REFUGEE CAMPS AS CITIES

Zaatari Camp: a groundbreaking case study on temporary settlements evolving into permanent urban centres.

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Dedicated to **Kr46m0**

Photographs by Anthony Dawton for The Hope Project in the Rohingya refugee camp at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

ABSTRACT

Migratory movements have been a recurring phenomenon throughout human history. Since ancient times, individuals have migrated in search of better opportunities, security, or to escape conflict and persecution. Nevertheless, the scale and intricacy of contemporary migration movements present an unparalleled challenge.

This thesis focuses precisely on the complexity characterising modern migratory movements. Specifically, it examines the correlation between urban planning and refugee camps, using the Middle East as a case study. The Middle East, particularly Jordan, offers an excellent backdrop due to its long-standing presence of various refugee populations. Palestinian refugees have resided in Jordan for over fifty years, while Syrian refugees have sought shelter there for more than a decade. Therefore, the selection of the Zaatari Camp underscores the necessity of shifting the perspective on camp observation and planning. Established in 2012, the Zaatari Camp has evolved into a proto city, boasting a sophisticated social structure aimed at meeting the needs of its substantial population.

This research primarily investigates the housing strategies currently employed to provide protection for refugees, with refugee camps remaining a prevalent approach. Despite conflicts persisting and becoming increasingly complex in different regions of the world, refugee camps are still often viewed as temporary and emergency solutions. However, the reality is that many camps have endured for decades, accommodating multiple generations of refugees.

Furthermore, this study recognizes the importance of exploring a broader perspective on urban planning within refugee camps. It highlights the temporariness aspect while striving to reconcile the need for short-term solutions with sustainable and dignified living conditions for refugees. By examining the case study of the Zaatari camp in the Middle East and analysing the relationship between urban planning and refugee camps, this research aims to make a theoretical contribution to addressing this complex and pressing challenge. Overall, this research underscores the necessity for a paradigm shift in the management of refugee camps, emphasizing the role of urban planning in providing refugees with decent living conditions. By considering camps as cities and refugees as formal citizens, urban planning can foster a more sustainable and inclusive approach to refugee camp design. The findings of this study aim to contribute to broader discussions and inform future perspectives on the future of refugee camps.

ABSTRACT

I movimenti migratori non sono un fenomeno nuovo nella storia dell'umanità. Fin dai tempi antichi, le persone si sono spostate da un luogo all'altro in cerca di migliori opportunità, sicurezza o per sfuggire a conflitti e persecuzioni. Tuttavia, l'ampiezza e la complessità dei movimenti migratori attuali rappresentano una sfida senza precedenti.

L'interesse della tesi nasce proprio da questa complessità che caratterizza i movimenti migratori contemporanei. Nel dettaglio, la tesi indaga la relazione tra pianificazione urbana e campi profughi, concentrandosi sul contesto del Medio Oriente come caso di studio. Il Medio Oriente, e più in particolare la Giordania, rappresentano un ottimo caso studio in quanto vi sono molteplici popolazioni rifugiate che vivono nel paese da decenni. I rifugiati Palestinesi vivono nel contesto Giordano da più di cinquant'anni; i rifugiati siriani sono accolti nel paese da più di un decennio. In tal senso, la scelta del casto studio di Zaatari Camp rappresenta la necessità di cambiare prospettiva di osservazione e pianificazione dei campi. Difatti, il campo è stato costruito nel 2012 e si può affermare che sia divenuto una città a tutti gli effetti. Nel corso degli anni ha sviluppato una struttura sociale complessa che cerca di soddisfare le esigenze della sua numerosa popolazione.

La ricerca indaga in particolare le risposte abitative che sono oggi adottate al fine di garantire protezione ai rifugiati. Tra le principali vi sono ancora i campi profughi. Nonostante l'aumento della durata e della complessità dei conflitti in diverse regioni del mondo, i campi profughi continuano ad essere spesso concepiti come strutture temporanee e di emergenza. Tuttavia, la realtà è che molti campi profughi esistono da decenni, ospitando diverse generazioni di rifugiati.

Questa ricerca nasce inoltre dal riconoscimento che è fondamentale esplorare una prospettiva più ampia sulla pianificazione urbana nei campi profughi, considerando l'aspetto della temporaneità e cercando di conciliare la necessità di soluzioni a breve termine con una qualità di vita sostenibile e dignitosa per i rifugiati. Attraverso l'analisi del caso di studio del campo di Zaatari nel Medio Oriente e l'esame delle relazioni tra pianificazione urbana e campi profughi, si cerca di fornire un contributo teorico per affrontare questa sfida complessa e urgente.

Complessivamente, questa ricerca evidenzia la necessità di un cambio di paradigma nella gestione dei campi profughi, sottolineando il ruolo dell'urbanistica nel fornire condizioni di vita dignitose per i rifugiati. Considerando i campi come città e i rifugiati come cittadini formali, la pianificazione urbana può contribuire a un approccio più sostenibile e inclusivo nella progettazione dei campi profughi. I risultati di questo studio mirano a contribuire a discussioni più ampie e a informare le prospettive future sul futuro dei campi profughi.

“Being a refugee is much more than political status. It is the most invasive form of cruelty that can be exercised on a human being. You deprive people of their security by putting them at the mercy of very often extremely inhospitable countries.”

Dr. Hanan Ashraw - Head of the PLO Department of Culture and Information

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ZAATARI CAMP:
A CASE STUDY OF THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCCM	Camp coordination and camp management
CEDAW	Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	The Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities
ERP	Emergency Response Preparedness
GBV	Gender based Violence
GoJ	Government of Jordan
GSC	Global Shelter Cluster
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPDs	internally displaced persons
JHCO	Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation
LCSA	Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment
MPAs	Minimum Preparedness Actions
NARE	Needs assessessment for Refugee Emergencies
NFI	Non-Food Items
NRC	National Rescue Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SDC	Site Development Committee
SMA	Site Management Agency
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees

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Photograph by Kevin Frayer | COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

PREMISES

Background of the study

"*The history of mankind begins with a step*" (Khanna, 2021). In fact, it is believed that as early as about 2 million years ago, the first members of the genus Homo migrated from Africa and dispersed throughout most of the old world, reaching as far as South-east Asia. In contemporary times, migration has continues to shape human history. Khanna describes that "*migrants make up a small share of the world's population, but their weight has only grown over time. [...] It would seem, then, that we are more or less where we started, yet today's figure seems to have a much more significant impact. For unlike nineteenth-century migration, today we are dealing primarily with voluntary movement of people between some 200 sovereign states*" (Khanna, 2021).

Humans have migrated throughout history and still migrate for multiple reasons. People move around countries for working, for studying and for tourism. These people choose to move around the world. At the same time, there are people that does not chose to move, they are forced to. They are compelled to move for reasons related to war, persecution, low economic conditions. Moreover, more and more people are moving for the impacts that climate change is having in many countries. Flooding, earthquake, wildfire, drought, tsunami, and many other natural disasters are making some places of the world unlivable.

When it is the case of voluntary movement, borders often appear more open, with countries encouraging migration. However, for those seeking to escape persecution, armed conflict, and the effects of climate change, borders can seem increasingly impenetrable. More and more people lose their lives seeking refuge in a state other than their own, so many are sent back, and so many others do not find a proper welcome upon arrival. It is in fact for this reason that Khanna states "*states have opened up to the (relatively) free movement of goods and capital, but not so much to that of human beings. Migration is one of the most important and sensitive tests of sovereignty: it is about controlling who enters*

and leaves a territory" (Khanna, 2021). Nevertheless, the thirteenth article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared that "*everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country*" (Declaration of Human Rights, Article XIII, 1948).

Rights for refugees and migrants are quite different, as migrants are not recognised as people of concerns. This is so as migrants do not flee from a territory where their life, their physical integrity would be threatened (UNHCR, 2017). Consequently, migrants have less rights than the one refugees have. This is extremely visible in the different way refugees and migrants find protection. In this research, the focus is solely on the protection afforded to refugees. There three main solutions are commonly adopted to protect refugees: repatriation, resettlement (that means taking refuge and moving them to a country where they can enjoy asylum rights), and local integration (which mean integration in the first place of arrival). The present study specifically examines local integration, which involves two distinct physical solutions: providing protection and shelter in planned camps or attempting to integrate refugees into urban or rural areas. Currently, most refugees seek protection in urban or rural areas. They go to inhabit public housing, informal neighbourhoods, or other precarious situations. For instance, in Zurich, refugees are housed in large containers located in the periphery of the city, resulting in a high level of social and physical exclusion. Although, integration may be the objective, it often leads to exclusion from the formal context.

Alternatively, refugee camps serve as another option for local integration. This solution is often adopted in already difficult country contexts and go on to create sorts of ghettos that enclose and to some extent hide refugees within place deemed safe by the host government. Refugee camps are built today as an emergency response to waves of refugees. Temporary settlements are then built, through the support of humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR or UNRWA, that serve as cities for refugees but do not want to be recognized as such. Refugee camps take the form of an urban settlement, encompassing within them all the typical functions of a city, but legally they cannot be. The issue of the temporariness of refugee camps poses several challenges to the pursuit of a dignified life for refugees. At the same time, temporariness implicitly represents every refugee's right to return. However, contemporary history shows how fragile the concept of fragility is; in fact, refugees such as Palestinians or Syrians have been forced to live in refugee camps for over fifty years the former, for over a

decade the latter. While refugee camps must therefore maintain their temporary character for refugees, they must at the same time be able to guarantee a decent quality of life on par with that achievable in an urban setting.

Around the world there are more than three hundred planned refugee camps. Most of them are located within Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Refugee camps are located where the most prominent and longest human crisis are happening. Bangladesh is hosted thousands of Rohingya refugees; this is one of the largest exoduses of refugees witnessed in recent decades. The Syrian civil war is causing millions of refugees that find themselves escaping in Middle East countries as Jordan, Lebanon or Turkey. The Israel-Palestine conflict is forcing Palestine refugees to escape since more than fifty years. All these crises are getting longer and longer.

For this research it was decided to focus on the context of the Middle East. This is so as there are several conflicts that are showing the fragility of the idea of temporariness that encompass the refugee status. The MENA region has witnessed numerous forced movements of population. Starting with modern Turkey, which was created by the expulsion of large numbers of non-Turkish people from the Ottoman Empire. The Lebanese civil war (1975-1991) led to the exodus of around a quarter of the Lebanese population. The sanctions imposed on Iraq caused many Iraqis to flee the country. The Syrian crisis has affected the region for over a decade and remains one of the world's greatest challenges. The crisis has resulted in the largest influx of refugees in the world, as well as the largest population of internally displaced people. Countries neighbouring Syria, such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, have taken in thousands of Syrian refugees. The conflict in Yemen has also led to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Today, some 23.4 million Yemenis (about 73 per cent of the population) remain in need of UNHCR humanitarian assistance. The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the ensuing war in 1948 led to protracted and politically disastrous waves of refugees. The presence of refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza has resulted in the forced displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians. The Palestinian issue continues to affect the region, with thousands of Palestinian refugees still living in camps.

From this context the proposed research emerged. It emerged from the inevitability of mass migrations and from the need of understanding how mass migration is related to urban planning. As Khanna wrote, "*if you don't care about migration, migration cares about you*" (Khanna, 2021).

Research aim and research question

Migration movements have a strong physical impact on the place of arrival. As seen, refugees find refuge in urban and rural settings or in planned camps. Both choices involve a modification of formal space with the goal of creating places for shelter. The research, focused on refugee camps as they represent a closed city within impassable walls. The planning of refugee camps takes place in a sense exactly as the planning of a city takes place. Infrastructure and service networks are built, housing is planned and then functional spaces such as schools, churches or recreation centres are inserted.

However, the formal city is an open place, a place where citizens are free to move in and out of the city as they wish. Refugee camps are not. They are closed places, places where those who live there lose any right to movement. They are places where citizens depend on aid from outside the camp and aid from humanitarian agencies. Above all, however, refugee camps are places built as temporary structures. Facilities that must provide shelter for a short period of time. The temporariness with which the camps are built results in the development of a city within which the quality of life is low, if not at times insistent.

The goal of the research is therefore to understand how urban planning, in its more theoretical and more practical aspects, can become an essential tool in camp planning. The emergency character with which camps are built cannot be the excuse for planning a lowly place. In fact, urban planning can make use of theories to show that even in relation to the emergency a more dignified response is possible. At the same time, temporariness cannot be a limitation in field development.

For these reasons, the questions the research attempts to answer are:

- *Are refugee camps still temporary structures?*
- *Can refugee camps be considered cities? If so, how can the temporariness of refugee camps be balanced with a decent quality of life?*
- *What is the relationship between urban planning and refugee camps?*
- *What is the future of refugee camps?*
-

Research structure and research methodology

In order to answer these questions, the thesis is structured into five main chapters. The first two - refugees and refugee camps - play a purely theoretical role. They lay the groundwork in order to really understand the world revolving

around the topic. In fact, when discussing and studying a topic such as migration, it is necessary to understand and study the political, economic, social, physical but above all legislative implications. In fact, it is not possible to think about designing a refugee camp or more generally think about the topic if one is not aware of the legislative apparatus that protects refugees. At the same time, in order to understand the impact that migratory movements have on society and the world more generally, it is important to conduct quantitative analysis by going to investigate the number of refugees and the number of camps present today. This analysis was also useful in determining the case study that goes into the third chapter. It was chosen to analyse the Middle Eastern context in when history has repeatedly shown the fragility of the temporary concept. Starting with Palestinian refugees and ending with Syrian refugees, the Middle East is one of the regions in the world that hosts the most refugees and is especially one of the areas of the world that has the longest-running refugee camps. Among them is Zaatari camp, which was chosen as a case study. Through the analysis of Zaatari camp, it was possible to pose reflections that attempted to answer the research questions. The fourth chapter, then attempts to investigate the role of temporariness by which refugee camps are constructed and whether or not it is possible to define city refugee camps. At the conclusion of the thesis, some reflections on the future of refugee camps are posed.

The research was conducted primarily through objective analysis based on readings of academic papers and the so-called grey literature-that is, all those reports produced by humanitarian agencies or governments. The research was also supported by interviews conducted with people who have worked or still work in the camps. The following were interviewed:

- **Francesco Tonnarelli:** Urban and Regional Planner at UN-Habitat
- **Marcello Rossoni:** Head of Field Office - UNHCR Milan, Italy
- **Igor Malgrati**: Regional Water and Environment Advisor for the Middle East - International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- **Davide Nicolini:** Water and Habitat Project Manager - International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- **Maroun Sader:** Assistant Information Management Officer - UNHCR, Lebanon
- **Lina Younis:** Shelter Associate at UNHCR, Amman (Jordan)

It was not possible to investigate the issues directly in the field. Therefore, in order to make up for this shortcoming, a part of the analysis was carried out through watching documentaries that recounted refugee life and life inside the

Theoretical framework

REFUGEES

REFUGEE CAMP

CASE STUDY

Syrian Crisis
Jordan
Zaatari camp

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Are refugee camps still temporary structures?

Can refugee camps be considered cities? If so, how can the temporariness of refugee camps be balanced with a decent quality of life?

What is the relationship between urban planning and refugee camps?

What is the future of refugee camps?

Urban planning and refugee camps

EXISTING REFUGEE CAMPS

FUTURE REFUGEE CAMPS

FINAL REFLECTION

camps. From this perspective, the most illuminating was Human Flow which is a documentary film directed by Ai Weiwei on the current global refugee crisis.

The research aimed to show how urbanism and refugee camps are two very closely related elements. The goal was to show how urbanism can be a useful tool to make people understand the need for a paradigm shift in the management of refugee camps. It was intended to show that as much as refugee management is obviously linked to political issues and positions, urbanism objectively and scientifically highlights the need to consider camps as cities and refugees as formal citizens. The research thus wants to be able to be the basis for carrying forward a broader reflection on the future of refugee camps.

01

Photographs by Kevin Frayer | COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

From definitions to data:
exploring the complexities of the refugee status

"Being a refugee is much more than a political status. It is the most invasive form of cruelty that can be exercised on a human being. One deprives the person of his or her security, placing that person at the mercy of countries that are very often extremely inhospitable."

Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Head of PLO Department of Culture and Information

This chapter is divided into four main sub-chapters, each dealing with a specific aspect of the issue.

The first sub-chapter examines the historical background of refugee profiles, beginning with the aftermath of the Second World War and the displacement of European populations. The chapter highlights the importance of the UN General Assembly Resolution on Refugees and the document's initial definition of a refugee. It also discusses the distinction between different categories of people leaving their countries, such as asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons.

The second sub-chapter then discusses the international legal framework for the protection of refugees. It highlights the complexity of the issue due to divergent state policies and the absence of a unified body of international law. However, it recognises the 1951 Convention as a fundamental and widely accepted instrument for the protection of refugees. Examples of regional conventions, such as the OAU Convention in Africa and the Cartagena Declaration in Latin America, are also mentioned.

The third sub-chapter then examines the role of UNHCR and its network in refugee protection. Cooperation between UNHCR and other international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is highlighted, demonstrating the diversity of actors involved in refugee management.

The final last sub-chapter, analyse refugee data, including movements and conflicts throughout history. It acknowledges the historical nature of human migration and briefly discusses the challenges faced by refugees and the importance of understanding their movements in the context of conflict.

Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the legal framework, actors and data related to the protection and management of refugees. It sets the stage for the subsequent analysis of refugee camp planning, considering the complexity and importance of the factors discussed.

1.1
Understanding the refugee status: definitions, rights, and categories

The first refugee profile was defined with the end of World War II and is closely related to the European populations that were displaced during the war. The first official UN document to recognise the refugee problem was one of the first resolutions of the UN General Assembly - The Refugee Question (1946). The document first of all emphasises the importance of the early return of refugees to their country of origin, in fact it stresses that "*that genuine refugees and displaced persons constitute an urgent problem which is international in scope and character; that as regards displaced persons, the main task to be performed is to encourage and assist in every way possible their early return to their country of origin*". Beyond that, it provides an initial definition of a refugee, which is identified as one who has left or is outside his or her country of origin and who belongs to one of the following categories: victims of either the Nazi regime, the fascist regime or the regimes that participated in World War II, persons who were considered refugees before the outbreak of the war because of race, religion, nationality or political opinion. In addition, the term refugee was also applied to those who, residing in Germany and Austria and being of Jewish, foreign, or stateless origin, were victims of Nazism. Unaccompanied children and war orphans also fell within the definition of refugees. Of these children, those aged 16 and under were to receive priority assistance. In contrast, displaced persons were defined as those who were forced to leave their previous residence because they were forced into forced labour or were deported for racial, religious, or political reasons.

With the creation of the new United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) agency, there was a need to eliminate ambiguities in the refugee definition. This need led to the adoption of the Convention Relating the Status of Refugee (1951). The 1951 Convention defined that a refugee person is "*someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion*" (Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugee, Article I, 1951). In fact, the Convention as an instrument made subsequent to World War II was originally limited to persons who were fleeing events that occurred prior to January 1, 1951, and were within Europe. The Convention remained in action as it was first defined

Fig. 1. A queue for food aid from a local NGO after arriving from Myanmar at the Balukali refugee camp | Source: Photographer Kevin Frayer

since 1967, when through a protocol the geographical and temporal limitation were eliminated.

The definition that the law proposes emphasizes the importance that it plays in protecting people from political or other forms of persecution. It is also emphasized that to be defined as a refugee is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution and reasons relating to race, nationality, membership in a particular social group, religion or political opinion. The only case for which the Convention is not applied is for those for whom there are reasons to believe that they have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity. In addition, the Convention is not applied to those who are already under the protection of other United Nations agencies. For example, Palestinian refugees are not covered by this Convention because they are already under the protection of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Beyond that, the Convention deliberates a fundamental principle: the principle of non-refoulement. This implies that states parties to the convention have an obligation not to return a refugee to his or her country of origin or to another territory where he or she would run the risk of persecution.

In addition to the important role this convention plays in protecting those fleeing war or persecution, it is an important tool in differentiating between different categories of people who leave their countries. Indeed, there are multiple situations where terms such as refugee, migrant, asylum seeker... are used as synonyms. The use of these terms as phenomena fosters a general confusion

among the different categories of people leaving their country of origin. In fact, people who flee because of persecution or war are, as mentioned, refugees who are protected by the 1951 Geneva Convention. In contrast, those who voluntarily leave their countries in search of better living conditions, but without a well-founded fear of persecution, are referred to as migrants. In the World Migration Report compiled in 2022, the IOM specifies that "*migration is the process of moving from one place to another. To migrate is to move, whether from a rural area to a city, from one district or province in a given country to another in that same country, or from one country to a new country. It involves actions. In contrast, a migrant is a person described as such for one or more reasons, depending on the context*" (IOM, 2022).

It is important to distinguish between the two categories, since with regard to migrants, states enjoy a margin of discretion in restricting and controlling the entry of foreign persons into their territory. In contrast, refugees enjoy complete protection (Moldovan, 2016).

Thus, the official definitions for defining those who leave their country are as follows (UNHCR, 2014; UNHCR 2017):

- ***Asylum seeker:*** is a general designation referring to people who seek protection internationally. It is important to note that not all asylum seekers will later be recognized as refugees. That said, international law provides that those who apply for asylum should not be sent back to their country of origin until the claim has been processed. Usually, when the asylum system is fair, people who are aware that they are not refugees have little reason to apply;
- ***Refugee:*** a person who has left his or her country and cannot return because of a serious threat to his or her life or freedom. As mentioned, the legal definition of the term is contained in and protected by the 1951 Convention;
- ***Migrant:*** is a person who moves from his or her country of origin not so much because there is a direct threat to life or liberty. Migrants move for work, education, or other personal reasons. Migratory movements are often understood to be primarily a socioeconomic phenomenon;
- ***Internally displaced:*** these are people who have not crossed the international border and in fact remain within their own country. They are, however, fleeing wars or forms of persecution, often perpetrated by their own government. Internally displaced persons are often misidentified as refugees, but in fact UNHCR humanitarian law is not specifically about them.

As anticipated, the differentiation between the various categories is in this thesis necessary to understand what rights are enjoyed by people moving from their country of origin. In fact, refugees, being protected by a convention that guarantees several rights, have access to greater protection than, for example, migrants. Among the various forms of protection and humanitarian aid guaranteed to refugees is the securing of a place to live. For this reason, in fact, refugee camps are built and planned to provide those who find themselves without a home with a safe place where they can start a new life.

1.2
Considering the complexities: laws and conventions in refugee protection

The subject of migration and refugees is very complex; among the various reasons for this is the fact that the movement of migrants and refugees involves the interaction between very different States. Internal state policy is not the same for all, and in fact it is difficult to have a unified view of the fate of refugees and migrants. Some states are historically more welcoming than others. There is therefore no unified body of international law regarding the protection and reception of refugees and migrants. However, there is a complex and overlapping set of policies, laws and conventions that have developed since the end of World War II. This system aims to regulate the movement of refugees and to ensure the definition of who has the right to be identified as such (Kennedy, 2018).

At the international level, the most important convention is the aforementioned Convention relating to the Status of Refugees drafted in 1951 and its consequent 1967 Protocol; these, as seen, define the term refugee and the duties of refugees and the responsibilities of states towards them. To respond to state specificities, every state in the world has developed regional laws and standards regulating refugee protection.

Da Costa attempted to provide a categorisation of the legislative instruments that have been developed over the past decades, and defined a list of nine possible categorisations (Da Costa, 2006):

- International law and regional instruments
- National laws and regulations
- Refugee camp regulations
- Customary or traditional refugee rules
- Gender roles and expectations
- Laws and regulations developed by the government or political parties in exile
- Religious law
- Internal committee rules
- Codes of conduct.

It is therefore not possible to draw up a complete list of all laws concerning the

Fig. 2. The 1951 Refugee Convention | Source: UNHCR website

reception and protection of refugees, nor is it the appropriate context . However, it is considered interesting to list some of the most important laws or conventions that have been drafted over the past century. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the types of instruments that are adopted to protect refugees.

Among the most important conventions is the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969). This convention developed as a result of the conflicts that led to the end of the colonial era in Africa. These conflicts resulted in large-scale refugee movements. Hence, the adoption of the 1967 Protocol was deemed necessary in the first place, but also the drafting and adoption of the OAU Convention. The latter confirms the 1951 Convention as the fundamental instrument on the status of refugees and adopts the refugee definition. However, the OAU Convention, broadens the definition of a refugee to include any person forced to leave his or her country because of "*external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events that seriously disturb public order in part or all of his or her country of origin or nationality*" (OAU Convention, 1969). Consequently, there are more categories of people in Africa who are considered to be entitled to the protection that refugees have (UNHCR, 2017).

Another important document is the Declaration of Cartagena (1984) which discusses the protection of refugees in Latin America. It too determines the fundamental role played by the 1951 Convention, which again becomes the instrument to refer to in refugee protection. What is interesting about this

document is that many South American countries have incorporated it into their legislation (UNHCR, 2017).

In the European context, a system of laws and conventions has been developed since 1999 based on the application of the Geneva Declaration (1951 Convention). The main legislative instruments that have been developed are four: temporary protection; reception of asylum seekers; obtaining refugee or subsidiary protection status and the rights and status to which beneficiaries are entitled; and standards for asylum procedures (UNHCR, 2017).

As anticipated, it is not easy to define a single policy regarding refugee protection at the international level. States are free to choose the degree of reception they wish to grant or not grant to refugees. It is clear, however, that in almost every global context, the 1951 Convention is adopted as a necessary and fundamental instrument in the protection and recognition of refugees. This brief analysis has merely served the role of demonstrating that although the world appears to be extremely divided in its handling of refugees, there seems to be a common understanding of who the refugee is and what his or her rights are. The application of this vision in reality is obviously different.

Fig. 3. The High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadruddin Aga Khan (right) and OAU Secretary General Mr. Diallo Telli at the signing of the OAU Convention on 13 June 1969 in Geneva, Switzerland | Source: UNHCR website

1.3
The multi-faceted network of refugee support: exploring actors

The assistance, protection and reception of refugees needs the support of international and non-international organisations to ensure its success. The world of actors dealing with refugees is a complex one, and it varies from state to state. The actors involved range from the international to the local/sub-local scale. Each state refers to international actors and then develops a network of small-scale actors that deal with the specificities and needs of the place in which they operate. It is interesting to show here which are the main actors dealing with refugee management, as they will be in parts the same as those dealing with refugee camp management. It is not easy to list all the actors involved but it is possible to define a general framework.

At the international level, the actor playing the main and fundamental role is the United Nations. There are multiple institutes under the mandate of the United Nations that deal with refugees; the most prominent is certainly the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This was established after the Second World War and its initial task was to help the millions of uprooted people in the aftermath of the war in order to find them as permanent a solution as possible. Initially, UNHCR was given three years to complete the task; as refugee crises around the world increased, the mandate was renewed year by year. In 2003, the UN General Assembly decided to make UNHCR a permanent institution. Today, UNHCR is one of the leading humanitarian agencies in the world and has provided assistance to more than 50 million people in recent decades.

Other agencies that collaborate with UNHCR in the protection of refugees are (IOM, 2022; UNHCR, 2017):

Table 1. Agencies supporting UNHCR in protecting refugees | Source: IOM, 2022 and UNHCR, 2017

CATEGORY	AGENCIES	ABOUT THE AGENCY
UN Secretariat Bodies		
	Chief Executives Board Secretariat (CEB)	It is the highest-level coordination forum of the UN network. Its responsibility is to be an international coordination mechanism that can provide guidance.
	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)	DESA works to find common solutions to the most pressing problems facing the world. Beyond this, the agency is committed to helping countries implement national actions in the economic, social, and environmental spheres

	Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)	The office has the role of facilitator to improve collaboration between the pillars of peace and security and the wider UN system. Promoting actions, policies, and guidelines in support of peace.
	UN Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC)	The alliance was established to form a group of experts to explore the roots of polarisation between societies and cultures today in order to then recommend a practical action programme to address the problem.
	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	The office provides humanitarian response through coordination, advocacy, policy, information management and humanitarian financing tools and services.
	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	It is the agency that promotes or protects human rights (guaranteed by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights).
Special Funds and Programmes ***(Under the UN General Assembly)***		
	UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)	It is a United Nations fund originally founded to help children from the Second World War. Today, it works in the most difficult places in the world to help disadvantaged children and adolescents and to protect their rights.
	UN Development Programme (UNDP)	The agency works to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. Beyond that, the agency helps countries develop policy, leadership, collaborative and institutional capacities. In detail, the agency's work focuses on sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building, and resilience to climate change and disasters.
	UN Humans Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	It is the Programme for Human Settlements and Sustainable Development. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable countries and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.
Specialised Agencies ***(Under the coordination of the Economic and Social council)***		
	International Labour Organization (ILO)	Its objective is to promote social and economic justice by establishing international labour standards.
	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	It is the specialised agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and air pollution from ships.

	World Health Organization (WHO)	It is the agency that promotes health, keeps the world safe and serves the vulnerable. The goal is for everyone to achieve the highest level of health.
Other entities ***(Under the General Assembly)***		
	International Committee on the Red Cross (ICRC)	It is an organisation whose mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide assistance. The ICRC is also committed to preventing suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.
	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	The IFRC acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of the most vulnerable.
	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	It is a UN body that works to foster the process of growth and development of women's conditions and their public participation.
	World Bank	It is one of the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries Its five institutions share a commitment to reduce poverty, increase shared prosperity and promote sustainable development.

In addition to United Nations agencies, UNHCR works with more than 900 partners including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and governmental institutions. A non-governmental organisation is a non-profit organisation that is independent of states and other governmental organisations. NGOs are usually engaged in humanitarian or social work. The NGOs with which UNHCR cooperates are both national and international. This exchange provides an important forum for networking, dialogue, and exchange of views; in this forum UNHCR acts as an equal partner. In 2016, a list of NGOs that are recognised was approved by the then President of the General Assembly. Among them is for example Open Migration, an NGO created by the Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (CILD), a network of organisations working for the advancement of human rights and civil liberties in Italy. Open Migration is an information project on the topic of migration, which is not intended to be only for specialists but open to all. The aim is to help shape opinions and knowledge on migration. Another example of an NGO working with UNHCR is Caritas Lebanon. Caritas provides economic development, livelihoods, health and social care, education, service to foreign

refugees, emergency and crisis intervention, environmental supervision and protection of the needy. From these two examples alone, one can see that UNHCR works with NGOs of different natures, some working more on the ground, others trying to work on the idea that one has and should have of refugees and migrants.

The analysis of actors serves to understand how complex the refugee aid and protection system is; the actors working to guarantee the rights of refugees are many and work at different levels and in different roles. In order to subsequently analyse how refugee camp planning takes place, it is good to keep in mind who and how they work. This analysis will therefore later be extremely relevant.

