

# Sanctuary in the city?

## Urban displacement and vulnerability in Amman

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Map of Amman and environs



# Chapter 1

## Introduction and methodology

In recent decades, many cities and towns around the world have seen dramatic population growth, with significant inflows from rural areas. A prominent feature of this global trend of urbanisation is forced displacement triggered by armed conflict, violence and political instability and slow- and sudden-onset disasters – or a combination of these factors. Many of those forcibly displaced have moved to urban areas in search of greater security, including a degree of anonymity, better access to basic services and greater economic opportunities. Today, approximately half of the world's estimated 10.5 million refugees and at least four million internally displaced people (IDPs) are thought to live in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009a; Fielden, 2008).

While a number of studies in recent years have sought to analyse urban livelihoods and urban governance, there remains little understanding of how the displaced negotiate their way in the urban environment, their relationships with the host community and governance institutions, and what their specific vulnerabilities are compared with other urban poor. In addition, the role of humanitarian and development actors in supporting these populations, and the strategies and approaches that are best suited to address the assistance and protection needs of urban IDPs, are still poorly understood.

The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), in cooperation with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is carrying out a series of studies between 2010 and 2012 on urban displacement. This multi-year research project, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, will explore the phenomenon of displacement in the urban environment and the implications and challenges that it poses for humanitarian action. Through field research in eight urban centres in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, the research aims to consider the reality of life for displaced populations in urban areas, investigate the policy and operational challenges that confront national and international stakeholders when responding to the needs of urban IDPs and refugees, and offer recommendations for strengthening support to these populations.

This case study is part of this series, and part of a larger body of work undertaken by HPG on urbanisation including a DFID-funded research study on urbanisation in Sudan ('City Limits: Urbanisation and Vulnerability in Sudan', published in January 2011) and a study of urban refugees in Nairobi undertaken jointly by HPG and the International Rescue Committee in partnership with the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (Pavanello et al., 2010).

### 1.1 Objectives and methodology

The objectives of this case study are to:

- (1) deepen understanding of the drivers and history of displacement in Amman;
- (2) review policies and legal frameworks for refugees, including housing and land policies;
- (3) discuss the specific protection threats affecting displaced populations living in Amman and how they compare with other urban poor;
- (4) assess the specific vulnerabilities of the displaced particularly in relation to access to basic services, urban infrastructure and livelihood opportunities and how they compare with other urban poor; and
- (5) suggest potential entry points where the international aid community can best engage with displaced people living in Amman, and the implications for humanitarian and development programming in this regard.

This case study relies mainly on secondary sources on displaced populations, economic migrants and other urban poor living in Amman. The documents for this literature review were collected from English-language sources only. Published literature was identified through internet searches and a systematic search of the websites of organisations and international fora concerned with urban displacement and humanitarian action in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and elsewhere in the Middle East, such as the Institut français du Proche-Orient (IFPO), the Middle East Institute (MEI), the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS), the Project on Forced Displacement in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan, the Refugee Studies Centre, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the International Crisis Group and the Brookings Institution. The websites of UN agencies and NGOs working in Jordan were also searched. Government policies and other material available online were consulted. Press sources such as the BBC, Al-Jazeera and the *New York Times* were examined. Keywords used in the search of online documents include: urban displacement, urban vulnerability, urban poverty, Amman, Iraqi refugees, Jordan, Palestinian refugees, human rights, informal settlements, living conditions, services, livelihoods and urban growth.

The findings of secondary sources were also triangulated and complemented with interviews with representatives of international organisations, researchers, experts and government agencies during a one-week visit by the author to Amman.

## 1.2 Terminology

This study uses the definition of informal settlements articulated by UN-HABITAT (2006): '(i) residential areas where a group of housing units has been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim, or which they occupy illegally; (ii) unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations (unauthorised housing)'.

The term 'displaced' is used in this study to refer to the refugee caseload, particularly Iraqi refugees and Palestinians. The concept of displacement in Jordan does not mean the same as it does in Western legal and policy frameworks governing displacement issues, and refugees are hosted on the basis of Pan-Arab principles of bilateral support.

Palestinians and more recently Iraqis have been welcomed into Jordan on these terms. This study recognises that Palestinians have long lived in Jordan, and the great majority have long been granted *de facto* and *de jure* integration; as such their situation and needs are fundamentally different from those of Iraqi refugees and other refugee nationalities who have sought sanctuary in the country in recent years. Since no recent waves of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were identified in the secondary sources or in interviews with key informants, this case study focuses only on refugees. As of June 2011 there were also 1,952 UNHCR-registered non-Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers living in Jordan, from Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan (UNHCR, 2011). However, there is very little information about their lives and needs and they will not be discussed in this report.

# Chapter 2

## Internal displacement and urbanisation

### 2.1 History and drivers of displacement in Jordan

The first major influx of refugees into Jordan took place in 1948 immediately after the creation of the State of Israel, when around 100,000 Palestinians sought refuge in the country (UNRWA, 2011b). In 1967, the Six Day War between Israel and Syria, Egypt and Jordan triggered another influx of Palestinian refugees originating from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, many of whom had already been displaced in 1948. From Gaza, which in 1967 was under Egyptian administration, around 140,000 people fled to Jordan. From the West Bank, which at the time was under Jordanian administration, around 240,000 *naziheen* ('displaced persons' in Arabic) also took refuge in Jordan (*ibid.*). In addition, an unknown number of Palestinians migrated to Jordan in search of employment and investment opportunities. Today Jordan is host to the largest population of registered Palestinian refugees in the world, estimated at more than two million; according to many sources, more than half of the population is of Palestinian origin (El-Abed, 2004; UNRWA, 2011a and 2011b; Ryan, 2010).

Between the 1970s and the 1990s a substantial number of Jordanians, many of Palestinian origin, joined the migration of skilled Arabs to the booming economies of the Gulf (Al Quds, 2009). This migration was also linked to the events of Black September in 1970, when Palestinian militants, many recruited from the refugee camps of Jordan, attempted to overthrow King Hussein. In the aftermath the government implemented a policy to 'Jordanise' the public sector, which made it increasingly difficult for Jordanians of Palestinian descent to find employment in the military and other public sector jobs (de Bel Air, 2011). This was a contributing factor for the thousands who migrated to seek skilled employment in the Gulf (*ibid.*). At the end of the 1990–1991 Gulf War, Gulf countries and Kuwait in particular expelled around 300,000 migrants with Jordanian passports because of the pro-Iraqi stance of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat during the Gulf War (Chatelard, 2010; El-Abed, 2004). Upon their return, many took up residence in Amman.

Iraqis make up the second-largest group of refugees in the country. Jordan has long exerted a strong pull on Iraqis because of its political and economic stability and investment and livelihoods opportunities. There are also long-standing political and economic ties between Jordan and Iraq. The first wave of Iraqi refugees, in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, comprised well-educated professionals and opponents of the Iraqi regime (Chatelard, 2009). The Gulf War in the early 1990s and economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council triggered an outpouring of middle-class

Iraqi refugees; estimates have put the number of refugees entering Jordan during this period at between 200,000 and 300,000 (Chatelard, 2008a and 2009).

The initial wave of displacement following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was not large, and mainly comprised people who were either closely related to the ruling Ba'ath Party or from the middle and upper class, many from Baghdad (Chatelard, 2009; Al Khalidi et al., 2007). An unprecedented number of luxury cars with Baghdad number-plates were reportedly seen on the streets of Amman after 2003, and the Iraqi elite enjoyed a lavish lifestyle in the capital. In the words of one respondent, in this period it seemed that 'the whole of the Baghdad upper class had moved to Amman'. A second, more substantial wave of Iraqi refugees occurred in 2006, in the aftermath of the dramatic escalation in sectarian violence that followed the bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque. This wave comprised middle class and poor urban Iraqis. Many took up residence in Amman, in middle-income neighbourhoods, informal areas and Palestinian refugee camps. Today the influx of Iraqis has largely stabilised, with new arrivals more-or-less offset by resettlement departures (UN, 2010).

Jordan has also long been a key destination for unskilled migrant workers. Around 290,000 foreign migrant workers are registered with the Jordanian Labour Ministry, and thousands more are thought to be working illegally. The great majority of foreign migrants originate from Egypt and from Asian countries. Women from South Asia are employed as domestic workers (David, 2007; Olwan, 2007). There is limited information about the living conditions of these foreign migrants, or their characteristics and specific needs and vulnerabilities.

### 2.2 Displacement and urban growth in Amman

Jordan is a markedly urbanised country: nearly 83% of the population live in urban areas, and up to 71% live in the capital (UNICEF, 2007). Amman is Jordan's primary city, and the economic, political and social centre of the country. Growth over the past century has taken place in bursts, largely driven by recurrent influxes of migrants from neighbouring countries.<sup>1</sup> As one respondent put it, 'the people of Amman have become used to the fact that every 10–15 years the city receives a wave of migrants'.

<sup>1</sup> Asian men are employed mainly in industry. In 2001, the majority of workers in Jordan's 12 Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) were Jordanian (64%). By April 2006, this had halved to 33%, with the rest made up of migrants from Asian countries, including Bangladesh (25%), China (18%), Sri Lanka (17%) and India (7%) (Schechla et al., 2008).

