



MIGRANTS REFUGEES

Migration Profile

JORDAN

A. Executive Summary

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a small country at the crossroads of the Holy Land which Pope Francis complimented in 2014 for its “generous welcome” of refugees fleeing crises in the Middle East. By 2019, 33% of its population were international migrants and refugees and Jordan ranked 4th in terms of ratio of refugees among the total population - to the exclusion of Palestinian refugees under UNRWA mandate. Jordan has been a country of important population movements be it through immigration (mainly from Syria and Iraq) or emigration (mainly to the Gulf States). Migrant workers in Jordan are mainly Egyptians employed in agriculture and construction, but there are also important vulnerable South and South-East Asian communities, in particular in the garment and domestic work sectors. Many of these migrants endure human trafficking or forced labor situations. Despite the fact that the many crises across the Middle East have created huge influxes of refugees in Jordan, the country has remained relatively stable. Since the 2016 EU-Jordan Compact, the country has implemented new policies which tend to better include Syrian refugees, and it has led to some positive results. However, legal gaps are considerable when it comes to non-Syrian refugees and non-Palestinian refugees - to the exception of Palestinian Refugees from Syria, Iraq and “ex-Gazans” who do not hold Jordanian citizenship - in addition to Christian Iraqis who remain highly vulnerable, in particular to human trafficking and to unfair work conditions as they can only work in illegal conditions. Jordan is not a party to the 1951 Convention on Refugees and has not signed the Global Compact on Refugees, but it has signed the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – though with several reservations. International organizations have been crucial to answering the refugee needs and many Catholic organizations act in favor of those who are set aside by the Jordanian law. The still ongoing COVID-19 crisis threatens the countries’ equilibrium and the mainly service-oriented economy. Unemployment rates have at least doubled since the start of the crisis and the already heavy dependency of the country on foreign aid has yet increased.

B. Country Profile

I. Basic information

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an ex-British mandate, independent since 1946, and it is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. It is located in the Northwest of Saudi Arabia, between Israel and Iraq, and it also shares a border with Syria and the West Bank. Its Chief of State is King Abdallah II and its Prime Minister Omar Al-Razzaz. By July 2020, the number of Jordan nationals was estimated to be 10.8 million. Before 2016, the high influx of refugees had been perceived and reacted to as threatening for the country's stability. With the EU-Jordan Compact in 2016, the government initiated a change in that perception and pledged to transform the situation into 'development opportunities.' In 2017, the IMF commended Jordan authorities for having maintained macroeconomic stability and reduced its budget deficit despite the added strain of the refugee influx on its economy and regional instability. But its equilibrium is now threatened by the COVID-19 crisis. Between the start of the sanitary crisis, around 2 March 2020, and 16 September 2020, the country has had 3,677 cases and 26 deaths. In mid-July, King Abdallah II declared that the pandemic was "under control". But despite the easing of the restriction measures, the mainly service-oriented Jordanian economy which is highly vulnerable to outside shocks is still suffering, in particular the tourism industry. Its economy is assessed to be the smallest in the Middle East, with insufficient supplies of water, oil and other natural resources, and is heavily dependent on imports as well as foreign aid. The IMF has given 1.3 billion US\$ to Jordan in assistance to structurally reform the economy while helping with the virus. The country faces very high rates of unemployment. In May 2020, the general administrator of the Latin Patriarchate declared that before the pandemic, the rate of unemployment in Jordan was 19% (39% range from 20 to 24 years old) and that it had doubled since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

II. International and Internal Migrants

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the total number of international migrants (forced migrants included) in Jordan by 2019 was 3,346,700 - 33% of the population. 97.2% of these international migrants were coming from the same SDG region (MENA region, without Iran). The medium age of these migrants was 21 years old, 49.7% being female. Among these international migrants, about 12.5% were non-forced migrants. As for the flow of migrants, in 2020, the net migration rate is 11.3 migrants for 1,000 people.