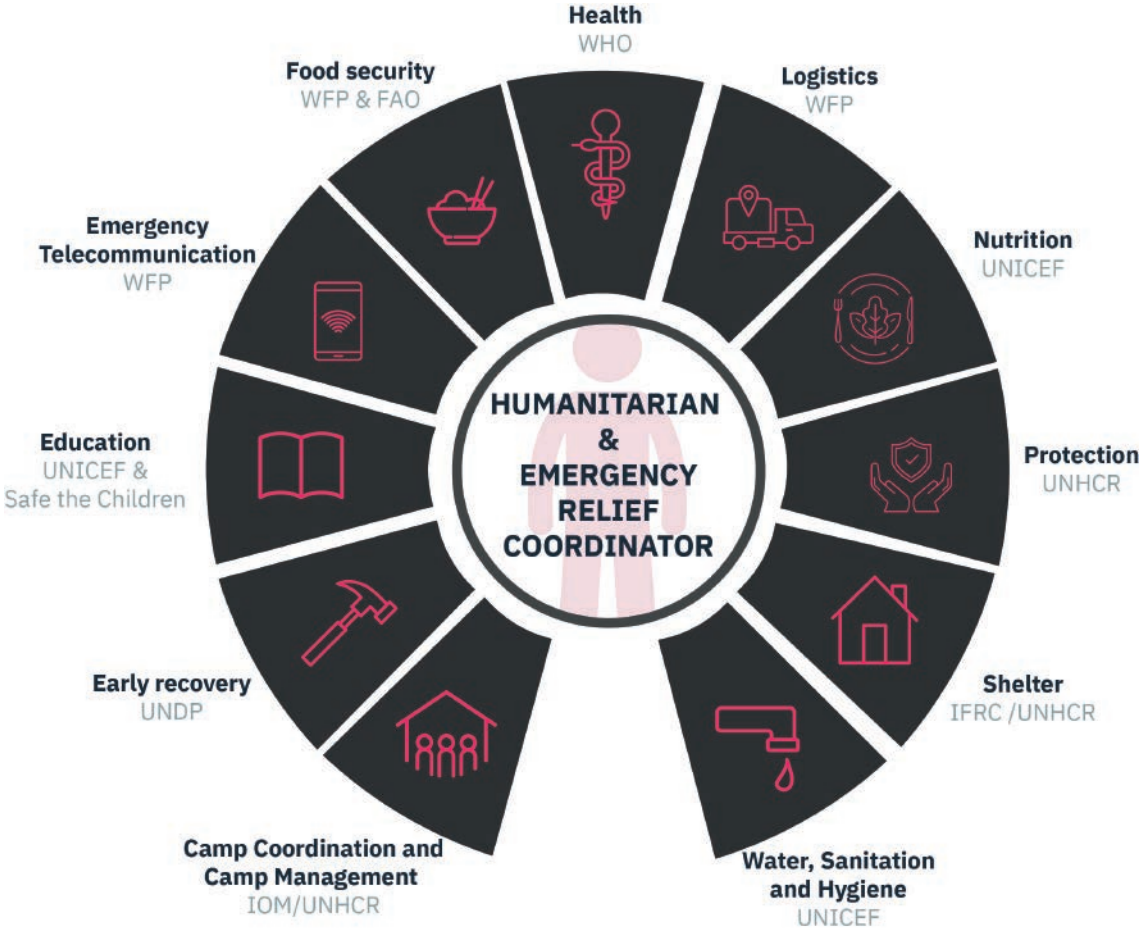


Fig. 4. UN Cluster Approach to the Coordination of Humanitarian and Emergency Relief | Source: UNHCR

1.4
Refugee data: understanding movements and conflict

1.4.1 The history of refugee movements

The history of human beings has been characterised by migratory movements since their birth. Human has always moved in search of better living conditions. The movements that have accompanied the history of human beings have been fairly free, and migrants have rarely been faced with limitations imposed on their flight and search.

Today, the refugee crisis often comes across as unprecedented; however, it is not the first time that huge numbers of people have been forced to leave their homes. For several centuries, migratory movements have been the result of religious and/or racial intolerance. Entire populations and groups of people have been exiled or deported in order to impose a conformity dictated by those in power. Refugee movements, in addition to the reasons mentioned above, are also the result of political choices or territorial partitions. During the last century, in addition to the two world wars, decolonisation and multiple civil wars led entire populations to flee. World War II alone led to around 60 million people being displaced and evicted from their homes. The creation of the State of Israel led to about one million Palestinians becoming refugees. The Japanese invasion of China and the prolonged war of occupation of 1938/45 led to the displacement of about 90 million people. The Partition of India in 1947, after the end of British rule, convinced indigenous political leaders of the need to create two new states: India and Pakistan. The consequence of this necessity was that millions of people moved between the two countries to join their own and thus avoid being persecuted in the other (Gatrell, 2017).

In recent decades, conflicts have become more fragmented, complex and seemingly protracted. The number of interstate conflicts (i.e., conflicts between states) seems to have decreased significantly, while intrastate conflicts (those within states) have increased (IOM, 2022). The reason why direct inter-state conflicts appear to be decreasing is attributable to a combination of factors: the emergence of international norms, the rise of more effective international organisations to enforce these norms, and the fact that some of the antecedents of inter-state conflicts have become less attractive (IOM, 2022). Contemporary conflicts are thus increasingly characterised by civil wars, often also initiated by non-state armed groups, terrorists, and criminal gangs.

In order to understand the complex world of conflicts on a global scale today, here are the major conflicts of the previous and contemporary century that led to the largest refugee crises. The conflicts have been divided into three historical periods and then subdivided by continent.

1.4.2 Examining the global refugee crisis: data ad trends

103 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide. Of these: 53.2 million are internally displaced; 32.5 million are refugees; 4.9 million are asylum seekers; 5.3 million are persons in need of international protection. More than seven out of ten refugees come from just five countries: Syrian Arab Republic (6.8 million); Venezuela (5.6 million); Ukraine (5.4 million); Afghanistan (2.8 million) (UNHCR, 2022).

In short, this is the picture of today's forcibly dispaced worldwide. The analysis of data on migratory movements and refugees is proposed here in order to understand which states are more likely to lose population and which ones are more likely to receive more and more. The analysis of the latter determines which countries must and will increasingly have to prepare to receive people on their territory. The aim here is to propose a brief analysis of the current world refugees' situation.

As anticipated, the number of refugees at the end of last year was 32.5 million (IOM, 2022). Among refugees, the top ten countries of origin are: Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Central African Republic, Eritrea and Burundi. These represent about 80 per cent of the total refugee population. The more than ten-year conflict in Syria has seen the number of refugees reach around 6.7 million. The more recent instability in Afghanistan has also made it one of the countries from which the largest number of people are fleeing; in fact, Afghanistan is the second largest country of origin in the world with about 2.6 million refugees in 2020.

More than half of the refugees found protection and shelter in ten countries around the world: Turkey (3.7 million), Colombia (2.5 million), Germany (2.2 million), Pakistan (1.5 million) and Uganda (1.5 million). In detail, Turkey is the country that host the majority of refugees in the world, the most present population of refugees are Syrians. In contrast, Afghan refugees find protection mainly in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Importantly, the majority of refugees - around 73 per cent - find protection in countries neighbouring the place from which they flee. Another interesting fact is that according to UNHCR,

Major conflicts and refugee crises of XX and XIX century

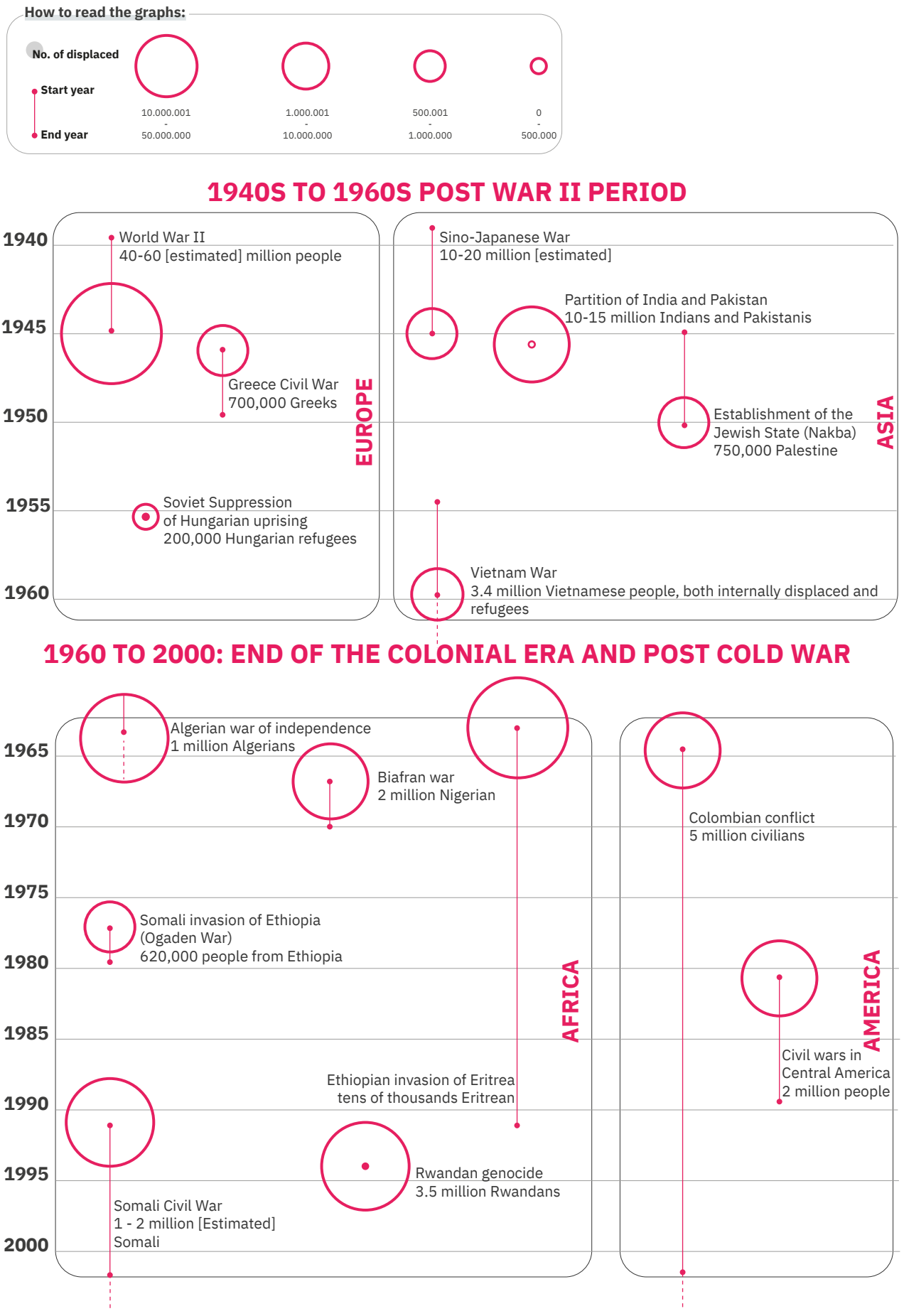
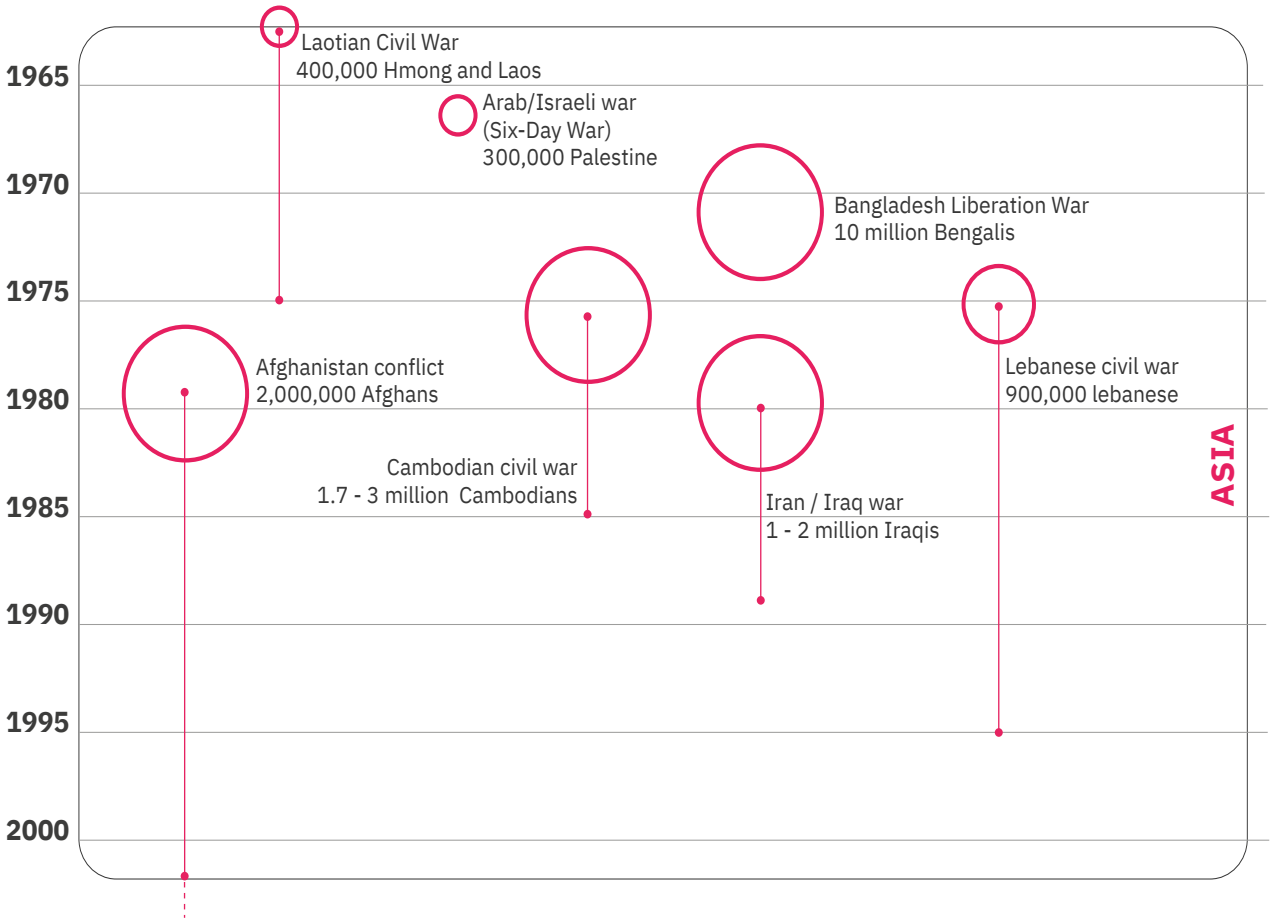


Fig. 5. Major conflict and refugee crisis of XX and XIX century | Source: own elaboration



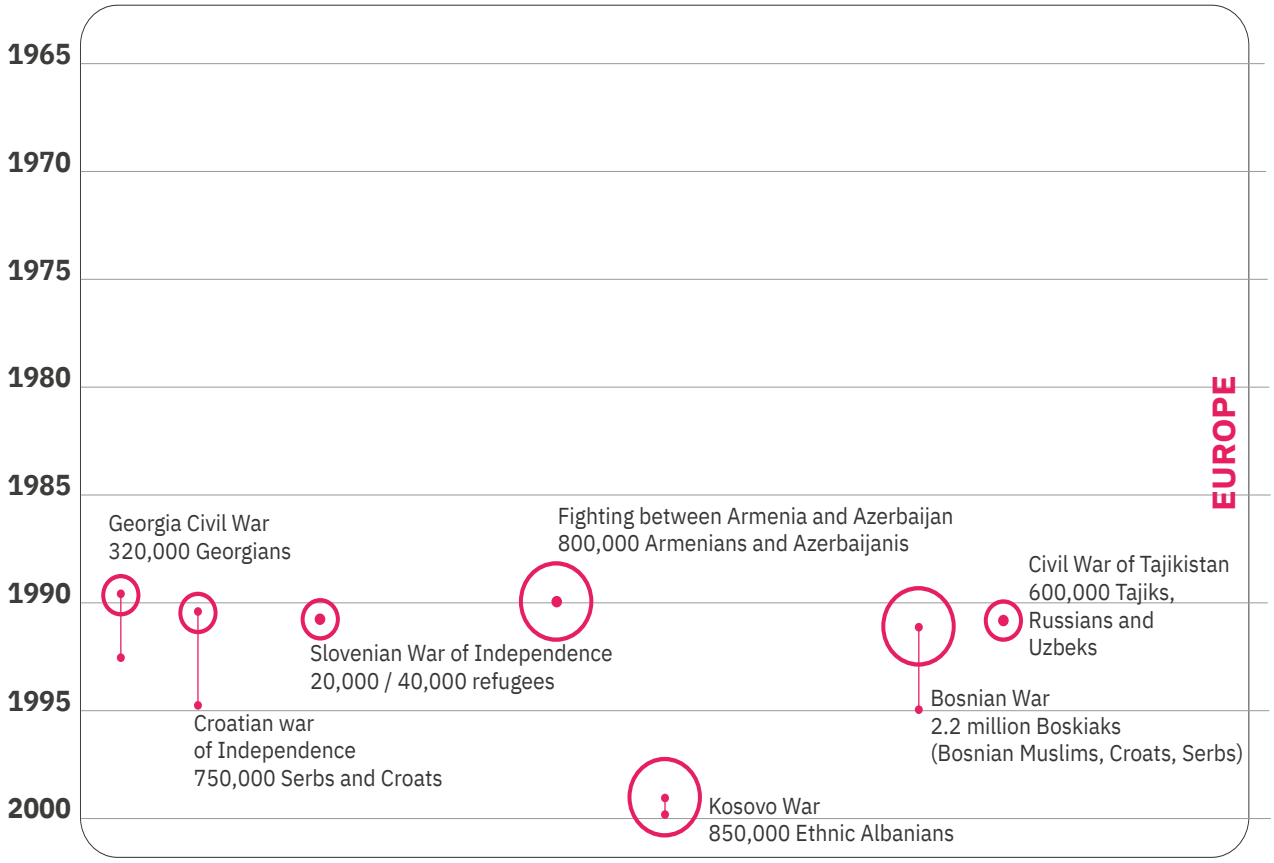
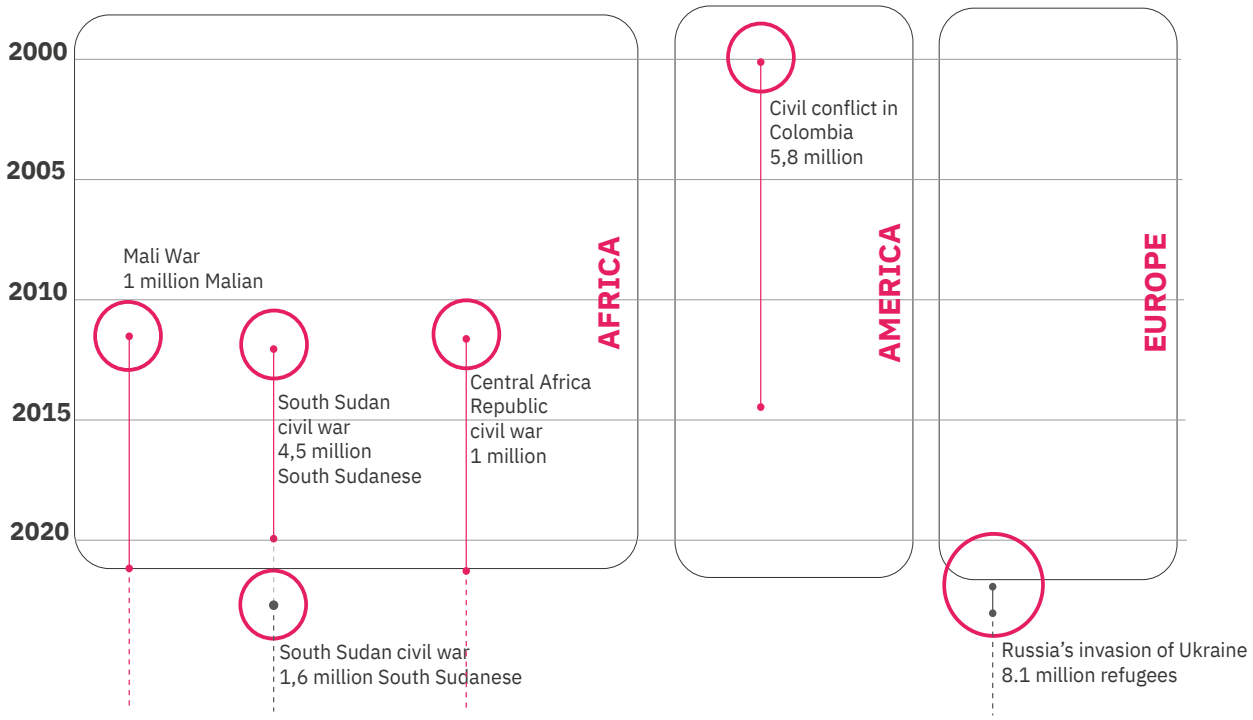


Fig. 5. Major conflict and refugee crisis of XX and XIX century | Source: own elaboration

2000 TO PRESENT: A WORLDWIDE INSTABILITY



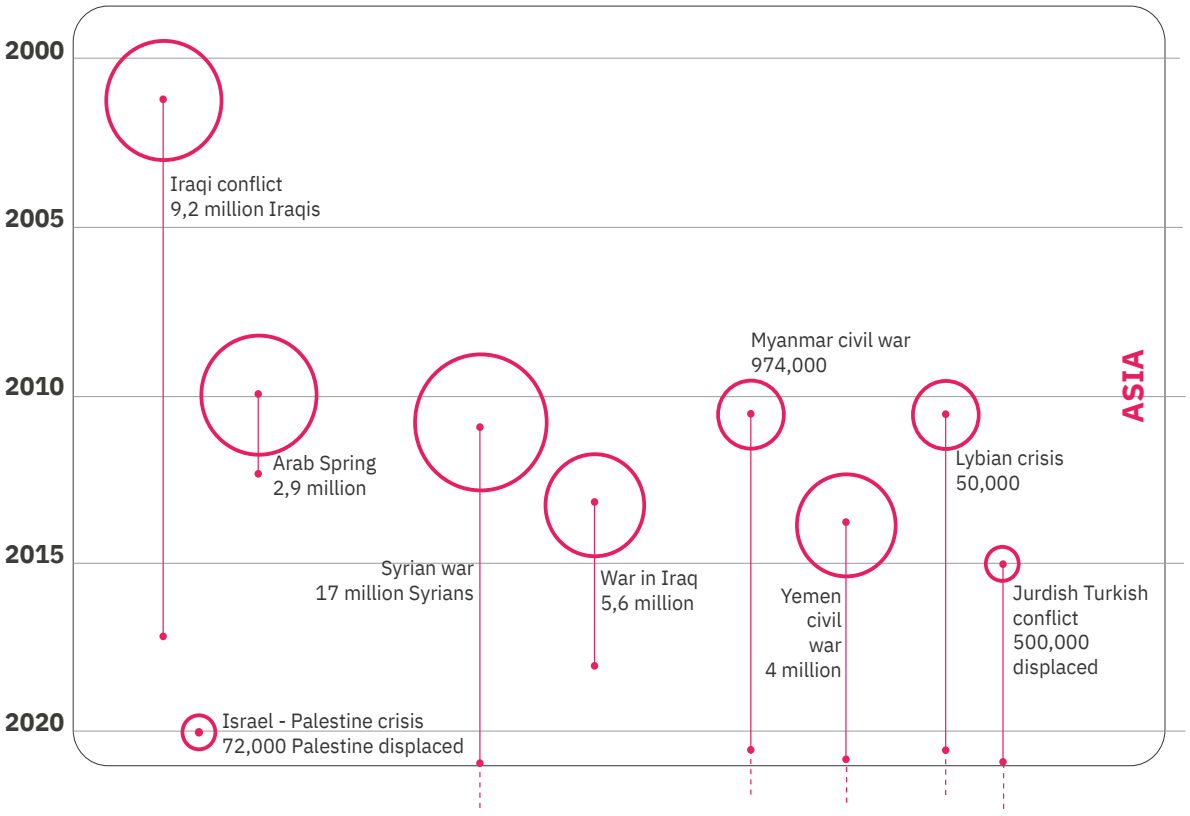


Fig. 5. Major conflict and refugee crisis of XX and XIX century | Source: own elaboration

developing countries - such as Chad, Yemen or Rwanda - hosted around 27 per cent of the global total (IOM, 2022).

Between 2016 and 2020, an increasing number of refugees found a durable solution; the three main solutions are voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration. In 2020, however, only one in a hundred refugees found a durable solution. COVID-19 and the solutions various states have adopted have certainly had a big impact. UNHCR estimates that there were about 34,000 naturalised refugees in 2020; this figure appears to be decreasing compared to the previous year where nearly 55,000 new refugees were naturalised. The majority of naturalisations (85%) took place in Europe; in first place is the Netherlands, which took in approximately 25,700 refugees, in second place is France, which naturalised approximately 2,500 refugees (UNHCR, 2021).

A more detailed analysis of the world's forcibly displaced is offered in the following pages. In order to conduct the analysis, it was decided to adopt the division of territories as proposed in UNHCR's Global Report (2021), which are:

- East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes;
- Southern Africa;
- West and Central Africa;
- the Americas;
- Asia and the Pacific, Europe;
- the Middle East and North Africa.

Fig. 6. Refugees are helped from a boat as they arrive exhausted on the Bangladesh side of the Naf river at Shah Porir Dwip | Source Photographer Kevin Frayer

Forcibly displaced people worldwide: some data

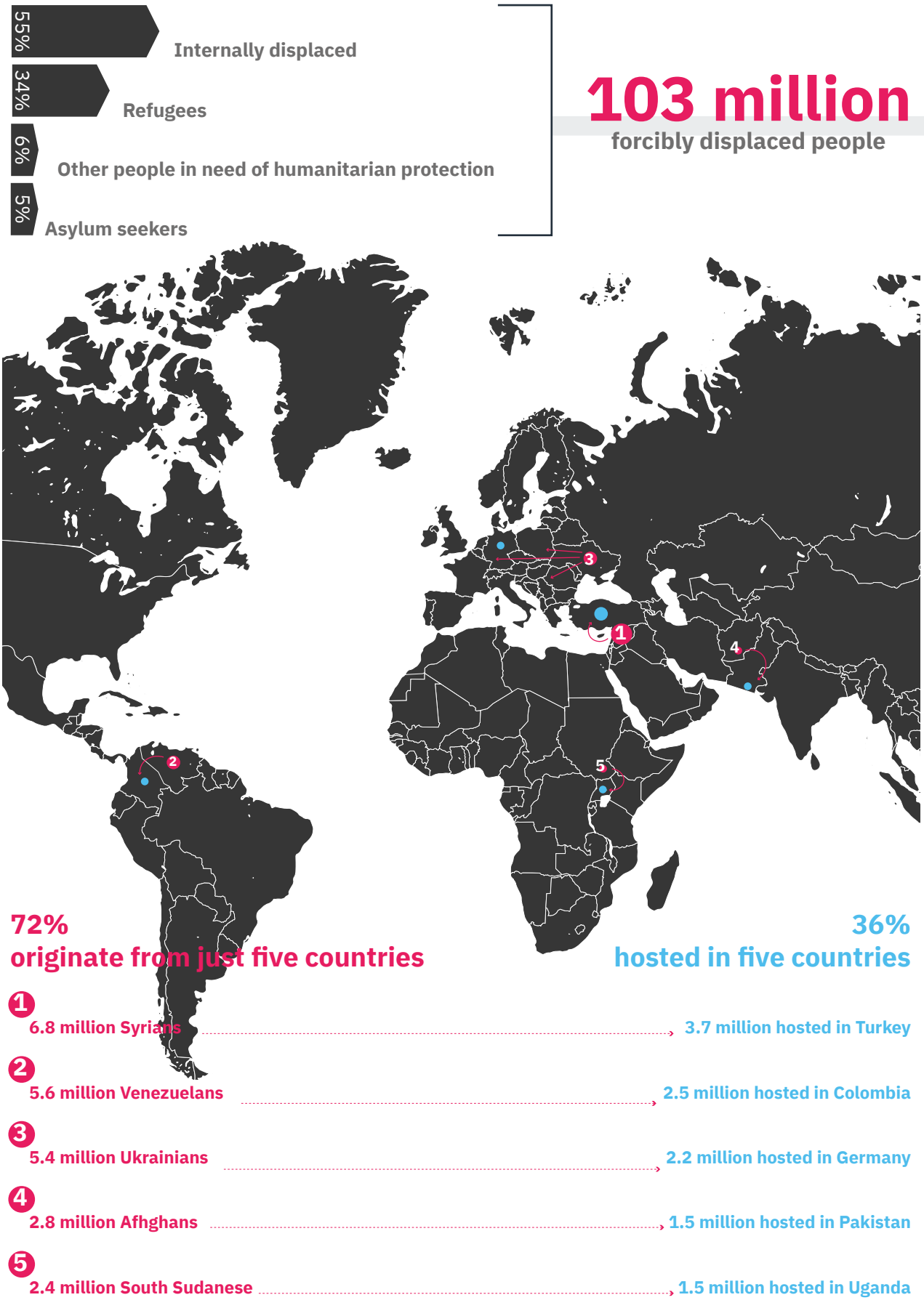


Fig. 7. Forcibly displaced people worldwide: some data | Source: own elaboration, based on data of UNHCR (27th October 2022), https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/ and Global Appeal 2022, UNHCR

REGION NO. 1: EAST, HORN OF AFRICA AND THE GREAT LAKES

KEY DATA:

4.99M Refugees and asylum seekers

11.71M Internally displaced persons

SOUTH SUDAN

2.30 million
refugees in neighbouring countries

2.23 million
internally displaced

BURUNDI

329,779
refugees in neighbouring conutries

75,300
internally displaced

SOMALIA

696,703
refugees in neighbouring countries

2.97 million
internally displaced

ETHIOPIA/ERITREA

147,357
Somali refugees

2.73 million
internally displaced

South Sudan Crisis

The outbreaks of **civil war** in 2013 and 2016 in the Republic of South Sudan have undermined the post-independence development gains it made, as well as making its humanitarian situation worse. More than a decade after independence, South Sudan remains impacted by fragility, economic stagnation, and instability. South Sudan remains in a serious humanitarian crisis. Some **9.4 million people**, 76% of the population, are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023, **an increase of half a million people** compared to 2022.

Somalia Crisis

All parties to the conflict in Somalia **committed violations of international humanitarian law**, some amounting to war crimes. The Islamist armed group Al-Shabab conducted indiscriminate and targeted attacks on civilians and forcibly recruited children. Inter-clan and intra-security force violence killed, injured, and displaced civilians, as did sporadic military operations against Al-Shabab by Somali government forces, troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and other foreign forces.