In the early twentieth century Amman was a small village of around 300 families (GAM, 2008). When Emir Abdullah I Bin Al Hussein declared it the capital of the newly established state of Trans-Jordan in 1921, Amman began to acquire economic and political relevance (Potter et al., 2009). In 1921 Amman's population was estimated at around 5,000 (ESCWA, 2005); on the eve of the 1948 Arab–Israeli war it had grown to around 60,000 (ESCWA, 2005; GAM, 2008). The two major influxes of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and 1967 prompted a huge population increase in a short space of time (GAM, 2008; Potter et al., 2009). From 1948 and over the course of the following two decades around 240,000 refugees settled in Amman, largely in the Al-Hussein and Al-Wehdat refugee camps (ESCWA, 2005; Potter et al., 2009). During these years Amman also attracted an unknown number of economic migrants from Palestine and rural Jordan. By 1987 the city was home to around a million people (GAM, 2008). The latest official figures put the population of the capital at 2.2 million (*ibid.*). Amman has also witnessed dramatic spatial expansion; Greater Amman more than tripled between the late 1980s and the late 2000s, from 532 sq km to 1,662 sq km (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010).

Amman's migrants have made a substantial contribution to the city's development. In the late 1960s it became the centre of investment and savings for wealthy Palestinians from the West Bank (Abu Odeh, 1998, in El-Abed, 2006a). Jordanians expelled from the Gulf in the 1990s returned with considerable savings, sparking a real estate boom whose effects lasted several years (ECWA, 2005). Iraqi migrants have also injected significant resources into the economy, and well-educated professionals, such as doctors and university teachers, have made positive contributions to city life.

### 2.2.1 Settlement patterns

Settlement patterns in Amman follow strict socio-economic lines, with wealthy neighbourhoods concentrated in the western areas of the city and poor neighbourhoods in the east. There are marked differences in building structures and infrastructure between east and west Amman.

The wealthy areas of west Amman extend in a wedge-like pattern from the original affluent quarter of the central city up to cooler areas in the hills that surround the capital (Potter et al., 2009: 84). Wealthy neighbourhoods boast excellent infrastructure, with large and luxurious apartment blocks, houses and villas. Residents of west Amman constitute the country's elite, comprising Jordanians, many of Palestinian origin, and rich expatriates. In addition, a number of respondents highlighted that many better-off Iraqis who arrived in Jordan after 2003 have taken up residence in these neighbourhoods.

East Amman hosts low-income and informal settlements and Palestinian refugee camps. It has long been home

to middle-class and poor Jordanians, the vast majority of Palestinian origin, as well as acting as a reception area for low-income foreign economic migrants, especially Egyptians and, more recently, for the poorest segments of the Iraqi refugee population. Unlike the squalid and highly precarious living conditions of many slums in the global South, dwellings in east Amman are permanent structures and enjoy relatively good access to basic services. Nonetheless these are overcrowded areas, with narrow side alleys, poor infrastructure and dwellings often built with substandard materials (Ababsa, 2010).

Over the decades, the Palestinian refugee camps of Amman – Al-Hussein, Al-Wehdat and Al-Baq'a<sup>2</sup> – have become surrounded by low-income neighborhoods and today there is no major visible difference between these camps and the informal settlements around them (UNRWA, 2011b). Residents of the original camps largely comprised families from poor rural backgrounds, who settled in specific camps and streets with relatives from the same village in Palestine. Today this clustering settlement pattern is still found in the camps of Amman and other cities. The Gaza camp in Jerash, for example, mainly hosts Palestinians of Gazan origin; the Al-Zarqa camp has largely been home to Palestinians who were displaced in 1948 from the cities of Jaffa and Haifa and nearby villages.

As in Damascus (Haysom and Pavanello, 2011), in recent decades more and more Palestinian families have quit the refugee camps to take up residence in other neighbourhoods of the city, mainly because their upward socio-economic mobility has meant that they can afford better-quality housing. According to UNRWA only around 17% of Palestinian refugees living in Jordan are currently residing in camps (UNRWA, 2011b). Meanwhile other population groups have moved in, including Egyptians and Iraqis attracted by cheap rents. Even so, a number of respondents believed that the majority of camp dwellers were still of Palestinian origin.

The great majority of Iraqi refugees in Jordan are in Amman, though there are also Iraqi refugees in the cities of Al-Zarqa, Irbid and Mafraq (UNHCR, 2011c). The settlement pattern of Iraqi refugees in Jordan is largely determined by their financial means and social status (Chatelard, 2011 and 2008a). Broadly speaking, upper-class Iraqis have taken up residence in the wealthier areas of Amman, while the less affluent and the poorest have clustered in east Amman. According to interviewees, the neighbourhood of North Hashemi has a particularly high concentration of poor Iraqi refugees, followed by Ashrafieh, Hay Nazal, Hay Nuzha, Mahatta, Abu Alanda, and Al-Hussein and Al-Wehdat camps.

<sup>2</sup> Located 20km north of Amman, the Al-Baq'a camp was set up in 1968 to accommodate refugees from Palestine and displaced people who left the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a result of the 1967 Arab–Israeli war (UNRWA, 2011b). Al-Hussein and Al-Wehdat camps are located in central Amman.



### 2.2.3 *Estimates of Iraqi refugees living in Amman*

The number of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan is disputed. Before 2007 official estimates had put their total number at between 750,000 and one million (Fafo, 2007). In 2007 the Jordanian government commissioned the Norwegian research institute Fafo to undertake a survey to estimate the size and characteristics of the Iraqi refugee population. The final report stated that 'the Jordanian government's technical team ... has concluded that the number of Iraqis in Jordan is estimated at 450,000–500,000' (Fafo, 2007: 8). A number of studies have raised doubts about the accuracy of

this figure (Chatelard, 2008b; Seeley, 2010; GAO, 2009). As of June 2011 32,675 Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR in Jordan (UNHCR, 2011), which the agency believes accounts for the great majority of vulnerable Iraqis (Chatelard, 2011). A number of representatives of international organisations noted that, since refugees that register with UNHCR are mainly the most vulnerable and neediest sections of the population, and particularly those interested in resettlement, Iraqis belonging to the middle and upper classes, or low-class Iraqis not interested in resettlement, are not included.



# Chapter 3

## Legal and policy frameworks

### 3.1 Legal frameworks for human rights protection

Jordan has acceded to most of the core international human rights treaties including the International Bill of Rights,<sup>3</sup> the Convention Against Torture (CAT), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPD). Jordan has also ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (HCR, 2008).

The Jordanian Constitution of 1952 is in line with international human right standards (HCR, 2009). The Constitution states that 'Jordanians shall be equal before the law' (GoJ, Article 6, 1952), and as such provides protection against discrimination on the basis of race, language, religion, sex or political opinion (HCR, 2009). In addition, personal and religious freedoms, the freedom of movement, of opinion and expression, the freedom to form political parties, the right to vote and freedom of association and assembly are all guaranteed by the Constitution (*ibid.*).

The government has publicly embraced democratic reforms (HCR, 2009), and Jordan has not seen the kind of sweeping protests taking place in many of its neighbours. The country is a constitutional monarchy, with legislative and executive powers concentrated in the hands of the King. Although the right to elect parliamentary and municipal representatives is guaranteed, citizens' power to substantially affect decision-making is limited, especially for Jordanians of Palestinian descent. The right to a fair trial is compromised by the long-standing practice of using state security courts, created by Law no. 17/1959 to deal with specific types of crime, including crimes against state security (AHDR, 2009). In 2007 the UN Special Rapporteur on torture noted that torture and ill-treatment, particularly in the course of routine criminal investigations and to extract intelligence information, remained a cause for concern (HCR, 2007).

### 3.2 Legal and policy frameworks for refugees

The protracted nature of Palestinian displacement has been hugely influential in shaping the attitude of governments in the region towards refugees. Fears that adhering to international refugee legislation could lead other (i.e. non-Palestinian)

refugees to settle in Jordan indefinitely, national security concerns and pressure on natural resources and public services have combined to make Jordan wary of adopting international legislation on refugees (Barnes, 2009). Jordan is not party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (HCR, 2008). The country also lacks domestic laws to regulate and govern refugee affairs (Zaiotti, 2006; RULAC, 2011; Barnes, 2009).

#### 3.2.1 Jordanians of Palestinian descent and ex-Gazans

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Jordan differs substantially from that of their counterparts in neighbouring countries. Except for refugees displaced from Gaza in 1967 (ex-Gazans), the great majority of Palestinian refugees have been granted full Jordanian citizenship rights and are regarded as Jordanians for all legal purposes, with rights comparable to native Jordanians.<sup>4</sup>

On their arrival in Jordan in 1967, refugees from Gaza were given temporary Jordanian passports, but were not granted Jordanian nationality (El-Abed, 2004). Today, more than 40 years after their displacement, ex-Gazans and their descendants remain temporary residents. They hold temporary passports, which are essentially residency permits that must be renewed every two years at the discretion of the Jordanian authorities, and do not have a national number (*raqam watani*)<sup>5</sup> (*ibid.*).

In recent years a number of Jordanians of Palestinian origin have lost their citizenship and many may be at risk. There is however limited information about the extent of this issue and its impact on the lives of affected people.

In 1983 the Jordanian authorities introduced a system of travel cards for Jordanians of Palestinian origin who had roots and business ties in the West Bank: those who habitually resided in the West Bank were issued a green card, and West Bankers who had moved to the former East Bank (currently Jordanian territory), but still had family or business ties in

<sup>4</sup> The 1954 Jordanian Citizenship Law granted Palestinians resident in the West Bank in 1949 or thereafter full Jordanian nationality, following Jordan's incorporation of the West Bank in April 1950. In 1967, with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Jordan lost control over the area, though it maintained administrative and legal ties with the West Bank and continued to treat refugees from there as Jordanian nationals (HRW, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> The 'national number' or *raqam watani* was introduced in 1992. It is a civil registration number that is granted by the state at birth or upon naturalisation; this number is recorded on national ID cards and on the family registration books which are issued only to citizens (El-Abed, 2004). Anyone who does not possess a national number is not considered a Jordanian citizen.