Most of the time, migrant workers are recruited in their country of origin by a highly organized network of recruitment agencies and subject to the *kafala* (meaning "warrant" in Arabic) system. It is a form of guardianship, or sponsorship system, that binds foreign workers to their local employers with very little protection, no safety net, the obligation to leave the country once their contract is over and which makes the annual renewal of each migrant's residence and work permits dependent of the goodwill of his or her employer. These migrants cannot change jobs or employers unless they become clandestine. The *kafala*

system is rather an ancient Arab customary practice than a formal work permit. They are therefore more vulnerable to the 'productivity injunction' as well as to ill-treatment.

By 2018, in most sectors of the economy, the maximal legal proportion of migrant workers authorized was 30% with a limited number of work permits for the enterprises. That proportion was much higher in domestic work, textile and agriculture sectors. Most of the agricultural workers in Jordan are from Egypt and are vulnerable to trafficking in persons (cf. part 5). In the garment industry, 76.5% of all Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) workers were migrants in 2017, sometimes even 90% in some places in 2018. In these two sectors, most of the migrant workers are from South and South East-Asia. Despite recent improvements, work conditions in the QIZ employed about 70,000 people in 2017 and have been extremely difficult. In addition to the fact that it is an "off-soil" economy – which is not integrated in the local economy – the migrant personnel, recruited through the *kafala* system faces many abuses from the non-migrant management personnel, regular surprise changes in the work objectives and a tendency to be maintained unintegrated in the Jordanian society by the enterprises. Some enterprises even created accommodation buildings to keep the migrants confined the nearest possible to the workplace. In these overcrowded and unsanitary buildings, migrants are forced to celibacy and children are unauthorized. Most of these migrants are paid the legal minimum. Despite the Syrian refugee influx and under allegations that the Asian workforce is "better trained" and "more productive" than the Jordanian workforce, enterprises pushed to increase the proportion of Asian migrant workers in that sector with the final objective to reduce the costs of production. QIZ migrant workers work a minimum of eight hours, sometimes twelve hours, a day, six days a week. In 2017, 70.6% of all workers in the textile sector were women. However, their situation has generally tended to improve. A unified contract for migrant workers (in 2015) and for refugees (in 2016) has been created to harmonize recruitment and employment policies for non-Jordanians, to ensure that they earn the same wages as Jordanians and that they are compensated for overtime work and transportation.

The 2020 US DOS TIP report states that in 2017, there were about 82,643 foreign female domestic workers in Jordan, mainly from Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and that they were highly vulnerable to forced labor (or abuses like underpaid work, excessively long work days, document confiscation, physical, sexual or mental abuse), namely due to isolation.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

Jordan is also a migrant-sending country. Even though there is no official database recording the number of Jordanian emigrants, data gathered by the EU Commission led to assess that there were about 744,000 Jordanian emigrants throughout the world (7.7% of Jordanian population) by the end of 2017. About 217,900 were in Saudi Arabia, 161,150 in the UAE, 74,150 in the USA, 55,300 in the Palestinian territories (among which most are Palestinians who obtained Jordan citizenship and returned to Palestinian territories), 54,923 in Koweit. The World Bank reported that, by 2019, about 10.3% of Jordan GDP was coming from personal remittances for Jordanian emigrants. The main motivations for outward migrant flows are the mismatch between the high professional aspirations of Jordanian skilled workers and the lack of adequate and rewarding opportunities in the national labor market.

Most of the jobs created in Jordan are low-skilled and low-paid. Although recent economic recession has reduced the trend, Jordanians have traditionally regarded the GCC countries as virtual extensions of the local labor market for skilled and experienced professionals, mainly engineers, lawyers, economists, bankers, IT specialists, teachers, doctors, nurses and technicians. A Section of Employment Offices and Workers Abroad, in the Jordanian Ministry of Labor, regulates and supervises the activities of private recruitment agencies sending Jordanian nationals abroad. The Jordanian government has signed bilateral labor agreements to regulate outward flows of migrants in Qatar (1997), Kuwait (2001) and UAE (2006). Regarding Jordanian forced migrants outside of Jordan, there were 2,397 refugees and 4,740 asylum seekers in 2019 registered with the UNHCR.

