

## **Syrian Refugees Policy Paper (Integration, Resettlement, or Return)**

### **Closed Expert Consultation Session**

**Prof. Reem Adnan Al-Kharouf / Director of the Refugees, Displaced Persons and Forced Migration Studies Center**

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Jordan has seen an influx of Syrian refugees from all Syrian governorates, particularly Daraa, in search of a safe haven for themselves and their families. According to Jordanian government sources, there are 1.3 million Syrian refugees registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Jordan, 656,000 refugees, and 83.3% of the refugees live in Jordan outside of the camps, while 16.7% live in the Azraq, Zaatari, and Jordanian-Emirati camps<sup>1</sup>.

Jordan has worked to provide humanitarian, medical, and educational services to refugees since the beginning of the crisis and has worked to integrate Syrian refugees into Jordanian society by providing job opportunities in a variety of economic sectors such as agriculture, commerce, construction, industry, and crafts. According to government and UNHCR figures, 62,000 Work permits for Syrians were issued in 2021, the highest annual number since the introduction of work permits for Syrian refugees<sup>2</sup>.

Due to the international community's lack of commitment to the aid agreed upon with Jordan to care for the enormous number of Syrian refugees in the region, which has only committed to 7% and is still declining, particularly in the wake of the Corona pandemic and the Ukrainian crisis, the Jordanian government is having a very difficult time managing the Syrian refugee file. The "Peace Research Institute in Oslo" (PRIO) warned in March that more than half of the Syrians in Jordan live below the poverty line despite cash assistance provided to refugees by the United Nations and other organizations. This will put pressure on Jordan as a host country and increase its burdens in caring for the Syrian refugees<sup>3</sup>.

It is not anticipated that Syrian refugees in Jordan will return to Syria any time soon. This is because "the issue is not only related to the return of the Syrian refugee to his country, but to specifying the exact place to which he will return, and most importantly, preparing that place in the first place, and providing objective conditions for a decent life for him in

---

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/394854/amp?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhsmaBhCvARIsAlbEbH5QvXsKPXSswktKKPdIFKPh6T7oUWqhbG4NI67vUJZ5eEbmiQELuTwQaAqLvEALw\\_wcB](https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/394854/amp?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhsmaBhCvARIsAlbEbH5QvXsKPXSswktKKPdIFKPh6T7oUWqhbG4NI67vUJZ5eEbmiQELuTwQaAqLvEALw_wcB)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/news/press/2022/1/61f03b704.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/506696#ixzz7iLW1hNt2>

his country, including political participation”<sup>4</sup>. Given that Jordan and the UNHCR stressed the importance of voluntary return and refused to compel it, there were 1,895 Syrian refugees who returned from Jordan to Syria in the first six months of 2022. Based on a survey conducted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 46,103 refugees have returned from Jordan to Syria since the border was opened in 2018, including 5,476 refugees from the Zaatari camp.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has worked on the resettlement of Syrian refugees who have sought refuge in Jordan in order to find work or be reunited with their families in countries other than Jordan, such as Canada, European countries, and Ireland<sup>5</sup>. 10% of refugees in Jordan need resettlement, while 1% actually have the opportunity<sup>6</sup>. There is no government directive to resettle Syrian refugees in Jordan or to grant Syrian refugees citizenship<sup>7</sup>.

The following proposed policies were developed based on the information provided above and the analysis of the actual circumstances surrounding the Syrian asylum file:

### **First, a general policy for integrating Syrian refugees into Jordanian society**

Jordan has adopted this policy to integrate refugees into Jordanian society and view them as an opportunity rather than a burden by integrating them into the Jordanian labor market in specific sectors and issuing work permits, but only at certain rates, and sectors such as health, higher education, and tourism have been closed.

#### **• Policy Implementation Procedures**

- Increasing the percentage of work permits issued to Syrian refugees.
- Opening closed economic sectors to Syrian refugees, allocating a quota for them.
- Encouraging investment by Syrian refugees with capital.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/506696#ixzz7iLW1hNt2>

<sup>5</sup> <https://help.unhcr.org/jordan/helpful-services-unhcr-%D8%AE%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9/resettlement-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/394854/amp?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhsmaBhCvARIsAlbEbH5QvXsKPXSswktKKPdIFKPh6T7oUWqhbG4NI67vUZ5eEbmiQELuTwQaAqLvEALw\\_wcB](https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/394854/amp?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhsmaBhCvARIsAlbEbH5QvXsKPXSswktKKPdIFKPh6T7oUWqhbG4NI67vUZ5eEbmiQELuTwQaAqLvEALw_wcB)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/506696#ixzz7iLW1hNt2>

- Converting camps into residential cities for Syrian refugees rather than caravans, and facilitating exit and entry without specific permits.
- Investing in highly qualified craftsmen and professionals and asking them to train Jordanian workers.
- Imposing taxes on workers parallel to the taxes imposed on Jordanians.

### **Advantages and Opportunities of this Policy**

- Investing in refugees as a source of opportunity and skilled labor, as well as alleviating poverty and unemployment among them.
- Reviving the Jordanian economy as a result of capital investments made by Syrian refugees.
- Contributing to community integration and working to improve camp living conditions.
- Improving the competencies of young Jordanian professionals, particularly in the crafts mastered by Syrian refugees, which reduces unemployment among Jordanians while increasing competition for professional job opportunities in foreign markets.
- Investing taxes collected from Syrian labor in developing infrastructure in Jordan.

