

Jordan: CARE presses for greater support for Syrian refugees living in urban centers

Record influx of refugees in January/ Two years after the conflict started needs are increasing

Amman, February 7, 2013. After a record influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan during January, the global humanitarian organization CARE International is urging more support to those refugees seeking shelter in urban centers. “Several days in January saw up to 4,000 Syrians crossing into Jordan. While many transfer to temporary camps, many more head to the poorer suburbs of Amman, Mafraq or other towns where they have relatives or friends. Often, they spend all their assets on rent and household items. Without any income and hopes to go home any time soon, they are trapped in a twilight zone of poverty, traumatic memories and fear for their future”, says Kevin Fitzcharles, CARE Jordan’s Country Director.

The humanitarian funding pledged at last week’s donor conference in Kuwait City is a necessary step toward providing more assistance to affected people inside Syria and refugees in neighboring countries. “It’s important that this funding considers the needs of refugees who are not living in camps but are on their own in Jordanian cities and towns”, urges Fitzcharles. “They need money to pay for their living costs, including fuel and items to protect them from the winter cold, and many require psychosocial assistance to deal with the terrible violence they have seen or experienced.”

The refugee influx also has negative effects on poor Jordanian communities. “In some urban areas, we observed an increase in rent, which means that poor Jordanian families might not be able to afford apartments any more”, says Fitzcharles. Municipalities in host communities are stretched beyond their capacity to provide necessary social services to Syrians and Jordanians alike. “It is therefore extremely important to help Syrians build support within their host communities and instill a sense of integration to avoid potential tension and break the isolation of refugees. After working with Iraqi refugees for eight years, CARE knows that this is an aspect of refugee assistance that is strongly needed yet often overlooked.”

CARE Jordan has reached more than 20,000 impoverished Syrians, almost 4,000 families, with cash assistance to pay for basic living costs, such as rent, food and winter clothes. More than 2,200 heaters have been distributed to help people stay warm in the freezing winter. At the end of last year, CARE opened a refugee center in East Amman for Syrians to receive assistance and receive detailed information on how and where to access health and other social services. In the center, CARE volunteers who are refugees themselves assist organizing and preparing the distributions. At the same time, CARE and local partners assist Jordanian host communities with emergency supplies such as food, blankets, bed sheets and winter clothes.

About CARE: *Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty and providing lifesaving assistance in emergencies. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to help lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty. CARE has been working in Jordan since 1948. CARE Jordan has*

extensive experience working with refugees, providing livelihood training and opportunities, emergency cash assistance, information sharing and psychosocial support to Iraqi refugees since 2003.