Burundi crisis

The vulnerabilities of the population in Burundi **has increased compared to previous years** due to the combined effects of recurring natural disasters, such as flooding caused by the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika and Rusizi River, frequent epidemic outbreaks, the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, as well as increasing refugee returns, which are putting pressure on host communities.

Ethiopia/Eritrea crisis

By mid-2022, there were nearly **578,000 Eritrean** refugees and asylum seekers in various countries, with many taking refuge in Ethiopia and Sudan. **High tensions** between Eritrea and neighbouring Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Sudan have previously **escalated into armed conflict**. War between Eritrea and Ethiopia from 1998–2000 resulted in an estimated 70,000 deaths and high levels of international displacement. The two countries are subject to **natural hazards**, including cyclical drought, flooding during rainy seasons, and earthquakes. The high frequency of these leaves little recovery time for affected people.

Fig. 8. Region no.1. East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4871

REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, RETURNEES AND IDPs

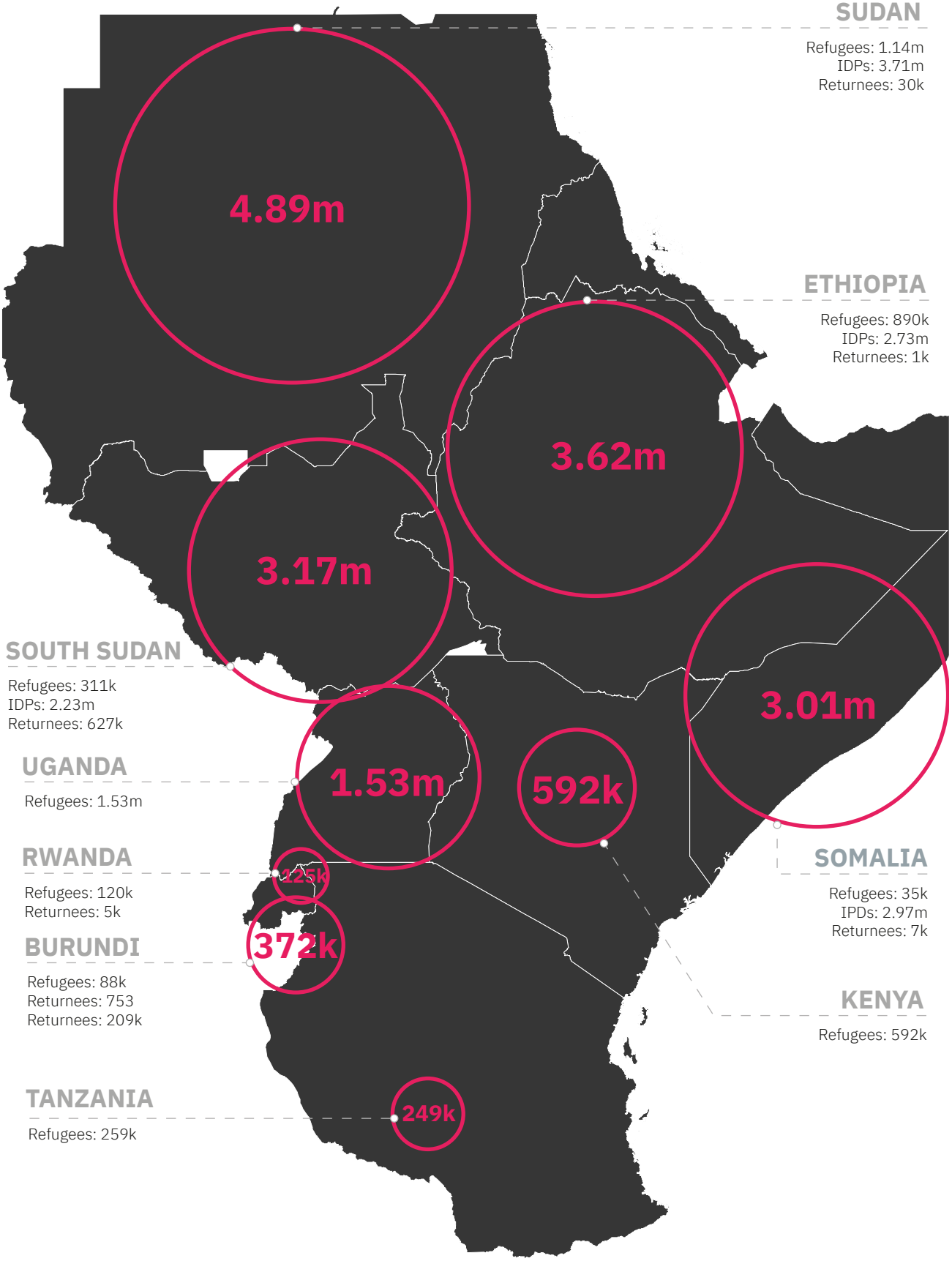


Fig. 8. Region no.1. East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4871

REGION NO. 2: SOUTHERN AFRICA

KEY DATA:

776,386 Refugees

197,751 Asylum seekers

8,326,697 Internally displaced persons and IDP returnees

DRC CRISIS:

922,000 Refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries

468,000 Refugees and asylum seekers in the DRC

5.1 million IDPs in the DRC

Democratic Republic of Congo Crisis (2023 situation)

Wracked by decades of conflict, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) **is the most complex and long-standing humanitarian crisis in Africa** and the fourth largest IDP crisis in the world. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, with violent intersecting conflicts **forcing people to flee their homes and preventing their return**. The situation is exacerbated by **disease** outbreaks and **natural disasters**. At the same time, the DRC hosts half a million refugees from neighbouring countries, three quarters of whom live outside refugee camps and settlements.

Fig. 9. Region no.2: Southern Africa | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4832

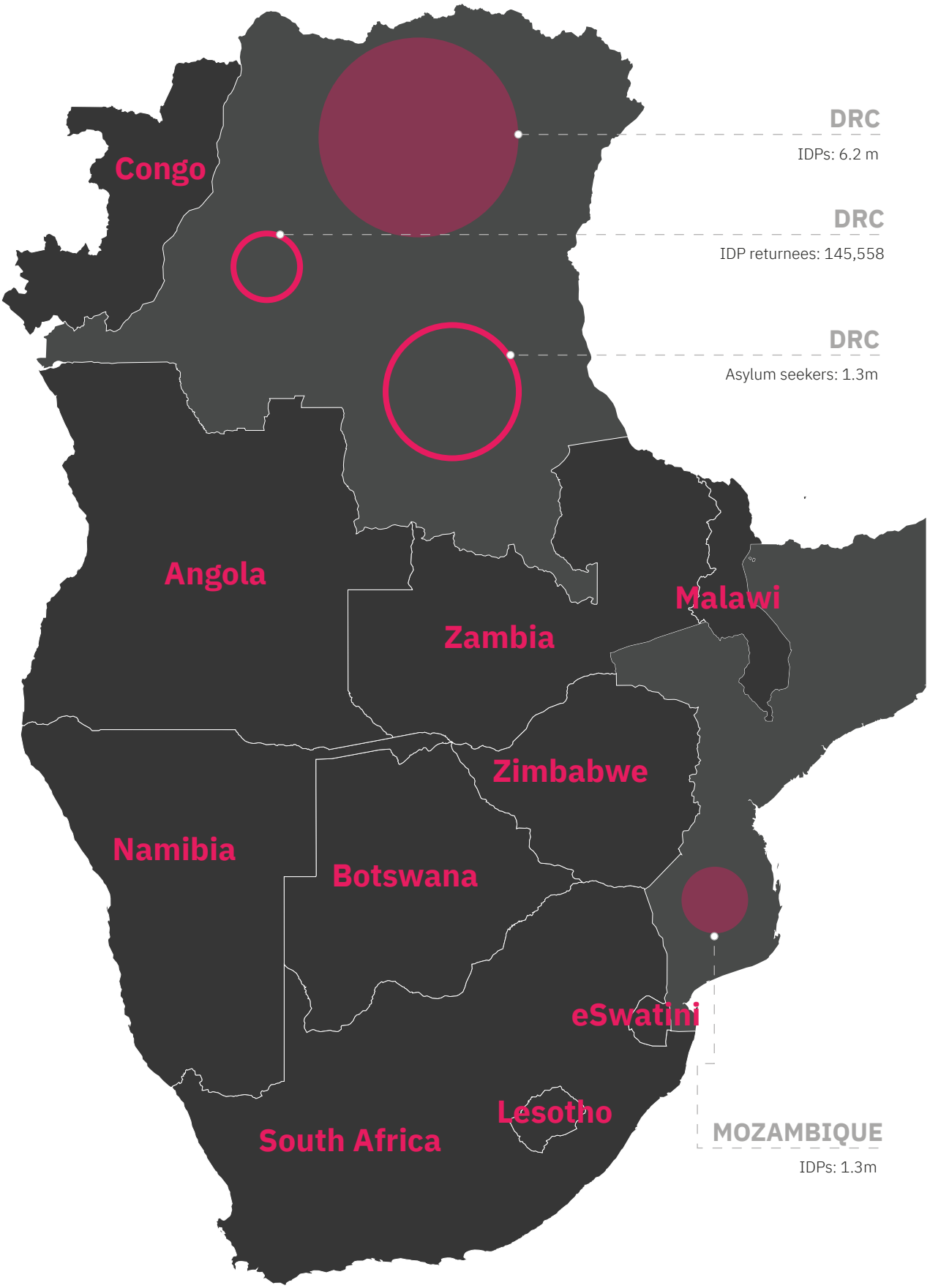


Fig. 9. Region no.2: Southern Africa | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4832

REGION NO. 3: WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

KEY DATA:

1.6M Refugees and asylum seekers

7.8M Internally displaced persons

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

742,834
refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries

483,074
internally displaced

SAHEL

1,116,064
refugees and asylym seekers in neighbouring conutries

3,154,496
internally displaced

CAMEROON

28,256
refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries

36,276
internally displaced

Sahel Crisis

The region has been plagued by **armed conflict, insurgencies, and extremist activities.** Groups like Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and various local militias have been involved in attacks, leading to displacement of communities and widespread violence. Moreover, the region is **vulnerable to climate change**, experiencing recurrent droughts, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and desertification. The Sahel crisis is **one of the fastest growing yet most forgotten crises in the world**. The region is facing unprecedented humanitarian needs due to armed conflict, food insecurity, climate change, disease, loss of livelihoods and political instability , with more than 33 million people in need of lifesaving assistance.

Central African Republic crisis

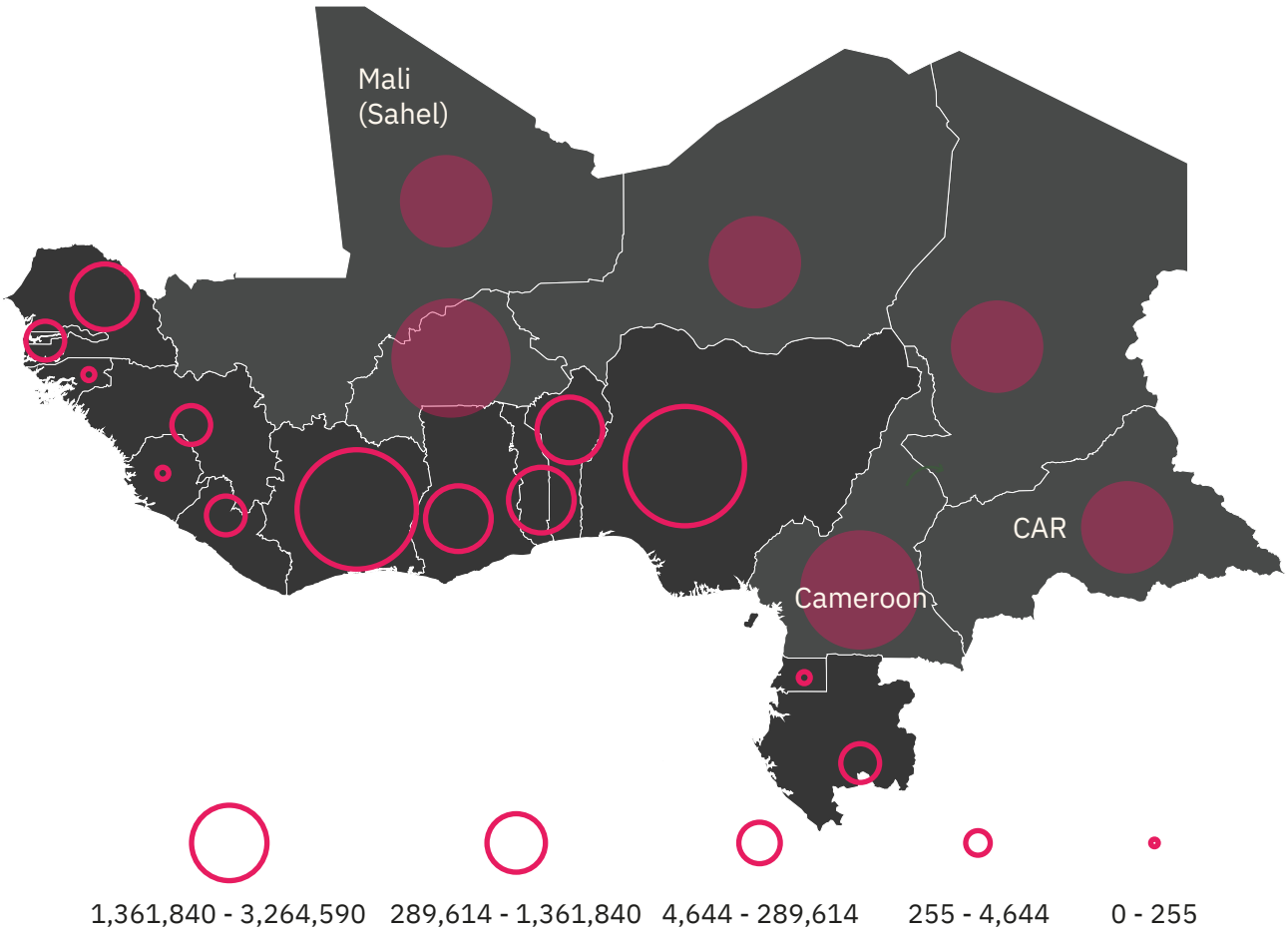
CAR is a small landlocked country that has endured **repeated cycles of violence** since it gained independence from France more than 60 years ago. The current fighting is rooted in the **2013-2014 civil war**, when the Muslim-majority Séléka group staged a coup against the Christian-majority government. The humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) **continues to deteriorate**. As a result of violence against civilians and insecurity in areas outside urban centres, several million people inevitably remain vulnerable and their livelihoods are eroding. In 2023, 3.4 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection, **an increase** of 10 per cent compared to 2022.

Cameroon crisi

Armed groups and government forces committed **human rights abuses**, including mass killings, across Cameroon's Anglophone regions and in the Far North region. As the crisis in the Anglophone regions continued unabated **for the fifth year**, over 712,000 people were internally displaced. The government continued to r**estrict freedom of expression and association**, while the state-sanctioned **persecution of LGBTQIA+ people** intensified.

Fig.10. Region no.3: West and Central Africa | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4832

Emergency Situations: ASYLUM SEEKERS, RETURNEES AND IDPs



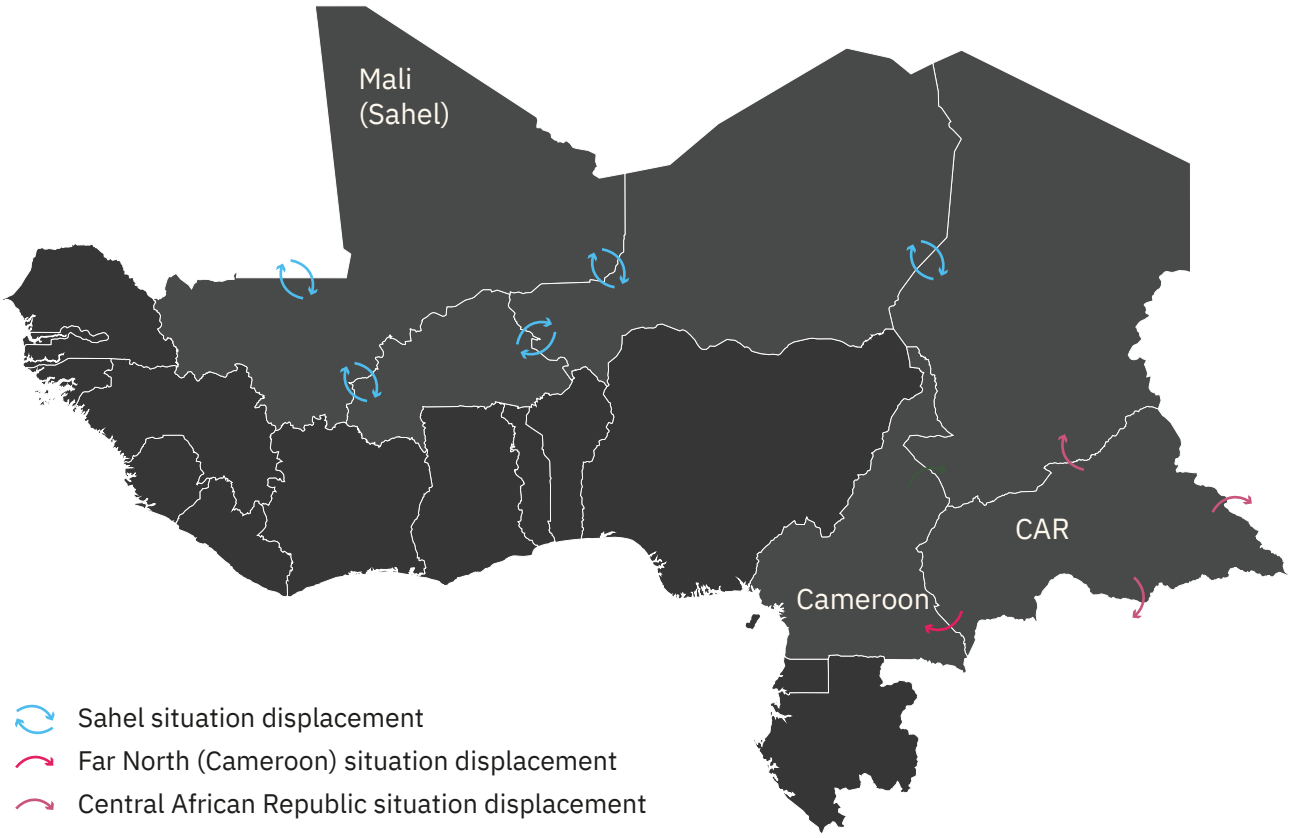


Fig.10. Region no.3: West and Central Africa | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4832

REGION NO. 4: THE AMERICAS

KEY DATA:

900,000 Refugees

3,100,000 Asylum seekers

7,100,000 IDPs

9,400,000 Other people in need of protection

20.6 million
18% of global total

Venezuela crisis

Venezuela is facing a **severe humanitarian emergency**. Venezuela has been **at a political impasse** since Juan Guaidó, the National Assembly president, claimed he was taking power as interim president of Venezuela in January 2019. The exodus of Venezuelans fleeing repression and shortages of food, medicine, and medical supplies represents **the largest migration crisis in recent Latin American history**.

Colombia crisis

The peace accord in 2016 between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government ended a five-decades-long armed conflict and brought an initial decline in violence. But **conflict-related violence has since taken new forms, and abuses** by armed groups, including killings, massacres, and massive forced displacement increased. Civilians in various parts of the country **suffered serious abuses** at the hands of National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas, FARC dissidents, and paramilitary successor groups.

Guatemala, El Slvador, Honduras Crisis

Violence and crime together with **food insecurity and a lack of opportunities** are the main drivers of forced displacement in and from these countries. **Climate change** is increasing the intensity of rain and droughts, particularly in the "dry corridor", exacerbating the violence and economic hardship that are spurring increased displacement, both in large mixed movements and as a steady flow of individuals, families and unaccompanied children.

Nicaragua Crisis

Since the initial violent clampdown following **popular protests** in 2018, most Nicaraguans have fled to neighboring Costa Rica.

Fig. 11. Region no.4: the Americas | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/3744

Fig. 11. Region no.4: the Americas | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/3744

REGION NO. 5: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

KEY DATA:

7,020,310 Refugees and asylum seekers

4,957,118 Internally displaced persons

14.3 million

5.2M
refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries

3.25M
internally displaced

AFGHANISTAN

54,200
refugees and asylym seekers in neighbouring conutries

1,508,400
internally displaced

MYANMAR / ROHYNGA

Afghanistan crisis

Afghans have suffered **more than 40 years of conflict**. **After a 20-year war, the Taliban retook power in Afghanistan in August 2021**. For the Afghan population, which has already endured decades of conflict, the humanitarian situation is increasingly critical. As the humanitarian crisis continues, the resilience of Afghans and their host communities is **being stretched to the limit**. As a result, thousands of families have been forced to flee, attempting to reach a safe place within the country or in a neighboring one. Afghanistan is also one of the **countries hardest hit by climate change**. In addition to the unstable economic and political context, droughts have been devastating for agriculture, and heat has been unbearable for the population and livestock. That is how close to half of the Afghan population suffers from malnutrition, and the numbers are rising. The situation on the ground, increasingly unsustainable on all fronts, is likely to push more people to flee their homes.

Myanmar / rohingya crisis

The Rohingya are a **stateless Muslim minority** who have lived in Myanmar **for generations**. The United Nations has described them as **"the most persecuted people in the world."** They have faced discrimination and extreme poverty for decades. Rohingya refugees were forced to flee their homes in the western region of Myanmar to **escape horrific violence and persecution — this is one of the largest exodus of refugees witnessed in recent decades**. Rohingya refugees survived dangerous journeys to escape, often walking barefoot for days or attempting deadly sea crossings on flimsy rafts to get to **Bangladesh**. Most Rohingya refugees are currently residing in the **Kutupalong refugee settlement. This has grown to become the largest** of its kind in the world, with more than 600,000 people living in an area of just 13 square kilometers, stretching infrastructure and services to their limits.

Fig.12. Region no.5: Asia and the Pacific | Source: own elaboration, based on https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar and https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/afghanistan

Emergency Situations: ASYLUM SEEKERS, RETURNEES AND IDPs

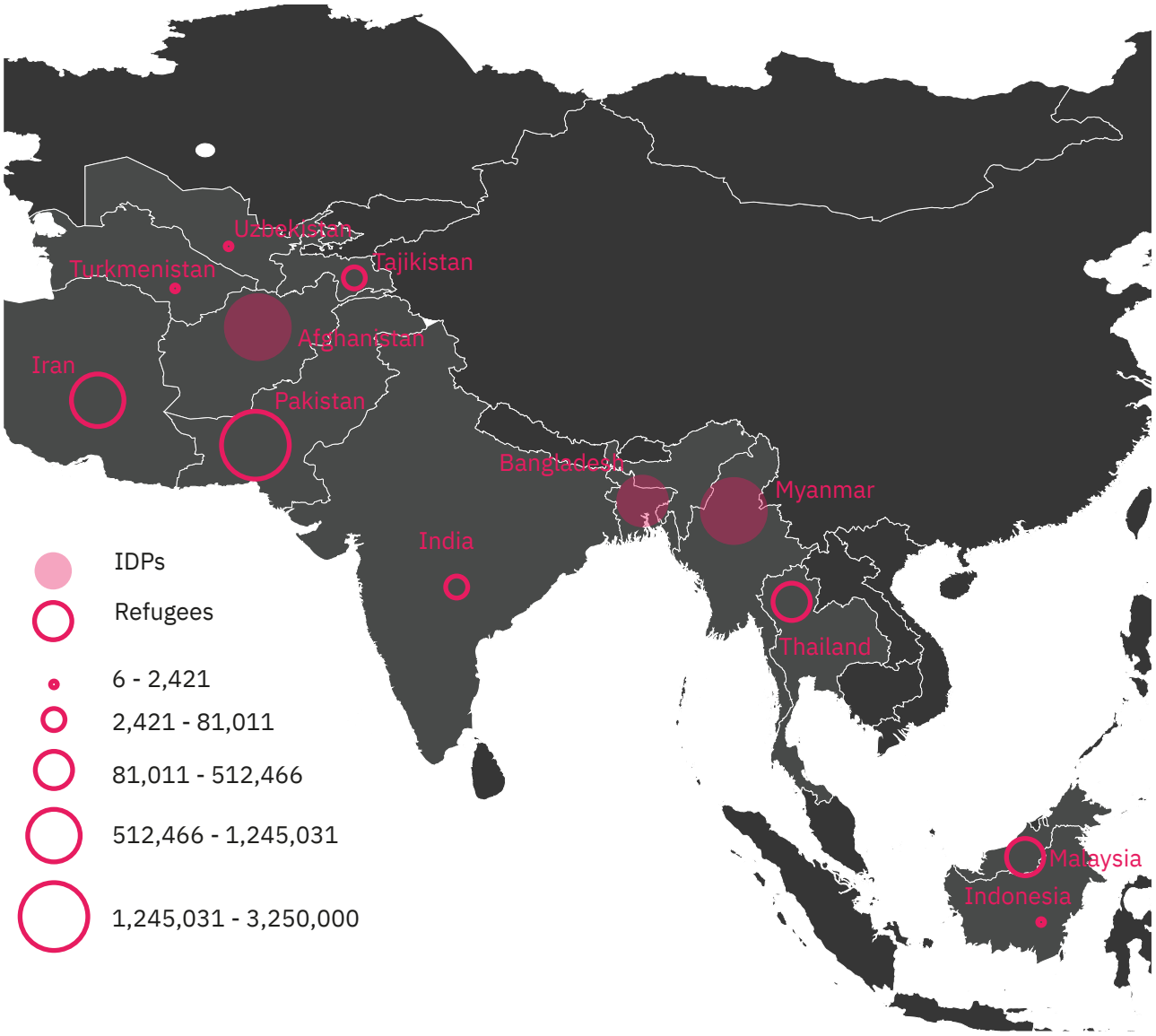


Fig.12. Region no.5: Asia and the Pacific | Source: own elaboration, based on https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar and https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/afghanistan

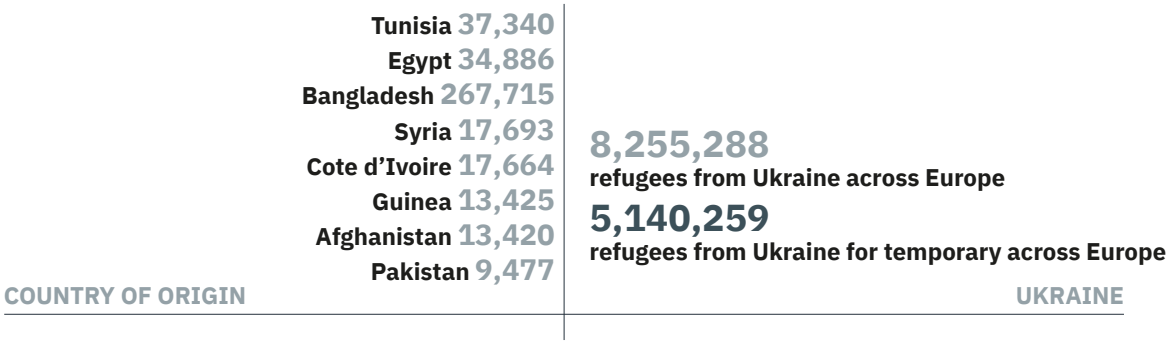
REGION NO. 6: EUROPE

KEY DATA:

60,932 Total arrivals

59,817 Sea arrivals

1,115 Land arrivals



Crisis in the Mediterranean

For refugees and migrants, travelling between Africa and Europe remains one of the **deadliest journeys in the world**. Thousands of people die and the people who survive experience severe trauma. Thousands of refugees and migrants perish or suffer extreme human rights violations during their journey.

The situation:

151,315 - refugees and migrants arrived in Europe by *sea* in 2022

30% - of people trying to reach Europe are women and children

8,095 - refugees and migrants arrived in Europe by *land* in 2022

Thousands - of unrecorded deaths

During their journey, by sea or by land, most travellers will **suffer unspeakable and barbaric brutality** from smugglers, traffickers, militias, and sometimes even government officials.

Ukraine crisis

The **Russian invasion of Ukraine** has caused civilian casualties and the destruction of vital infrastructure, forcing people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance. Millions of refugees from Ukraine have crossed borders into neighbouring countries, in addition to those displaced inside the country. They are in urgent need of protection and support. An estimated 17.6 million people in Ukraine require urgent humanitarian support, including more than 5 million people internally displaced by the war. As of February 2023, over 8 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe, of which 4.8 million were registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes.

Fig. 13. Region no.6: Europe | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4871

Emergency Situations: ASYLUM SEEKERS, RETURNEES AND IDPs

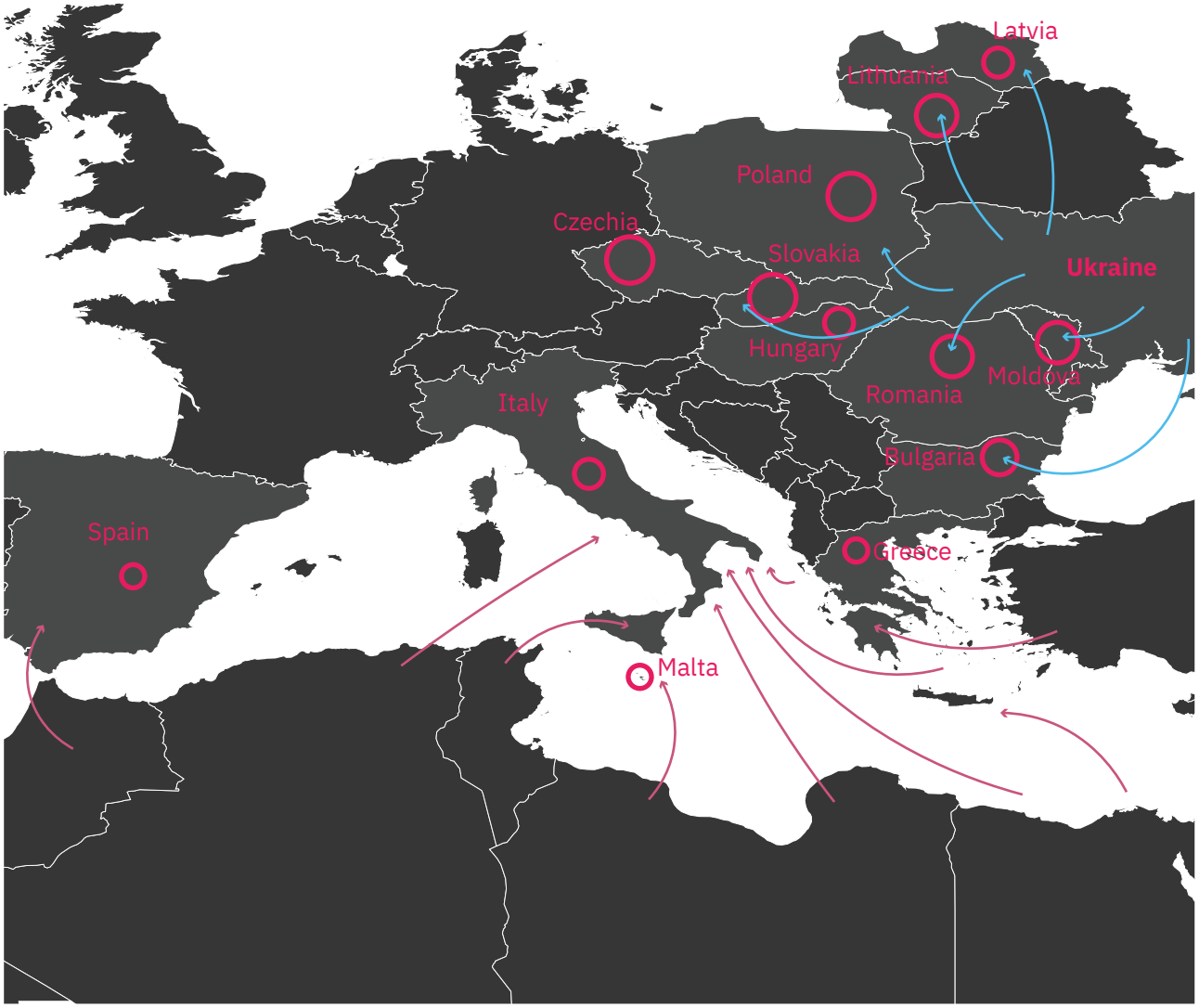


Fig. 13. Region no.6: Europe | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4871

Deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea

In 2022, it was estimated that **2,062 migrants died while crossings the Mediterranean Sea.** However, the accurate number of deaths recorded in the Mediterranean Sea cannot ascertained.

