Establishment and Development
Baq'a was one of the six original emergency camps established in order to accommodate some of the 250,000 Palestine refugees and displaced persons from the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Between June 1967 and February 1968, refugees fleeing the conflict were housed in temporary shelters located throughout the Jordan Valley; however, they were subsequently transferred to Baq'a when military hostilities escalated in the area.

Baq’a residents were initially accommodated in temporary tents. Between 1969 and 1971, UNRWA substituted these tents with 8,000 pre-fabricated shelters in an effort to shield residents from Jordan’s harsh winter conditions. Today, a majority of the camp’s residents have upgraded their living quarters into more resilient concrete shelters.

Baq’a has become the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s largest Palestine refugee camp, with over 131,630 registered refugees in an area of 1496.6 square kilometers located kilometers north Amman approximately 20 kilometers north of Amman.

UNRWA Services
UNRWA provides a diverse assortment of services in Baq’a Camp. These include education, health, relief and social services and infrastructure and camp improvement.

Education
- 16 schools, which operate on a double-shift system and two are co-educational.
- Nearly 14,823 students in grades 1-10 and 459 educational staff members.

Health
- Two UNRWA health centres serve approximately 139,475 people inside and outside Baq’a Camp.
- UNRWA medical staff provide an average of 75 consultations per day.

Likewise, the implementation of a new version of the UNRWA e-Health system replaced manual, labor-intensive, costly and time consuming processes with a paperless electronic system. The e-Health system reduced the workload of health staff and improved the quality of health assistance mainly by enhancing doctor-patient communication.

In 2020, the UNRWA health programme launched an electronic platform for patients with Non-Communicable Diseases, and Telemedicine Services were introduced at the Agency’s health centres in response to COVID-19 pandemic.
Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP)

Under the RSSP's Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP), 4,876 individuals (1,138 families) -44% are aged below 18-years- registered Palestine refugees in Baq'a Camp live in abject poverty and receive critical needed assistance. UNRWA Jordan Field Office (JFO) has assigned four relief worker to serve and follow up with the registered SSNP beneficiaries reside inside Baq'a Camp.

To improve Palestine refugees' access to services with dignity, in April 2016, Jordan Field Office revised its food distribution programme by introducing e-cards. This modality replaced food with cash assistance which is distributed to families under the SSNP, giving them the autonomy to select their food from predesignated shops according to their individual needs. To date, the percentage of SSN beneficiaries are 4% of the Baq'a camp residents.

The RSSP also provides guidance and technical support to one Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBRC) and one Women's Programme Centre (WPC) in Baq'a Camp. The WPC provides a unique and socially acceptable venue for women to participate in cultural and recreational activities, as well as educational and technical training courses in order to increase their employability and self-confidence.

Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP)

Camps often suffer from dilapidated shelters, inadequate infrastructure and lack of facilities, compromising the Palestine refugees' quality of life. The Infrastructure and Camp Improvement programme was introduced in Jordan in 2007 to address the substandard living conditions in Palestine refugee camps.

UNRWA employs sanitation staff in Baq'a Camp, who play a crucial role in upholding the living conditions for the camp residents by collecting waste, maintaining regular vector control and monitoring the quality of water supplies. The environment health service also works towards reducing the risk of outbreaks of diseases.

Major Socio-Economic Challenges

Baq'a suffers from a number of significant socio-economic challenges. Firstly, unemployment is alarmingly high throughout the camp. 17 per cent of residents are unemployed, ranking Baq'a second of the ten camps in terms of unemployment. Consequently, 32 per cent of the camp's residents live below the national poverty line (814 JD per annum).

Despite its population size, Baq'a has the lowest prevalence of chronic health problems of all Palestine refugee camps in Jordan. While this is reassuring for the present, 46 per cent of residents do not have any form of health insurance to safeguard themselves in the event of future ailments.

Although many residents in Baq'a have made significant strides in transforming their living quarters into more durable structures, comprehensively improving infrastructure and rehabilitating shelters continue to be major challenges for the camp's development.\(^1\)


Camp Map

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united nations relief and works agency for palestine refugees in the near east

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UNRWA provides assistance, protection and advocacy for some 5 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, pending a solution to their plight. The Agency's services encompass education, health care, social safety-net, camp infrastructure and improvement, community support, micro-finance and emergency response, including in times of armed conflict. Through these services UNRWA strives to help Palestine refugees achieve a decent standard of living, long and healthy lives, knowledge and skills and full enjoyment of human rights. These goals are formulated according to the UN criteria for human development.

UNRWA Jordan Field Office, Amman, Jordan