IV. Forced migration (internally displaced, asylum seekers and refugees)

In 2019, according to the UN DESA, the proportion of refugees among all foreign nationals was 87.5% in Jordan. It is estimated the refugee population to be: 657,287 (UN-registered) Syrians (figures from 2020) and, in 2019, 2,242,579 Palestinian, 67,266 Iraqis, 14,730 Yemenis and 6,116 Sudanese (CIA; UNHCR March 2020). In 2019, the UNHCR reported 51,306 asylum seekers.

Almost all of Palestine refugees in Jordan – which hosts the largest number of Palestine refugees of all UNRWA fields – have Jordanian citizenship. However, there are still some of them who do not have this. There are ten Palestinian refugee camps throughout the country, which accommodate nearly 370,000 refugees (18% of the country's total). In Jerash camp, where “ex-Gazans” (Palestinian refugees from Gaza, arrived after the 1967 war), who do not hold the Jordanian citizenship, are living, the poverty rate is at 53% and vulnerability levels are high. The total of “ex-Gazans” is about 166,076 people. Due to the Syrian crisis, about 17,500 Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) have sought assistance from UNRWA in Jordan. The majority of them are reported to suffer from abject poverty and live in a precarious legal status (85% of them are living under the poverty line), more than 90% of them are identified as vulnerable.

Between 2011 - in the wake of the Arab Spring - and June 2020, Jordan has become one of the major hosting countries for Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Eighty percent of the Syrian refugees are estimated to live in urban areas, where shelter price distortions in the demand and supply and competition for jobs has created tensions between refugees and host communities. The others live in camps, namely Azraq and Zaatari camps.

Since the EU-Jordan Compact signed in 2016 between Jordan and the community of international donors, the Jordan government tends to design policies which include refugees in its development objectives. Through the Compact, the government accepted to formalize the status of 200,000 Syrian workers, in the sectors allowed to migrant workers (mainly agriculture, construction, tourism and manufactured goods). By 2019, despite many measures, including the easing of the *kafala* system for Syrian workers, the Jordan Compact results were still not sufficient and the condition of refugee workers was worsening. The number of Syrians working in the formal sector was less than 60,000 – less than one third than what had been agreed – and in 2018, among the refugees working in the formal sector, few Syrians were registered with trade unions to protect their rights and entitlements. The

number of 134,000 work permits said to have been granted by the government up to December 2018 was taking into account all permits issued since 2016, including those that are not valid anymore. The 2020 US DOS TIP report even stated a number of only around 30,000 work permits still valid in 2019. Several factors have caused these insufficient results from the Jordan Compact: many refugees refused to be regularized as they want to keep receiving foreign aid and many are refusing the type of hard and poorly paid work proposed; employers do not want to face social security costs; but above all, the weak growth of the country led to little job creation. Another factor is the increased number of professions barred to non-Jordanians in October 2019 (from 11 to 39) with exceptions for Syrian enterprises of less than 10 workers. As a result, many Syrian refugees work in the informal sector and face insecure work conditions. Most of the Syrian refugees work in construction, manufacturing and retail. As a consequence of these mitigated results, 81% of the Syrian refugees who live outside camps in Jordan live below the poverty line (they struggle to cover their basic needs, such as food and shelter) according to the UN and 60% of Syrian refugees are unemployed.

Apart from labor concerns, several other positive results have stemmed from the recent trend in refugee-inclusive Jordanian policies towards Syrian refugees. Access to education has been expanded, with over 134,000 Syrian refugee children enrolled in public schools by September 2019. Still, around 40% of Syrian children remain out of school, a proportion that has been widely increased by the COVID-19 crisis despite the government and international organizations efforts to promote and deliver online or TV classes.