Between 2014 and 2018, for instance, about **12 thousand people who drowned were never found**.

June, 2023:

At Least 78 Migrants Drown After Boat Sinks Near Greece.

79 bodies have been retrieved, "but the death toll is likely to rise", the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) stated in a press release.

REGION NO. 7: MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

KEY DATA:

272,000 Refugees and asylum seekers

1,248,000 Internally displaced persons

SYRIA	PALESTINE
5,303,746 refugees in neighbouring countries	**1.5m** refugees in neighbouring conutries
289,929 Syrian refugees (in-camp)	**58** Recognised Palestine refugee camps

Syrian crisis

wo thirds of the population required assistance because of a **worsening economic crisis, continued localized hostilities, mass displacement and devastated public infrastructure**. Now, the country is also grappling with severe human and material damage from **catastrophic earthquakes and aftershocks** in February 2023 that have left families in urgent need of food, water, shelter, and emergency medical and psychosocial assistance.

Palestine crisis

The Palestinian father Amjad Abu Ja'as (48) has died of his wounds sustained by the Israeli occupation forces during the aggression in Jenin city, yesterday. His son Waseem (22) was also **killed by the Israeli occupation** forces a few months ago on 26.1.23.

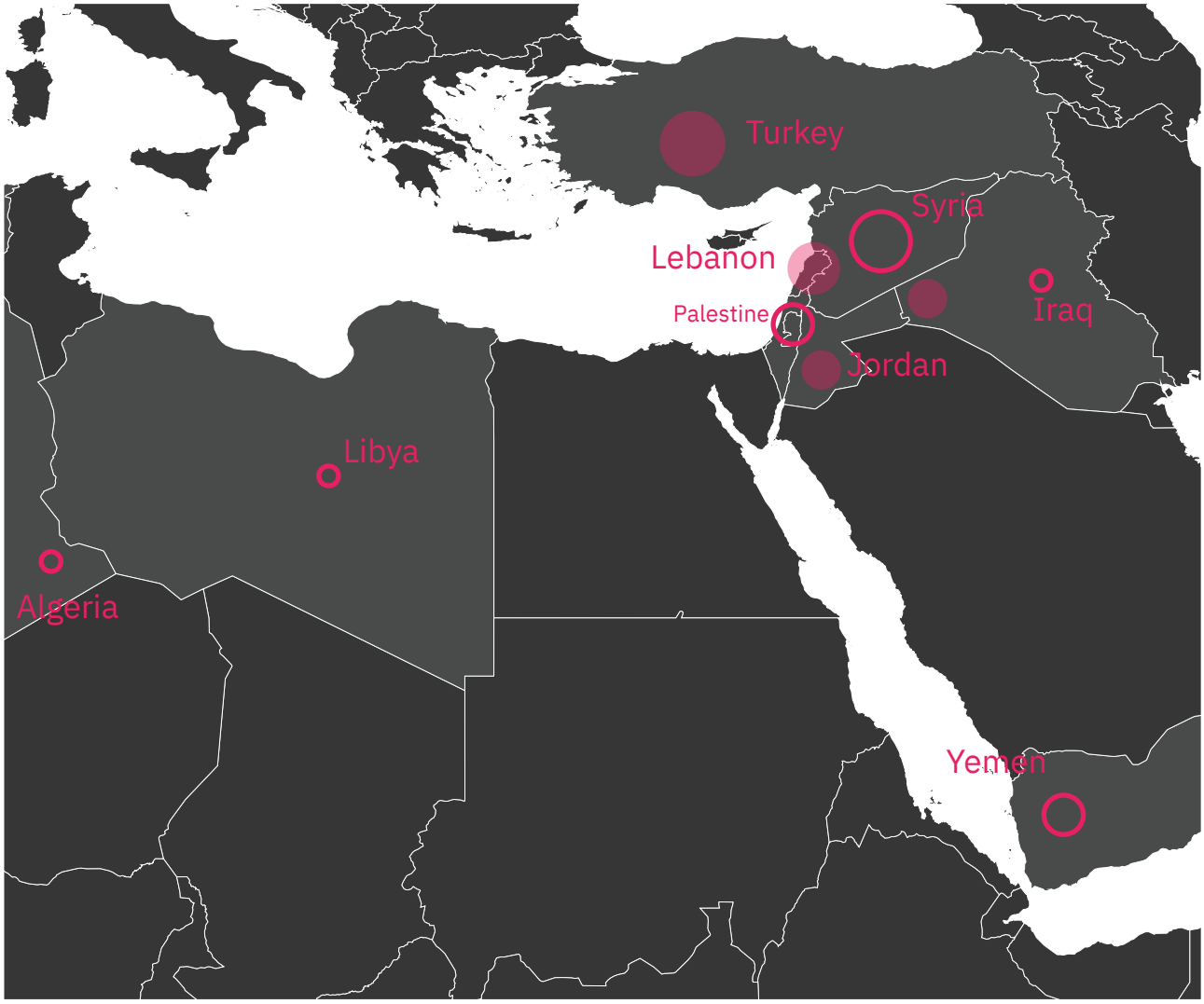
@eyeonpalestine

The Palestinians who were **killed by the Israeli occupation forces** in Jenin, today. 19.6.23

@eyeonpalestine

Fig.14. Region no.7: Middle East and North Africa | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa#toc-populations

REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, RETURNEES AND IDPs



Syrian refugees

0 - 50,000

50,000 - 440,000

440,000 - 1,450,000

>1,450,000

Refugees in the middle east

90,000 - 300,000

300,000 - 5,000,000

>5,000,000

Fig.14. Region no.7: Middle East and North Africa | Source: own elaboration, based on https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa#toc-populations

02

Photographs by Kevin Frayer | COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

Refugee camps:
past, preent and patterns

"Refugee camps are perceived as exceptional and hence temporary measures to be taken before normality is restored once again in the future"

Simon Turner

This chapter focuses on refugee camps, which are often perceived as temporary solutions to the displacement of people fleeing violence, conflict or persecution. The first sub-chapter examines the definition of refugee camps, emphasising their temporary nature and the challenges faced by humanitarian agencies in providing protection and assistance to displaced populations.

The second sub-chapter analyse at the history of refugee camps. It highlights how refugee camps have been used as a means of recruiting labour and assembling troops against European colonial occupation. Special attention is given to Palestinian refugee camps established in response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, highlighting the challenges of temporariness and the right of return.

The third sub-chapter provides an overview of data related to refugee solutions worldwide. It examines the preferred alternatives to refugee camps, such as integrating refugees into existing urban or rural settings, planned camps or in spontaneous settlements. An examination of refugee camps based on their concentration, time of existence, and proximity to national borders is also presented. The analysis underscores the emergency nature of refugee camps and their prevalence in neighbouring and developing countries.

Overall, this chapter aims to explore the definitions, historical contexts, and current data surrounding these temporary settlements, shedding light on the challenges faced by refugees and the humanitarian agencies working to support them

2.1
Refugee camps: exploring their meanings

The humanitarian crises that are plaguing various states around the world are becoming increasingly complex. Conflicts are also lasting longer and longer because of the devastating effects of climate change, which exacerbates the situation in which a country exists. This results in refugees needing humanitarian aid for more years. UN-Habitat (2020) estimated that more than 15.9 million refugees have been displaced for "*five years or more with no immediate prospects of implementing durable solutions*". UNHCR also estimates that the average time in refugee status has increased from nine years at the end of the last century to 26 years in 2015.

Humanitarian agencies are therefore trying to implement suitable solutions for refugee protection. Humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR seek to provide protection within the existing urban or rural context. This choice is made in order to ensure greater cohesion and integration between the host community and the refugees. Often, especially at the beginning of a crisis, it is not easy to ensure such integration as initial protection, and so humanitarian agencies find themselves having to provide protection through the construction of refugee camps. These are always to be understood as the last option pursued by agencies, which then always attempt a more integration-focused approach. Thus, the refugee camp is primarily linked to the time when people move-or are moved-from one nation to another due to specific circumstances. In this sense, Agier defines refugee camps as "*reproductions of a massive population of undesirables, kept in existence in spaces remote from everything*" (Agier, 2002).

UNHCR defines refugee camps as "*are temporary facilities built to provide immediate assistance and protection to people who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence, conflict or persecution. Refugee camps are initially designed as a short-term solution to keep people safe during specific emergencies, but emergency situations can become protracted, resulting in people living in camps for years or even decades*". Temporary settlements might be of different types as planned camps, self-settled camps, collective centres, reception and transit centres, and emergency evacuation centres. Planned camps are the one refers to and they can be both in urban and rural locations. In this kind of camp, displaced people are accommodating on purpose sites where multiple services are guaranteed.

The analysis on the definition of refugee camp proposed by Turner (2015) makes some peculiarities of camps well obvious. The author starts from the analysis of the Latin term *campus*, which means open field, and points out how it is related to the military aspect. This relationship defines how the camp is actually defined, as something away from the formal city with a clear demarcation between what is inside and what is outside. In this sense, it almost seems that the refugees' lives are marked by this demarcation that therefore excludes them from the host community both spatially and socially.

Refugee camp planning usually takes place once an initial response has been provided. In fact, it is not always easy to predict the waves of people who will arrive in a country seeking refuge, and this implies that humanitarian agency responses must ensure a quick response, thus initially providing only the main services. The services that are initially provided are water, food, relief items-so-called non-food items (NFIs)-shelter. In addition, some forms of assistance such as health care or legal assistance are provided. The models adopted for camp planning, are models that aim to minimize construction costs in order to achieve, with limited finances, as decent an environment as possible. However, the refugee camp remains in its early months, and sometimes throughout its existence, what Augé defined as a non-place. Over the course of the following months, or in some cases years, the camp is developed and improved by going on to plan a whole series of infrastructures and services that can make life within them increasingly dignified. A more in-depth analysis will be proposed in Chapter 4, where the relationship between urban planning and refugee camps is investigated.

Refugee camps can thus be analysed as a material and spatial response of the state of emergency. Herz (2011) explains that "*refugee camps have been described as politics turning into space, or the spatial ramification of political proceedings*". It is well understood in this description how much politics, and international and national laws, play a decisive role in the spatial definition of the refugee camp. Political strategies influence the size and structuring of the camp. In fact, for example, no refugee camps can be planned in states such as Lebanon. Here humanitarian agencies can provide refugees with the minimum degree of protection – for example, by providing only plastic sheeting as shelter. This is precisely because of the laws imposed by the Lebanese state.

Camps, as anticipated, are determined by their temporariness. They are in fact an emergency response to an emergency problem. At the same time, however,

refugees may find themselves living within a camp for years if not decades, so much so that entire generations have been born within refugee camps and for them that is the only known reality. It is in these contexts that the temporariness through which camps are planned is challenged. And this is where the need arises to understand how to work in order to plan camps that are able to transition from temporary to durable settlements, while always guaranteeing the refugees' right of return. Such reflection also involves a broader consideration of the future of refugee camps. As camps are increasingly being transformed into durable situations, and thus infrastructure and services typical of an urban or rural setting are being implemented, one has to wonder what the future of these settlements will be once refugees return to their place of origin.

To conclude, analysing the reflections posed by academics and non-academics on refugee camps are of a different nature. At the same time, camps can be analysed in their most negative aspects, which often identify them as places where life ceases to exist. For example, as is emphasized by Agier who points out that camps are the place where life is kept at a distance and hidden from the ordinary social world and are also places where "t*he experimentation of the large-scale segregations*" is being established (Agier, 2002). At the same time, they are seen as a place where both socially and spatially, life can reinvent itself to the point of taking new forms. In this sense, according to Turner, camps are both "*a place of social dissolution and a place of new beginnings where sociality is remoulded in new way*s" (Turner, 2015).

2.2
A historical perspective on refugee camps

The first refugee camps emerged to house survivors of the Armenian genocide[i]. These camps were run by missionaries and colonial officials of American and French origin and were located in Aleppo, Beirut and other cities in the Middle East. The first camps for Armenians made it clear how temporary settlements were an almost inevitable solution in response to waves of migration. For many decades, however, the camps played more the role of useful places to segregate and control refugees in very specific areas. A feature still very much present today in places where refugees are not welcomed or protected by the national laws of the host state. Beyond that, starting with the Armenian refugees and later the Assyrian refugees in Iraq, enclosing refugees in a well-controlled place was also considered useful by host states in order to gather manpower and storm troops against European colonial occupation.

Fig. 15. Armenian refugees in the Caucasus | Source: https://www.britannica.com/event/Armenian-Genocide/Genocide

At the conclusion of World War II, many of the prisoners who were released from concentration camps were relocated to refugee camps located on the European continent, especially in Germany, Austria and Italy. German political

[i] The term Armenian genocide, sometimes Armenian holocaust or Armenian massacre, refers to the deportations and eliminations of Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1919 resulting in approximately 1.5 million deaths [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genocidio_armeno]

scientist and philosopher Hanna Arendt commented on the propagation of such camps saying, "a*pparently nobody wants to know that contemporary history has created a new kind of human beings-the kind that are put into concentration camps by their foes and internment camps by their friends*". With the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict-beginning in 1948 and still ongoing-many of the refugee camps housing Jewish refugees who survived the Holocaust were dismantled and many of the refugees moved to the new state of Israel. Today on the European continent, apart from in rare exceptions, no refugee camps are planned or implemented. Refugees find relief and protection in Europe through integration into the existing urban or rural setting.

With the birth of the State of Israel a new refugee crisis began. Indeed, due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at the end of 1948 some 750,000 Palestinian Arabs were expelled from their homes-which were now found to be on territory claimed by the Israelis-and had to seek refuge in other states such as Jordan, Lebanon or Syria. In response to this wave of refugees, multiple temporary camps were built to house Palestinian refugees. Today there are 68 Palestinian refugee camps, of which 58 are official and under the direction of UNRWA while 10 are unofficial. These camps established as a temporary solution are mostly still in existence today and are under the control of UNRWA. One example is the Shatila refugee camp established in 1949 in South Beirut (Lebanon), the camp is

Fig. 16. Street view of Shatila refugee camp | Source hhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shatila_refugee_camp

home to about 10,000 registered Palestinian refugees. Among other things, the camp was devastated during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

The refugee camps that were created for Palestinian refugees are key in this history. The historical study of these camps demonstrates once again the role that temporariness plays, both conceptually and practically. Palestinian refugee camps came into existence to temporarily house Palestinians forced to flee their homes. The truth, however, is that return home is still extremely difficult if not impossible today. There are Palestinian refugee camps that have existed for more than fifty years. Some refugees have tried over the decades to integrate themselves into the contexts where they have found refuge, this has often not been possible and so there are Palestinian refugees forced to live in camps for perhaps the rest of their lives. Moreover, to some, integration into local contexts would mean renouncing to their Palestinian identity and symbolically give up on the right of return. The history of the Palestinians thus makes one reflect on the role that temporariness plays in the lives of refugees. In addition to the political, economic and planning reasons that lead to the need to build the camps temporarily; temporariness represents the right of return to the homeland. However, temporariness at the same time does not guarantee a decent quality of life. The question then arises as to how much the representation of this right should not be sought elsewhere and thus that temporariness should no longer be used as an excuse in limiting the pursuit of a dignified life while ensuring that this right is respected through the implementation of more durable structures.

2.3
Refugee camps dynamics

2.2.1 Examining refugee camps worldwide: concentration, duration, and location

People in need of protection from humanitarian agencies, as anticipated in Chapter 1, are grouped into categories according to the reasons why they flee and the ways in which they move from their homeland. For example, internally displaced persons (IDPs) move from their home but remain within their country's borders; conversely, refugees seek protection in countries other than their own. Categorising people seeking protection also helps humanitarian agencies understand which response is most physically appropriate, and thus where to accommodate these people. The solutions adopted, as seen above, take shape in urban and nonurban contexts; moreover, sometimes it is necessary to plan new settlements in order to provide shelter for displaced people, and at other times it is necessary and better to adopt solutions that aim at integration into the existing local context. In the following paragraphs, data regarding the solutions adopted to accommodate refugees will be shown and analysed. For the purpose of staying in line with the goal of the thesis, the analysis will focus primarily on planned refugee camps. The analysis will start by studying trends and the current situation in the world context and then focus on the region of the world where the case study is located, the Middle East. A more detailed analysis will then also be provided for Jordan, the country of the case study.

Before going into the details of the planned refugee camps, it is interesting to show what are the preferred solutions for receiving refugees worldwide. In line with the goal of avoiding the construction of refugee camps, the preferred solutions are those that allow refugees to settle in existing urban or rural settings. In fact, 67% of refugees are now found to be either centres (26%), hosted or rental (36%) or in accommodation (4%). Only 31% of refugees today are in planned refugee camps. These figures represent the goal of humanitarian agencies in decreasing the construction of refugee camps as much as possible but at the same time show that it is still in many cases the only adoptable solution. To conclude, another interesting fact to report concerns spontaneous settlements, which are the main solution that refugees adopt; there are about 7,000 spontaneous settlements in the world today. These are often located in countries that do not allow humanitarian agencies to protect refugees as they should. In fact, in these settings-such as Lebanon, for example-humanitarian agencies can at best provide plastic tents as shelter and cannot build any

services (UNHCR, 2023)

In order to better understand how camps are distributed and characterized around the world, three data analyses were conducted: refugee camps by world concentration, refugee camps by time of existence, and location of refugee camps with respect to national borders.

Analysis No. 1: concentration

The region of the world where most refugee camps are located is the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes where 128 refugee camps are located. However, the country where most camps are located are Pakistan and Bangladesh, which are in the Asia-Pacific region. Next, the other two countries where the highest number of camps are present are Uganda and Sudan. This reflects the biggest humanitarian crises happening in the world today. In fact, as seen in Chapter XX among the major crises is the one that is affecting South Sudan and leading 1 refugees to seek refuge mostly in Sudan and Uganda. Other crises include the one affecting the Rohingya – one of the most persecuted ethnic minorities in the world – who mainly find refuge in Bangladesh where there are in fact 35 refugee camps. Pakistan is particularly affected by the crisis currently present in Afghanistan which has led some 1,316,257 refugees to find refuge in the 54 refugee camps located in the country.

What is interesting from this analysis is how in wealthier contexts, and thus in the countries of the global north, there is no presence of refugee camps – except for one refugee camp in Moldova established in 2008. Even with the recent crisis due to the war in Ukraine, no refugee camps have been established in any European country. The reasons for this difference lie first of all in the fact that refugee camps are established as an emergency response and in fact refugees tend to flee initially to neighbouring countries and then often to countries that are in the same geographic area and are often developing countries.

The largest refugee camps are located in the areas most affected by the presence of refugee camps. In fact, the top four largest camps in the world are located in Kenya, which is in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region (Table 2) (UNHCR, 2021).

REGION	NO. OF COUNTRIES	NO. OF REFUGEE CAMPS
East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes	12	128

Table 2. No. of Refugee camps per region | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

Southern Africa	3	4
West and Central Africa	14	69
The Americas	0	0
Asia and the Pacific	5	124
Europe	1	1
Middle east and North Africa	8	51

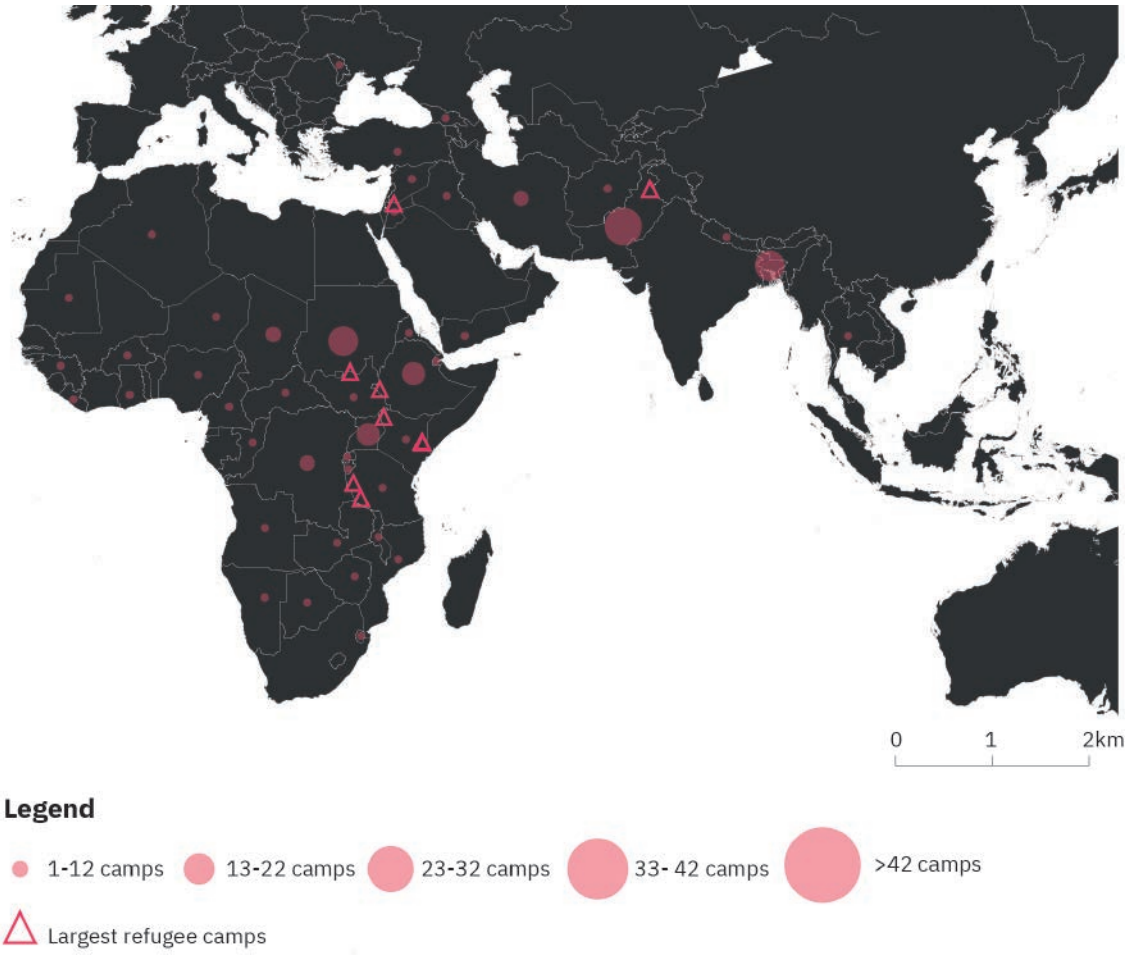


Fig. 17. No. of Refugee camps per region and largest refugee camps | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

Table 3 Largest refugee camps | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

COUNTRY	CAMP NAME	POPULATION	ESTABLISHED
Kenya	Kakuma	184,550	1992
Kenya	Hagadera	105,998	1992
Kenya	Dagahaley	87,223	1992
Kenya	Ifo	84,089	1992
Jordan	Za'atari	77,781	2012

South Sudan	Yida	70,331	2012
Tanzania	Katumba	66,461	2014
Ethiopia	Pugnido	63,262	1993
Pakistan	Panian	62,264	2008

Analysis 2: time of existence

From a time perspective, the constitution of refugee camps is absolutely in line with the timeline of the largest humanitarian crises, which have in fact seen a large increase and longer duration in recent decades. The analysis is posed here to reflect on the concept of the temporality of refugee camps. Indeed, as pointed out on several occasions, camps are built to be emergency solutions and to be primarily a temporary shelter for refugees. Due to multiple reasons, such as among the most recent ones related to environmental disasters caused by climate change, returning home is becoming increasingly difficult. This is perfectly reflected in the length of existence of the camps, which thus cease to be a temporary shelter and become home for many. Also in this analysis, it is interesting to note how much longer the camps' existence is in regions that are part of the so-called third world.

Fig. 18 and 19. Time of existence of refugee camps in the seven regions of the world | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

Analysis 3: where are located the camps compared to national borders

To conclude, the analysis below (Figure X), shows that refugee camps are located close to national borders. This is in fact due to the fact that camps are the first solution provided to refugees when they find themselves in a safer context than their own. Next, moving down in scale and studying the context of the case study, an analysis will be placed on the relationship between the location of the camps and the surrounding urban contexts; *are the camps located in close proximity to existing urban or rural contexts? Or are they located totally spaced out and therefore not integrated to the local context?*

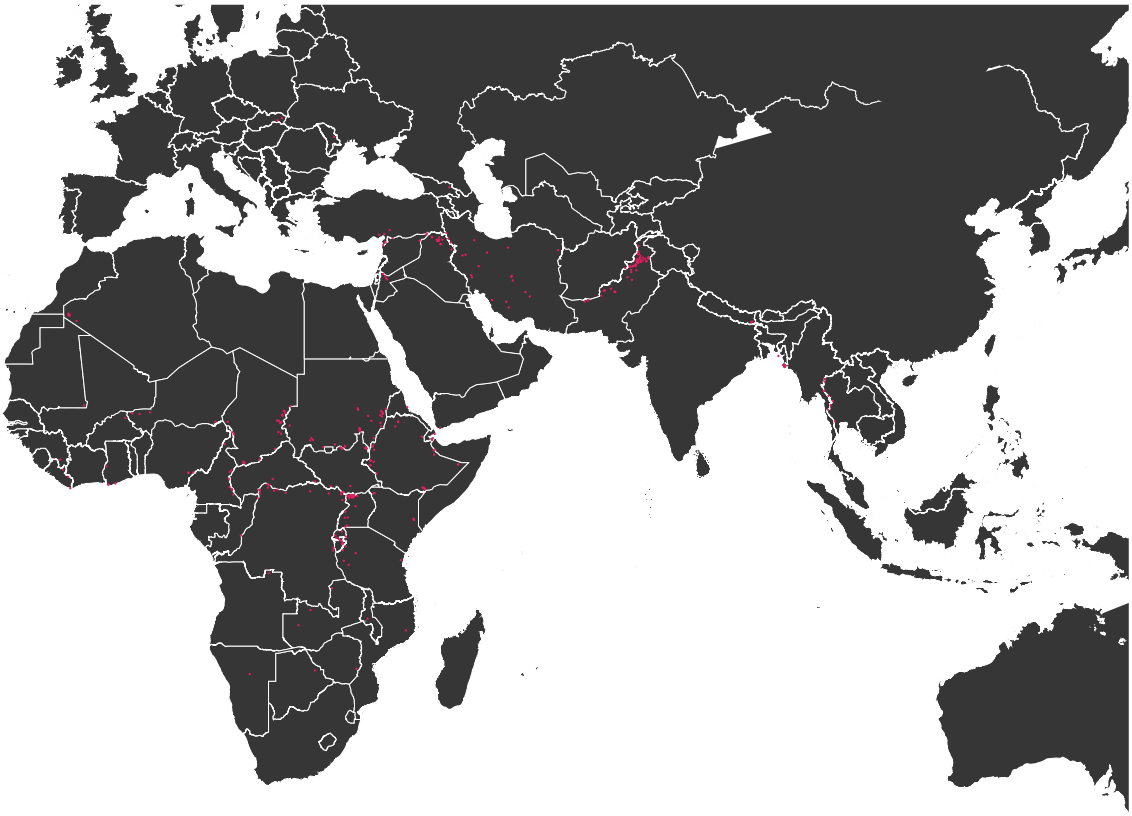


Fig. 20. Relation among refugee camps and national borders | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

2.2.2. The Middle East: a region shaped by refugee camps

As analysed in the premises of this thesis, the Middle East region is one of the most affected regions in the world by conflict and persecution resulting in the exodus of countless people. Refugee movements in the region are not recent history; as early as the beginning of the last century, the Armenian crisis and subsequent genocide led to the exodus of millions of Armenians and the formation of the first refugee camps. Until today's war in Syria. These crises resulted in the development of a hundred refugee camps throughout the region (Table 4). The refugee camps in this region are under the supervision of two of the world's leading humanitarian agencies, UNHCR and UNRWA. In detail, UNRWA oversees

and manages Palestinian refugee camps – 57 percent of the total camps in the region – located in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While UNHCR is in charge of all remaining camps that have been developed to accommodate Syrian, Afghan or Iraqi refugees. The Palestinian territories have the largest number of camps (27), the reasons for this presence being that the Palestinian crisis has now been going on for more than seventy years and over the decades there have been multiple crises affecting the Palestinian people. Several times throughout history it has been necessary to establish camps for the protection of Palestinian refugees. In line with the present humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the other country to have the largest number of camps is Iran (20). Indeed, thousands of Afghan refugees find refuge in Iran.