<sup>3</sup> The International Bill of Rights includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

the West Bank, were issued a yellow card (HRW, 2010). Over the years this created a system of tiers of citizenship rights, affecting green card holders first<sup>6</sup> and, more recently, yellow card holders. Between 2004 and 2008 an estimated 2,700 people holding yellow cards lost their Jordanian nationality (HRW, 2010). According to a recent Human Rights Watch report, some Jordanian officials have said that withdrawals of Jordanian citizenship serve to maintain the birthright of Palestinians to live in the West Bank and to block Israeli plans to colonise the West Bank (*ibid.*). However, the same report has criticised such withdrawals as arbitrary, taking place without warning and not following proper regulations, policies or judicial procedures. People affected have had no adequate means for redress (*ibid.*). Some have reportedly been offered temporary passports without a national number, which places them in the same situation as ex-Gazans (*ibid.*).

### 3.2.2 Iraqi refugees

For decades Iraqi refugees have been generously admitted into the country and allowed to stay as temporary guests according to modern interpretations of traditional Arab principles of hospitality, as well as a desire to maintain good relations with Iraq (Chatelard et al., 2009 and 2008b; Zaiotti, 2006). While Iraqi immigration has effectively taken place in a legal and policy vacuum, there was widespread consensus among respondents that refugees live in a relatively safe and welcoming environment. Government officials interviewed frequently used the term 'guest' when referring to Iraqi refugees, and noted that the Jordanian government, as their host, was responsible for their well-being and 'good treatment'. One official explained that this was the main reason why Iraqi refugees are not harassed or deported when stopped by the police.

<sup>6</sup> In 1988, when the late King Hussein disengaged from the West Bank and relinquished Jordan's claims of sovereignty, 1.5 million green-card holders lost their Jordanian citizenship almost overnight, and became stateless under Israeli occupation (El-Abed, 2004; Al Quds, 2009; HRW, 2010).

The exodus of refugees following the escalation of sectarian violence in Iraq in 2006 coincided with Jordan's introduction of a stricter entry regime for Iraqis, which included screening and profiling them at the border according to their social, economic and religious backgrounds. These entry restrictions were part of heightened security measures implemented in response to the bombing of three upmarket hotels in Amman by a small group of Iraqi nationals in November 2005, as well as requests by the Iraqi government to restrict entry (ICG, 2008; Chatelard and Dorai, 2010). From early 2008, following consultation with the Iraqi government, Jordan has prevented Iraqi citizens from obtaining visas (visas are only available at the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad, and are only issued for medical, training or educational purposes) (Barnes, 2009; ICG, 2008).<sup>7</sup> As a result of these changes the number of Iraqis seeking refuge in Jordan has decreased, while a growing number, particularly Shi'a from middle- and lower-income groups, have fled to Syria, where no restrictions are as yet in place (ICG, 2008; Chatelard, 2010). The profile of the Iraqi refugee population in Jordan has become more middle class and educated, and more Sunni (Chatelard and Dorai, 2010).

Many Iraqis in Jordan, regardless of their legal status and registration with UNHCR, use the Iraqi Embassy in Amman to access services, including obtaining or renewing identity documents, voting in Iraqi elections and (for civil servants) collecting pensions from local branches of the Iraqi government-owned al-Rafidayn Bank (Chatelard et al., 2009). Unlike Iraqis, who remain Iraqi citizens and whose citizenship rights continue to be preserved in the country of exile through minimum standards of diplomatic protection, ex-Gazans and those who have recently been stripped of Jordanian nationality do not have any other state to turn to for protection other than Jordan.

<sup>7</sup> A Royal Decree issued in 2009 has facilitated the entry of Iraqi diplomats and investors into Jordan, but the majority of Iraqis still need to apply for a visa (UN, 2010).

# Chapter 4

## Protection and access to justice

### 4.1 Protection threats

In a troubled and volatile region, Jordan has managed to maintain security, stability and peace, both internally and with its neighbours. While crime has recently been on the rise, one study concludes that crime in the country 'is still within reasonable and controllable rates' (Fraihat, 2008: 2).<sup>8</sup> Among respondents there was widespread consensus that life in Amman, including in the poorest neighbourhoods, informal settlements and refugee camps, is generally safe. Nevertheless, some refugee groups, as well as Jordanians of Palestinian descent, are exposed to specific protection threats linked to their lack of citizenship rights and, for Iraqi refugees, the trauma they have experienced.

#### 4.1.1 Jordanians of Palestinian origin and ex-Gazans

Their lack of citizenship rights means that ex-Gazans are afforded very limited protection in Jordan and are faced with significant barriers to the enjoyment of basic rights and freedoms, including the freedom to travel abroad. Their passports can be used for overseas travel only if receiving states allow entry to temporary passport-holders. Very few do so; Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and some Gulf States for instance do not (El-Abed, 2004). There is limited information regarding the situation of Jordanians of Palestinian origin who have lost their nationality. A recent Human Rights Watch report highlights the shock, 'utter disbelief' and anguish of affected individuals and families, who have suddenly been placed in a legal limbo (HRW, 2010).

#### 4.1.2 Iraqi refugees

The arrival of wealthy Iraqis in Amman has generated widespread resentment among the host population. Many believe that all Iraqi refugees are rich investors and land speculators, and blame them for rising prices and rampant inflation (see Chapter 6). The authorities have also expressed concerns that Iraqis triggered a sudden increase in market demand and, in turn, a rise in consumer prices. The government has estimated the cost of hosting Iraqi refugees between 2005 and 2008 at around \$2.2 billion.<sup>9</sup> According to a government official Iraqis placed significant pressure on Jordan's already scarce resources and stretched basic services, and placed additional demands on public spending, both to maintain the quality of services and for the continuation of the country's development

<sup>8</sup> According to this study general crime rates in Jordan increased steadily in the ten years to 2007, from 29,065 reported cases to 42,996 (Fraihat, 2008). The same study found that crime rates were highest in Aqaba; Amman was second.

<sup>9</sup> See 'Jordan Says Iraqi Refugees Cost \$2.2B', UPI.com, 13 February 2008, [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/2008/02/13/Jordan-says-Iraqi-refugees-cost-22B/UPI-29701202916716](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2008/02/13/Jordan-says-Iraqi-refugees-cost-22B/UPI-29701202916716); and 'Jordan Slaps Visa Restrictions on Iraqis', Associated Press, 14 February 2008, [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23170924/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/jordan-slaps-visa-restrictions-iraqis](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23170924/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/jordan-slaps-visa-restrictions-iraqis).

plans. As discussed in Chapter 8 ('International Assistance'), the high levels of assistance directed specifically at Iraqi refugees have also contributed to resentment among the host community, particularly in the poorest neighbourhoods of the capital. As in Damascus (see Haysom and Pavanello, 2011), this resentment has not however resulted in widespread cases of overt violence towards Iraqi refugees.

### 4.2 Formal protection mechanisms

In recent years the Jordanian government has put substantial emphasis on the promotion of the rule of law and combating corruption. In 2006 King Abdullah II commissioned the 2006–2012 National Agenda, a ten-year reform plan. One of the key objectives is to '[g]uarantee the rule of law and independence of the judiciary' and to build 'trust between citizens and institutions and adopt principles of transparency, good governance and accountability' (GoJ, 2006: 4).

These reform efforts have done little to address Jordan's entrenched system of patronage or *wasta*. As one respondent put it: 'who you know that can help is something to always remember when doing things or asking for help in Jordan'. The ability to draw on influential connections is closely related to financial means and social status: the more one has, the more influential one's connections are (Lowe et al., 2007).

Although the Jordanian legal system stipulates the right to a defence and access to court and counsel for the accused, this is not explicitly provided for in the Constitution, and Jordanian lawyers are not given fair incentives to provide legal aid (Abu Hassan and Sukkari, 2007; Gora, 2009). As a result, an individual can only get legal assistance if they can afford to pay legal fees. For the most disadvantaged sections of the population legal fees are prohibitive and represent a significant barrier to justice. For poor non-Jordanians, access to justice is also hampered by their lack of legal status and citizenship rights, and the unease and fear that many feel when interacting with formal law enforcement agencies like the police. As highlighted by one key informant, non-Jordanians have difficulty finding their place in the *wasta* system because they cannot vote and therefore cannot pay back their 'patron' by providing political support.

### 4.3 Informal protection mechanisms

There is limited information on the specific informal protection mechanisms that vulnerable displaced communities rely upon. In Arab societies extended family ties and social networks are an important informal protection mechanism (see Haysom and Pavanello, 2011). As one local respondent explained, 'a

problem is never an individual but a family and a community issue'. In cases of abuse or exploitation, for example in the workplace, these networks not only provide support, whether financial, material or psychological, but they can also be used to settle disputes. When minor incidents such as a theft or a quarrel arise in refugee camps, Palestinian communities, including ex-Gazans, reportedly resolve the matter by involving their extended family and elders.

