Establishment and Development
Jerash Camp, locally known as Gaza Camp, was established as an emergency camp in 1968 in order to accommodate 11,500 Palestine refugees and displaced persons who fled the Gaza Strip during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. These individuals settled on an area of 0.75 square kilometers located approximately 5 kilometers away from Jerash’s famous Roman ruins.

In order to accommodate these Palestine refugees and displaced persons, UNRWA swiftly created facilities for food aid, sanitation, health services and education. 1,500 tents were replaced with prefabricated shelters in order to shield the residents from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s harsh winter conditions.

Between 1968 and 1971, emergency donations provided the support necessary to build an additional 2,000 shelters. Over the years, many residents have transformed their living quarters by building more durable concrete shelters. Yet many of the new structures still include deadly carcinogens, including asbestos sheets.

Today, there are almost 35,557 registered Palestine refugees in Jerash Camp, rendering it Jordan’s fifth most populous Palestine refugee camp. Furthermore, UNRWA’s installations also provide services for registered Palestine refugees living in the camp’s adjacent neighborhoods.

UNRWA Services
UNRWA provides a number of services to Palestine refugees in Jerash Camp. These include education, health, relief and social services and infrastructure and camp improvement.

Education
- Five schools, out of which four operate on a double-shift system.
- 5,916 students in grades 1-10 and 171 educational staff members.

Health
- One UNRWA health centre serves approximately 31,180 people inside and outside Jerash Camp.
- UNRWA medical staff each provide an average of 80 consultations per day.

With the aim to improve the delivery of health services, in April 2017 UNRWA launched a mobile application to track Maternal and Child Health Records. It allows mothers to easily access UNRWA Health Information System, where they can find medical information on health status and that of their children, as well as appointments and relevant contact numbers.

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. The improved system has decreased the average number of daily medical consultations per doctor, increasing consultation time, decreasing antibiotics prescription rate and reducing the waiting time.

In 2019 UNRWA health department launched the electronic platform for patients with non communicable diseases. In 2020, in response to COVID-19 pandemic, UNRWA started telemedicine services at the agency’s health centres.

Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP)
Under the RSSP’s Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP), 4,308 individuals (835 families) -54% are aged below 18-years- registered Palestine refugees in Jerash Camp live in abject poverty and receive critical needed assistance. UNRWA Jordan Field Office (JFO) has assigned two relief worker to serve and follow up with the registered SSNP beneficiaries reside inside Jerash Camp.
The RSSP also provides guidance and technical support to one Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBRC) and one Women’s Programme Centre (WPC) in Jerash 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 marketability and self-confidence.

**Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Plan (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 Palestinian refugee camps.

REPAC Project (VII) funded by the German Development Bank KfW, is a continuation of an ongoing partnership since 2011. Building on the CIP, REPAC VII is to implement infrastructure improvements in Jerash Camp. The implementation is done in cooperation with the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA).

REPAV VIII, started to implement infrastructure improvement in the camp such as: shelter rehabilitation and roads repair. The project is ongoing - to be completed by April 2022.

UNRWA employs sanitation staff in Jerash Camp, who play a crucial role in upholding the living conditions for the camp residents of 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.

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**Major Socio-Economic Challenges**

The direst socio-economic challenge for the residents of Jerash Camp is overcoming pervasive poverty. Indeed, Jerash Camp is the poorest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, with 52.7% per cent of Palestine refugees earning an income below the national poverty line (816 JD per annum). A significant factor contributing to widespread unemployment and poverty pertains to a majority of the residents’ national status. Around 16% per cent of camp residents are unemployed.

Given that many Palestine refugees from the Gaza Strip do not possess a Jordanian national identification number, they are severely limited in earning a living and accessing educational facilities and national aid programs. ‘Ex-Gazans’, as they are often referred to, constitute approximately 90 per cent of registered Palestine refugees living in Jerash camp. They are also three times more likely to be amongst the poorest citizens in society, surviving on less than USD 1.25 per day.

Around 88 per cent of residents of Jerash Camp lack any form of health insurance to protect them in the event of future costly ailments. Once again, the ambiguous legal status of ex-Gazans means they are barred from accessing government services, such as membership in the Civil Insurance Programme.

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**Camp Map**

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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, microfinance 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