COUNTRY	NO. OF REFUGEE CAMPS	ORIGIN OF REFUGEES
Iran	20	Afghanistan
Iraq	11	Iraq
Jordan	14	Palestine and Syria
Lebanon	12	Palestine and Syria
Palestine (Gaza strip and West Bank)	27	Palestine
Syria	15	Syria
Turkye	7	Syria
Yemen	1	Yemen

Table 4. Refugee camps throughou Jordan | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

The majority of the camps in the region have very old origins, this again reflects the crises in the area. As can be seen from the graph in Figure XX, the majority of camps were established between 1949/1973 (36) as a result of the two Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. With the beginning of the new century, we see a further increase in the establishment of refugee camps; in fact, since 1998, 30 camps have been established in the region mainly for Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis.

DATE	NO. OF REFUGEE CAMPS	COMMENTS
1900 - 1924	3	/
1925 - 1948	13	2 of which are for Armenians refugees, the other for Palestinians
1949 - 1973	36	1948 + 1967 Israel-Palestine congflicts
1974 - 1977	14	/
1998 - 2021	30	Refugees are mainly from Syria and Iraq

Table 5. Establishment of refugee camps | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

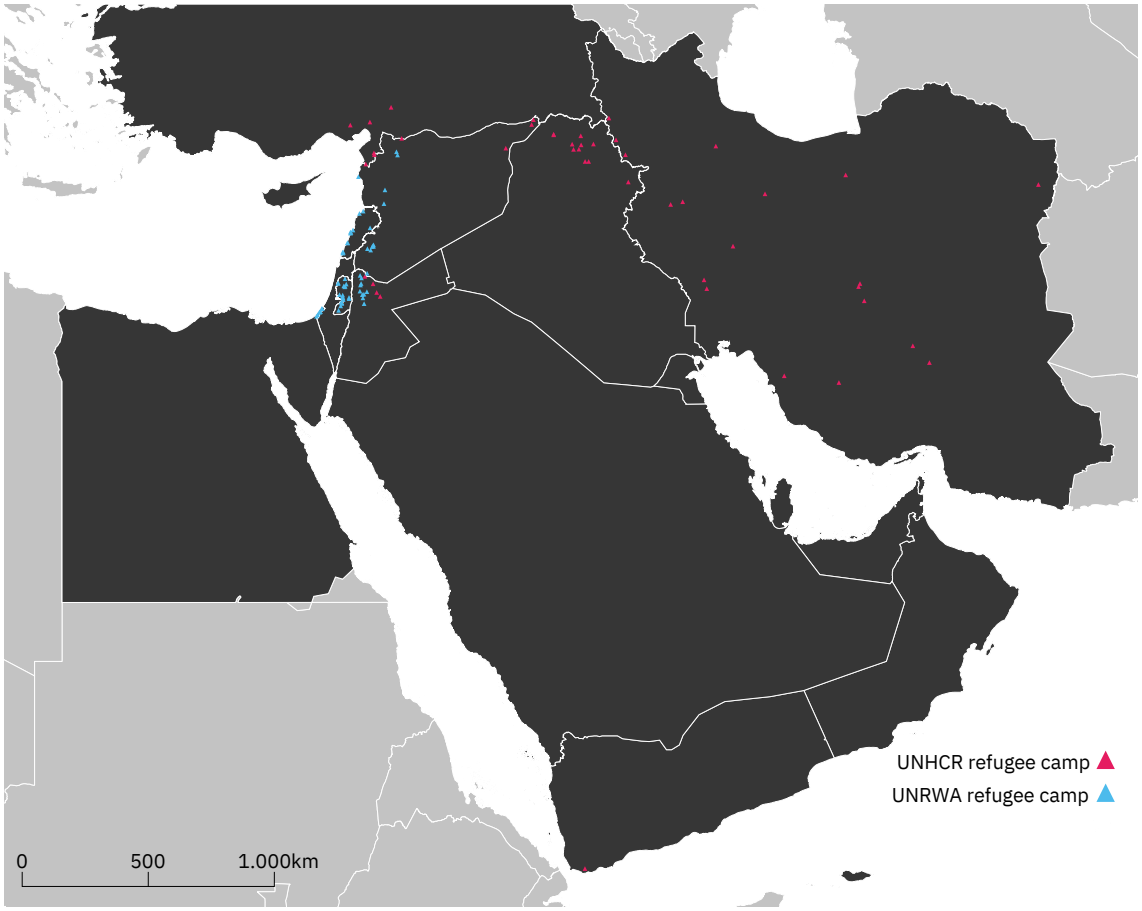


Fig. 21. UNHCR and UNRWA refugee camps in the Middle East region | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

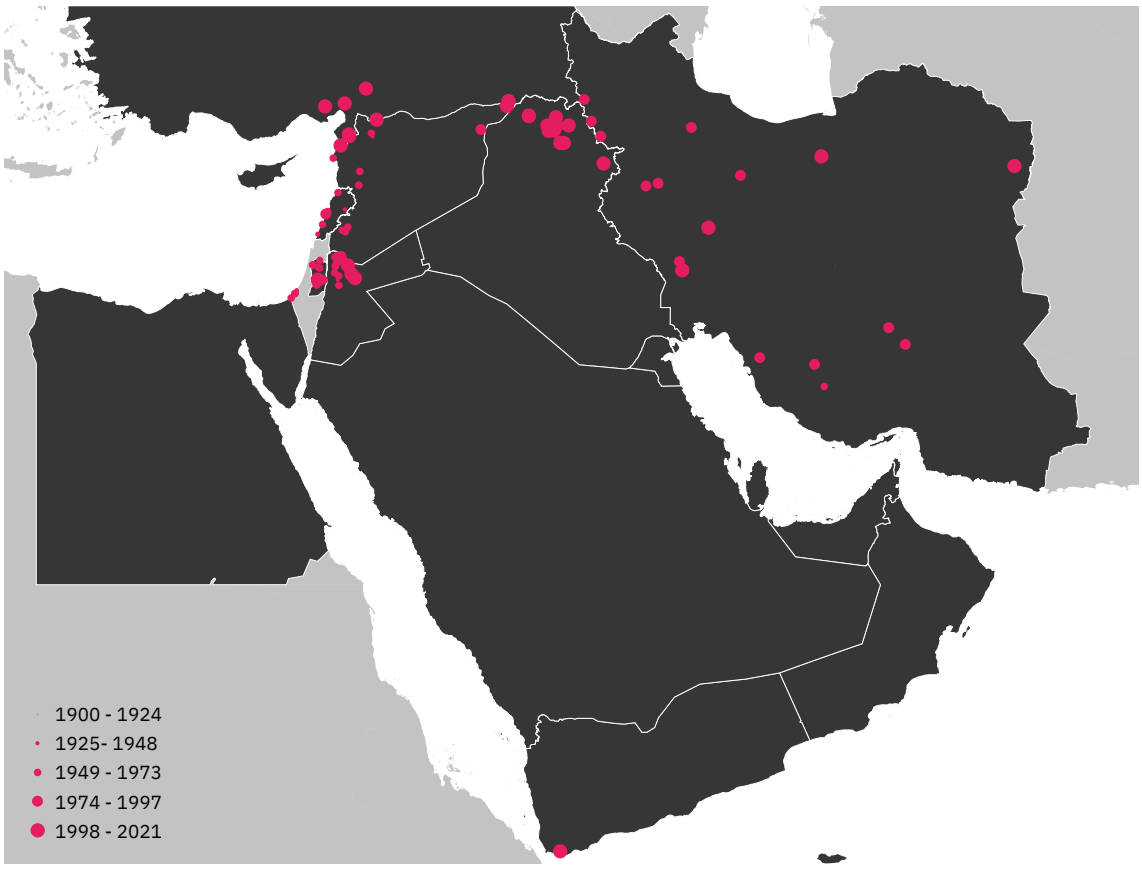


Fig. 22. Refugee camps in the Middle East region per time of existence | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

The Middle East region proves to be very interesting to analyse as the solutions undertaken by humanitarian agencies vary in nature, this is because of the type of aid they are allowed to activate by the host state.

For example, Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. Consequently, in the country does not grant refugee status and all procedures for entry and stay in the country of based on local laws and regulations. However, Lebanon is bound by the principle of nonrefoulement, and is therefore prohibited from returning people from places where they are at risk of persecution or exposed to war-related risks. Spatially, this results in the impracticality on the part of humanitarian agencies to provide proper protection to refugees. It is not in fact legally possible to develop and build refugee camps in Lebanon. Humanitarian agencies can only just provide basic and mostly extremely temporary materials for refugees. This results in the emergence of small spontaneous settlements by the refugees, about 6,000 (Figure X). However, the situation for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is different; in fact, UNRWA has been providing services to Palestinian refugees since 1950 and relies on the support of the Lebanese government (UNRWA, 2017). In fact, there are twelve refugee camps for Palestinians run by UNRWA itself. Among them is the Shatila camp located in the city of Beirut and established in 1949. The camp is known worldwide because of the continuing devastation resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. In particular, it is known for the massacre of September 16/18, 1982, which resulted in the deaths of a large number of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians. The camp was originally built to house 500 housing units, however, today it has grown tenfold. Interestingly, the growth has occurred vertically rather than horizontally; in fact, refugees have built new shelters on top of existing ones.

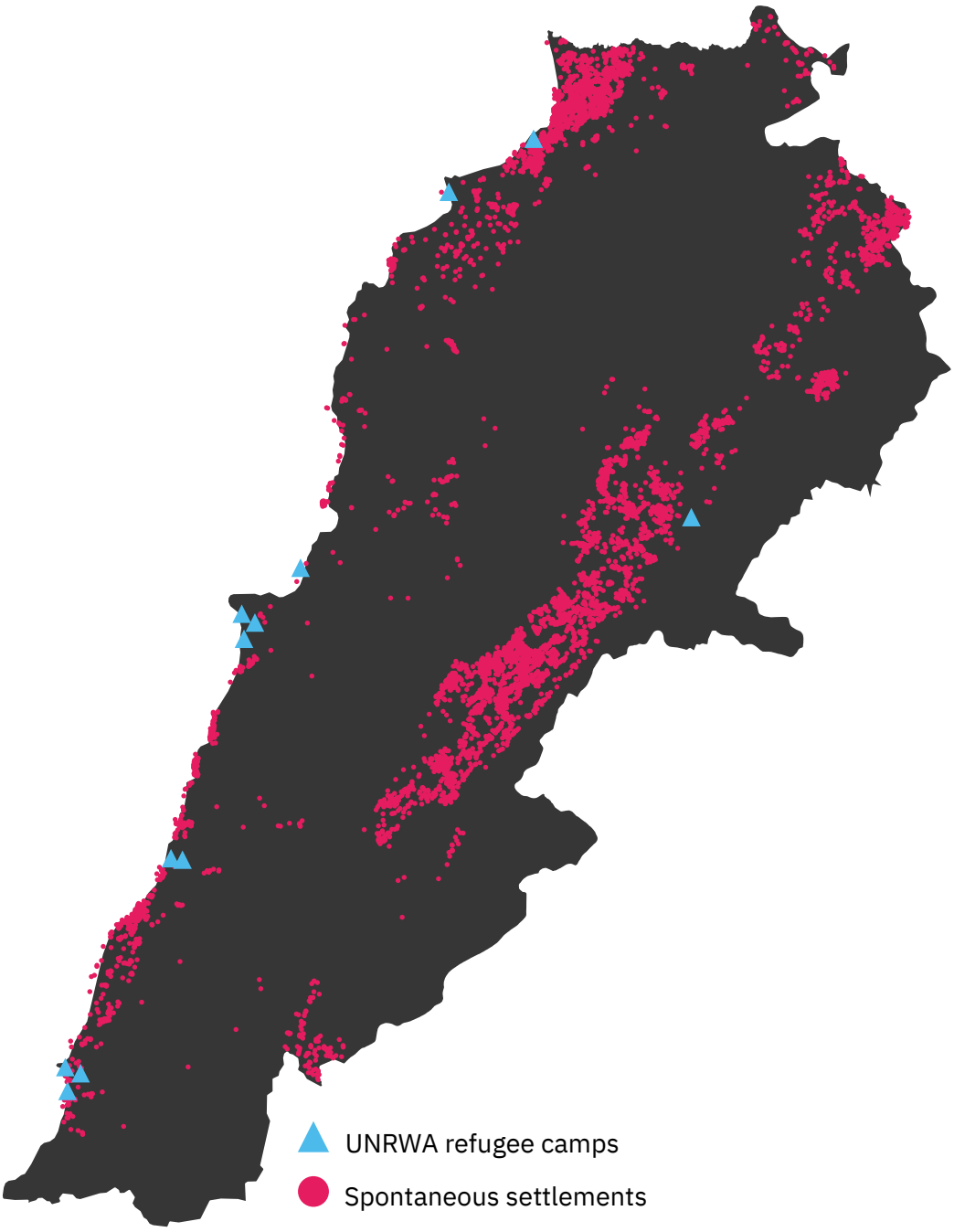
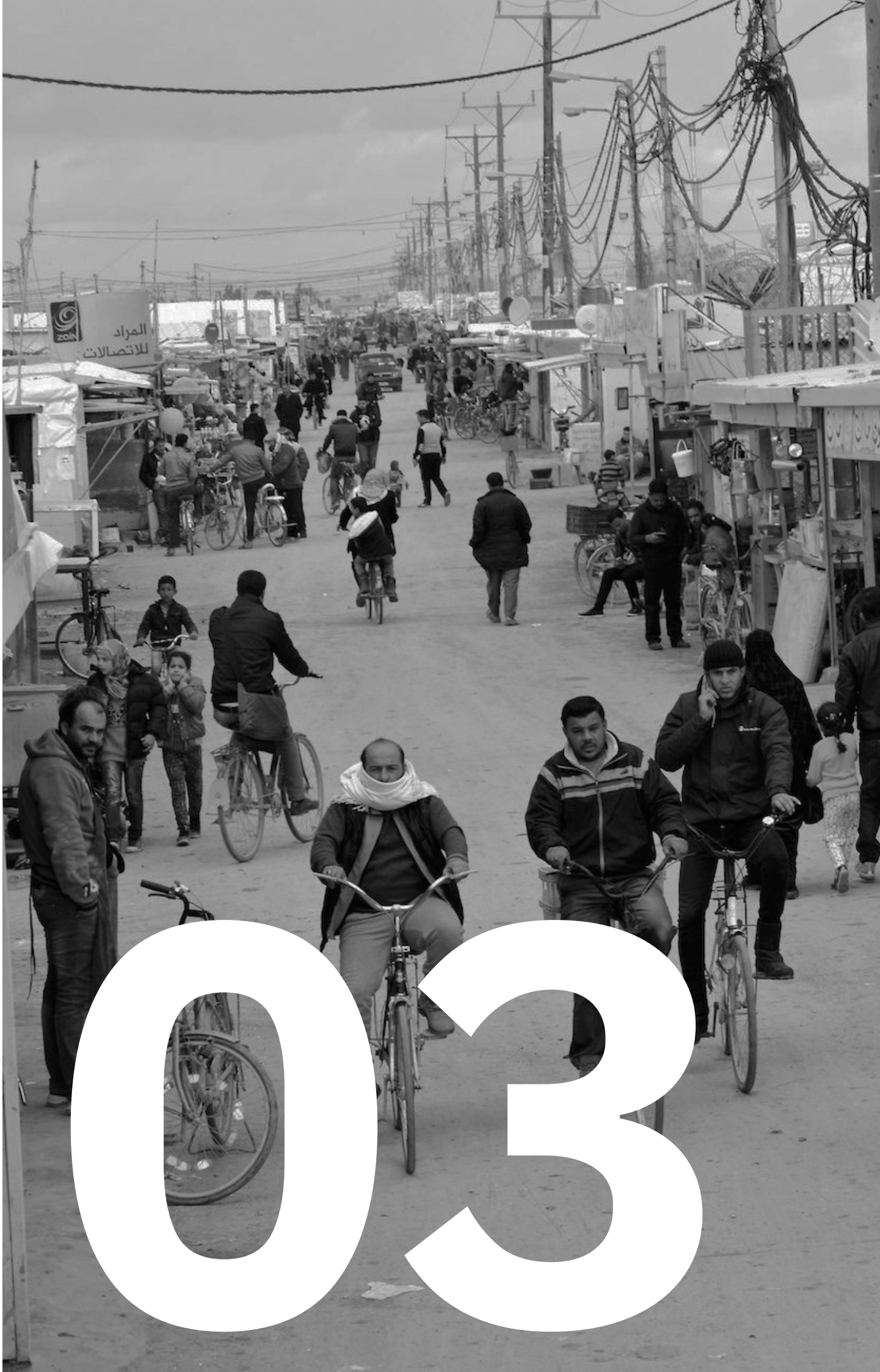


Fig. 23. Refugee camps and Spontaneous settlements in Lebanon | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#



03

Zaatari camp:
a case study of the refugee experience

"When I talk to my children about Syria, and tell them that we have family there, they ask me: What is Syria? I explain that a war broke out, and we came to the camp. I tell them that staying here in the camp is not our choice: when things calm down and the security situation improved, we will return to Syria"

Ghasim Al-Lubbad, a Syrian Refugee from Zaatari Camp

Chapter 3 of this thesis focuses on the situation of refugees and refugee camps in Jordan, with a specific emphasis on Syrian refugees and on Zaatari camp. The chapter is divided into three main sub-chapters, each addressing different aspects of the refugee situation in the country.

The first sub-chapter – Refugees in Jordan – provides an overview of the refugee movement in Jordan and highlights the country's unique position as an ethnic and religious melting pot. It explores the historical context of refugee flows into Jordan since its creation. Then the focus narrows down to the Syrian Civil War and its impact on Jordan. It begins with an overview of the Syrian Civil War, highlighting its origins and the subsequent waves of violence and protests that engulfed the country; it has been also analysed the legal framework surrounding the entry and integration of Syrian refugees in Jordan is explored. While the chapter acknowledges the significance of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, it narrows its scope to the Syrian refugee crisis due to its strong temporal and physical impact on the country. Through this analysis, a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by the refugee situation in Jordan can be gained.

The second sub-chapter explores the topic of refugee camps in Jordan, focusing on their structure, distribution, and the main issues surrounding them. The primary aim is to shed light on the living conditions and services provided within these camps, as well as the challenges faced by refugees residing in them. The chapter also highlights the geographical placement of the camps, which are strategically located near urban centres and national borders. This proximity allows for emergency response and access to essential services. However, despite the potential for greater integration with the host society, the camps impose significant restrictions on refugees' freedom of movement, limiting their lives within camp boundaries.

The last sub-chapter focuses on the city-like aspects of Za'atari refugee camp, examining its layout, shelter development, services, and utilities. The chapter is divided into four main sub-chapters, each delving into specific aspects of the camp's urban characteristics. It explores the initial planning of the camp and its subsequent development. It highlights how the camp, initially established as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis, lacked a well-thought-out layout and composition. The camp's spontaneous nature led to rows of tents with narrow spaces between them. However, as the need for a higher quality of life arose, a grid-like layout with caravans arranged in rows was adopted. It then delves into the concept of control within the camp. It examines the physical elements, such as walls made of barbed wire, that enclose the population and restrict their freedom of movement. The role of walls in representing societal values and the placement of public buildings at the centre of the camp are explored, drawing inspiration from Aldo Rossi's ideas. By exploring these aspects, the chapter provides valuable insights into the urban dynamics and living conditions within the camp.

3.1
A melting pot of refugees: an overview of refugee movements in Jordan

3.1.1 Refugee dynamics in Jordan

Jordan is described as an ethnic and religious melting pot (George 2021). Former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri described Jordan as "*a mixture. There is ambiguity*" and also supporting this are the words of former Information Minister Muhammad Afash Idwan who said "*Jordan is a conglomerate. Jordan is the Bedu, the city-dweller, the Palestinian, the refugee, the Circassian, the Christian, the Muslim, the Armenian*".

This description of Jordan is due to the fact that since its creation (1921), the state has welcomed a series of refugee flows within its borders. Although Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the protection space for refugees is considered favourable. In fact, Jordan's Constitution specifies that "*political refugees shall not be extradited on account of their political belief, or for their defense of liberty*". This has led to rapid population growth and multiple changes in the composition of the population.
The continuous flows of refugees within the country have been both a major challenge for the Jordanian regime and an asset, especially economically. In fact, the large refugee presence has allowed Jordan to receive an enormous amount of cash assistance from the international community. This assistance was and still is used to help resettle and integrate the refugees in the territory.

Jordan soon became the first place of arrival for Palestinian refugees; who, due to the ongoing Arab-Israeli crisis, continue to represent a significant portion of the Jordanian population (Chatelard, 2010). In addition to the Palestinian population, the state has also hosted migrants from other Middle Eastern countries. For example, Jordan hosted Lebanese refugees during the civil war in Lebanon (1975-1991) and Iraqis following the 1991 Gulf War and after the removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003 (Chatelard, 2010). In the last decade, since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria (2011) an unprecedented number of refugees from Syria have arrived in Jordan.

Figure X shows the main data provided by UNHCR (2023) regarding refugees present in Jordan. It is important to remember that Palestinian refugees are under the protection of UNRWA, and therefore the data provided by UNHCR does not consider the number of Palestinian refugees present.

Jordan, that has a population of around 10 million people, hosts the second largest number of refugees per capita in the world. The Government of Jordan (GoJ) reports that since the outbreaks of the Syrian Civil War around 1.3 million of the 6.7 million Syrians refugees have found refuge in Jordan (GoJ, The Jordan Response Plan, 2020). Latest UNHCR's data reports that in Jordan reside 740,726 active registered Refugees and Asylum Seekers, of which 89.1% are Syrians, 8.2% are Iraqis and the remaining 9% from are from Yemen, Sudan, Somalia and other parts of the world.

Under the protection of UNHCR the largest refugee population in the country is the Syrians. In addition to being the largest number, they are also the ones who have resided there the longest. As the focus of the thesis is on the temporality of refugee camps and the role that urbanism plays within the camps, it was decided to focus precisely on Syrian refugees as they have a strong temporal and thus physical impact on the Jordan state. Next, a brief analysis and introduction on Syrian refugees is proposed with the aim of understanding how they fit spatially within the country. Jordan is also the country that hosts the largest number of Palestinian refugees; so much so that for many Israeli politicians "*Jordan is Palestine*". The case of Palestinian refugees would be very interesting to analyse especially in relation to the concept of temporariness, as the Palestinian situation is perhaps the situation in the world to which an end date is very difficult to determine. However, as the case of Palestinian refugees has very complex political, legislative and social implications that relate little to other refugees, it was decided to focus the gaze on this thesis only on Syrian refugees.

REFUGEES IN JORDAN

Active registered refugees **740,762**

82% in the urban context (605,212)

18% in the camps (135,550)

Age and gender

Gender	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-35	36-59	60+
Male	45,826	72,609	58,399	**109,743**	72,109	16,141
Female	44,271	68,715	54,313	**104,440**	74,370	20,827
	90,097	**141,324**	**111,712**	**214,183**	**146,478**	**36,968**

Origin conutry

SOM	587	0.1%	YEM	12,771	1.7%
Other	1,185	0.2%	IRQ	61,026	8.2%
SUD	5,171	0.7%	**SYR**	**660,022**	**89.1%**

Specific needs

Serious medical condition	95,676	12.9%
Disability	46,193	6.2%
Specific legal and physical protection needs	31,805	4.3%
Child at risk	27,317	3.7%
Single parents	16,934	2.3%
Women at risk	13,012	1.8%
Older person at risk	7,401	1.0%
Unaccompanied or separated child	1,923	0.3%
	170,510	23.0%

Registration trend quarterly

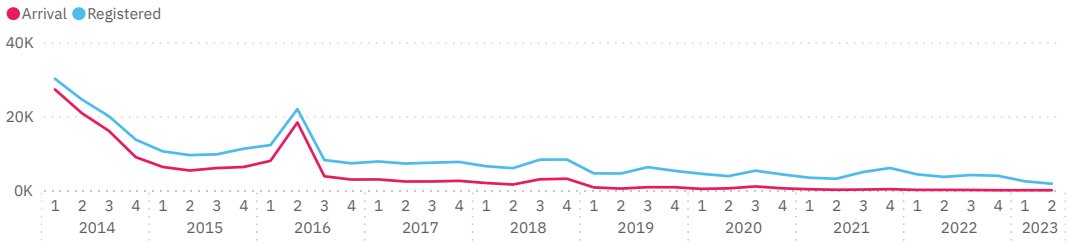


Fig. 24. Refugee in Jordan | Source: Analyzed by Data Analysis Group | Jordan, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/101162

3.1.2 The Syrian conflict: Jordan's role and response

3.1.2.1 *From Arab Spring to civil war: a historical overview of the Syrian conflict*

The unrest in the Syrian state began as a result of the so-called Arab Spring – which began with the fall of the Tunisian regime following anti-government protests. The Tunisian experience influenced a revolutionary wave in many Arab countries; these waves resulted in riots that erupted both violently and non-violently.

In Syria, the first demonstrations broke out in March 2011 in Daraa a Syrian province located in the south of the country. On the following pages the War has been summarized through a timeline that attempts to analyse the most important moments of the war.

More than a decade after the beginning of the war in Syria, it is difficult to understand the deaths and destruction the war has brought. The UN has stated

that there have been more than 350,000 deaths and has also specified that the number may actually be higher than indicated. In addition to the deaths, the war has led to huge numbers of displaced people (5,286,155) around the world. The majority of Syrian refugees are hosted in three countries: Turkey (63.7 percent), Lebanon (15.2 percent) and Jordan (12.5 percent).

Fig. 25. Timeline Syrian Civil War | Source: own elaboration

RUSSIAN AND TURKISH INTERVENTIONS

2015 — **30 September 2015:** the Russian Aerospace Forces began a sustained campaign of air strikes against both ISIL and the anti-Assad FSA. Russia and Syrian government forces begin heavy bombardment of rebel-held territory in Aleppo.

2017 — **August 2016 - January 2017:** Turkish military intervention begins in northern Syria: Euphrates Shield

CONTINUING CONFLICTS AND GENERAL STATUS OF CONFLICTS IN PRESENT TIME

2018 — **September 2018 - December 2019:** Iraq strikes ISIL targets, ISIL attacks continue; Turkish offensive into northeastern Syria; Russian mediation & US power vacuum, Russian troops enter Raqqa; Syrian Constitutional Committee; NATO summit; Turkish occupation; continued refugee crisis

2020 — **May 2020 - June 2022:** Caesar Act sanctions, economic crisis, frozen conflict

2023 — **General status of conflict 2023 to present**
As of 2023, active fighting in the conflict between the Syrian government and rebel groups had mostly subsided, but there were occasional flareups in Northwestern Syria. In March 2023, the Syrian government declared that it would not seek any reconciliation with Turkey, unless Turkey withdrew all of its proxy forces from Syria. This statement occurred in response to diplomatic efforts by Russia, which sought to encourage Syria and Turkey to seek reconciliation, and restoration of diplomatic ties.

3.1.2.2 The Syrian civil war's impact on Jordan

The Civil War in Syria has had and still has a major impact in Jordan. In fact, since the beginning of the war, Jordanian communities have provided protection to thousands of Syrian refugees while encountering several difficulties in both the economical and humanitarian spheres. In Jordan the number of Syrian refugees is 660,022 people (UNHCR, 2023). Most Syrian refugees in Jordan come from Syria's south-central governments-Dara'a (79.1 percent), Rural Damascus(13.9 percent), Homs (2.8 percent), Damascus (2 percent) and Aleppo (0.6 percent) (UNHCR, 2017).

Total Persons of Concern 5,286,155

Total Persons of Concern by Country of Asylum

Turkey	3,358,813	63.5%	Iraq	274,724	5.2%
Lebanon	805,326	15.2%	Egypt	147,401	2.8%
Jordan	660,022	12.5%	Other	45,008	0.9%

Fig. 26. Syrian Refugees in the Middle East countries | Source: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria

3.1.2.3 *Syrian refugee integration in Jordan: legal perspectives*

Since the beginning of the War, Jordan has adopted a policy of non-interference in the conflict; at the same time, Jordan has cooperated with UNHCR from the very beginning in order to provide protection to Syrian refugees. From a legal perspective, Syrian refugees in Jordanian territory are divided into three groups: those who reside in camps and are registered, those who have documents and reside regularly in the country, and finally there are irregular refugees. Each of these groups has different access to the protection systems offered by the Syrian government (ACAPS, 2013).

Syrian refugees can cross the Jordanian border freely. In fact, Syrians do not need any visas to enter the territory; they only need a passport. That said, there are four social groups who are very often denied entry into the country: Palestinians living in Syria, men of military age, Iraqi refugees living in Syria, and refugees without necessarian documents (UNHCR, 2013). The report Legal Status of individuals fleeing Syria published in 2013 by ACAPS helps to understand what steps guide the integration of Syrian refugees within Jordan once they cross the national border. Syrian refugees are first taken to a screening centre near the northern border; then they are directed to camps within the territory. In the camp they then receive health care, food, shelter, access to water and other services. Inside the camp their documents are taken from them, resulting in any freedom of movement within the country. The documents can be regained only if the Jordanian government sponsors the refugee, once this happens Syrian refugees regain their right of movement. Moreover, once there are sponsored by the government they are able to find refuge in both urban and rural areas of Jordan.

In response to the continued arrival of Syrian refugees, the Jordanian government approved the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) in 2015. The Plan represents a model of partnership between the Host Country and the international community. The latest plan to be drafted in this regard is the JRP 2020-2022 which again aims to address the needs of Syrian refugees while supporting Jordanians who have been affected by the Syrian crisis. The goals of the plan are to strengthen the design and implementation of programs that are as relevant as possible to the needs of refugees, especially the most vulnerable refugees, and support national systems to continue to provide good quality services. Beyond that, the government has also developed the Jordan Compact, which aims to increase formal employment opportunities for Syrian refugees.

3.2
Refugee camps in Jordan: a comprehensive analysis

In Jordan, the majority of refugees actually live outside of camps. In fact, 81 percent of the refugee population (605,212) live in the urban context in host communities (UNHCR, 2022). In contrast, the remaining portion, the18 percent of refugees (135,550) live within Jordan's four planned camps Za'atari, King Abdullah Park (KAP), Emirati Jordian Camp, and Al Azraq (Table 6). These camps house mostly refugees of Syrian origin and in fact their construction is consequent to the outbreak of war in Syria.

UNHCR assumes the role of coordinating the three out of four camps, both strategically and in directing all planned sectors and services within them (UNHCR, 2022). Supporting UNHCR in administering the camps is the Jordan government's Directorate of Syrian Refugee Affairs (SRAD). Since 2012, when the first camp was established, living conditions for refugees have improved considerably. In fact, UNHCR, together with the National Rescue Council (NRC), has initiated a series of projects to improve infrastructure and services within the camp with the goal of ensuring fair and adequate access for all refugees.