There were mixed responses regarding the extent of social ties and the nature of social relations among Iraqi refugees in exile in Amman, but it was clear that Iraqis did not enjoy the same level of social support among themselves as Palestinians. The fact that Palestinian communities have lived in Amman for decades, and Iraqi refugees have arrived more recently, needs to be taken into account here. Some respondents indicated that the Iraqi refugee community has weak social ties and many individuals and families are socially isolated. This is in line with the findings of other studies (Crisp et al., 2009; IOM, 2008). Reportedly, such isolation is often voluntary and linked to fears of retaliation or attacks by other Iraqis. According to one INGO representative almost half of Iraqi refugee children in the INGO's programmes did not take part in any social or recreational activities, such as birthday parties and weddings. At the same time, however, other respondents did not describe the Iraqi refugee community as completely fragmented. This echoes a recent UNHCR study that indicated strong ties among Iraqi refugees in Amman and in other cities in Jordan, albeit collective action was very weak (Calhoun, 2010; see also IOM, 2008).

#### 4.4 Governance

Jordan is divided into 12 governorates (*mohafaza*), which are in turn sub-divided into districts (*liwa*), sub-districts (*qada*) and municipalities (*nahia*) (LoC, 2006). The Law of the Municipalities of 1955 is the legal basis for the definition of the territory, functions and authority of municipalities. The law defines a municipality as 'a financially independent national institution with administrative autonomy', managed by a mayor together with a town council (World Bank, 2005).

According to the latest amendment of the Municipalities Law, which took place in February 2007, the mayor and town councils of all municipalities are elected. The exception is Amman, where the mayor and half of the council continue to be appointed by the government (Carnegie Endowment and Fride, 2008). This allows the government to maintain political control of the capital and primary city, including the growing population of Jordanians of Palestinian descent. Likewise, the distribution of parliamentary seats favours the rural and tribal areas inhabited by native Jordanians, leaving under-represented the areas where most Palestinian-origin Jordanians live. Amman's second district, for example, has more than 200,000 constituents but only four MPs. By contrast the sixth district of the city of Karak has around 7,000 constituents and three MPs (Chambers et al., 2007). Amendments of the electoral law in 2010 have been criticised by civil society groups and media commentators for doing little to advance equal representation (US DoS, 2010; Ryan, 2010). The participation of Palestinian refugees in Jordan's political life remains severely constrained.

# Chapter 5

## The economy and livelihoods

### 5.1 The urban economy

The largest source of employment in Amman is the public sector (Al, 2008; UNDP, 2011). Public sector work has always been particularly attractive thanks to its secure terms of employment and benefits and the social prestige it offers (ETF, 2005). However, except for health and education posts, employment opportunities in the public sector and in the military have long been dominated by native Jordanians. The private sector, particularly the services sector, accounts for more than a third of the labour force nationwide and is the second source of employment in the capital (UNDP, 2011; ETF, 2005). The private sector is also the main source of employment for Jordanian Palestinians.

In recent years Amman has experienced a real estate and property boom. In 2007 investment in this sector grew by 40%, representing around 4% of the country's GDP, compared to 3% in 2005 (Al, 2008). The tourism industry has also witnessed rapid expansion, to become the largest private employer (WTO, 2008). Amman is the gateway to the country, and tourism is an important driver of the urban economy. Every year the population of the capital increases by an estimated 10% during the summer months when wealthy tourists from the Gulf countries and Jordanian expatriates travel to Amman to spend their summer holidays (ESCWA, 2005).

There are no official statistics and very limited unofficial studies on the size and characteristics of the informal economy, but there are indications that it is growing (Shawabkeh, 2007; Fortuny and Al Hussein, 2010). There are several reasons for this, including the inability of the formal economy to absorb the high number of new entrants into the labour market (estimated at 50,000–60,000 every year), complex procedures for registering businesses and obtaining licences, a mismatch between educational and training curricula and the requirements of the labour market, the contraction of the public sector over the past decade and, according to some, the recent influx of Iraqis in the country (Shawabkeh, 2007; Fortuny and Al Hussein, 2010; Schecla et al., 2008).

Finding a job in Amman is not easy and soaring living costs linked to global rises in food and fuel prices make the city an expensive place.<sup>10</sup> The minimum household monthly income for living in Amman has been estimated at JOD 400–450 (\$562–632) (Van Bruaene and Deboutte, 2010). Workers in the

<sup>10</sup> Inflation rose from 5.4% in 2007 to 13.3% in the first half of 2008 (Global Investment House, 2008; Florian, 2008). A factor in rising fuel prices has been the disruption of the long-standing trade relationship between Jordan and Iraq following the 2003 US-led invasion, which cut Jordan off from subsidised oil from Iraq (Saif and DeBartolo, 2007).

informal sector reportedly earn around JOD 200–250 (\$281–351) a month. Despite good economic performance (with growth rates of 6%–7% annually), unemployment remains high, at around 12% (DoS, 2006; ILO, 2009). For women and young people the rate is over 24% and 27% respectively (UNDP, 2010). One of the reasons why youth unemployment is so high is the tendency among young people to shy away from vocational training (where most of the jobs are) in favour of academic subjects, even though this drastically reduces students' chances of finding work.

The labour market is segmented along national lines, with specific sectors dominated by non-Jordanian workers. Labourers in the construction and catering industries are predominantly Egyptian, and in many cases illegal workers; domestic work is commonly done by women from South and South-East Asia (Olwan, 2007; ETS, 2005; David, 2005). The same goes for the thriving tourist industry, particularly the catering sector, where again jobs are largely in the hands of Egyptians. While the national economy is producing around 55,000 new jobs a year, more than half (53%) are taken by foreign workers (Hindi, 2009, in Women's Refugee Commission, 2009).

### 5.2 Livelihood opportunities for displaced populations in Amman

Under labour legislation, the recruitment of non-Jordanians must be approved by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) (Olwan, 2007). The MOL controls the number of foreign workers in every economic sector and gives approval only if the position requires experience and skills that Jordanians lack (*ibid.*). Non-Jordanian workers are also forbidden from joining unions and professional associations (*ibid.*). As this is a prerequisite for employment qualified foreigners find it very difficult to practice in professions such as law, engineering, journalism, accountancy and medicine. Bilateral agreements are also important in facilitating access for foreign workers to the Jordanian labour market. The entry of Egyptian labourers into the country is regulated by a Memorandum of Understanding between Egypt and Jordan, based on the needs of the Jordanian labour market and to ensure employment opportunities for Jordanians (*ibid.*).

Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship can access employment in the formal economy and in principle face no legal or administrative barriers. In practice, however, access to public sector jobs is limited and Palestinians are mainly employed in the private and informal sectors. Their socio-economic status and occupations vary greatly, ranging from wealthy entrepreneurs and corporate executives to middle-class employees and small business owners and unskilled workers in the informal sector. In refugee camps and informal settlements

residents work in a variety of informal occupations, including stall holders or employees, street hawkers, mechanics and bakers.

The unemployment rate amongst ex-Gazan refugees is significantly higher than the national rate, at 39% (UNRWA, 2009). The great majority of those with jobs work in the informal sector because the temporary residence permits they hold do not automatically entitle them to legal employment and they are effectively considered foreign workers. Ex-Gazans are banned from public sector jobs, are not allowed to register with professional societies or unions and cannot attend government training or employment programmes (El-Abed, 2006; UNRWA, 2009). Given the unresolved Palestinian situation, unlike with Egypt the establishment of a bilateral agreement is not feasible.

Because of their legal status the majority of employers are reportedly reluctant to hire ex-Gazans, even if candidates possess the required qualifications and skills. Since ex-Gazans do not have a 'national number', employers are faced with administrative hurdles, such as processing basic paperwork including registration of the employee, payment of salary

and pension benefits. One respondent noted that some well-connected ex-Gazans have become successful entrepreneurs and business owners in Amman, but they represent only a small minority. The great majority survive with informal, low-paid, casual jobs.

A third of registered Iraqi refugee adults in Jordan have a university degree; 38% were in professional occupations in Iraq, and only 13% worked as manual labourers (UNHCR, 2009). However, the ban on joining professional associations means that the large majority of Iraqis living in Jordan are unable to put their skills to work. Only a small number of Iraqis work in the formal economy as professionals (i.e. medical or university personnel) or entrepreneurs (Doocy and Sirois, 2009; IOM, 2008; UNHCR, 2009). Many are forced to turn to the informal sector to make ends meet. Recent UNHCR and other studies have found that between 40% and 60% of Iraqi refugees are engaged in some form of informal work (UN, 2010; Van Bruaene and Deboutte, 2010), for instance as bakers, blacksmiths, carpenters and travel agents. These jobs are poorly paid, irregular and exploitative. Iraqi refugees are in most cases unable to seek redress and abuses in the workplace often go unreported.



# Chapter 6

## Basic services and infrastructure

Substantial investment in health and education has resulted in high levels of coverage, particularly in urban areas. As Jordanian citizens the majority of Palestinians enjoy access to basic services and housing on a par with native Jordanians. They can also access UNRWA education and health services free of charge. Ex-Gazans face the most serious obstacles to accessing basic services, and the majority depend on UNRWA. Sustained advocacy efforts by the international community and funds channelled directly to line ministries have played a key role in opening up access for Iraqis since 2007, though many do not use public health and education services. Public provision for mental health services and tertiary health care is inadequate.

### 6.1 Education

For decades the government has allocated significant resources to the public education system, and primary education is almost universal. Ninety-two per cent of adults are literate (UNICEF, 2011) and rates of school enrolment and attendance are also very high (see Table 1).