Based on Jordan government lists, the UNHCR reported that 28,889 Syrian refugees had voluntarily returned to Syria during 2019. However, most of the Syrians refugees are not planning to return home at the moment. Many of them are discouraged by the threat of imprisonment for men deserters, the mandatory military service and the fact that many families who had only come back to check the state of their properties in Syria found themselves stuck.

For Iraqi refugees, the situation is very different. They are legally considered as “guests”, not as refugees, which is a status allowing them to be respected and to remain in security, but which is a legal “grey zone”. That is why, without a clear legal status which defines their means of subsistence, they are not allowed to work legally and are therefore in a difficult situation. Iraqi Christians face severe integration challenges and experience miserable life conditions. Many of them were placed in temporary shelters provided by the Catholic Church. Although the war against ISIS's caliphate is over, thousands of Christian families from Iraq remain displaced in Jordan. All the Iraqi Christians do not have the chance to be enrolled in public schools as most are overcrowded with Syrian students. For the previous 3 years, their only chance was to study in the Catholic schools where they were supported by Caritas and its international affiliates. The integration model of Jordan is based on international funds and selective criteria such as religion. While Muslim migrants are somehow supported, Christian refugees face bigger challenges.

Right at the border with Syria, about 10,000 Syrian refugees, mainly women and children, are stranded in a ‘no-man’s land’ in an informal settlement called Rukban in Syria. The Jordanian authorities were reported to have deported dozens of Syrian refugees in that

camp between July and September 2020; according to the UNHCR and the Human Rights Watch, in recent years, the Jordanian government has tended to deport back to Syria some refugees due to security reasons and hundreds of refugees or asylum seekers without explanation. Amnesty International reported very high needs in humanitarian aid and medical support in that restricted area.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, accessing basic services and earning an income became very difficult for refugees outside camps. For refugees in camps, namely in Zaatari camp, the lockdown prevented people from working at all, meaning no income for the families, and had serious implications on the mental health and psychosocial status of refugees (+50% consultations in Zaatari and Azraq camps since the start of the crisis).

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

According to the US Department of State 2020 Trafficking in Person Report, trafficking victims in Jordan are primarily from South and Southeast Asia, East Africa, Egypt and Syria. Undocumented migrant workers are very vulnerable to human trafficking, mainly in the sectors of construction, agriculture, textiles, and domestic work, due to informal or very unstable work agreements (*kafala* system), and frequently changing employers. Some migrant workers face false promises of money or other benefits when recruited by the Jordanian recruitment agencies in their countries of origin. In the garment industry, some QIZ migrant workers face withheld or non-payment wages, confiscation of identity documents, restricted freedom of movement, unsafe living conditions, long hours without rest, isolation, and verbal and physical abuse. As for domestic workers, they remain most of the time excluded from the protections provided by labor laws. In 2018, an NGO reported a large increase in Ugandan trafficking victims following the implementation of a 2016 bilateral labor agreement between the Ugandan and the Jordanian governments.

As for migrant workers in the agriculture sector (mainly Egyptians), physical isolation and geographical dispersion of agricultural workers increases vulnerability to exploitative practices by employers and reduces the ability of labor inspectors to access farms.

Almost 70,000 children estimated to be in a situation of child labor, the majority of whom are boys working in the agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and wholesale and retail trade sectors. Child labor incidence is said to have increased with the coronavirus pandemic. An increasing proportion of these children are Syrian refugees working in the informal sector. In 2018, 3,000 children are estimated to live in the streets in Jordan, being highly vulnerable to HT. Refugees from Syria, Iraq, the Palestinian territories and other countries are highly vulnerable to trafficking in Jordan, especially women and children working illegally or informally. The government works to reduce Syrian refugees' vulnerability to trafficking through formalizing work under the Jordan Compact and increasing the number of children enrolled in public school. The government exclusion of refugees in most formal employment sectors, even more for non-Syrian and non-Palestinian refugees, lead to an increased vulnerability at work. In 2019, Iraqis refugees reported that they were frequently paid below-market wages and they do not benefit from the legal protection of the state.