As anticipated, in addition to hosting Syrian or Iraqi refugees, Jordan also hosts Palestinian refugees. These find themselves under the protection of UNRWA and consequently the camps that host them are different from the camps where other refugees are housed. In order to get a spatial idea of how refugees in general are distributed in the Jordanian territory, it was decided to briefly analyse the Palestinian camps as well. There are ten Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan within which approximately 2,307,011 refugees live (Table 6)

Table 6. UNRWA and UNHCR refugee camps in Jordan | Source: https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices/#

CAMP NAME	ESTABLISHED	MANAGED BY	REFUGEES
Za'atari	2013	UNHCR	Syrian
King Abdullah Park	2012	UNHCR	Syrians and Palestinians
Mrajeeb Al Fhood	2013	Air Arab Crescent Authority	Syrians
Amman New Camp	1955	UNRWA	Palestinians
Baqa's	1968	UNRWA	Palestinians
Husn	1968	UNRWA	Palestinians
Irbid	1951	UNRWA	Palestinians
Jabal El-Hussein	1951	UNRWA	Palestinians

Jerash	1968	UNRWA	Palestinians
Marka	1968	UNRWA	Palestinians
Souf	1967	UNRWA	Palestinians
Talbieh	1968	UNRWA	Palestinians
Zarqa	1949	UNRWA	Palestinians

As the map shows, the camps – both UNRWA and UNHCR managed – are located near the most relevant urban centres in Jordan. In addition, they are located in areas near the crossing points between national borders. The reason is due to the fact that camps are the result of an emergency response. They respond to a sudden need to secure shelter for thousands of people. Therefore, the response is often made as soon as refugees have crossed the border and are in a protected area. In addition, the need to locate close to urban centres is due to the fact that the camp must be provided with a range of services and infrastructure, such as water system or electricity infrastructure, which must be related to those already in place. Proximity to so-called formal urban centres is an important resource; however, it seems that camps are to be able to be exploited to the fullest extent. In fact, as much as such proximity might foster greater integration of refugees into the existing society and community, this remains extremely difficult. Indeed, as explained earlier, refugees have no freedom of movement as long as they reside in the camps; this implies that their lives are restricted within the boundary imposed by the camp. Before going into the detailed description of the camp that was chosen as a case study, which is Zaatari camp, it is considered interesting to provide a brief description of the four camps run by UNHCR and one run by UNRWA (Baqa's).

Zaatari refugee camp (UNHCR)

Zaatari camp is the largest camp in Jordan (82,000 refugees). The camp is located 10km from the Syrian border and is in the vicinity of a transit centre for refugees entering Jordan. Since its opening (2012), the camp has registered more than 350,000 Syrian refugees; of these, a large portion have left the camp to settle in urban or rural Jordan. Over the course of the decade, the camp has expanded and today has 26,000 shelters, 32 schools, 8 health centres and 58 community centres. In the camp, refugees receive food and health care, they also have access to free education. The shelters within the camp are built through both fixed and mobile caravans

King Abdullah Park

The camp is located in the governorate of Irbid, about 20km away from the Syrian

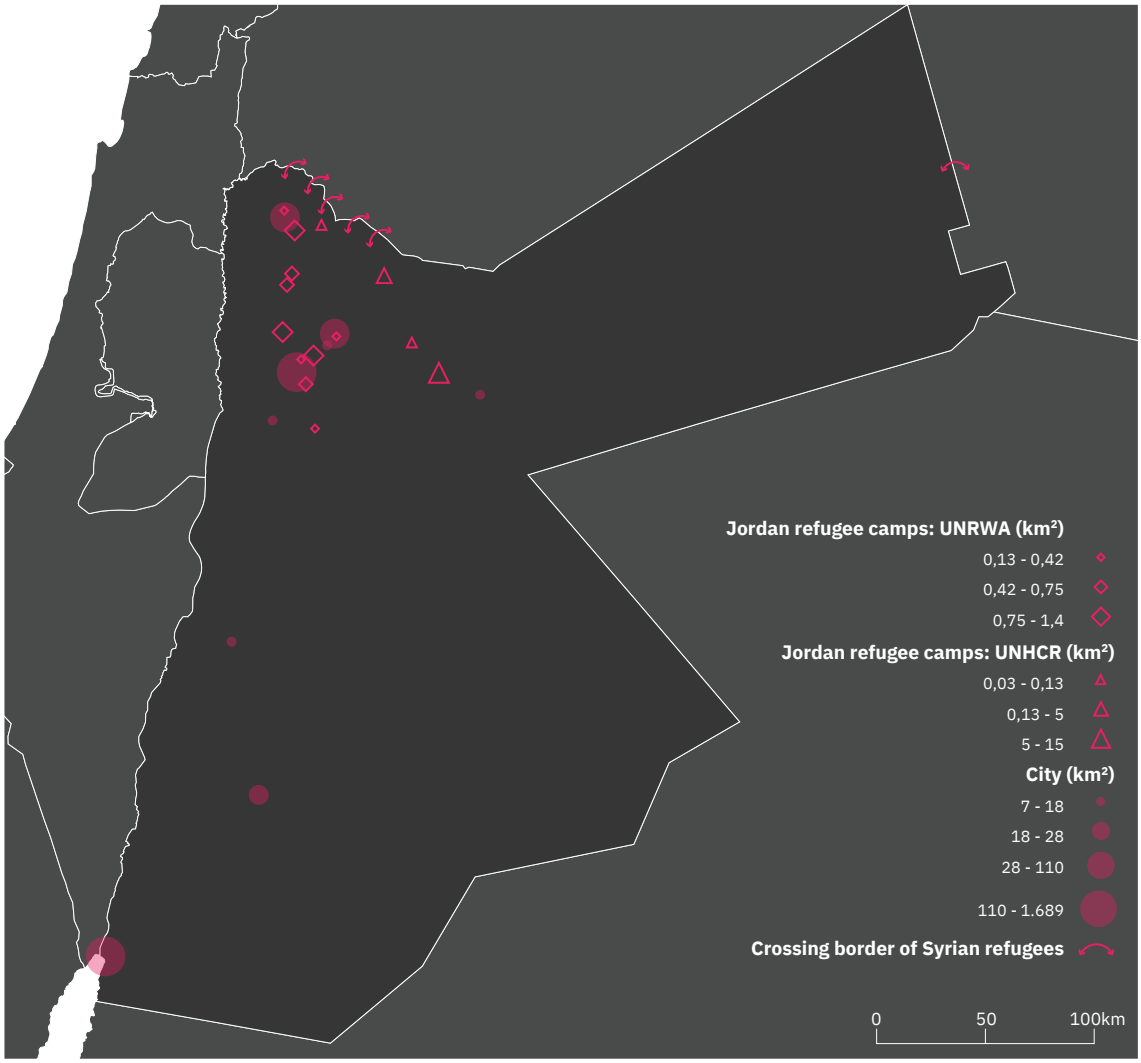


Fig. 27. Distribution and dimension of refugee camps in Jordan | Source: onw elaboration based on https://im.unhcr.org/geoservices

Fig. 28. Zaatari camp | Source: Google Earth, 2023

border. Moreover, the camp is located near the city of Al-Ramtha (4km distance) and it is easily accessible and well connected to the city's infrastructures. In the camp there are about a hundred or so shelters and 37 infrastructures and buildings. The camp hosts at the same time Syrians and Palestinians refugees. However, not much information can be found on the camp.

Fig. 29. King Abdullah Park | Source: Google Earth, 2023

Mrajeeb Al Fhood – Emirati Jordanian Camp

The Mrajeeb Al Fhood camp, also known as Emirati Jordanian Camp, was opened in 2013. The camp is about 20km away from Zarqa and is located in an expansive arid plain. The Emirati Jordanian camp is located approximately 37km from the Syrian border. The camp is financed by the UAE government and managed by the Air Arab Crescent Authority.

The camp was originally built to accommodate 770 caravans; a further 2,200 were prepared to be added once the water and electricity infrastructure was implemented. The caravans are provided with hot showers and electricity. In addition, the camp is equipped with four schools, a medical centre, a library and an events hall. There are also management offices, infrastructure facilities such as roads, water and electricity grids, but also a water treatment plant (ReliefWeb, 2017).

As the camp is run by an authority other than UNHCR, there are specific rules that must be respected. For example, only families, single women, elderly

people, and disabled people are allowed inside the camp. Also, unlike in other camps, there are no free markets for goods and services, and anyone who wants to work must apply to the central committee which matches people to available jobs. Fahad Abdulrahman Bi Sultan, the Deputy Secretary General of the ERC, described the camp as "*the best camp that serves refugees and provides them with shelter and comprehensive care*".

Fig. 30. Mrajeeb Al Fhood camp | Source: Google Earth, 2023

Azraq camp

The camp was established in 2014 and is located in the vicinity of the town of Azraq, from which it takes its name, and is approximately 90km away from the Syrian border. The camp was built on an area that had been used in the early 1990s to shelter refugees fleeing Kuwait and Iraq during the Gulf War. It was built for the continuing waves of refugees from Syria and is run by UNHCR in cooperation with the government of Jordan. The camp was initially built to accommodate 52,000 refugees, but soon its capacity was expanded to a total of 130,000 (UNHCR, 2014).

What is extremely interesting about this camp is that it was built on the basis of lessons learnt from the Za'atari camp; in fact, its planning is different from other camps as it is not based on an emergency response but a year's work was done before it was implemented.

Other innovative elements of the camp include the fact that the shelters are built in such a way that the camp is not permanent. The shelters were therefore built with zinc and steel – with the aim of being more resistant to the hot and windy conditions typical of the area - and without the use of more permanent materials such as concrete.

Fig. 31. Azraq Camp | Source: Google Earth, 2023

Baqa'a camp

Unlike the Syrian camps, the Palestinian camps – due to the longer duration of the crisis – have an older origin. Baqa'a camp is located about 20 km away from the Jordanian capital, Amman. The Baqa'a refugee camp is the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, and it is one of the six "*emergency*" camps that were established in 1968 with the aim of accommodating Palestinian refugees and displaced persons who left the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Initially, the camp offered shelter through unstable plastic tents; over the years, UNRWA replaced the tents with more stable prefabs. The refugees then replaced these prefabs with concrete shelters again.

Inside the camp there are 16 schools, a clinic and two maternal and child health clinics, two sports clubs, a market and several entertainment areas.

In the eighties, the Baqa'a basin was classified as the second largest area in agricultural production after the Jordan Valley, where there were approximately 5,000 greenhouses, but now, after legalizing the use of groundwater, it has become the fifth area in agricultural production.

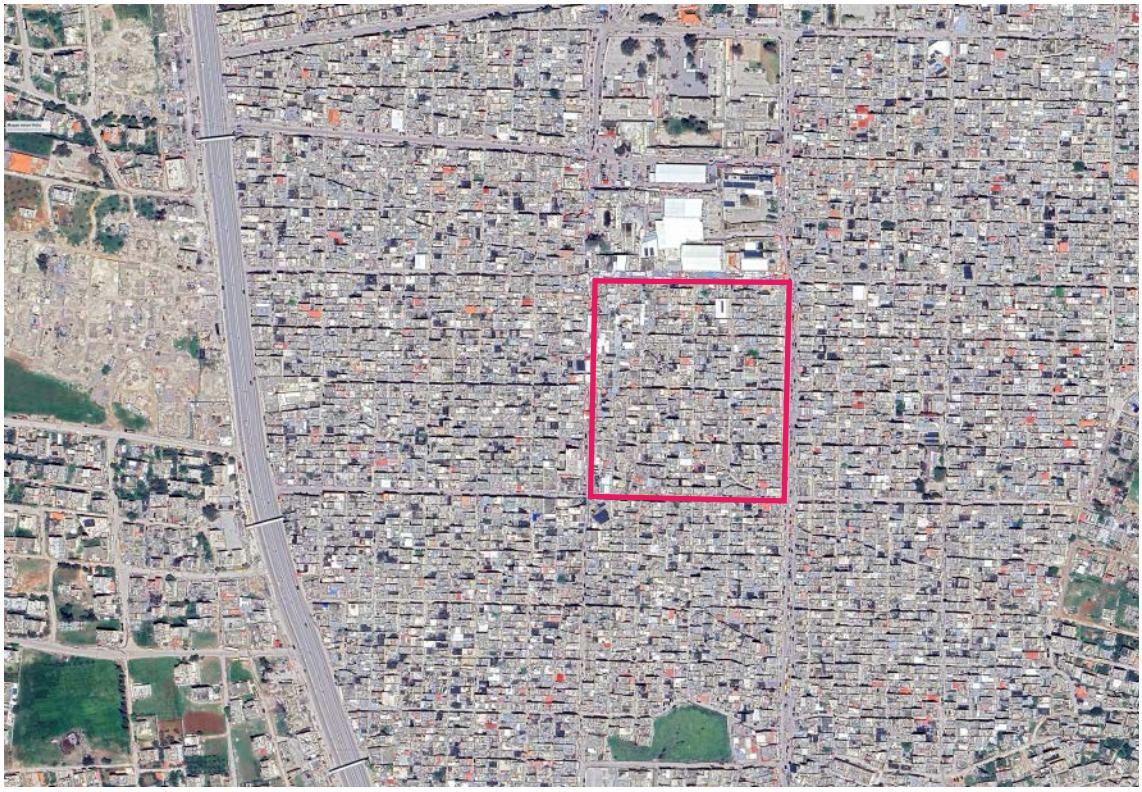


Fig. 32. Baqa'a Camp | Source: Google Earth, 2023

3.3
Zaatari Camp: a glimpse into a Jordanian camp

3.3.1 Za'atari Camp: transforming lives and building a refugee city in Jordan

The Zaatari camp was established in July 2012 with the aim of settling around 10,000 refugees; today, the camp has turned into Jordan's fourth largest city. In fact, Za'atari is considered the largest camp for Syrian refugees, both in terms of size and population. UNHCR camp manager Kilian Kleinschmidt says "*we are building a city as people arrive. It takes 20 years to establish a new city somewhere. We did it in months, but now it's coming to real life*" (UNHCR, 2013).

Za'atari is located on a land that is owned by the Jordanian armed forces and is about 15 km away from the Syrian border. Its proximity to the border makes it easily accessible to the continuous flow of Syrian refugees still fleeing the war. The camp is located near the city Mafraq, the capital of the governorate; the city has a population of 60,000. Zaatari, on the other hand, hosts 80,000 refugees. The proximity to the city has made it possible to connect to the existing water and electricity networks; in addition, this relationship has enabled the development of transport infrastructure networks connecting the camp to the city. In view of reflections on the future that the camp will have once the war is over, the presence of such infrastructure might pose reflections on the possibility of transforming the camp into a permanent settlement.

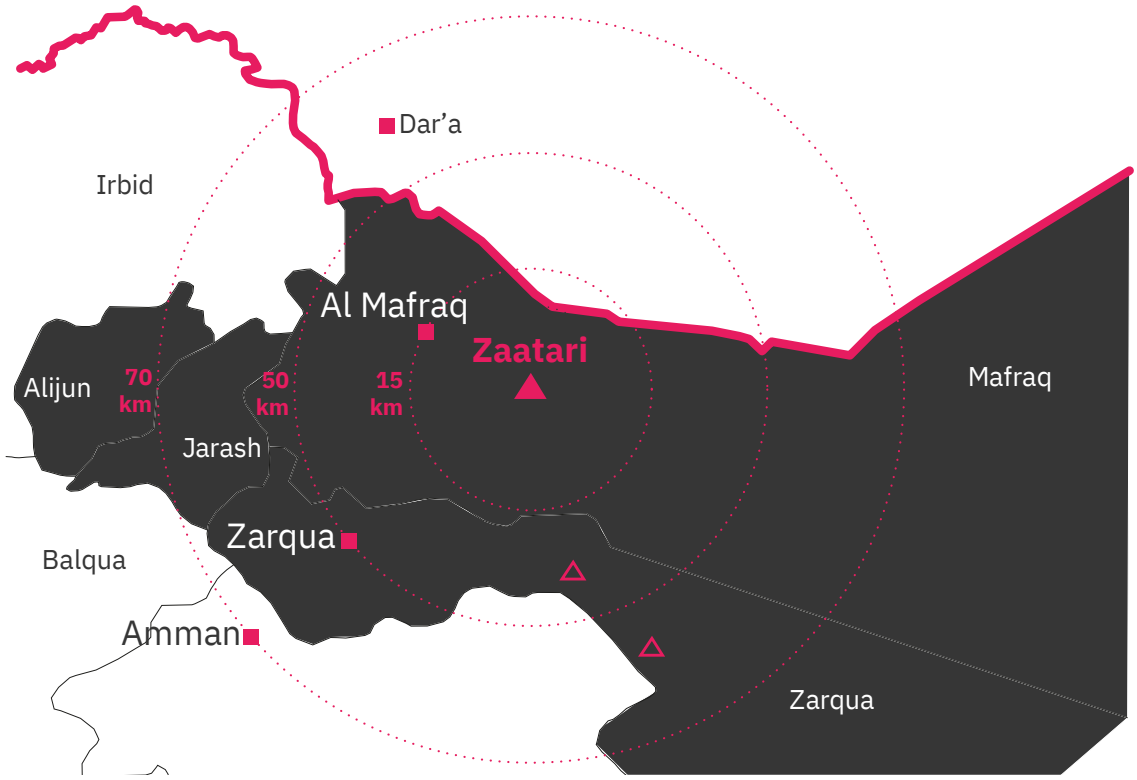


Fig. 33. Zaatari camp location within Jordan territory | Source: own elaboration

What has made the development of the camp difficult are the extreme climatic conditions. Temperatures can reach very high temperatures (40°) and there are also frequent windstorms. In addition to this, the camp is located in a flood-prone area. All these situations, although they have imposed quite a few difficulties, have also been foster reflection on the planning of the camp. Indeed, it has been possible over the years to attempt to use new, even more sustainable systems to stem the problem. This raises the question of how refugee camps, although a temporary place, can also become a test bed for the development of innovative and more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable systems.

In the following paragraphs, an attempt will be made to provide a description of the camp and life within it. It is important to mention that the description is based on academic texts, reports from humanitarian agencies, documentaries and interviews. It was not possible to observe the camp in person and thus get a true personal picture of the camp.

3.3.2 The demographic landscape of Zaatari camp: refugees and partnerships

As the *population by governorate of origin* chart shows, the majority (80%) of the refugees in the camp come from the Dara'a region. This locational choice represents the importance of the role that geographical, cultural and demographic characteristics play in the location choices of refugees. Indeed, the Dara'a region and the area where the camp is located are both located in the Hawran plain. The refugees from the Dara'a region and the inhabitants of the Al-Mafraq region (Jordan) share culture, traditions and history (Dalal, 2014). In addition to the importance of shared traditions, especially in the planning choices of the camp, the homogeneity of the refugees within the camp also plays an important role. This is considered an extremely stabilising factor for the development of the camp.

Forty per cent of the refugees present in Za'atari are between 18 and 59 years old, only two per cent are people over sixty and the remainder are children and adolescents under the age of 18. Of these children, a study prepared by UNHCR in 2014 reported that only 5% of them had no schooling at all while 60% had completed secondary school, 16% high school, 9% primary school and 6% university (UNHCR, 2014). Refugees' level of education is therefore very high; however, it appears from the analyses that it is very difficult for them to develop and exploit their knowledge. This raises important questions about the role that the education system and the labour system play within the camp.

REFUGEES IN ZAATARI CAMP

Total population passed through the camp 461,701

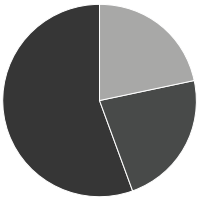
Present refugees 76,439

20% under five years old

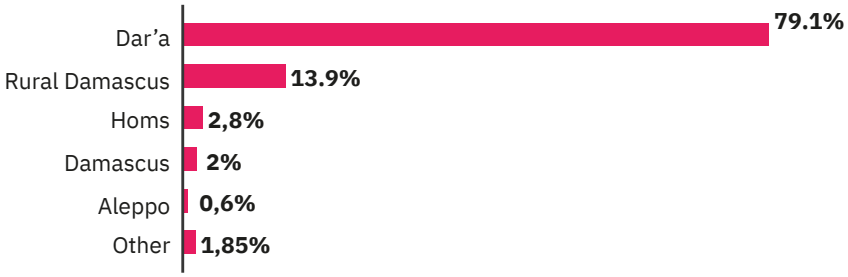
30% female-headed household

Population by gender and age

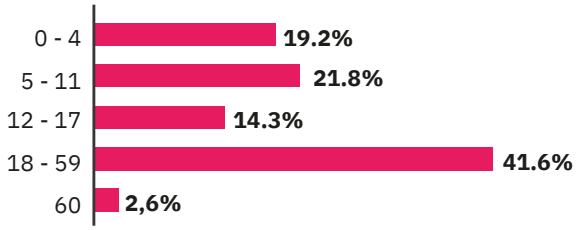
- Men (21,8%)
- Women(22,8)
- Children (55,4%)



Population by governorate of origin



Age range



Zaatari population

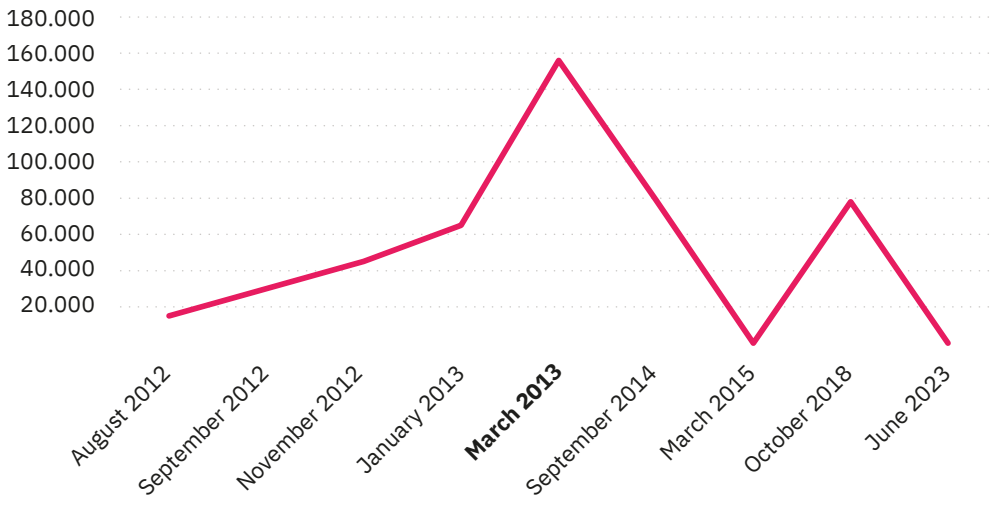


Fig. 34. Zaatari camp population | Source: UNHCR, 2023

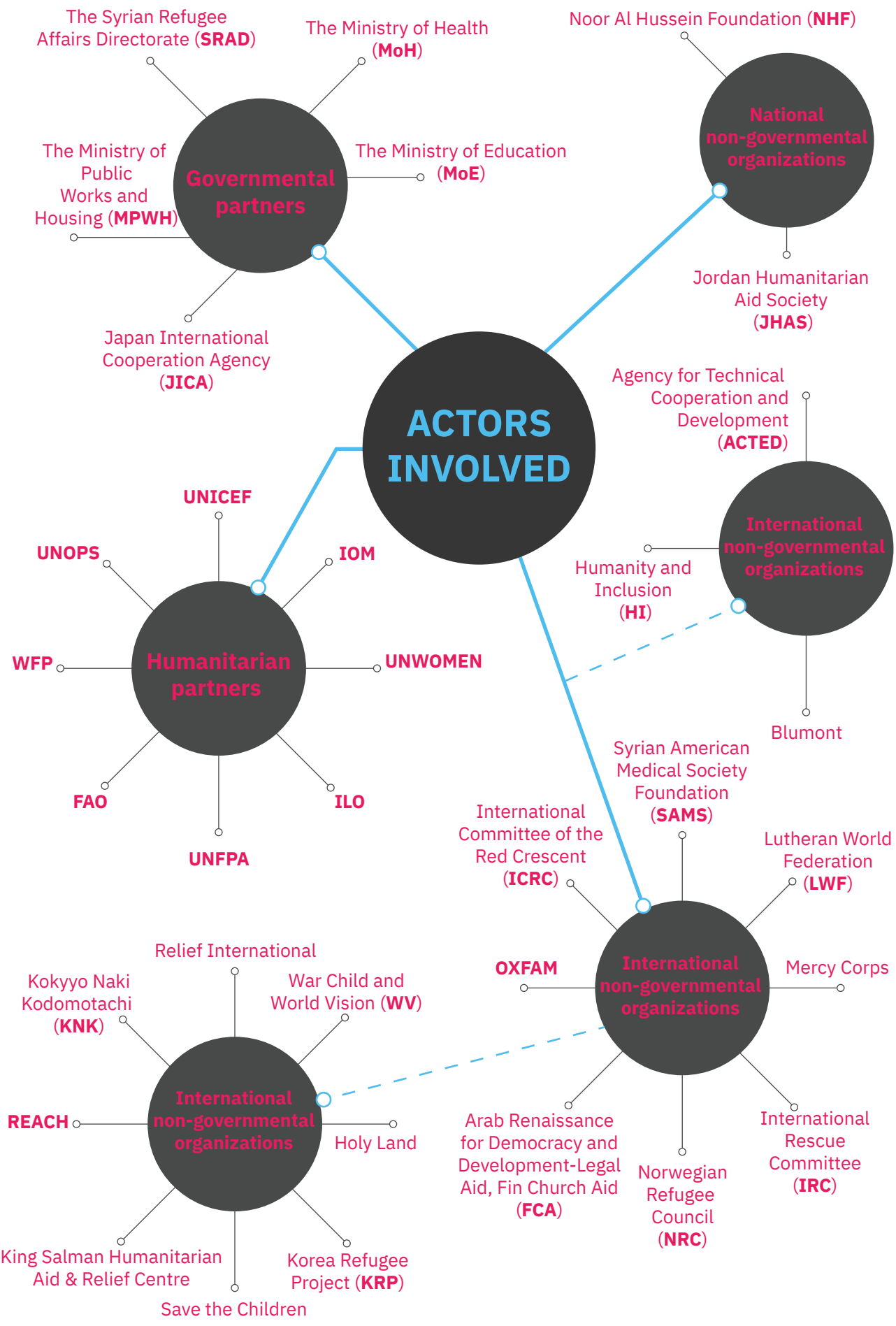


Fig. 35. Actors involved in the management of Zaatari Camp | Source: own elaboration

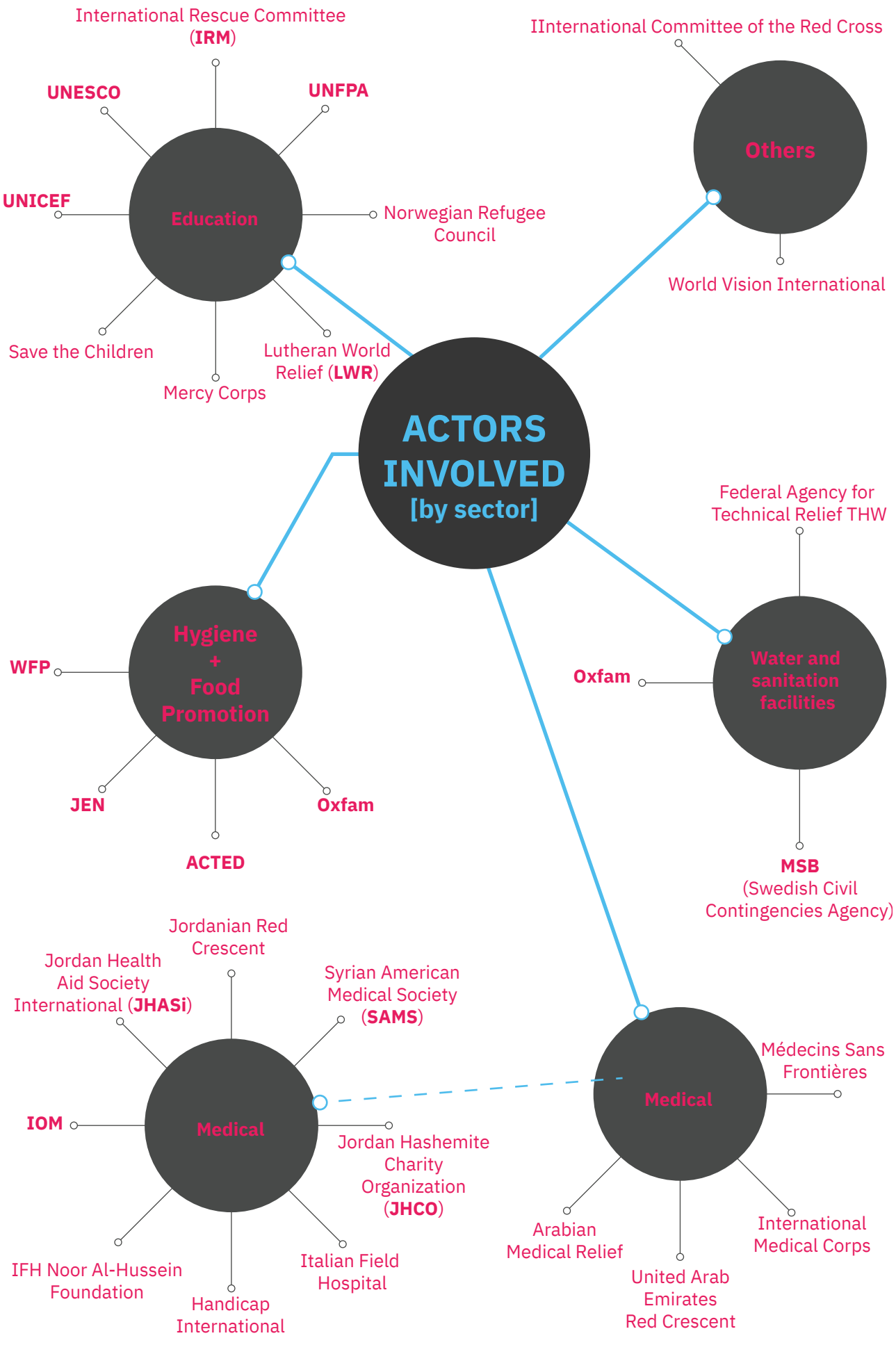


Fig. 36. Actors involved by sector in the management of Zaatari Camp | Source: own elaboration

3.3.3 From chaos to order: the evolution of Zaatari Camp and improving living conditions

Initially, the management and coordination of the refugees were under the direction of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), which provided an area of about 200 hectares (about 40% of the total space the camp occupies today).

In the first months, the planning of the camp was poor as it had to respond quickly to a large wave of Syrian refugees. The poor planning led to severe overcrowding problems and a consequent lack of basic services. Furthermore, due to the difficult environmental conditions in the settlement area, the first winter was particularly hard on the refugees; many refugees were forced to live in snow-covered tents. The camp was structured via a main road where the main services and facilities were developed. As specified by Dalal "*this development began in the very first days of the camp's existence and only later crystallised into the current set-up*" (Dalal, 2014).