The education system consists of ten years of compulsory basic education (grades 1–10) and two years of optional secondary vocational or academic education (grades 11–12).<sup>11</sup> There is a long-standing preference for the academic stream (offering disciplines such as history, science and maths), which is considered more prestigious than the vocational stream (offering subjects such as agriculture, commerce, industrial trades and nursing). In recent years there has also been steady growth in university enrolment rates: 22% in 2006, compared to 18.5% in 2001 (World Bank, 2011).

Regardless of where they live (whether in camps or elsewhere) registered Palestinian refugee families can choose to send their children to public, UNRWA or private schools. UNRWA schools, which are free of charge, had an excellent reputation in Jordan, and the education that children received was considered as good or better than at public schools. Over the past ten

years, however, decreasing funding and growing student numbers among other factors have negatively impacted on the quality of education that UNRWA provides (UNRWA, 2010; Lindsay, 2009; Haysom and Pavanello, 2011). With an average of 40 students per classroom, UNRWA classes in Jordan are more overcrowded than in public schools, which host an average of 21.4 students per class (UNICEF, 2007). Ninety per cent of UNRWA schools run on double shifts, compared to 10% of government schools, and 50% of UNRWA school facilities are deemed unsuitable (UNRWA, 2010a). All these factors contribute to an inadequate learning environment and decreasing quality of education offered at UNRWA schools. Reportedly, today it is mainly the poorest, living in refugee camps and nearby informal settlements, who send their children to UNRWA schools. While there were mixed reports about the quality of education offered by the public system, given the choice parents are reportedly more inclined to enroll their children in public schools rather than with UNRWA, or, if they can afford it, in private schools.

Amman offers a broad choice of private schools, which are widely regarded as offering the best quality of education. In general Jordanian families place a great value on education, and households often stretch their budgets to send children to these schools. However, high tuition fees, in addition to associated costs such as uniforms, textbooks, school activities and so on, are a significant financial barrier for the most disadvantaged segments of the population. For grades 1–5, for example, tuition fees at private schools can be anything from JOD 400 to JOD 5,000 a year (\$562–\$7,000).<sup>12</sup> Anecdotal reports indicated that the soaring cost of living has prompted many families, no longer able to afford private education, to transfer their children to public schools.

Ex-Gazans are allowed to use the public education system, but since they are considered Arab foreigners they have to pay annual fees of JOD 40 (\$56) for primary school and JOD 60 (\$84) for secondary (Women's Commission for Refugees,

**Table 1: Net primary and secondary school enrolment and attendance in Jordan<sup>13</sup>**

	Primary school enrolment	Primary school attendance	Secondary school enrolment	Secondary school attendance
Male	99%	99%	80%	85%
Female	90%	99%	84%	89%

Source: UNICEF, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> The two years of vocational education prepare students for craftsmanship and skilled labour, while the academic stream prepares students for entry into university upon completion of the General Certificate of Secondary Education or *tawjihi*.

<sup>12</sup> Note that the higher the grade the higher the fees, which means that every year tuition fees increase.

<sup>13</sup> The net primary school enrolment ratio refers to the number of children enrolled in primary school divided by the total population of that age group.

2009).<sup>14</sup> For cash-strapped households with several school-age children these costs can quickly mount up, and for the great majority of ex-Gazan children the only affordable option is the increasingly precarious education of UNRWA schools. They also face stiff competition in the public university system as they have to secure places within the 5% quota reserved for Arab foreigners (El-Abed, 2004).

In 2007 the Jordanian government granted access to public primary and secondary education for Iraqi children living in Jordan, regardless of their legal status or registration (Women's Refugee Commission, 2009). According to the Ministry of Education, 26,800 Iraqi children were enrolled in public and private schools during the 2008–2009 academic year (*ibid.*). Several NGOs put this figure lower, at 9,000 (GAO, 2009); similarly, recent UNHCR data indicates that only 7,500 Iraqi refugee children are enrolled in public primary schools, and 1,500 in secondary schools (UNHCR, 2011a). An unknown number are enrolled in private schools. There is general consensus that enrolment and retention rates for Iraqi refugee children are low.

There are a number of reasons why many Iraqi refugee families living in Jordan do not send their children to school, including indirect costs, such as transport, registration fees, textbooks and stationary, and differences between the Iraqi and Jordanian curricula (Chatelard et al., 2009; Women's Refugee Commission, 2009). A significant number of children may not resume their education in Amman because their families hope to relocate to a third country shortly, when in many cases this can take several years. One respondent spoke of families where both parents are educated, some to university level, while their children are barely literate.

## 6.2 Health

Sustained public spending on the health sector has resulted in major progress across a wide range of indicators, including reductions in infant, child and maternal deaths, improvements in child nutrition and higher life expectancy (UNICEF, 2007).<sup>15</sup> Like most middle-income countries, the health profile in Jordan is characterised by the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Cardiovascular diseases (36.1%) and cancer (14.8%) account for more than half of the deaths in the country (Government of Jordan, 2008). There are also high rates of obesity and diabetes, mainly linked to lifestyle factors (Zindah et al., 2008).

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is the largest health services financier and provider of primary, secondary and tertiary health care services, and has regulatory and supervisory functions as well. The Jordanian Royal Medical Services (RMS) is the second health provider in the public sector, and has an excellent reputation for the provision of high-quality services.

<sup>14</sup> For Jordanians access to primary and secondary school is free of charge.

<sup>15</sup> Health expenditure accounts for almost 10% of national GDP (AHDR, 2009).

The RMS is responsible for delivery of secondary and tertiary health care to military and security personnel and other public sector employees, including their dependants, and to patients referred by the MOH and the private sector (Yadav et al., 2009; Halasa, 2008). Smaller public service providers include the Jordan University Hospital and King Abdullah University Hospital (Halasa, 2008). The MOH provides subsidised health care to all citizens. Even so 85% of the population has health insurance (Government of Jordan, 2010). The RMS and MOH manage large insurance schemes for the military and civil servants; private firms, UNRWA and university hospitals also offer insurance (Halasa, 2010; Ajlouni, 2011).

With a total of 60 hospitals accounting for 34% of the country's hospital beds, alongside thousands of clinics across the country, private health care is a large and vibrant industry, making Jordan a leading health service provider in the region and a popular destination for foreigners seeking medical care (Ajlouni, 2011; UNICEF, 2007). Private practices are found mainly in urban areas; Amman accounts for 36% of private clinics and the majority of private hospitals (*ibid.*). The quality and cost of these services vary greatly. Top-quality private clinics and hospitals in the capital cater for the wealthiest segments of the population and for foreigners, are equipped with the latest equipment and perform sophisticated medical procedures. Consultation fees can reach JOD 150 (\$210). Small private clinics with basic medical equipment offer primary health services in informal settlements and refugee camps, reportedly charging consultation fees of between JOD 3 and 5 (\$4–7).

The health profile of Palestinians living in Amman is very similar to that of the host population, with a high prevalence of non-communicable chronic diseases (UNRWA, 2010; Ajlouni, 2010). Infant mortality rates and immunisation rates are also very similar (Ajlouni, 2010). A 1997 Fafo study found that chronic non-communicable illnesses were more prevalent among camp residents than among their counterparts living outside camps (Arneberg, 1997), presumably a function of the more precarious economic conditions facing people in the camps.

Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship enjoy access to the public health system just as native Jordanians do, and registered UNRWA refugees, regardless of their area of residence, can also access the free primary health care services offered by UNRWA. UNRWA provides comprehensive primary health care services including family planning, mother and child care and disease prevention. It also subsidises hospital care through contractual arrangements or partial reimbursement schemes with government hospitals (UNRWA, 2011b). The quality of the care provided at UNRWA clinics is reportedly poor, with overcrowded and inadequately staffed facilities. As a result, it appears that UNRWA services are used mostly by poor camp-dwellers. Ex-Gazans face significant barriers to accessing health services. While they are allowed to seek treatment at public facilities, their lack of citizenship rights means that they are treated as Arab foreigners and

cannot therefore benefit from the subsidised medical services offered by the government to non-insured Jordanians.

As with Palestinians, the health profile of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan is similar to that of the host population. Many refugees are middle-aged and so tend to suffer from the maladies of middle age, particularly chronic diseases, high blood pressure and high cholesterol (Chatelard et al., 2009; WHO et al., 2009; Skopec et al., 2010). A team of IOM medical staff interviewed for this study believed that high blood pressure was a problem for 30% of Iraqi refugees. Almost 60% of Iraqis suffer from a serious medical condition of some type and are in need of regular medical care (UN, 2010).

Regardless of their legal status or registration, since 2007 the government has allowed Iraqis to access public primary health care in the same way as non-insured Jordanians, except that they have to pay for medicines (Chatelard et al., 2009). Secondary health care services are offered through Caritas and Jordanian Red Crescent-affiliated hospitals. Substantial investment has also been made by UNHCR and partners to provide tertiary services such as cancer treatments and cardiovascular operations to registered Iraqi refugees, though these are very expensive (UNHCR, 2008).

One study estimates that up to a fifth of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan do not seek medical care in public health facilities because they cannot pay for medications or laboratory tests (Skopec et al., 2010). Other reasons include a general lack of knowledge around access to public health services, the desire to maintain anonymity and a lack of confidence in public health systems based on their experience of declining services in Iraq (Weiss Fagen, 2007; UN, 2010; Skopec et al., 2010). UNHCR and partner organisations are encouraging Iraqi refugees to use public health systems, and according to one UNHCR official these efforts are beginning to pay off.

