Establishment and Development
Marka Camp, referred to as Hitteen by the Government of Jordan, was established in 1968 on an area of 0.92 square kilometers approximately 10 kilometers northeast of Amman. The camp is locally referred to as Schneller, alluding to the German rehabilitation centre that was established in the area before the camp emerged.

Given its proximity to Amman, there are nearly 61,869 registered Palestinian refugees in Marka Camp. The camp also disproportionately hosts a large number of Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip, commonly referred to as ‘ex-Gazans’.

UNRWA Services
UNRWA offers a variety of services to the residents of Marka Camp, including education, health, relief and social services and infrastructure and camp improvement.

Education
- 10 schools, all of which operate on a double-shift system.
- 93 per cent of students in Marka Camp are enrolled in UNRWA schools.
- 8,430 students in grades 1-10 and 260 educational staff members.

Health
- Two UNRWA health centres serve approximately 114,575 people inside and outside of Marka Camp.
- UNRWA medical staff at Marka and Msherfeh Health Centres each provide an average of 66 and 63 consultations per day, respectively.

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 UNRWA health department launched the electronic platform for patients with non communicable diseases and started telemedicine services 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), 2,657 individuals (614 families) -41% are aged below 18-years-old. registered Palestine refugees in Marka Camp live in abject poverty and receive critical needed assistance. UNRWA Jordan Field Office (JFO) has assigned one relief worker to serve and follow up with the registered SSNP beneficiaries reside inside Marka Camp.

In April 2016, the Jordan Field Office (JFO) revised its food distribution programme by introducing e-cards. The new modality replaced food distribution with cash assistance, distributed to families under the SSNP, giving them the autonomy to select food from predesignated shops according to their individual needs. So far, 630 e-cards have been distributed in Marka Camp.

The RSSP provides guidance and technical support to one Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBRC) and one Women’s Programme Centre (WPC) in Marka 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 Marka 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

Perhaps the most considerable socio-economic challenge in Marka Camp pertains to the deprived socio-economic status of its ex-Gazan residents.

Ex-Gazans possess temporary passports. Without a national identification number, they are not allowed to serve in the majority of public sector positions and practicing professions such as law and dentistry.

They also possess limited property rights and lack access to the Jordanian National Aid Fund, universities, and public health insurance. Hence, the limitations imposed on them by their national status renders ex-Gazans as some of the most disenfranchised and impoverished Palestine refugees in Jordan.

Although the residents of Marka Camp have some of the lowest rates of severe chronic health issues, 58 per cent of residents do not have any form of health insurance to protect them in the event of future ailments.

While Marka Camp has some of the highest rates of enrolment in kindergarten of all ten camps in Jordan, 7 per cent and 4 per cent of residents are illiterate and semi-literate, respectively.