The US TIP document also reports that Lebanese, North African and Eastern European women who have migrated to work in restaurants or nightclubs are said to be sex trafficked.

VI. National Legal framework

Jordan has ratified various international human rights treaties that protect migrant workers: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Forced Labor Convention of 1930, the Abolition of Forced Labor as well as the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Jordan ratified several ILO conventions without incorporating them into its labor code. It ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951 in 1966 and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958 in 1963. But the labor code does not prohibit discrimination or different remuneration for work of equal value. Jordan has not yet ratified several important instruments that address the issue of fair migration including: the 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labor Convention, the revised Migration for Employment Convention of 1949, the supplementary provisions of the Migrant Workers Convention of 1975, the Private Employment Agencies Convention of 1997, the Domestic Workers Convention of 2011, the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of 1990. Still, Jordan is considered to have some of the best legislation in the Middle East for migrant workers. In recent years Jordan passed laws that would protect the rights of migrant workers, like prohibiting forced labor, forced confinement, restrictions of freedom of movement, but also like limiting working hours and fining employers for withholding passports. In 2019, Jordan announced it would review its *kafala* system. As a result, in September, migrant domestic workers were granted permission to return home without paying a fine if they did not have valid permits. However, the law still restricts the rights of migrant workers to freedom of association. Even though NGOs reported that a bilateral labor agreement between the Jordanian and Philippine governments have strengthened protections and led to improved working conditions for philipino migrant workers, several bilateral labor agreements, including with Egypt and Uganda, which create more vulnerability to trafficking for migrant workers, are maintained. For instance, as agreed between Egypt and Jordan, Egyptians cannot leave Jordan without the permission of their employer (even if the employer has been convicted of trafficking crimes).

Although Jordan is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, its legal framework for refugees has been relatively responsive to the regional crises, for Palestinians and Syrians in particular. Among these adaptations, a loosening of the *kafala* system has been applied for Syrian refugees in the construction and agriculture sectors and several measures have been taken to better include them since the 2016 Jordan Compact. The major legal gaps concern non-Syrian and non-Palestinian (to the exception of the “ex-Gazans”, the PRS and the PRI) refugees, in particular Christian Iraqi refugees as they do not have official permissions to work in Jordan, so they have to work illegally. Such as the Palestine refugees who do not hold the Jordanian citizenship.

The legal and regulatory framework for the elimination of child labor is in place but has had limited impact as the monitoring and coordination mechanisms are still weak. Jordan has ratified the Minimum Age Convention of 1973, the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention of 1999 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Labor Law No. 8 (1996) prohibits the employment of children under 16 years of age for any type of work, and under 18 years for hazardous jobs. The National Law on the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings (2009) criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking, but penalties for sex trafficking offenses were not commensurate with penalties prescribed for other serious crimes. The US TIP document reports that many HT cases have been dealt with as breaches of labor law and not of anti-trafficking laws. Substantial resources were allocated to anti-trafficking training in 2019; the Ministry of Justice's Anti-Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan was finalized, and efforts were led by distributing anti-trafficking information to all foreign migrant workers entering Jordan and at inspected work sites. However, no new anti-TIP legal measures were taken in that period; the Public Security Directorate (PSD) and Ministry of Labor (MOL) joint Counter-Trafficking Unit, leading the anti-trafficking investigations, investigated almost half of the number of investigations of potential trafficking crimes of 2018. The government was also said to prefer settling potential cases of domestic servitude through mediation, rather than referring them for criminal prosecution.