The traumatic experiences many Iraqis have been exposed to, including beatings, torture, rape and murder, have had severe repercussions on their mental well-being. A number of representatives of I/NGOs working with Iraqi refugees in Amman noted that a significant proportion of their beneficiaries had been victims of violence, and said that affected children and adults suffered from a range of conditions including flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, fatigue, panic attacks, anger, depression, post-traumatic stress disorders and suicidal thoughts. Marriages have reportedly come under strain and domestic violence has increased (Grady, 2011; IOM, 2008). Mental problems are often exacerbated by anxiety surrounding residency status in Jordan, the significant decline in lifestyle and social status that some Iraqi refugees have experienced and uncertainty about the future (Crisp et al., 2009; Human Rights First, 2010; UN, 2010; Riller, 2009). Particularly for male heads of household difficulties in finding a job in Jordan constitute another important compounding factor. One mental health professional working for an NGO stressed that survivors

of torture and violence are not only found among the poorest segments of the refugee population and registered UNHCR refugees, but also among the better-off segments of the Iraqi community. While mental health needs cut across income and social groups, reaching affected individuals and families in the upper classes remains a challenge as they are not registered with UNHCR and do not live in the poor neighbourhoods where international agencies mainly operate.

Mental health provision in Jordan's public health facilities is inadequate. Primary health care workers do not receive mental health training, there is very limited interaction between primary care and mental health systems and the number of mental health professionals per capita is low and they are unequally distributed across the country (WHO, 2011). According to one respondent there is a particular shortfall in the number of mental health professionals qualified to assist survivors of torture, which is precisely the specialised assistance that many Iraqi refugees need.

### 6.3 Shelter and housing

Except for the wealthiest groups, securing adequate accommodation in Amman is costly and difficult. There are structural problems and inefficiencies in the housing market, with an over-supply of large serviced plots and houses built with expensive materials, which only a minority of the population can afford, while smaller and more affordable serviced plots are difficult to find (Salah, 2007). Low-income groups without assets find it difficult to get mortgages (*ibid.*). Property prices have risen, driving rents and housing costs beyond the reach of many.

The poorest segments of the population, including Jordanians of Palestinian origin, ex-Gazans, Iraqi refugees and economic migrants, are concentrated in refugee camps and informal settlements in east Amman. Rental prices reportedly range from JOD 75 (\$105) for one room to JOD 300 (\$421) for a two/three-bedroom house, with rents in refugee camps being slightly cheaper. Overcrowding and sub-standard housing are among the most acute problems afflicting informal settlements and refugee camps. The majority of houses are poorly built and structurally weak, with around 15% of shelters thought to be in a dilapidated condition (UNRWA, 2010a).

As Jordanian citizens the majority of people of Palestinian origin have the right to own property. The situation is more difficult for ex-Gazans, as they are considered foreigners. Under Jordanian law, a non-Jordanian can only own property where Jordan and the buyer's country of residence have a reciprocal relationship, and only with the approval of the Council of Ministers.<sup>16</sup> For ex-Gazans the issue of reciprocal relations with their country of origin is clearly problematic; one respondent noted that, for both ex-Gazans and Iraqis, approval is usually granted only to individuals with a certain level of financial means.

16 See <http://www.globalpropertyguide.com/Middle-East/Jordan/Buying-Guide>.

Many Iraqi refugees originate from relatively well-serviced urban areas and were used to comfortable standards of living in Iraq; most middle-class families, for example, lived in spacious compounds of 200–600m<sup>2</sup> (Riller, 2009). While wealthy Iraqis can afford expensive accommodation in high-status neighbourhoods in Amman, the poorest have taken up residence in the low-income areas of the city, including refugee camps. According to UNHCR the cash assistance of JOD 75 (\$105) per month per

person that is given to vulnerable Iraqi refugees (see Chapter 8, ‘International Assistance’) has been calculated precisely to subsidise rental costs. Unaware of the workings of the rental market and the legal stipulations governing contracts, many Iraqi families ended up paying higher than average rent prices, under oral contracts that were illegal and afforded no protection. This has however become less common as Iraqi refugees have become more familiar with renting arrangements.

# Chapter 7

## Land

### 7.1 Land law and urban planning

Amman has a long history of urban planning. The first plan was drafted in 1938 when Jordan (then Transjordan) was under the British Mandate, and the first comprehensive Master Plan was developed in 1954. Three decades later the municipal authorities replaced it with the 1985–2005 Greater Amman Comprehensive Development Plan (GACDP), which sought to control and shape the city's growth to accommodate a forecasted population of 2 million people by 2005 (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010; Potter et al., 2009). The GACDP was however never implemented and Amman's growth was largely regulated by outdated zoning by-laws (GAM, 2008).

In early 2006 King Abdullah II instructed the former mayor of Amman, Omar Maani, to 'embark on a serious and comprehensive project of city planning' (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010: 65). Developed between 2006 and 2008 by a Canadian planning and design firm in collaboration with the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), the Greater Amman Plan (GAP) sets out a long-term development vision of Amman as a major regional cultural, social and tourist hub (GAM, 2008). In 2007 the GAP gained Amman the World Leadership Award for Town Planning from the World Leadership Forum (*ibid.*).

There are a number of shortcomings in the planning, focus and implementation of the GAP. Despite a marked emphasis in the plan on community participation, respondents reported that consultations with communities took place very late in the decision-making process, so that their opinions had little leverage, and often simply entailed the provision of information rather than genuine participation. Public meetings were apparently mostly attended by influential elites with connections to GAM decision-makers, rather than by ordinary people (see also Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010; Khirfan and Momani, 2011). Second, the emphasis in the GAP is on improving historical areas with tourist potential, rather than disadvantaged residential areas, such as informal settlements and refugee camps. This constitutes a marked shift in urban planning and housing provision, as discussed below (Oesch, 2010).

### 7.2 Land policy and informal settlements

There is high demand for housing land in Amman and, with the city's population projected to grow from 2.2 million today to 6.5 million by 2025, this trend is only likely to accelerate (GAM, 2008).

Residential land planning in Amman follows the zoning system introduced by the British administration in the 1930s. It comprises four categories (A–D), based on plot size, the percentage of the plot that can be built on and the distance between residential buildings and the plot boundary (see Table 2). Even category D plots are too large and expensive for low-income groups. This has played a key role in the spread of informal zones in east Amman since the 1970s (Ababsa, 2010). Population densities in central and eastern Amman are among the highest in the world, at between 14,000 and 30,000 people/sq km. In wealthy west Amman the rate is between 2,500 and 6,000 people/sq km (Potter et al., 2009).

The great majority of refugee camps in Amman are on land leased by the government from local landowners, with less than one-third of the built-up areas of camps located on public land (Badil, 2010). As one local respondent explained, although camp dwellers own only the structure, not the land on which it is built, their right to own and rent houses in the camps, to carry out improvements and to erect additional floors are fully recognised and protected by the government. For example, following the 1993 Oslo Accords establishing the framework for a Palestinian state, several private landowners tried to regain access to their lands through legal mechanisms, but none of these efforts resulted in the removal of refugee camps or parts of them (*ibid.*).

### 7.3 Security of tenure in the informal settlements

The first government initiative to address the problem of housing for the poor was in 1965, with the establishment of a Housing Corporation to provide affordable homes for low-income groups. In 1973 the government formed a Housing

**Table 2: Residential land zoning categories in Amman**

	Plot area	Distance (front, back, sides) between residential buildings and plot boundary	Built-up area as proportion of plot size
Category A	Less than 1,000m <sup>2</sup>	5m, 7m, 5m	39%
Category B	Less than 750m <sup>2</sup>	4m, 6m, 4m	45%
Category C	Less than 500m <sup>2</sup>	4m, 4m, 3m	51%
Category D	Less than 250m <sup>2</sup>	3m, 2.5m, 2.5m	55%

Source: Adapted from Potter et al., 2009 and Ababsa, 2010.

Bank to provide subsidised home loans (HUDC, 2011). In 1980 an Urban Development Department (UDD) was established under the auspices of the GAM to improve living conditions and security of tenure in informal settlements in Amman and other cities.

With the assistance of the World Bank, the UDD embarked on a project to upgrade East Wahdat, an informal settlement north of Al-Wahdat refugee camp. In 1980 East Wahdat was inhabited by around 500 families of Palestinian origin who had spilled over from the refugee camp and were squatting on privately-owned land (Al Radi and Moore, 1992). Under this programme the UDD bought up the land, divided it into small serviced plots of 150 sq m (thus introducing a new type of zone, Zone E) and sold the plots to local households (Oesch, 2010; Ababsa, 2010; Al Radi and Moore, 1992). Local residents participated in all phases of the process, from renovating their homes to the acquisition of land title for their plots through long-term loans guaranteed by the state (Ababsa, 2010; Oesch, 2010).

In 1997 the government adopted the Social Productivity Program, a national strategy to alleviate poverty. As part of this initiative a Community Infrastructure Program (CIP) was established to improve infrastructure in urban and rural areas. In Amman the CIP focused explicitly on refugee camps and informal areas. Substantial improvements in basic services and infrastructure were made (Ababsa, 2010). Unlike the UDD, which covered home improvements, basic services and the

core issue of land tenure security, the CIP focused exclusively on the provision of utilities and basic services (Ababsa, 2010). This shift away from a concern for tenure security stemmed from rising land and mortgage costs, which made it more difficult for the government to purchase land and for people to pay their mortgages. The government was also reluctant to grant secure tenure in refugee camps as this would imply permanent settlement. Rather than granting security of tenure to camp dwellers, the aim was to maintain their temporary status and their right to return once the Palestinian question was resolved (*ibid.*; Al Hussein and Bocco, 2010). Meanwhile, there is general acceptance among the authorities of informal settlements and refugee camps, and mass forced evictions, relocations or housing demolitions are not the threat they are in other cities looked at in this research.