In October 2012, UNHCR assumed responsibility for the management of the camp and within a short period of time, with the aim of improving living conditions within the camp, UNHCR involved various humanitarian agencies such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam and MSF.

Due to the continuous influx of people, the humanitarian agencies soon decided to open a new camp next to the old one. With more knowledge of the conditions in the settlement area and the people to be settled, the planning of the second camp was more accurate and resulted in a camp where living conditions were favourable. The new camp soon doubled in size to 530 hectares. The new camp was built not exactly following the international guidelines (The Emergency Handbook or Sphere Project seen in the previous chapter); even the chief planner Mohammed Jetila explains that "*the handbook is our bible. It is however our responsibility to respond to challenges as they happen on the ground... the handbook provides minimums that are better not to be excessed*" (Dalal, 2014).

Fig. 38. Zaatari camp historical evolution | Source: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/4-million-more-europes-crisis-pales-compared-to-syriasneighbours/article26285222/

3.3.4 Zaatari Camp: the unexpected rise of a city

3.3.4.1.*Beyond walls and caravans: transforming Zaatari Camp into a temporary home*

The initial planning of the camp, as anticipated, lacked any real thought about the layout and composition. This was due to the fact that Zaatari, built in ten days, was a response to the emergency of the major refugee influx from Syria. In fact, the camp is often described as a spontaneous camp as refugees initially arranged themselves in the area independently. The initial conformation consisted of a series of rows of tents separated from each other by very narrow spaces. This conformation is still clearly visible in the area that coincides with the old camp.

The subsequent need to plan the camp in such a way as to ensure a higher quality of life led to the decision to use the grid as a layout with a system of caravans arranged in rows; this layout is, as seen, also suggested by the international guides. The spacing between the caravans makes it possible to accommodate all the amenities necessary for the pursuit of a dignified life. Al Nimri describes that in Za'atari it is possible to recognize different types of layouts. Some of them echo the grid-like settings used during the camp's expansion; others developed more organically and spontaneously (Al Nimri, 2014). Thus, the field is composed of areas that turn out to be chaotic and others that turn out to be more controlled from a planning perspective. In this sense, it is interesting to report the reflection posed by Santini regarding the role that the grid plays in these contexts. Indeed, Santini explains how the grid from a planning point of view may seem to be a useful solution to make space more functional. However, going down to the human scaler, the use of the grid layout makes the space monotonous and static (Santini, 2017). In order to make his idea clearer, Santini refers to the reflections that Aldo Rossi proposes in his book Architettura Della Città (1966), in which he explains that "*we today have three main systems of building cities: the orthogonal system, the radial system, and the triangular system. Variations generally result from combinations of the three methods. All of these systems have zero artistic value; their exclusive purpose is for the regulation of the road network; it is therefore a purely technical purpose. A road network serves only for circulation; it is not a work of art, because it is not grasped by the senses and cannot be embraced at a stroke other than on paper*" (Rossi, 1966). The grid thus hardly succeeds in creating a dynamic and pleasing space and on the contrary seems to become almost more of an instrument of control both from the physical and also from the human point of view.

Controlling how life takes place inside the camp is a foundational feature of the

Fig. 39. Original setting of the UNHCR planned camp | Source: UNHCR, 2013

Fig. 40. The old field, in the background the new camp designed by the UNHCR | Source: UNHCR, 2013

refugee camp. Control occurs not only inside but also between the inside and the outside. In fact, as specified in the analysis of the legal system, Syrian refugees, as they enter the camp, lose their freedom of movement within Jordanian territory. This means that refugees can only leave the camp if they are given permission to do so. As a result, from a physical point of view, it is necessary to build elements that enclose the population within the camp. Thus, the camps are surrounded by walls that do not allow escape. In the case of Zaatari, the wall consists of barbed wire; thus, unlike typical walls, it is possible to see what is on the other side of the wall. It is again interesting to report Santini's proposed reflection on the role that the wall plays within Zaatari. Santini, in posing his thought, again makes use of the words of Aldo Rossi, who explains how walls, typical of fortified cities, tend to represent a core structure; at the centre of this structure are all the main spaces of attraction. Santini notes that it is also possible to take up this description in observing Zaatari; in fact, all public and attractive buildings are placed in the centre of the field (Santini, 2017). Thus, as Santini writes in his research, "*ironically, with its isolation, the camp resembles a fortified city: the 530 hectares of orbital shape, surrounded by trenches, embankments and watchtowers (milestones with tanks), and it opens to the outside world through a single gate that is not directly connected to the Jordanian transport network, but to a long road that, thanks to two blocking points at its ends, increases its control*" (Santini, 2017).

The wall is a typical element of control infrastructures, such as prisons, and in addition to fulfilling the above role, they also have a strong meaning and represent what a society wants or does not want within its territory. Prisons and refugee camps are obviously two infrastructures built to host two different types of population; the former control people considered dangerous, while the latter houses people fleeing dangerous contexts. While there is this great difference between the two populations, the adaptation of the two infrastructures seems to have many points in common. In particular, there is a willingness in both cases to keep at a distance and hidden what is perhaps considered to be different from that of formal society. However, according to Jon Calame and Esther Charlesworth (2009), tearing down walls is not the only way to promote integration with the outside world.

Refugees initially lived in tents provided by humanitarian agencies. The tents had a total area of 23 square metres and were hexagonal in shape; a family of up to five people could be accommodated quite comfortably inside. In this way, UNHCR was able to guarantee the minimum covered living space of 3.5

Fig. 41. Border wall at Zaatari camp | Source: Refugees International, 2015

Fig. 42. Border wall of the Bollate prison (Milan, IT) | Source: Riscatti, 2023

square metres per person suggested by the Emergency Handbook and the Sphere Project (UNHCR, 2007). When it became clear that the Syrian refugees would have to live in the camp for longer, the agencies decided to provide them with caravans. Caravans are prefabricated structures that offer better protection from the weather and more privacy. Donors – the main one being Saudi Arabia – spent about $75 million to build 24,000 caravan units; the cost was therefore about $3,127 per unit (UNHCR, 2014).

Interestingly, one project was pivotal in the transition from tents to caravan. This is a project implemented by the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC), which is a coordination mechanism of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in support of refugees. The GSC is co-chaired by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UNHCR. The GSC initiated a project to recycle tents, saving an estimated $3,000,000 (or $600 per tent). The tents were then recycled to partially repair existing tents and to construct new elements to be used in the camp. For example, metal poles were reused to make frames for beds and other furniture. The tents have been used as fencing material, but also to make bags or toys for the children. Parts of the tents were also used to make playground equipment for the children.

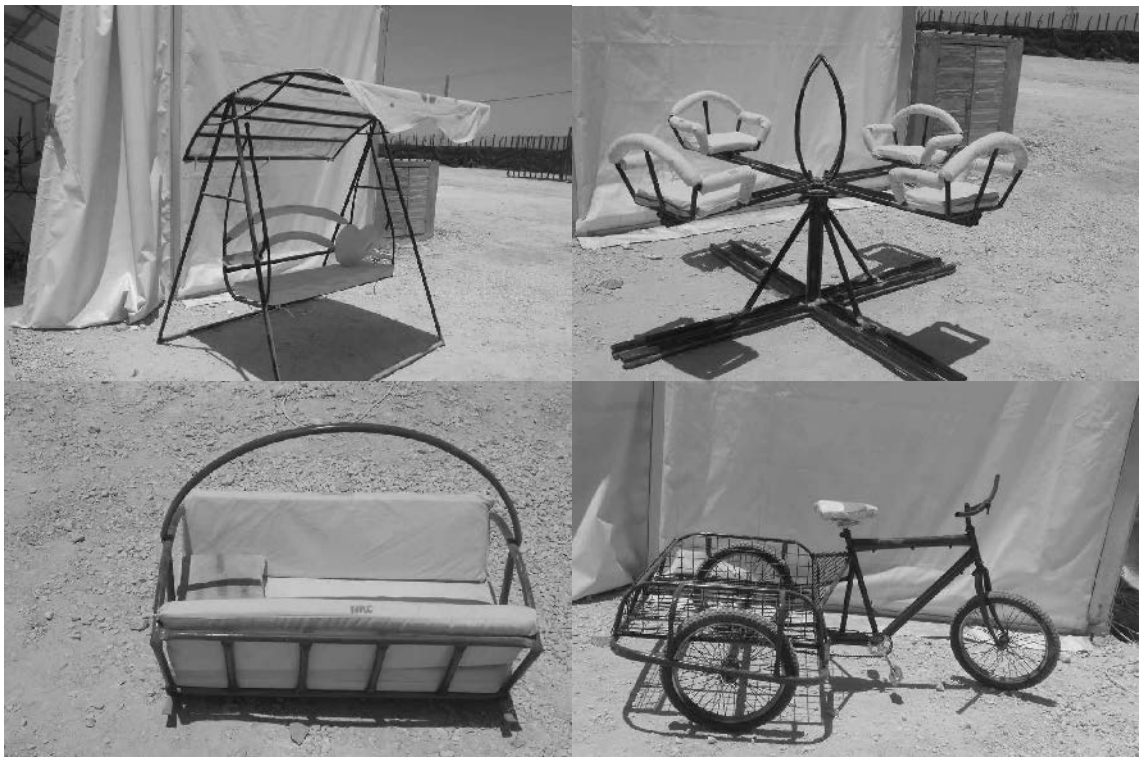


Fig. 43. Examples of furniture, play equipment, and disability aids made out of left-over materials from the tent recycling project | Source: Fadi Al Masarweh/ NRC

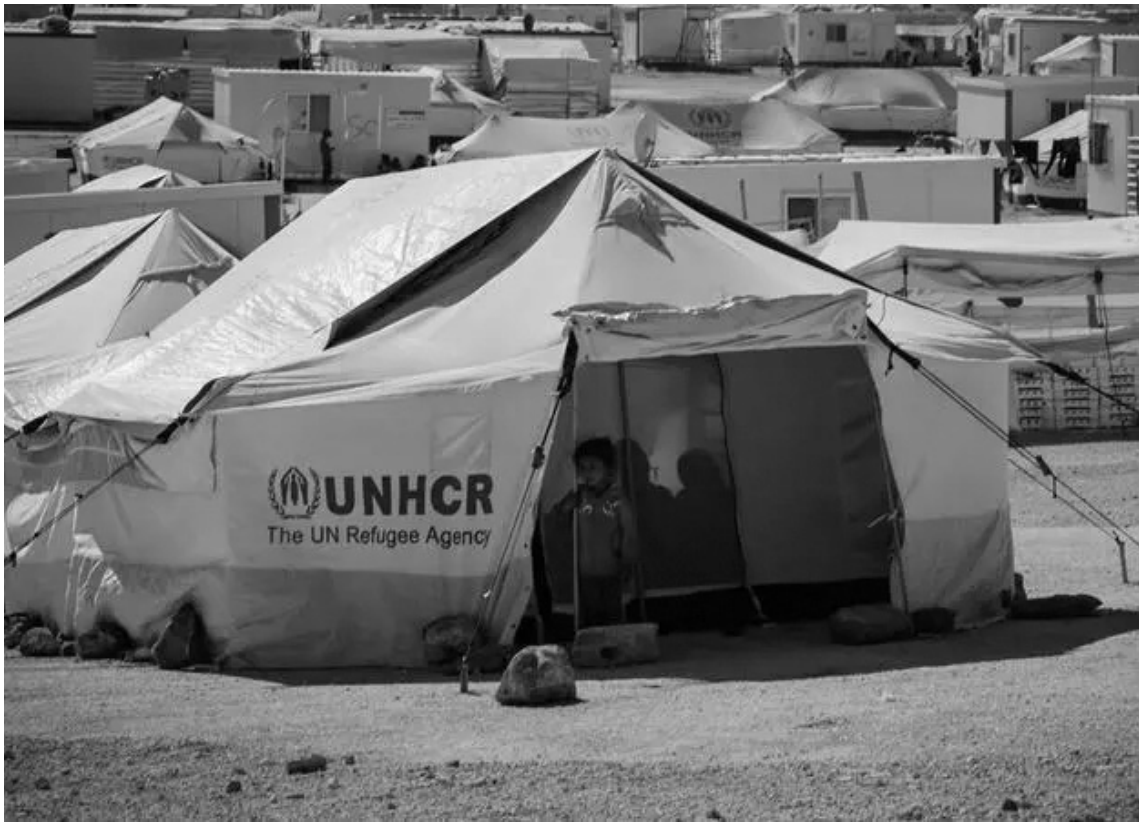


Fig. 44. Initial shelter: tent at Zaatari camp | Source: google images

Fig. 45. Second phase shelter: one caravan for each family | Source: Hesna Al Ghaoui, 2014

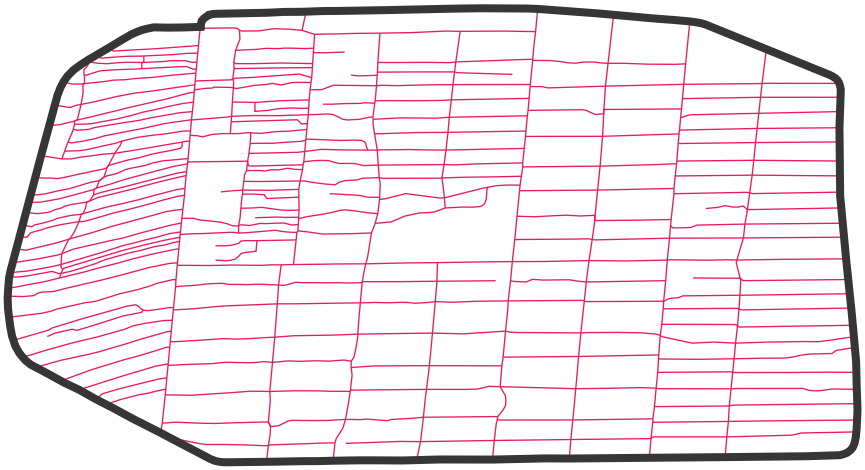
The caravans, with a total area of 16 square metres, are rectangular and made of prefabricated metal. Each family is entitled to one caravan; families with more than five members are also entitled to a tent. According to a report published by REACH (2017), 99.3% of the population – or 12,319 households – live in caravans. However, despite being the best solution according to international guides, the caravan is not the ideal solution in countries of Islamic origin. This is due to cultural reasons, as Islamic values support the separation of men and women, especially when they are not yet married. As Santini explains "*this social unease caused by the universalisation of norms has become a driving force for refugees to find appropriate solutions for living and housing. Within the limited availability of materials, the camp population began to create a new habitat that, by its dynamics, overcomes the monolithic image of refugee camp housing and marks the first steps towards the urbanisation of Zaatari*" (Santini, 2017).

The refugees have distributed and arranged the dwellings – that are therefore of two kinds, caravans and tents – in various forms. In particular, the refugees have distributed the units in a U-shape or courtyard shape; this layout aims to create a greater sense of privacy and individuality for the family (UNHCR, 2013). Some refugees have also paved the area around the caravan in order to recreate the home they left behind in Syria (Al Nimri, 2014).

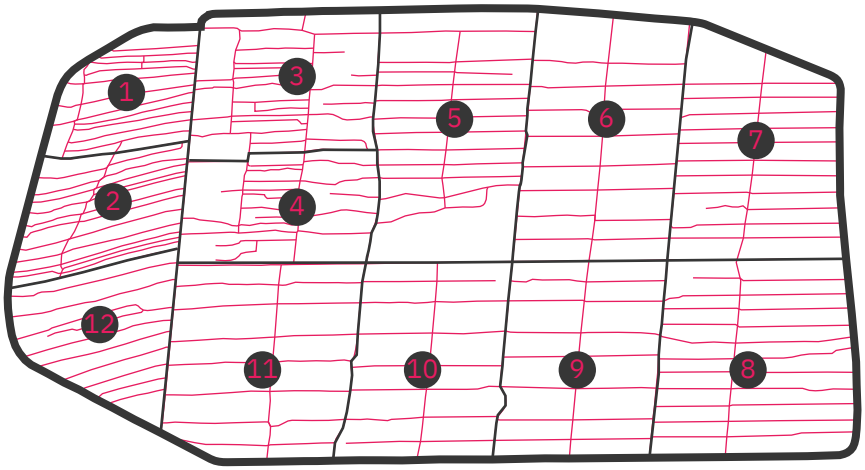
However, what is really interesting to analyse when looking at the distribution of accommodation is the way in which refugees have come together to form communities within the camp. Within Za'atari, refugees prefer to live close to those who came from the same places when they left Syria, so the origin or background of the refugees does not play a determining role in the distribution. This is in contrast to other camps, particularly Palestine camps, where origin is the determining factor in the distribution of shelters. As Misselwitz (2009) explains, in Palestine camps there is an interest in grouping together to recreate the same villages and towns of origin in Palestine in order to feel protected and safe. Another observable feature in Za'atari is that the neighbourhoods developed collectively by the refugees seem to be based on the country that donated the caravans in certain areas (Santini, 2017). This can be seen in the flags of the donor country that are usually placed on the caravans; thus, the formation of the Saudi, Qatari, Kuwaiti, Omani and Bahraini districts can be seen (Dalal, 2014).

It is also interesting to analyse how refugees have over time attempted to represent their values and traditions in shelters. For a better understanding, we

The grid



Districts into which the camp is divided



The shelter distribution

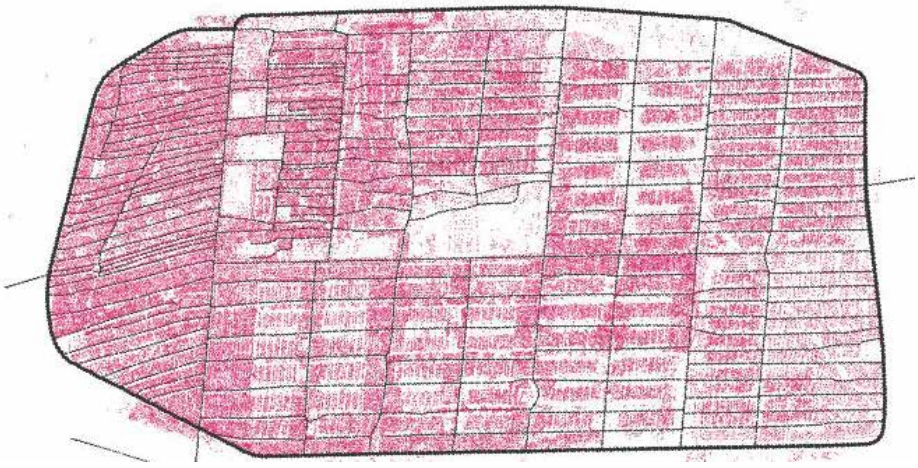


Fig. 46. Grid, district and shelter distribution in Zaatari camp | Source: own elaboration based on https://data.humdata.org/dataset/6f912b7c-ea75-4ede-86e3-4b0109c5b5f9

can refer to Dalal's (2014) analysis of housing units "one example is located in district 12. The randomly chosen household was composed of a caravan and two tents attached to it, inhabited by two married young couple and a child. The caravan was the only private space, thus included a kitchenette of a small cooker, a metal washing basin and moderate cooking equipment; two mattresses for sleeping/ living, faced with few blankets and a television. The first tent was hung at one side on the caravan, and fixed on the other with the ground, supported with thin metal columns. This has created a semi-private space accessible from two sides covering the door of the caravan for more privacy. The space had also cement floor so it can be cleaned and used for setting on it. The space is usually used for storing, receiving guests, drying clothes, and is also connected to a toilet/bath that was built from stone collected around the camp and cement illegally smuggled inside the camp. It is connected to a septic tank which was dug underneath. The other tent was erected the same way on the other side of the caravan, creating more space for receiving guests. The refugees expressed their intention for sparing some space of that tent for raising some chickens. Around the household, a small garden for planting wild garlic and mint was added. The household was connected to electricity through an adjacent lighting pole" (Dalal, 2014). Refugees thus attempt to recall the codes of their own culture, social values and traditions in what has become their temporary home. As Santini writes, "*refugees are the architects*" of their home (Santini, 2017).

3.3.4.2 *Infrastructure and services in Zaatari refugee camp*

As analysed in the previous chapter, the protection provided by UNHCR to refugees does not only concern shelter, but also the provision of a range of services and infrastructure. As seen, these services and infrastructures are distributed and planned according to guidelines based on the number of users in the camp. They include communal latrines, communal kitchens, communal toilets, water depots and other recreational facilities.

The main services within the camp include education, health, basic relief items, utilities and sanitation.

FACILITY	NO. OF FACILITIES
Hospital	3
Medical centres	16
Supermarkets	2
Recreation facilities	7
Women friendly spaces	3
Schools	13

Table 6. Number of facilities within Zaatari camp | Source: UNOSAT, 2016

Kindergardens	3
Community centres	28
Football fields	8
Market space	1

Educational services

There are three schools in Zaatari camp, in which eleven NGOs work together to provide education. Each of these schools has a capacity of 5,000 students, as stated in the Emergency Handbook (UNHCR, 2007). In order to reach more people, double shifts are used: girls go to school in the morning and boys in the afternoon. Although the majority of children want to go to school, attendance rates are actually low and, as Chulov says, "*raise fears of a lost, illiterate post-crisis generation*'" (Chulov, 2013). There are many reasons why children do not attend school, ranging from reasons related to the need to work in order to support their families, to reasons related to violence and abuse suffered while fleeing (Ledwith, 2014). Within the camp, there are several projects that support adult education. These include the Oasis of Women and Girls, a training programme that teaches women trades such as tailoring and hairdressing.

UNHCR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

- Currently, 19,243 children, 49 percent girls, and 51 percent of boys are *enrolled in formal schools from an eligible population (6-18 years) of 25,402. To further the quality of basic education, school expansion, class formation planning, the development of physical infrastructure, together with investment in teaching and supervision practices, are seeking to address barriers to enrolment and retention. To complement formal education, UNICEF runs non-formal education programs, where over 523 students are enrolled. While over 17,427 children benefit from learning support services at the Makani centres and 6,941 youth have access to skills training opportunities in the Camp, the establishment of quality, relevant, flexible, and diverse pathways to certified post-basic and tertiary level learning opportunities is a priority. UNICEF is also implementing the Early Childhood program, which has been integrated with the Makani benefitting over 1,859 children. To further enhance education, the first inclusive playground was recently opened in Zaatari. Currently, 770 students with disabilities are being supported through ten resource rooms, shadow teachers, individual academic support, visual and hearing aids.*
- *Working with national and international institutions, UNHCR has established an Innovation Lab in the Zaatari camp that will be open for access soon. The first Zaatari Camp Robotics Championship, as part of the Innovation Lab education project in collaboration with Jubilee Center for Excellence in Education, was held. The training program started last October, through*

the program, 14 university students have been trained to become robotics coaches, 35 kids have been trained to compete on the camp level. A series of courses in the Learning Hub, which include Marketing and Packaging (HBBs), robotics EV3, coding, robotics Arduino and 3D printing, were launched for both adolescents and adults for skill-building and youth empowerment.

- *A total of 106 refugees from the Camp have earned the DAFI scholarships. Out of them, 11 students have graduated, 95 students are still studying in Jordanian Universities.*

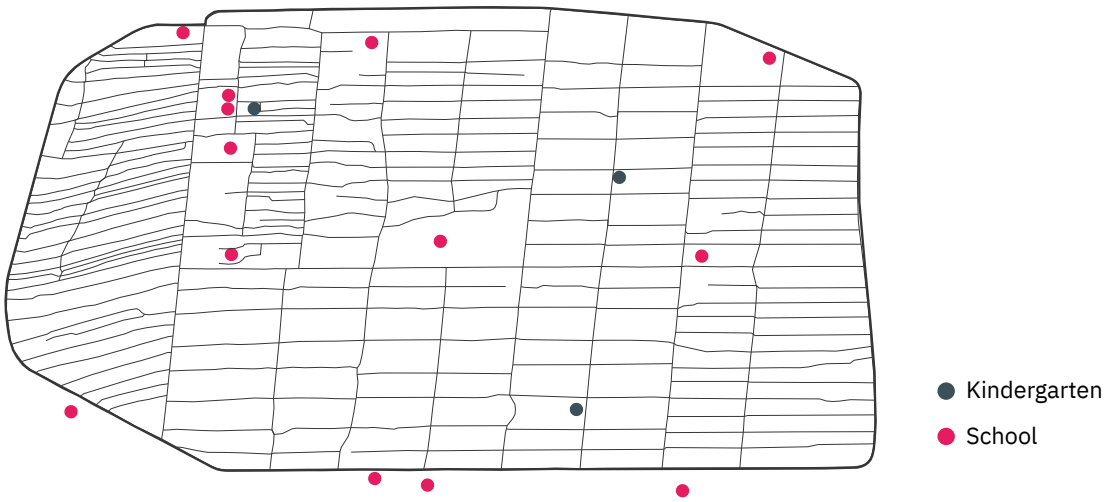


Fig. 47. Education facilities in Zaatari camp | Source: https://data.humdata.org/dataset/6f912b7c-ea75-4ede-86e3-4b0109c5b5f9

Healthcare system

The health system in the camp is able to provide treatment for a range of illnesses, as well as psychological support. However, the infrastructure in the camp is often unable to deal with a medical condition or is inadequate, in which case it is necessary to refer to nearby Jordanian hospitals. These include the IMC clinic, the JHAS clinic, the Italian field hospital in Jordan, the MDM 1 and 2 clinics, the Moroccan field hospital and the Saudi clinic. Inside the camp there are three hospitals and more than a hundred doctors of Syrian origin.

UNHCR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- *To sustain quality primary health services, building the capacity of national partners to assume greater responsibility for service provision is a priority while furthering the health status of refugees through self-care. In support of secondary and tertiary health care interventions; including off-camp referrals, priorities include the integration of Health Information System (HIS) reporting; the mainstreaming of standard operation procedures in instances of sexual and gender-based violence; the establishment of a Health Quality Control Committee for assessment and monitoring; a transition to a unified E-Health electronic records system for patient care; the adoption of a health education*

strategy, the implementation of targeted reproductive health behavioural change programs; and investments in infrastructure to expand the scope of emergency health care.

- *UNFPA provides quality integrated 24/7 reproductive health care and Gender-based Violence services in four clinics in the Camp.*
- *The refugees in Zaatari will be integrated within the national plan for COVID-19; the Ministry of Health (MoH) has prepared their health facilities to deal with any developments related to the virus. MoH guidance and instructions regarding COVID-19 response was shared with the RRT and camp health facilities.*

Fig. 48. Healthcare facilities in Zaatari camp | Source: https://data.humdata.org/dataset/6f912b7c-ea75-4ede-86e3-4b0109c5b5f9

Core relief items

As seen in the previous chapter, humanitarian agencies also provide refugees with food and so-called NFIs items. Among the first items to be provided are two blankets per person and food vouchers worth $8.5. In addition, the World Food Programme provides four free pita per person per day in the five bread centres within the camp. In addition to the pita, food such as rice, oil, lentils, sugar and biscuits are provided free of charge for a total of USD 4 million per month, or USD 30 per refugee (Laub and Daraghmeh, 2013; Khandaji and Makawi, 2013).

UNHCR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE CORE RELIEF SYSTEM

- *All camp refugees receive JOD 23 (USD 32) per person per month through the Blockchain system (BB) to cover their food needs. The assistance can be redeemed from two WFP contracted supermarkets (Tazweed and Safeway) and four dedicated bread selling points located in the Camp. This allows camp residents to choose from a variety of goods as well as it brings a sense of*

normalcy and dignity to their life. In October 2016, WFP introduced the card-less EyePay iris scanning system based on UNHCR's biometric registration data, which helps to enhance the efficiency and accountability of food assistance, while also making shopping easier and more secure for refugees. The blockchain (BB) technology is innovative assistance and a cost-efficient delivery mechanism in the Zaatari camp.

- *WFP also provides and delivers healthy school meals to refugee children in all formal schools via the Healthy Kitchen Project. Four kitchens have been established inside the Camp that provides healthy meals to about 20,000 children attending formal schools. The project aims to improve health and nutritional awareness and boost healthy eating habits by providing nutritional information. WFP also provides economic opportunities to Syrian women and men engaged in the sourcing, preparation, and delivery of the meals.*

Sanitation

Public services include water, waste management and electricity. The Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and UNICEF are the main providers of these services in the camp.

In Za'atari, per capita water consumption is approximately 35-53 litres per day, which is 15 litres above the minimum standard proposed by Sphere. Access to water is provided through communal tanks and standpipes. However, many refugees now have private tanks due to the insecurity associated with the distance from distribution points – women, children and the disabled feel particularly insecure. Andrew Harper, head of the operation, says "*8% of the camp population have a private water tank, either because they were deported or because they actually stole it from the tomato facilities. They've destroyed a lot; they've stolen a lot. But did they steal it, or did they privatise it? I think they privatised it*".

In 2017, the camp installed the largest solar power plant ever built in a refugee camp. The installation is capable of reducing the camp's annual carbon dioxide emissions by 13,000 tonnes per year. It will also save around $5.5 million. The 12.9-megawatt peak photovoltaic system was financed by the German government through the KfW development bank at a cost of EUR 15 million (USD 17.5 million). The new solar plant will provide households with 12 to 14 hours of electricity per day. Residents say the extra energy will greatly improve their lives, allowing them to complete their daily chores sooner and keeping children from having to play in the dusty streets after dark. The solar plant was built on

the outskirts of the camp and consists of 40,000 photovoltaic panels arranged in rows hundreds of metres long, covering an area roughly the size of 33 football pitches. Ilham, a 41-year-old mother from Dara'a in southern Syria, said the extra hours of electricity would help her keep her children safe and healthy; "*now I can do laundry during the day instead of at night when it doesn't dry, and we get sick from wearing wet clothes*" (UNHCR, 2017).