VII. Main Actors

The State

The government of Jordan is a central actor and coordinator in dealing with Jordan's refugee situation. Since 2015, it has created the 'Jordan Response Plan' for the Syria Crisis to respond to the impact of the influx of Syrian refugees in Jordan. It declares focusing on targeting vulnerable individuals, irrespective of their nationality, and supporting the elaboration of adapted government structures. Since the start of the Syrian crisis, the government has made sure that a minimum of 30% of all international aid is destined to host communities, thus avoiding inter-community tensions. The *Jordanian Ministry of Social Development* is operating and funding a shelter dedicated to protecting human trafficking (HT) victims, with psycho-social care, medical treatment, legal assistance, vocational training, and specialized services for children.

International organisations

International organizations play a core role in supporting the government's efforts and providing assistance to migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and HT victims. *UNRWA* provides education, cash assistance, health services and psychosocial support to Palestinian refugees (mainly "ex-Gazans", PRS and the few Palestinian Refugee families from Iraq (PRI) in camps and outside camps. Although it is now severely underfunded, since the main donor (USA) stopped providing in 2018 *UNHCR* is running three main offices across the Kingdom (in Amman, Irbid and Mafraq) and works closely with the government and other organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and host communities affected by the refugee influx. *UNHCR* has also been coordinating with *UNDP* to address any specific vulnerability, ensure the access to critical services, food, healthcare, education, shelter, WASH services, livelihoods, protection and security for refugees and host

communities. At the time of the COVID-19, UNRWA scaled up its programs to help the refugees overcoming the economic downturn and UNHCR is working with the government to provide assistance to all refugees including health services and online education. ILO plays an important role in providing technical assistance to shape the regulatory framework around the access to the labor market for non-Jordanians. Several programs were launched with the ILO, such as Better Work Jordan or the Fairway Project to support migrant workers in the country and fight against child labor. IOM provides resettlement support, medical support, emergency response to the Syrian crisis and anti-human trafficking action with the Jordanian government.

The Catholic Church

Religious organizations and institutions have played a crucial role in dealing with the refugee influx in Jordan. The local Church is very involved in all services in support for refugees and migrants. Bishop Shomali, Latin Patriarch of Jordan, says, even if Catholic Christians are a minority in Jordan (1% Catholics, 1.2% other Christians and 97.2% Sunni Muslims), “through Catholic schools, Caritas and Catholic hospitals, their presence in the health, social and educational sectors is strong”. The ACOHL (Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land) which includes the six Catholic Churches present in Jordan, works on the pastoral care of migrants and refugees to foster openness to other cultures and mutual enrichment. Noting that the six Catholic rites present in Jordan are: Roman (Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem), Greek-Melkite (Archdioceses of Baniyas and of Petra and Philadelphia), Armenian (Patriarchal Exarchate of Jerusalem and Amman), Maronite (Patriarchal Exarchate of Jordan), Syriac Catholic (Patriarchal Exarchate of Jerusalem) and Chaldean (Territories dependent on the Patriarch of Jordan of the Chaldean Church). Coordinated under the ACOHL and Conference of the Latin Bishops of the Arab Regions.

Caritas Jordan works in close cooperation with other local and international organizations in providing shelter, education, humanitarian assistance, awareness-raising, counselling and health services to around 100,000 people – refugees and host communities – a year. Its head office is in Amman and it works mainly outside camps. Caritas holds 22 centers, with medical services, GP and dental clinics, child-friendly spaces, rooms for training and capacity building. It employs 450 people and has 3,000 volunteers across the country. It collaborates with UNHCR to provide health services and primary healthcare to Iraqis and all refugees who cannot access the national health system. CRS works with Caritas Jordan, providing institutional support and legal assistance to migrant workers in need of protection. More recently, CRS started defending migrant women rights with Jordanian NGOs and declared having served 144,631 people. *JRS Jordan* has helped 9,948 people through two programs to support urban refugees in Amman. The ‘Urban Refugee Support Program’ consists of a team of trained psychosocial case managers who visit the most vulnerable refugee families, providing accompaniment and medical referrals, and distributing cash assistance for basic needs. JRS Jordan also holds three higher education centers where refugees can take English courses, digital literacy and psychosocial case management. In 2019, *l’Oeuvre d’Orient* supported Syrian and Iraqi refugees with about 1% of its total budget, through a dispensary in Amman and school buses to bring out-of-school Iraqi children to a free ‘evening school’ in Marka. It also provides help to communities in