Today, government-sponsored urban upgrading projects in informal settlements and camps have virtually stopped, and the focus has shifted largely to the provision of social housing and the beautification of Amman's tourist areas (Oesch, 2010). Rather than falling under the control of the GAM, camps are managed by the DPA and UNRWA. Together with I/NGOs, these bodies are responsible for infrastructure improvement programmes and shelter rehabilitation activities in these areas. Although upgrading activities continue they are sporadic as they depend on available funds, are carried out in isolation and are not coordinated with broader urban development plans (Oesch, 2010a).

# Chapter 8

## International assistance

UNHCR has operated in Jordan since 1991, though on a small scale, at least until the recent Iraqi refugee crisis. As Jordan is not party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, UNHCR's presence and activities in the country are governed by a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government. The MOU has adopted the definition of refugee used in the 1951 Convention, and lays out the basic principles of refugee protection (ICG, 2008).

In recent years UNHCR and other humanitarian actors have significantly expanded their operations in response to the influx of Iraqi refugees, and new aid actors have opened offices in Amman. Relations between the humanitarian community and the government are reportedly good; one key informant referred to 'an ongoing and productive dialogue with the Jordanian authorities'. Jordan has also greatly benefited from international assistance (Dodd, 2010). In late December 2007, the European Union (EU) pledged €50 million (\$73 million) for Jordan and Syria (Simon, 2009). Since 2008 the US has been increasing its aid to Jordan; in early 2011 \$100 million was given to Jordan in addition to \$363 million already provided in 2010 (Al-Khalidi, 2008; The New York Times, 2011).

However, the granting of substantial levels of funding in the absence of reliable baseline information has made working according to humanitarian principles particularly challenging. Between 2006 and 2007 the drafting of programme proposals for Iraqi refugees living in Amman became a key concern of many humanitarian actors. However, lacking accurate data on the number, profile and characteristics of these refugees, agencies were essentially putting forward proposals and setting indicators with no idea of how many potential beneficiaries were in need of assistance (Washington, 2010). Many respondents agreed that, with high levels of funding and short time cycles, the main preoccupation became demonstrating an ability to reach the highest number of beneficiaries in the shortest possible time. In the words of one key informant, 'Iraqi beneficiaries merely represented a target to reach'. There was little attempt to develop a coherent strategy or appropriate programmes that could more adequately support Iraqis in exile.

The marked focus on Iraqi refugees has had significant repercussions for the targeting of humanitarian assistance according to need. From the beginning of the response, I/NGOs have set aside between 10% and 30% of programming for non-Iraqi beneficiaries (Washington, 2010). However, a number of respondents indicated that, when this (low) quota of non-Iraqis has been reached, needy members of host communities approaching I/NGOs for assistance are simply turned away (see also Washington, 2010). While there were

no reports of overt violence towards Iraqi refugees as a result, it is not difficult to see how this approach has generated resentment, both towards Iraqi refugees and I/NGOs. As one respondent working for a local NGO admitted, 'the [host] community now hates us'.

### 8.1 Assistance to Iraqi refugees

In addition to processing asylum claims and providing assistance to registered refugees, UNHCR leads the coordination of the humanitarian response, in partnership with national and international NGOs, UN agencies and government ministries (UN, 2010). The international response to Iraqi refugees has focused on a range of sectors including education, health and health awareness raising, vocational training, psychosocial assistance, financial assistance and protection.

Sustained dialogue and good relations between humanitarian agencies and the Jordanian authorities were often mentioned as contributing to a favourable protection environment for Iraqi refugees in Jordan (UN, 2010). In collaboration with a local human rights organisation, UNHCR has conducted training activities for government agencies, the police and religious leaders on refugee protection, including international legal frameworks for refugees, protection principles and protection issues for women and children. According to a UNHCR official interviewed for this study, this training has been very well received. Government officials at all levels have attended, and have shown high levels of interest and receptivity.

The provision of psychosocial assistance to Iraqi refugees is also a key focus of assistance. A number of agencies indicated that, particularly at the beginning of the response, considerable efforts were made to set up outreach programmes to get in touch with Iraqis scattered across Amman. Extensive networks of volunteers and community mobilisers were trained to locate Iraqi refugees and inform them about UNHCR registration and the assistance, including psychosocial assistance, available to them (Washington, 2010; Barnes, 2009). These efforts have reportedly yielded positive results, at least in the poorer sections of the capital, and there was widespread consensus that Iraqi refugees are well aware of the services offered by international agencies. (Indeed, they may be too aware of them: some respondents to this study reported assistance-seeking behaviour among some Iraqi refugees; some demand financial incentives to attend training or other activities, and there is a widespread expectation of financial remuneration or other support for taking part in surveys and studies.)

In response to soaring living costs since 2008 UNHCR has provided cash assistance to around 5,000 vulnerable Iraqi

families (of JOD 75 (\$106) per person), distributed with ATM bank cards (Nyce, 2010). A UNHCR impact survey conducted in 2009 indicated that nearly 98% of beneficiaries preferred financial assistance delivered through ATM cards over any other method (UN, 2010). This mechanism has helped in overcoming some of the difficulties of distributing assistance in the urban setting, for example avoiding the need for beneficiaries to wait for assistance in long and very visible queues, or to commute long distances to distribution centres (Nyce, 2010).

## 8.2 Assistance to Jordanians of Palestinian origin and ex-Gazans

UNRWA has long been the main provider of international assistance to Palestinian refugees in Jordan. Its services include basic education, health care and food and financial assistance (UNRWA, 2011c). UNRWA is, however, facing severe financial problems. Funding has not kept pace with the growing Palestinian refugee population and donors' reporting requirements have become more rigorous; the global financial crisis that began in 2008 has further restricted donor funding (UNRWA, 2010a). Financial shortfalls have resulted in cuts to core services in all countries where UNRWA operates, including Jordan (*ibid.*). These funding cuts have been met with apprehension by the Jordanian authorities. In June 2011 the Prime Minister stressed the importance of supporting UNRWA in order to support 'peace and stability in the region', and noted that decreased funding was considered a major national priority and a matter of security for the government (UNRWA, 2011d). No detailed information was found in terms of the impact of UNRWA's cuts to core services on the most vulnerable sections of the Palestinian population, including ex-Gazans who rely heavily on the agency. It appears that, aside from UNRWA, no other national or international agency is extending assistance to ex-Gazans.

## 8.3 Durable solutions for displaced populations

### 8.3.1 Iraqi refugees

The overwhelming majority of Iraqi refugees do not see return to Iraq as a viable or sustainable solution to their displacement, on account of high levels of insecurity, poor employment prospects, deteriorating basic services and limited assistance. Likewise, UNHCR does not consider that the current situation in Iraq allows for safe and dignified large-scale returns.<sup>17</sup> In 2009, an informal survey conducted by UNHCR revealed that 92% of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan had no intention of returning in the near future, and a 2010 poll in Baghdad showed that over 60% of returnees regretted going back to Iraq (UN, 2010). According to UNHCR data, between January and June 2011 only 54 registered Iraqi refugees returned voluntarily to Iraq from Jordan (UNHCR, 2011).

While the generous conditions and favourable protection environment under which Iraqi refugees have been hosted in Jordan

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR offers a package of assistance covering transport as well as a small cash grant for registered refugees who opt for voluntary return.

have allowed some aspects of *de facto* integration (i.e. access to basic services almost on a par with Jordanians), the Jordanian authorities oppose more formal *de jure* integration (Chatelard, 2011). Like neighbouring governments, the Jordanian authorities have made it clear that their naturalisation is out of the question, and that their presence in Jordan is only a 'temporary and partial' solution (Ferris, 2009); they are treated as 'guests' and are expected eventually to leave. Many respondents explained that granting Jordanian nationality to Iraqis is a sensitive issue which needs to be seen in relation to the long-standing Palestinian caseload, and in relation to the hundreds of thousands of ex-Gazans denied citizenship rights. While attitudes towards Iraqi refugees in Jordan do not appear likely to harden in the immediate future, their position is ultimately uncertain and may come under threat depending on levels of international assistance and the political environment in the country, in Iraq and in the region more broadly (Chatelard, 2011).

The UNHCR resettlement programme for Iraqis is large. Worldwide, out of 108,000 refugees submitted for resettlement by UNHCR, 26,700 originated from Iraq (UNHCR, 2011b). Between January and June 2011 a total of 1,837 applications for resettlement were put forward by UNHCR Jordan alone, and during the same period a total of 413 Iraqi refugees were resettled (UNHCR, 2011). Respondents confirmed that the great majority of applications originate from Amman.