### **Policy Implementation Challenges**

- Inability to amend labor legislation.
- Inability to amend the investment law.
- The inability of the Vocational Training Corporation to invest in Syrian professionals and craftsmen to provide training programs for Jordanians.
- Security warnings regarding freedom of entry and exit from the camps.

### **Second: General Policy for the Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees to Syria**

**This policy encourages the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to Syria by ensuring their safety and providing them with a decent life upon their return.**

### **Policy Implementation Procedures**

- Best practices for encouraging voluntary and long-term return by providing information and advice on return options and conditions in Syria.
- Advocate for funding to allow the International Organization for Migration and other partners, such as the Jordanian government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, to establish assistance programs for the voluntary return and reintegration of Syrian refugees into their country of origin.
- Providing assistance to reintegrate Syrian refugees into their community in their country of origin upon their return.

- Taking international humanitarian action to ensure that Syrians with specific needs, such as unaccompanied or separated children and individuals with disabilities, are taken care of upon their return.
- Activating the International Organization for Migration's role and accepting its responsibilities for the voluntary return of Syrian refugees, as well as ensuring their safe return, support, and ability to live in Syria.
- The Jordanian government launching awareness campaigns with the help of the international community and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and creating awareness strategies to inform potential Syrian refugee returnees of all their options as well as the situation in their home country, Syria, and any potential risks of unauthorized movement.
- Training government officials and members of civil society on how to guarantee the compassionate and respectable repatriation of Syrian refugees in conformity with human rights norms.
- Conducting risk assessments prior to the return of Syrian refugees to identify international protection needs.
- The international community participating with the government in providing advice on return, and providing answers that meet the special needs of returnees during the return process.
- The international community providing advice and answers to Syrian refugees' questions and needs after their return to their country, following up on them during the post-return period, and establishing monitoring mechanisms for the post-return phase in coordination with the relevant authorities to determine their protection needs in Syria.
- The international community and UNHCR encouraging Syrian refugees to participate in reintegration plans for Syrian refugee returnees, and monitoring reintegration activities that benefit the individual and the local community in Syria.

### **Advantages and Opportunities of this Policy**

- The repatriation of Syrian refugees and their reunion with their families in Syria.
- The opportunity to return to their previous lives, prior to the war and the asylum.
- Obtaining the property they left behind during the war.
- Improving the economic, social and psychological situation of the refugees who have returned to Syria.
- If Syrian refugees who possess factories and capital return, Syria can be rebuilt and its economy will be revived.

- Reducing the obligations Jordan and the international community has for Syrian refugees, as well as the social, economic, and humanitarian burdens borne by Syrian refugees.
- Directing international aid to Syria's reconstruction rather than providing humanitarian aid to refugees in host countries.

### **Policy Implementation Challenges**

- Syrian refugees' unwillingness to return to Syria.
- There is a fear that the environment won't be favorable for Syrian refugees to return in terms of security, economy, and society.
- The international community's inability to fulfill its obligations for the safe return of Syrian refugees and for their return to be dignified and sustainable, such as providing follow-up to their affairs inside Syria, providing protection for them, providing mechanisms for integration into their communities of origin, following up on them after their return, and providing them with economic opportunities.
- Gaps and internal issues might arise between society members and the returning refugees, as well as the Syrian society's unwillingness to embrace Syrian refugees and their return.

### **Third: General Resettlement Policy for Syrian Refugees (Not provided by Jordanian Government); Resettlement in a Country other than Jordan**

The resettlement of Syrian refugees in Jordan is a scenario that the Jordanian government has not yet proposed, but it will be investigated to see if this scenario is proposed. Regarding resettlement, it is a scenario that is currently in effect. People are resettled in nations like Europe, Canada, and Ireland for a variety of reasons, the first of which is to provide job opportunities and facilitate family reunion.

### **Policy Implementation Procedures**

- Amending the law granting non-Jordanians citizenship.
- A government decision to resettle Syrian refugees.
- International community support for this decision, as well as financial and economic assistance to Jordan in order to accommodate resettled refugees by developing economic projects to employ them and Jordanians alike, as well as developing infrastructure and building and developing service facilities to provide appropriate services for refugees and Jordanians alike.
- Finding mechanisms conducted by the International community for resettling Syrians in the host countries, creating job opportunities for these citizens, creating suitable living conditions for them, and working to integrate them into society, particularly in terms of language.

## **Policy Implementation Challenges**

- Inability to amend the law on granting citizenship for refugees.
- The government's unwillingness to resettle Syrian refugees.
- Jordanian society's unwillingness and opposition to the settlement decision—if it is proposed— as well as the government's inability to gain the confidence of the House of Representatives regarding this decision.
- Challenges with refugees and the emergence of an internal conflict in Jordanian society.
- The failure of the international community to uphold its duties and obligations towards Jordan, economically and financially, if this decision is taken.
- Jordan's inability to create job opportunities or develop services, which increases unemployment and poverty and may lead to an internal crisis and deterioration of conditions in Jordan.
- The international community's inability to resettle Syrian refugees and open resettlement opportunities in light of the region's political ramifications, particularly the war on Ukraine, finding job opportunities for refugees, providing them with a decent life, and reuniting them with their families.