teachers. Additionally, these children were enrolled on a psychosocial support programme to improve their social engagement.

This project has given Aisha a chance to stay in education. "I enjoyed my time at the Islamic Relief school. Everything was perfect. The classes were beneficial. Teachers were so kind to us, they used to repeat the lesson if anyone missed anything. The psychosocial sessions were an opportunity for me to spend time with other girls.

"I can't go out of our home, so this was the only way to see other girls. I really enjoyed the outside activities, especially painting and agriculture," says Aisha.



# PROTECTION FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN



A child from Al Ramtha attends the open day Islamic Relief held to celebrate Universal Children's Day.

Covid-19 has increased the challenges facing women in Jordan. Many are being overwhelmed by increased debts, overdue rent, a shortage of work opportunities, and higher living costs. Women and children are among the most vulnerable in such situations, especially refugee women and children, who are facing complex protection issues including psychological trauma, sexual and gender-based violence and a lack of access to services.

To exacerbate these issues, when the pandemic broke out, much of the support given to vulnerable women was provided remotely, leaving women and children without direct protection support.

In 2020, we provided 669 women and children with much-needed protection and psychosocial support, including assistance with gender-based violence issues and protection mechanisms. Around half of Syrian refugees in Jordan are children, and Islamic Relief is committed to providing them with remote protection and psychosocial support.

## Duwaina's story

Duwaina, a mother of five, travelled across Syria with her family looking for safety. But there was no safe place. She had no choice but to flee to Jordan.

"The last thing I can remember of Syria is the 13 days we spent inside our bathroom without food, water or electricity. Our house was located in the middle of a conflict area in Deraa. The fire was everywhere. No one could reach us for more than two weeks. We tried to eat less food, so the bread could last for days. I am sure my children will never forget those days. Wherever they go, those memories will keep chasing them," says Duwaina.

Duwaina's family, along with hundreds of thousands of Syrian families in Jordan, have experienced the consequences of this crisis on an unprecedented scale. They have lost their loved ones, relatives and homes. Duwaina's family has almost no income and her husband suffers from physical and mental health problems.

"We sold all our possessions to pay the rent and bills. We only can meet part of our food needs from the food voucher we receive as assistance. I fear for my children, my husband, my life. My children, like other children, want clothes, toys, books, pocket money, and I cannot afford this," she says.

One project has been running for the past five years. It provides psychosocial support for Syrian women and children in the north of Jordan. Through generous funding from Islamic Relief Canada, a total of 356 women and children have benefited.

The project aims to empower Syrian women and children, and to increase their social coherence. We have provided 194 children with a protected environment in which they can play, socialise, learn and express themselves. In addition, 162 women were equipped with basic skills, knowledge and attitudes to effectively engage them with their host communities.

"These sessions were useful, the idea of talking about your fears, expressing your feelings, and listening to others' stories is useful. Also, I have learnt a new skills such as soap-making and crochet. During the soap-making sessions, they provided me with essential materials to start my own project at home. And I did it! I sold some of my products to my neighbours," says Duwaina.





# EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND HEALTH



An Islamic Relief medic checks on the health condition of a patient after surgery.

The health sector in Jordan is under severe pressure from the high numbers of refugees, a changing population demographic and increasing rates of disease. As a result, 50 per cent of refugees have reported rising health costs and many are therefore unable to access healthcare.

In 2020, Islamic Relief Jordan provided medical support to 6,322 patients with kidney disease. We also aimed to increase access to healthcare for vulnerable families, ran a mobile health clinic, delivered health awareness sessions and provided hygiene kits amid the global pandemic.

Haj Mohammad, 73, is one of many Syrian refugees forced to flee their homes.

**“We would never have thought this would happen to us. We used to live in peace. We used to have enough food. But now everything has changed. We are family of five living in a small tent without any source of income. My family relies on food vouchers. The small amount of food we get is barely enough”,** says Haj Mohammad.

The challenges facing Haj Mohammad are made worse by bad health. **“I have suffered from kidney stones for two years, and my wife suffers the same problem. I can’t find words to describe the pain we used to feel. The pain kept us awake all night”,** he says.

In 2018, a sharp increase in medical costs for Syrian refugees prevented many from having treatment. Islamic Relief Jordan’s health team is on the ground providing healthcare services for Syrian refugees and families from host communities. Our two mobile clinics reach vulnerable people living in remote or rural areas who are unable to access medical facilities.

**“Doctors from Islamic Relief’s mobile clinic visited our camp one week ago. It was a surprise for us. Finally, we are able to get medical services without the need to travel long distances to reach the nearest medical centre. All people living here, especially children and older men and women, have received free medical check-ups and got the medication they need for their health condition,”** said Haj Mohammad.

We were also able to help Haj Mohammad and his wife by referring them to an Islamic Relief hospital in Irbid, where they both underwent surgery to remove their kidney stones. **“This was a gift from Allah. This pain has vanished forever!”**, says Haj Mohammad.