There is a strong desire for resettlement amongst Iraqi refugees. A 2008 survey found that half of respondents hoped to be resettled in a third country (IOM, 2008). Several respondents noted that the decision to register with UNHCR was primarily linked to access to resettlement opportunities. Refugees who meet one or more of the 11 vulnerability criteria set by UNHCR are eligible for resettlement (UNHCR, 2007), but for resettlement to actually take place Iraqis must also meet the criteria set down by recipient countries, which tend to focus more on whether refugees can easily be assimilated into the local economy, rather than on the vulnerability criteria identified by UNHCR. For example, one interviewee indicated that Germany considers applications for resettlement only from German-speaking Iraqis with higher education; unsurprisingly, very few registered Iraqis living in Amman (or indeed in neighbouring countries) meet these criteria. The US government, the largest single donor of assistance to displaced Iraqis, including for resettlement, has stringent security checks in place and eligible refugees must go through in-depth and lengthy screening and vetting procedures, slowing down the resettlement process (Berman, 2010; Cohen, 2011; US Department of State, 2011). Despite the large scale of the resettlement programme there is widespread agreement that resettlement remains a possibility for only a minority of Iraqi refugees (UN, 2010; Department of State, 2011).

For many resettled Iraqis, the transition from the Middle East to the West has been very challenging. One respondent explained that, before being resettled to the US, Iraqis receive a four-day cultural orientation course. Even so, 'nothing really



prepares them enough for life in the US'. Many start their journey with unrealistic expectations about the quality of life and the degree of social support they will enjoy once they have arrived. After a period of excitement which usually lasts a couple of months, the realisation usually sinks in that starting a new life in the West is far from easy. Some reportedly become depressed or suffer a nervous breakdown.

According to a UN official there is a relatively small group of Iraqi refugees who are simply stuck in Jordan and will not attain any durable solution in the near future; they have no immediate opportunities for local integration, they cannot or do not want to return to Iraq, and they are not eligible for resettlement. Sooner or later this group of Iraqi refugees will require recognition and attention by the Jordanian authorities

to facilitate some level of further integration, particularly around access to formal employment opportunities.

### *8.3.2 Jordanians of Palestinian origin and ex-Gazans*

The great majority of Palestinians living in Jordan are naturalised and therefore long ago attained *de jure* local integration. The same however cannot be said for ex-Gazans, who have no immediate prospects of local integration. Given the unresolved Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the complexities around the right of return for Palestinian populations, return to their homeland is far from a feasible solution and UNRWA's mandate does not call for resettlement. The granting of Jordanian citizenship to facilitate local integration appears to be the most realistic solution to the plight of ex-Gazans in Jordan.



# Chapter 9

## Conclusions and recommendations

For over 60 years Amman has been a safe haven for Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, attracted by its stability, good basic services and livelihood opportunities. In the space of a century Amman has grown from a small village of a few hundred families to become the country's primary city, home to more than two million people. Such growth has largely been shaped by recurrent influxes of forced and voluntary migrants, comprising not only poor and uneducated rural people but also educated middle-class and wealthy families who, over the years, have contributed a great deal to the city's cultural life and its economy.

Jordan hosts the largest number of Palestinians living outside the occupied Palestinian territory, a substantial portion of whom live in Amman. The vast majority have long been granted Jordanian nationality, which has greatly facilitated their local integration and economic and social advancement. These Palestinians dominate the private sector and, according to some estimates, account for half of Jordan's middle class (Bocco, 2011; Ryan, 2010). In many ways there is no difference between Jordanians of Palestinian origin and native Jordanians, although the living conditions and economic situation of the residents of refugee camps, informal settlements and the poorest areas of the city are more precarious than their counterparts living in better-off western neighbourhoods. Regardless of socio-economic status, their political representation and participation in public life remain restricted.

While ex-Gazans have also been living in Jordan for decades, they are treated as foreign Arabs and denied citizenship rights. As a result, they face heightened vulnerabilities across a number of indicators, including education, property ownership, freedom of movement and employment. They are socially and economically marginalised. Until ex-Gazans are granted nationality, their *de jure* and *de facto* local integration will remain a distant hope. More recently, the local integration of Jordanians of Palestinian origin has been overturned with the withdrawal of their nationality, exposing them to similar threats and imposing substantial restrictions on their rights and freedoms.

Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and there is no domestic policy regulating refugee and asylum matters. Palestinians and more recently Iraqis have been welcomed into the country under particularly generous conditions and have been granted access to public health and education services, regardless of their legal status or registration. While Iraqi refugees have found a favorable protection environment in Jordan their status remains unclear, and the policy environment around refugee matters is unpredictable. The vulnerabilities of Iraqi refugees in this

context are mainly linked to their inability to access jobs in the formal economy in line with their skills and education, their decreased socio-economic status and, for some, pre-existing mental health conditions, all of which are further aggravated by displacement. The Iraqi refugee population living in Amman has specific vulnerabilities, but there are no widespread, urgent humanitarian needs. In essence, their requirements do not differ substantially from those of the host population.

The humanitarian response to the Iraqi refugee crisis in Jordan has been shaped by international political interests. The high levels of assistance and financial support that have poured into the capital have been mainly intended for Iraqi refugee households, despite the fact that Iraqis live alongside and within host communities with broadly similar needs and, in the case of ex-Gazans and those who have lost their Jordanian citizenship, particularly acute vulnerabilities. For the most part, however, assistance and funding has bypassed these groups.

### 9.1 Recommendations

#### *Government of Jordan*

- The government should give urgent recognition to the plight and needs of ex-Gazans living in Jordan without nationality. Steps should be taken to ensure that Jordanians of Palestinian origin are not at risk of having their nationality withdrawn and the restoration of citizenship rights for those who have been affected should be prioritised. Policy developments are also needed to clarify the legal status of refugees and asylum-seekers living in Jordan. The generous conditions under which Iraqi refugees have been allowed access and residence in the country are certainly welcome, but their protracted displacement should also be recognised and options related to their local integration should be explored.
- The 2007 amendment of the Law of the Municipalities should be extended to Amman to allow the citizens of the capital to elect their mayor and all town council members. This should be seen as a first step to ensuring that, like other municipalities across the Kingdom, the GAM represents the needs, interests and aspirations of urban communities. The under-representation of urban areas should also be addressed and steps taken to amend the electoral law to allow for this.
- Government and municipal authorities should work with local communities, UNRWA, the DPA and other actors involved in upgrading and shelter rehabilitation activities in informal settlements and refugee camps to develop a vision and a strategy to include these areas in national and urban planning efforts.

- Ongoing efforts as part of the democratic reforms that have been initiated in recent years are needed to promote the rule of law and combat corruption. The provision of legal aid should be included in the Constitution, national law and legal practice to ensure open and fair access to justice for all.

#### *Government of Iraq*

- More substantial efforts are required by the government of Iraq to assist Iraqi citizens living in Jordan. With the support of the international community the Iraqi government should initiate a dialogue with its counterpart in Jordan to work towards the development of a bilateral agreement to facilitate entry into the labour market for the thousands of skilled and professional Iraqis living in Amman and other cities in Jordan.

#### *Humanitarian and development actors*

- While there is a wealth of information on the characteristics, needs and vulnerabilities of Iraqi refugees living in Amman, there is less understanding of how these needs differ from the host population, including ex-Gazans and Jordanians of Palestinian origin who have lost their citizenship, as well as the poorest segments of the population, which also include poor Egyptian economic migrants. A comprehensive analysis is required to better understand vulnerabilities and capacities in the informal settlements and refugee camps of Amman. This exercise should be undertaken jointly by UNRWA, UNHCR and other international actors, with support from the government, the municipal authorities and international donors.
- There appears to be scope for more substantial engagement by international actors, led by UN-Habitat and UNRWA, around urban planning, both in advocacy and capacity-building, to ensure that the most disadvantaged areas of the city are included in urban strategies, that basic services and infrastructure are improved and that the sensitive issue of security of tenure, particularly for refugee camps, is addressed.
- There is a paucity of secondary information on the informal sector in Amman, where many Palestinians, Iraqi refugees and economic migrants work. Humanitarian and development actors should join forces and gain a better understanding of the needs, characteristics and size of the informal economy to help with the design and delivery of appropriate livelihood interventions.
- Funding and sustained advocacy from international agen-

cies and donors have yielded important outcomes in terms of access to basic services for the Iraqi refugee population. More efforts are needed to ensure that remaining barriers to access are removed, including the requirement that they meet the costs of medication. Similar efforts are also urgently needed to ensure that access to basic services is extended to ex-Gazans, and as part of broader efforts to ensure their local integration. An advocacy strategy aimed at removing the administrative barriers that prevent access to formal livelihood opportunities for Iraqi refugees and ex-Gazans should also be put in place.

- International agencies should work with the government of Jordan to tackle ingrained negative attitudes towards vocational jobs. A comprehensive strategy that addresses this issue within the education system and in the labour market is urgently needed to equip young people with the skills the job market requires.

#### *International donors*

- International donors should support the Jordanian authorities to undertake the necessary policy developments to clarify the legal status of refugees and asylum-seekers living in Jordan. Practical steps are needed to facilitate the *de jure* and *de facto* integration of ex-Gazans in Jordan and to address the withdrawal of nationality from Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Donors should also explore ways for Iraqi refugees to access formal employment opportunities in line with their skills.
- Efforts to resolve the ongoing debate around the number of Iraqi refugees living in the country should be urgently prioritised. International donors are well-placed to lead an open dialogue with the authorities to ensure transparency so that future response strategies are devised and planned according to needs.
- Except for the most vulnerable, the problems of Iraqi refugees living in Amman appear to be of a more structural and chronic nature, rather than strictly humanitarian. As a matter of urgency a long-term strategy of assistance should be formulated together with development partners to address the needs of the thousands of Iraqi refugees in Jordan for whom repatriation and return is not an option. Such a strategy must be supported by flexible funding that is able to shift from a short-term humanitarian approach focused on crisis response to a development agenda to address the needs of Iraqi refugees within wider strategies of assistance for the local population.

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