Establishment and Development
Established in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to accommodate Palestine refugees and displaced persons during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Zarqa Camp is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s oldest Palestine refugee camp.

Originally, it housed 8,000 refugees on an area of 0.18 square kilometers near the city of Zarqa. UNRWA replaced the residents' tents with concrete shelters, and over the years, many have taken it upon themselves to unilaterally upgrade their living quarters.

Today, there are over 21,109 registered Palestine refugees in Zarqa Camp. Adjacent neighborhoods have now become de facto part of the camp, and mirrors other urban quarters in the town of Zarqa.

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

Education
- Four schools, which operate on a single-shift system.
- 97 per cent of students in Zarqa Camp are enrolled in UNRWA schools.
- 1,985 students in grades 1-10 and 78 educational staff members.

Health
- One UNRWA health centres serve some 120,502 Palestine refugees living inside and outside Zarqa Camp.
- 9309 patients with non-communicable diseases under supervision (NCDs).
- UNRWA medical staff each provide an average of 74 consultations per day.

Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP)
Under the RSSP’s Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP), 821 individuals (195 families) -45% are aged below 18-years- registered Palestine refugees in Zarqa 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 Zarqa Camp.

In April 2016, the Jordan Field Office (JFO) revised its food distribution programme by introducing e-cards. The new 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. So far, 172 e-cards have been distributed in Zarqa Camp.

The RSSP also provides guidance and technical support to one Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBRC) and one Women’s Programme Centre (WPC) in Zarqa 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 Programme (ICIP)
Early 2017, the Jordan Field Office (JFO) in collaboration with Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme in UNRWA’s Amman Headquarters, has developed a masterplan for the restoration of Zarqa schools compound and the relocation of the Zarqa Area Office. The primary objectives are the repositioning of the bathroom facilities inside of the schools and the merging of the two health centres in order to increase the operational efficiency.

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UNRWA employs sanitation staff in Zarqa 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.

**Refugee Camp Population**

![Graph showing refugee camp population distribution](image)

**Major Socio-Economic Challenges**

Given the age of Zarqa Camp, many residents have cited significant concerns regarding the quality of their living quarters. In particular, noise pollution, low quality piped water and the rising cost of living have all been cited as pressing issues for residents.

Health is another major socio-economic challenge in Zarqa Camp. Approximately 15 per cent of residents suffer from a chronic health problem, making it the second highest of all ten camps in Jordan. Furthermore, statistics show that around 68 per cent of residents do not have any form of health insurance to protect themselves in the event of future ailments.

Poverty remains a primary obstacle in raising living standards for residents. In recent years, around 19 per cent of Palestine refugees in Zarqa Camp earned an income below the national poverty (816 JD per annum).

Finally, Zarqa Camp has some of the lowest academic achievements of all ten camps in Jordan. Zarqa Camp also has the lowest rate of enrolment in kindergarten, with only 28 per cent of children enrolled in full-time programs, and only 83 per cent of residents are literate. Hence, overcoming these challenges is critical to improving the overall standard of life for the camp’s residents.¹