A boy has a medical check-up by an Islamic Relief doctor.



# COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

After just a few coronavirus cases appeared around the country, the government took extraordinary measures and immediately implemented strict emergency laws. The Jordan Armed Forces and police were deployed to patrol the streets, enforcing a strict curfew. All people living in Jordan are obliged to quarantine at home to help prevent the spread of the virus.

The precarious situation of Syrian refugees has been greatly worsened by restrictions on movement designed to halt the spread of the deadly virus. Many lost their jobs and income. In addition, 70 per cent of Syrian refugees indicated that they face challenges in accessing healthcare (UNDP, 2020). Many have been forced to resort to desperate measures such as early marriage and child labour.

In 2020, Islamic Relief was one of the main organisations providing cash to families to cover their basic needs amid the pandemic. Through emergency response projects funded by Islamic Relief Netherlands and Islamic Relief USA, Islamic Relief Jordan has supported 3,921 families. We also conducted awareness sessions for 932 people, showing them how to prevent the spread of the virus.

**“After the beginning of the lockdown, our situation got much worse”**

For Myyyasar, a widow struggling to get by in Al Baqaa camp, life got even harder once the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

“After the beginning of the lockdown, our situation got much worse. Due to schools closing, my daughter was stopped from working as a cleaner, while my son lost his job at a local restaurant. A huge number of households in this camp have been affected by this pandemic as most of them pay for their basic needs like food or accommodation with what they can earn that day”, she says.

Islamic Relief Jordan is a lifeline to families like Myyyasar's. They received cash assistance, which helped ease their hardship.

“I received a message to inform me that you have provided us with cash assistance as a support during the quarantine. That moment I raised my hands and asked Allah to reward you for your good deeds. Our situation is so bad. This cash assistance is very useful. I bought groceries for the house”, she says.

Through generous funding from Islamic Relief USA, we were able to ease the suffering of 1,520 families amidst the pandemic.

An Islamic Relief doctor conducts a consultation with a patient.



Myyyasar, a Palestinian refugee living in Al Baqaa camp, talks to an Islamic Relief colleague about her living conditions.



# ORPHAN SPONSORSHIP

Running since 1997, Islamic Relief Jordan's orphan sponsorship programme is one of our longest-running interventions. It supports 3,174 vulnerable children, giving their families a regular stipend toward their basic needs and schooling.

As much as possible, Islamic Relief aims to integrate orphans and their families into ongoing projects that can help support their psychological and financial wellbeing, and give them access to education, health, nutrition, protection and shelter as well as sustainable livelihoods to help them improve their lives.

In 2020, 2,338 orphan families received assistance through projects including; shelter rehabilitation, seasonal (Ramadan, qurbani and winter survival), education, Covid-19 emergency response and psychosocial support. Among these:

- 70 orphaned children received informal education.
- Nine orphan families have benefited from a shelter rehabilitation project.
- Nine widowed women and two orphans have been part of an urgent medical treatment for orphan families project.
- 1,747 orphan families received Covid-19 cash assistance.
- 803 orphans accessed support through our seasonal programmes.

We distributed clothes and vouchers during Eid for almost 650 children, and clothing for over 40 families in coordination with Clothes Bank. In Ramadan, we gave over 100 orphaned children food for iftar, clothes for Eid and psychosocial support.

There are currently 261 orphans awaiting sponsorship and support.

## “It is very hard to raise five children alone”

Fida is a widow, living with her five children in Al Baqaa Camp. She is the sole breadwinner for her family. **“It is very hard to raise five children alone. Tiredness makes it is hard for me to stand on my feet, and all because I want to provide a decent life for my children. Unless there is some extra money I can’t get the things that my children need,”** says Fida, 37.

All of Fida's children are sponsored by Islamic Relief USA. The family has also benefited from Islamic Relief's other projects such as qurbani, Ramadan and winter support. The last time Fida received sponsorship money she bought new tin sheets to patch the roof of their house.

“I bought it because last winter the ceiling was leaking water from many places and it was leaking above my son Ahmad's head”, she says.

Recently, she bought a washing machine and a refrigerator in installments.

**“Without this sponsorship I would not be able to improve the condition of our house, it's very beneficial for me and for my children. I was able to make a bedroom for my children and I also painted the house, little by little,”** says Fida.



Syrian children living in an informal tent settlement in Jordan celebrating their graduation ceremony.

## FUTURE PROGRAMMES

**Islamic Relief Jordan is determined to remain by the sides of vulnerable people. Our priorities for future programming are:**

- Ensuring provision of protection and psychosocial services for the most vulnerable groups, especially survivors of gender-based violence
- Enhancing access to education and supporting the current education system, especially for children who have dropped out of school
- Improving access to food support for vulnerable families
- Boosting access to primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare
- Increasing awareness of Covid-19 and other health issues
- Ensuring access to safe shelter, especially for Syrian and Palestinian refugees
- Empowering communities by establishing sustainable livelihoods programmes for refugees and vulnerable members of host communities.





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