rural projects, namely in Karak. In 2019, the *Order of Malta* supported an Italian hospital in Karak with personnel, skill transfer and ensuring the coordination with the Bambino Gesù in Rome; it provided support to health centers in Syrian refugee camps with medical technology. In 2019, the *International Catholic Migration Commission* (ICMC) in Jordan provided cash assistance, vocational training, English and Arabic literacy courses, educational and recreational kits, hygiene kits, psychosocial support and life skills classes. ICMC Jordan created Child Friendly Spaces providing protection for 6,500 refugee children to play and develop safely. To face the COVID-19 situation, ICMC Jordan has proposed online classes and maintained psychosocial support projects through internet or phone calls. The *Near East Foundation Jordan* works to support refugees in providing non-food items, life skills and enterprise training. The *Latin Patriarchate* has offered education to refugee children, with the help of the *Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher*, Caritas Jordan and many Christian volunteers. It covered school fees for 1,100 people, transport for 745 people, books and uniforms for 1,100 people and life skills training courses for 450 students. It provided shelter for 220 Iraqi families and humanitarian assistance (cash, food, clothes, shelter, water, medicines, free medical visits, transportation) to 11,235 Iraqi families. In coordination with Talitha Kum and supported by the UISG, the network of *Yanabieh El-Amal* (Wells of Hope) was created to promote cooperation and alliance, through joint action and mutual trust, between Christian and Muslim women as part of an effort against Human Trafficking. Its objective is to create action plans for prevention, assistance and rehabilitation of people at risk of trafficking. At the time of the pandemic, the *Congregation for the Oriental Churches* has initiated an emergency fund for Jordan refugees through the ROACO (Assembly of organizations for Aid to the Eastern Churches).

Other organisations

Other organizations are present in Jordan such as: (MECC) *Middle East Council of Churches*, the Danish Refugee Council (multisectoral support for refugees), Care International (with a focus on poor women), World Vision (WASH projects), Relief international (emergency assistance and education), the Norwegian Refugee Council (shelter and education to Syrian refugees) but also the Mercy Corps, MSF, the International Rescue Committee, International Relief and Development (for Syrian and Iraqi refugees) and others, including many Muslim organizations such as the Islamic Relief and the Red Crescent.

VIII. Other Important Issues

Environmental issues are significant in Jordan, particularly due to limited natural freshwater resources, declining table water and desertification. Jordan is ranked 50 over 133 in the Global Climate Risk Index of 2020, as an average in the past 19 years. Regarding the number of fatalities due to climate and environment situations, it went from being the 122nd country to being the 38th country, due to situations such as droughts, periodic earthquakes or flash floods. Climate-related problems might represent a serious issue for vulnerable people throughout Jordan in the near future.

In 2018, the Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies of Jordan (RIIFS) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) issued a common statement urging for the protection and respect of human life, especially that of migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking.

RIIFS and PCID signed a Memorandum of Understanding and joined in saying that “migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking deserve special attention and care, to have their life and dignity safeguarded”.

Jordan voted in favor of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in December 2018, but with reservations on several points in the text, recalling it was not legally-binding. Jordan did not ratify the Global Compact on Refugees as it did not redefine the main principles of the 1951 Convention on Refugees including their status and the principle of non-refoulement.

September 2020

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