UNHCR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE SANITATION SYSTEM

- *In a bid to improve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and the overall quality in service delivery, UNICEF established in 2016 three internal water wells with a combined daily capacity of 3,800m3 and a wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of 3,600m3 /d; to meet the needs of the Camp's population. Also, a piped water supply distribution system has been constructed and is being commissioned. This network will ensure piped water delivery to every household in the Camp, together with a piped sewage network, linking the collection system to the wastewater treatment plant. Besides, solid waste management and community led low-cost recycling are priorities.*
- *Based on good consumption and utility, a 12.9-megawatt peak solar photovoltaic (PV) plant opened in November 2017 has allowed UNHCR to provide 11 hours of electricity to refugees' homes. This provision eased the living conditions of families in the Camp. It improved their safety and security while facilitating the storage of food and allowing children longer hours to do their homework. The plant helped UNHCR save an average of approximately USD 5 million per year in electricity bills, an amount that could be redirected to expand other vital services to Zaatari camp residents. It is foreseen that other facilities such as hospitals, community centres, and offices of humanitarian organizations working on site will also benefit from the electricity generated by the plant. All 2,300 sodium streetlights in Zaatari camp are replaced with LED low energy consuming lights to save energy and going for greener. To improve power connection in shelters, a project for replacing consumer cables to upgrade the current status of the electrical network in Zaatari has commenced; the replacement of consumer cables has been extended for 13,000 shelters, and 10,052 shelters have been energized.*
- *To ensure community participation and empowerment, JICA trained 144 refugee electricians at the National Electric Power Company training centre (NEPCO-ETC). These electricians are responsible for connecting households to the distribution network, ensuring the connection is safe and reliable.*

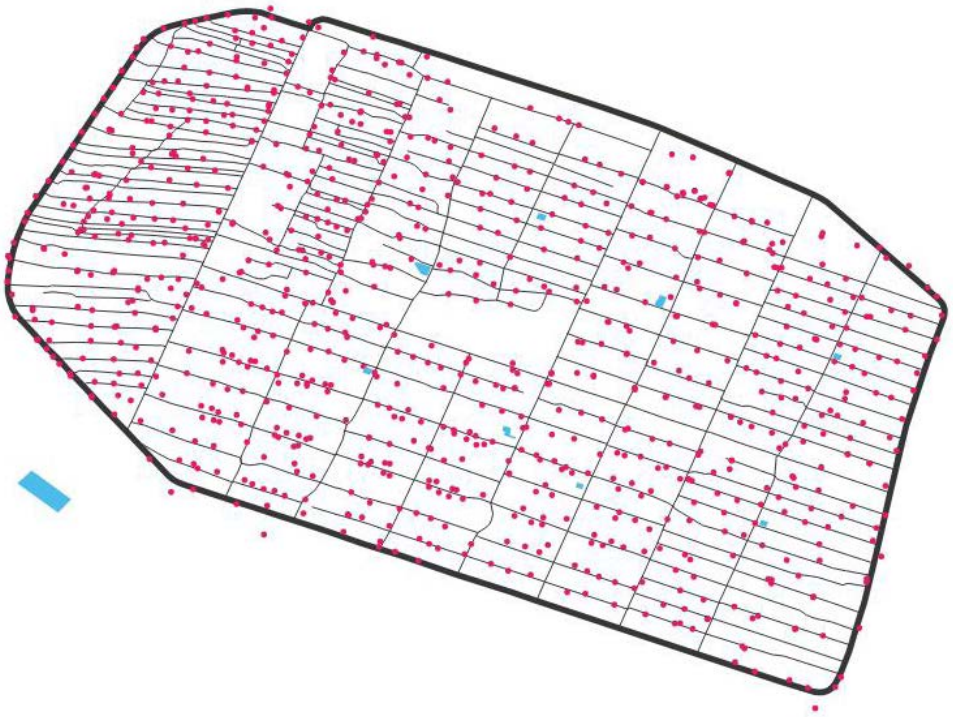


Fig. 49. Water mandgement systems | Source: https://data.humdata.org/dataset/6f912b7c-ea75-4ede-86e3-4b0109c5b5f9

Fig. 50. The largest solar panel installation in a refugee camp | Source: google images

Toilets

The vast majority of households (98.4%) reported having private toilets in Zaatari camp. 99.5% of the toilets were connected to the sanitation network via a Phase 1 concrete tank. In addition, 89.2% of the population surveyed felt that the connection to the PRC had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' the sanitation situation. 47.4% of the sanitation facilities were found to be inadequate according to UNICEF standards; only in one third (30.9%) of the cases did the families contact an NGO to improve their facilities. Of the tanks assessed in this survey, 34.3% (946) were found to be damaged.

One of the most humiliating realities for refugees in the Middle East is a basic human need: going to the toilet. In camps like Zaatari in Jordan, people walk for miles and wait in endless queues to use antigenic facilities, increasing the likelihood of disease. In response, some refugees simply dig pits in the ground and try to dispose of waste through trenches. This is a serious health hazard that affects more than 2 billion people worldwide. Now an MIT spinout, change: WATER Labs, plans to bring proper sanitation to this population by developing a compact evaporative toilet for homes without electricity or plumbing. Since wastewater is mostly water, it can be quickly evaporated, eliminating up to 95 percent of daily wastewater.

3.3.4.3 *The role of public space in Zaatari camp: physicality, social interactions, and symbolism*

In cities, public space is the place where individuals socialise, where they carry out their activities and where their identities and values are displayed. Public space is described in relation to those who observe and study it. Sociologists analyse public space in the context of its social dynamics; politicians analyse it as a space of civil society and as a place for the expression of individual rights; finally, urban planners, architects and designers think of public space as a physical place and as a place of relationships between individuals and space. It is also the place of relationships where the main activities of urban life take place. Public spaces are the setting for human activity. They are both physical and social places. For this reason, such spaces are often referred to in urban planning through two different locutions: public space and public realm. As Mariano describes, "*public space corresponds to the physical and morphological dimension of space that can be measured and represented on city maps. Public realm corresponds to the relational dimension and the set of social interactions between residents, a dimension that is not visible and representable, but fragmented and changeable*" (Mariano, 2013). The meaning of the public

realm was also related to the concept of the public domain as structured by Hajer and Reijndorp. They understood the public realm as the set of all places where a person enjoys being and where exchange relations take place. The public sphere is "*where exchange between different social groups is possible and actually takes place*" (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). Arendt argues that "*public spaces offer the possibility of coming together, of discussing and acknowledging each other's presence, which is crucial for democracy*" (Arendt, 1958). Public space thus assumes the role of places of identity manifestation, places within the city where there is (or should be) freedom to express one's being. However, it is important to emphasise that a space does not become public as a result of a deliberate action, such as planning. It is not the mere arrangement of a space that makes it public. Moreover, public spaces can be understood as the banner of urban civilisation. Indeed, the citizens of a place are called upon to identify themselves in the community through the symbolism that takes shape in the places of the city. As Torricelli describes it, public space "*is therefore not only a set of physical forms, flows, sounds and noises, but also the manifestations of the city, whose meaning is not the same for everyone. Precisely because it is a place of manifestation, public space becomes a vector of images, in a certain sense it takes on the appearance of a mirror of power*" (Torricelli, 2009).

In a context such as refugee camps, public space is a very important place for the development of a sense of community and the integration of refugees. The development and representation of a refugee community identity can lead to a real sense of belonging to what temporarily becomes the refugees' home.

Within Zaatari, public space takes on different conformations and roles depending on the sector. It can be observed that in the old camp, where there is a high density of housing, communal spaces are minimal. Here the public space is really a passageway that allows circulation between the blocks. On the other hand, in the area of more recent development, where the density is lower, public spaces appear. However, these spaces do not seem to have any particular function and are therefore not attractive to refugees. There are no places that in cities would be called squares, plazas or other recreational areas. In this sense, the public space par excellence remains the street, where refugees feel protected and carry out their activities. Za'atari is a particularly interesting case in this respect, as a kind of commercial district has developed along the camp's two main streets, which have been dubbed the *Champs-Elysées*. In fact, there are around 600 restaurants and 3,000 shops (UNHCR, 2013). Most of the shops consist of one or more connected caravans or a construction of tin and wood.

Shops range from kiosks to hairdressers, butchers, electricians and more. UN officials report that, thanks to the skill and commercial drive of Syrian refugees, development in Zaatari has exceeded in six months what many camps see in 20 years. Refugees have taken over the street, which has become an unplanned public space, creating an informal market that attempts to replicate that of formal cities. As Dalal describes, "*refugees have set up all kinds of businesses that you would expect to see in a city*" (Dalal, 2014).

Fig. 51. EAli Jibraail owns the longest-running restaurant within the camp. Every day, the Damascus-based chef, together with his nine staff, serves more than seven thousand falafels; Jibraail proudly says "the whole camp eats here".

Fig. 52. Abudelmena'em Abu Hesenih BAKERY shop | Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igPVUi2HeH0&t=494s&ab_channel=RealStories

Fig. 53. Mohammed Khaer Al-Jokadar barber shop | Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igPVUi2HeH0&t=494s&ab_channel=RealStories

3.3.5 Zaatari: navigating the boundaries of temporariness

As Ledwith explains, the planning of the camp has always maintained a temporary nature, as the Jordanian government wanted the refugees to leave once the war in Syria was over (Ledwith, 2014). At the same time, however, the refugees continue to develop and modify the camp to meet their needs. In this way, the camp develops beyond temporal and universal boundaries to become a camp city (Santini, 2017). The concept of temporality within field planning is a very relevant issue, as it raises several considerations. For example, one wonders whether temporariness is an excuse for often not guaranteeing many rights that refugees should enjoy. Temporariness is also used as what represents the right of refugees to return to their countries of origin; at the same time, temporariness does not guarantee that many services and infrastructure will be adequately built. How, then, is it possible to guarantee the right to return in the spatiality of a place, while at the same time designing spaces that are adequate? In addition to reflecting on the temporary nature of the camps while they are still functioning, a number of reflections are made on the role these infrastructures will play once the wars or persecutions cease. *What will become of Zaatari when the war in Syria is over? Will it be decommissioned? Will it be reused as a new urban centre?* In terms of time, the main example of the fragility of the concept of impermanence is the Palestinian refugee camps. Palestinian camps have existed in many cases for more than 40 years and have become a home for many. The Zaatari camp has achieved in six years what Palestinian camps have not achieved in 40 years. From a physical-spatial perspective, the Zaatari camp seems to follow the same steps as the Palestinian camps: once the camp opened, a socio-cultural order influenced the design and function of the space, leading to the emergence of habitat and social space. What makes the case of Zaatari particularly interesting is not only the fact that it has existed for more than a decade, but perhaps what makes it most interesting is its conformation. A conformation that is that of a city. A city that may be informal, but claims to be a city.

04

Photographs from a helicopter carrying US Secretary of State John Kerry and Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh, July 18, 2013| ZAATARI CAMP, JORDAN

Refugee camps:
the intersection of temporariness and urbanization

"[Refugee camp is] a place that evolves over time, constantly being reshaped, whose inhabitants try to build a future for themselves rather than staying in a temporary state that is particular to camps"

Corbet, 2015

The chapter is divided into three sub-chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of camp planning and management.

The first sub-chapter provides an overview of the guidelines currently used in camp design, emphasising their purpose of ensuring a safe and dignified living environment for refugees. It highlights the emergency nature of camp development by focusing on the limitation of the international guidelines.

The second sub-chapter focuses on the temporariness of refugee camps as a defining characteristic. It discusses how temporary architecture and the concept of temporariness have influenced urban planning and people's lifestyles. It distinguishes between the chosen temporariness of digital nomads and the imposed temporariness faced by refugees due to disasters, conflicts, and persecution. The sub-chapter reflects on the permanence of camps and the challenges it poses, as well as the legacy and future of these camps.

The third sub-chapter explores the fact that camps are transforming into cities; they witness the emergence of neighbourhoods, the construction of makeshift structures, and the growth of population. The shift from top-down planning to bottom-up processes by refugees themselves plays a crucial role in this urbanization. However, political constraints prevent camps from attaining full city status. Recognizing the camp-city hybrid nature calls for comprehensive planning and design to address the needs and aspirations of the inhabitants.

Overall, this chapter critically examines the existing guidelines for planning refugee camps, emphasizing their limitations in addressing the complex social, cultural, and long-term aspects of camp settings. It highlights the need for more context-specific and sustainable approaches to camp planning and management, considering the unique needs and aspirations of the displaced populations.

4.1
Limitations of international guidelines: examining challenges in refugee camp design and management

The guidelines currently used in camp design and management focus on developing a set of standards to ensure a safe and dignified existence for all refugee camp residents. The guidelines reflect the emergency nature of refugee camp development and provide technical guidance on how to respond quickly to refugee flows. Once implemented, these guidelines should be followed by a process that assists the affected populations to find more sustainable and durable solutions.

UNHCR refugee camps are planned on the basis of the guidelines contained in the Handbook for Emergencies produced by UNHCR in 2007. In fact, camps planned by host countries are also based on UNHCR guidelines and those of the Sphere project (1997). The latter, together with the Handbook for Emergencies, is therefore the main reference for responding to humanitarian emergencies. However, there are a number of other manuals that have been published on camp management and planning, including the Camp Management Toolkit published by the Norwegian Refugee Council. The various manuals and reports do not differ that much from each other.

Although camps are often built as an emergency response – with little thought given to social aspects, the provision of services, the use of local materials and other important planning factors – the above manuals are structured as if they were proper city plans. The first stages of urban planning involve a careful study of the area. The study of the settlement area must consider social, environmental, economic, political analyses and possible future trends. In order to plan an area or a city, it is necessary to understand what the needs of the place are. This is suggested in the Emergency Manual, where the first chapter precisely describes the need to carry out a series of analyses in preparation for a possible crisis. The manual states that if possible planning ahead – which is what happen in formal urban planning – the response will be faster and better (UNHCR, 2007). However, it is not always possible to know when it will be necessary to build a refugee camp, and therefore it is often not possible to carry out this type of activity. The case of Jordan is interesting in this respect. In fact, the Zaatari camp studied in the previous chapter was built in response to an emergency. As seen, this meant that the first responses were made without having the chance

to understand the scale of the problem, the population arriving, the context in which the refugees were settling, and without any other useful studies to ensure a better response. In contrast, the Azraq camp, built two years after Zaatari, was developed after careful study. As can be seen, Azraq camp was developed on the basis of lessons learned from Zaatari and a better understanding of the context and the population to be settled.

The manuals then consist of an extensive section providing guidance on appropriate planning and management of the camps. Here, as in an urban plan, guidance is given on standards, indicators and policies. Suggestions are made for the most appropriate distribution of services and infrastructure. However, what distinguishes the camp manual from the urban plan is the role played by the context. The urban plan is made in relation to a specific context, a specific area of a city or a city itself. The information provided in the plan is therefore adapted to the needs of the place for which it is provided. In contrast, the manual could be said to be context-free. In fact, the standards and indicators provided do not refer to a specific humanitarian crisis or a specific country. Rather, they are provided at a global level without any consideration of context. A small analysis of the main standards and principle is now proposed with the aim of highlighting that just discussed.

The Handbook highlight that when developing the camps, some key protection issues should be considered (UNHCR, 2015):

- To provide a secure and healthy living environment with privacy and dignity to persons of concern;
- To protect persons of concern from a range of risks. Settlement planning and responses should aim to mitigate potential tensions between refugee and host communities and reduce other security risks;
- To support self-reliance, allowing persons of concern to live constructive and dignified lives;
- To recognize, and encourage other actors to recognize, that every person, including every refugee, is entitled to move freely, in accordance with human rights and refugee law;
- To assist refugees to meet their essential needs and enjoy their economic and social rights with dignity, contributing to the country that hosts them and finding long term solutions for themselves;
- To ensure that all persons of concern enjoy their rights on equal footing and are able to participat

The standards outlined are meant to ensure that camps create an environment where refugee communities can live with security and dignity, promoting at the same time a healthy and improved quality of life.

Standard n.1: Indicative modular planning units

Table 7. Indicative modular planning units | Source: Emergency Handbook UNHCR, 2007

MODULE	STRUCTURE	APPROXIMATE NUMBER
Family	1 x family	4-6 persons
Community	16 x families	80 persons
Block	16 x communities	1,250 persons
Sector	4 x block	5,000 persons
Settlement	4 x sectors	20,000 persons

Standard no. 2: Minimum standards for planning camps

Table 8. Minimum standard for planning camp | Source: Emergency Handbook UNHCR, 2007

DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM STANDARD
Avarage area per person	30 - 45 sqm
Covered living area	3.5 sqm per persons minimum [In cold climates and urban areas more than 3.5 sqm may be required]
Roads and walkways	20- 25% of the entire site
Open space and public facilities	15 2'% of the entire site

Standard no.3: Services and infrastructures

Table 9. Services and infrastructures in refugee camps: guidelines | Source: Emergency Handbook UNHCR, 2007

DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM STANDARD
Communal latrine	1 per 20 persons (during the emergency phase)
Latrine distance	no more than 50m from shelter and not closer than 6m
Shower	1 per 50 persons
Water supply	20 litres per persons per day
Water tap stand	1 per 80 persons (1 per community)
Water distance	max 200m from household
Rubbish container of 100 litres	1 per 50 persons (1 per 10 families)
Refuse pit – 2mx5mx2m	1 per 500 persons (1 per 100 families)
Health centre	1 per 20,000 persons (1 per sector)
Referral hospital	1 per 200,000 persons (1 per 10 settlment)
School	1 per 5,000 persons (1 per block)
Distribution centre	1 per 5,000 persons (1 per sector)
Market place	1 per 20,000 persons (1 per sector)
Feeding centre	1 per 20,000 persons (1 per sector)
Storage area	15 to 20 sqm per 100 persons

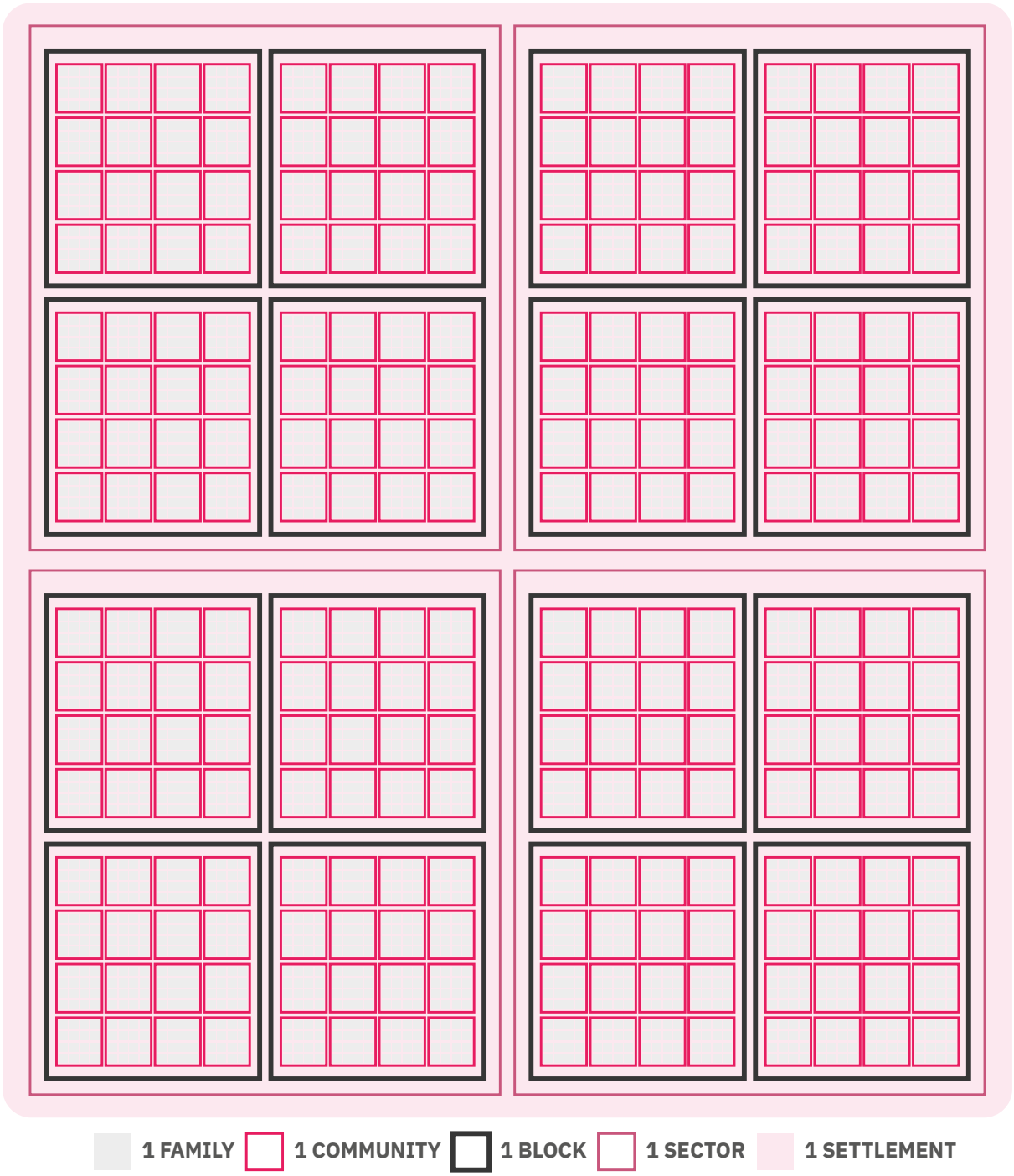
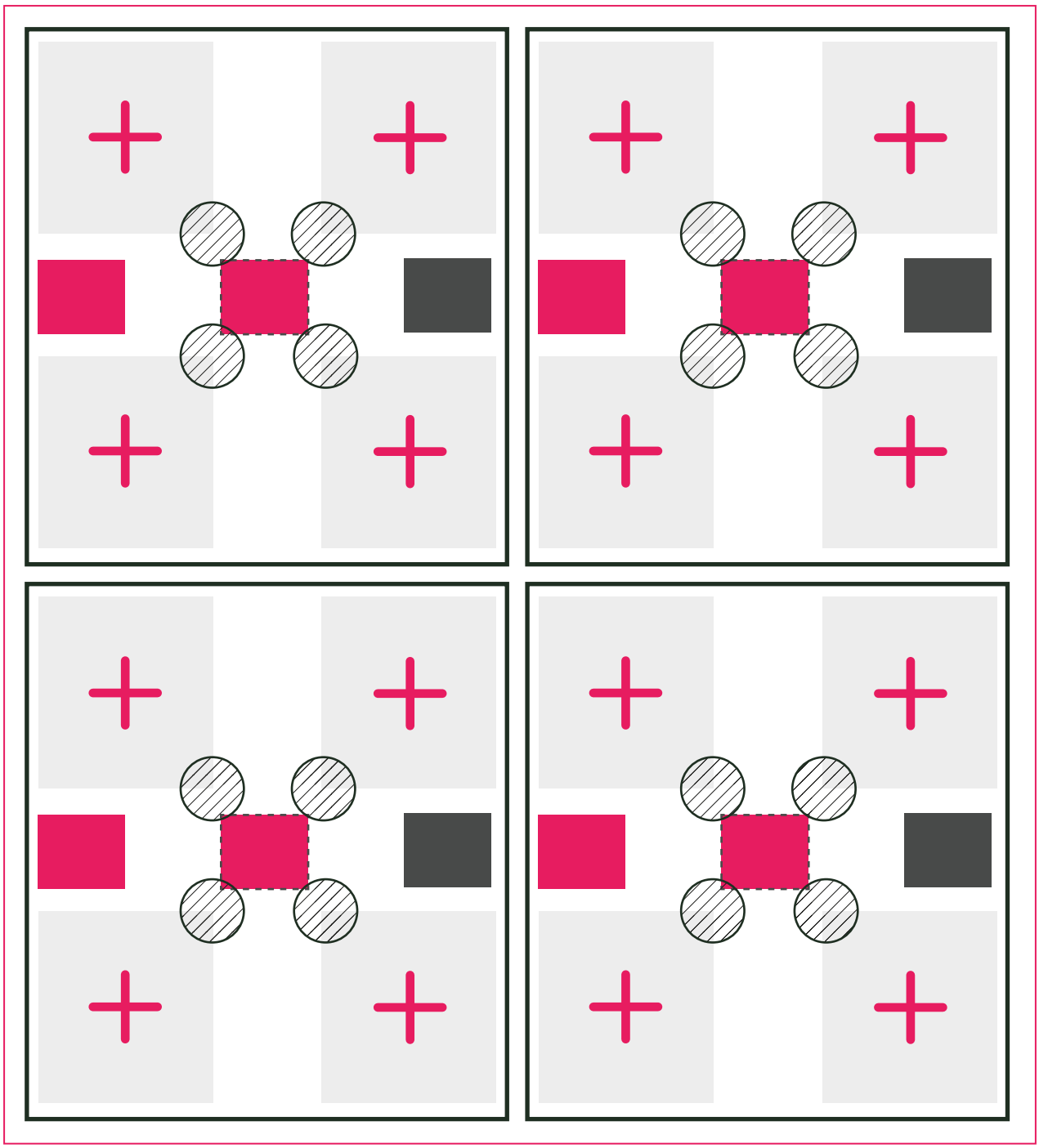


Fig. 54. Indicative modular planning units | Source: own elaboration based on Emergency Handbook UNHCR, 2007



1 BLOCK 1 SECTOR 1 SETTLEMENT

HEALTH CENTRE	1 per **20,000** persons (1 per sector)
FEEDING CENTRE	1 per **20,000** persons (1 per sector)
DISTRIBUTION CENTRE	1 per **20,000** persons (1 per sector)
SCHOOL	1 per **5,000** persons (1 per block)
MARKET PLACE	1 per **20,000** persons (1 per sector)

Fig. 55. Services and infrastructures in refugee camps: guidelines | Source: own elaboration based on Emergency Handbook UNHCR, 2007

As the analysis here shows, the report provides guidance on the location of elements, their size and presence within the camp. As Anne Stevenson and Rebecca Sutton (2011) write in their examination of the various reports produced by humanitarian agencies, the perspective from which the camps are planned is "*decidedly modernist, aerial, planned from above, both literally and figuratively*" (Stevenson and Sutton, 2011). They go on to explain that the planning is based on a uniform, almost relatively inflexible layout, "*plots are identical in size, streets are gridded, and only residential uses are spatially planned at block level*" (Stevenson and Sutton). It is interesting to note, however, that at the same time humanitarian agencies suggest – contrary to the guidelines – that modular planning should not be used wherever possible, as it does not encourage interaction within the community and does not promote the idea of integration among refugees.

The guidelines also seem to suggest strategies for planning an idealised city. A settlement based on the idea of the superiority of structured organisation. An organisation that separates functions, where everything is easily distinguishable, including the four main human activities: working, living, leisure and movement. This type of planning is typical of the modern era, when urban planning emerged as a useful tool for responding to formal and functional needs for physical and functional organisation. This is exactly what is happening in the planning of refugee camps. This type of urbanism, which separates and demarcates, has not really been able to consider the real needs of citizens in the case of modern cities; the same happens in refugee camps. The human being in the context in which he lives has to deal with others and cannot be understood as a mere machine.

Other limitations of the guidelines include the fact that the standards proposed by humanitarian agencies appear to be based on planning ideals typical of Western Europe. Such planning appears to be naive planning (Santini, 2017). A particularly striking example of this, also highlighted in the case study analysis, is the lack of reflection on the internal division of caravans between men and women. In many cultures, particularly Islamic ones, women and unmarried men have to be separated; they cannot live in close contact, as is the case in the Western context. However, the caravans provided for refugees in Islamic contexts do not take this need into account at all. Manuel Hertz explains that this approach can become dangerous in violent and catastrophic contexts, and it is precisely its neutrality that makes this design approach so vulnerable to instrumentalization and politicisation (Herz, 2013).

In conclusion, the issue that seems most relevant to the design of refugee camps and their durability over time, and the extent to which they move from being camps to proto cities, is the following. Current guidelines do not realistically consider the lifespan of camps and population growth (Kennedy, 2005). Over the decades, humanitarian agencies have attempted to find solutions that have resulted in a series of piecemeal policies and strategies. The issue of the permanence of camps is therefore still relevant and raises two distinct considerations. On the one hand, it is necessary to reflect on how and when camps cease to be camps and become settlements that can be considered urban; when they become cities. Secondly, the increasing permanence of camps entails the construction of infrastructures and services that are more and more permanent in nature. Services and infrastructure that are unlikely to be dismantled once the crisis is over. It is therefore important to think about the future of camps once the crisis is over. Such reflection is highly necessary in today's global context where temporary forms of living are increasingly being adopted. Reflections along these lines are proposed in the following paragraphs.

4.2
The paradox of temporariness: refugee camps as permanent settlment

Temporary architecture is a fertile ground for testing new ideas and representing the needs of society. Temporary structures present alternative visions for the urban environment by challenging established norms. The attraction of temporary architecture is a feature of world history. Such architecture challenges classical domestic design. An example of temporary architecture that raises several reflections is Aldo Rossi's Teatro del Mondo, built for the 1980 Venice Biennale. As described by Kaley Overstreet "*although not designed for residents, this structure was constructed in the Fusina shipyards and towed across the Adriatic Sea to Piazza San Marco for public viewing. This floating structure represented theatre as an architectural object, but its transitory nature had a lasting impact on the development of floating architectural typologies*" (Overstreet, 2020). Temporary architecture also takes shape through the construction of temporary pavilions or temporary events such as mega-events, a concept that will be further explored in relation to the future of refugee camps (Chapter 5).

Fig. 56. Teatro del Mondo, Aldo Rossi (1980) | Source: Google images

Temporariness is not only attractive for architecture or urban planning, but the notion of temporariness is increasingly shaping the lives of people and cities. The romantic notion of nomadism, involving the ability to move freely from the familiar, is a desire that runs through many people's lives. The nomadic lifestyle represents the possibility of breaking away from the symbols of stability and permanence in favour of exploring the world. This philosophy of life is very much in vogue at the moment. This lifestyle is now known as digital nomadism. Those who practice it are people who work remotely, often travelling all over the world; this lifestyle is possible thanks to technological innovation that has enabled more and more people to work remotely. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic caused many people to reflect on the concept of permanence and to reconsider their views on transience. During the pandemic, many people found themselves working from home and this situation has continued to this day. Many decided to leave the big cities and seek refuge in quieter places, others decided to travel the world.

Temporariness, as described so far, indicates a lifestyle chosen by people. Where the choice of temporary residence in a place other than one's own, is made in the knowledge that one can return home at any time.. This is not the reality for all people living in temporary conditions today.

Environmental disasters, wars, persecution and other catastrophic events have forced many people to live in temporary conditions for an indefinite period of time. Unlike before, the state of temporariness is not chosen, but imposed by uncontrollable events. Temporariness is imposed by laws, policies and practices that prevent from living a permanent life in society (Kodeih et al, 2023). Temporariness in this case, and in any case that challenges conventional ways of life, forces reflection on the imposition due to this type of temporariness.

Thus, there are social groups, including refugees, who find themselves in conditions of indeterminate temporariness, an "*unwelcome state with no definite end that they [refugees] can predict or control*" (Kodeih et al., 2023). This excludes refugees from the normal times and places of organised society (Kodeih et al., 2023).

Here, too, temporariness is expressed in the physical representation of everyday life, both in terms of architecture and urban planning. The refugee camp is the physical symbol par excellence of this state of transience. At the same time, the refugee camp represents a condition that was born to be temporary, but most

often becomes a permanent state of being (Aburamadan et al., 2020). Indeed, as the Palestinian cases cited above and the case of the Zaatari camp show, millions of people have been living in camps for decades. There are children who were born in the camp and are still living there as adults. In Lebanon and Jordan, for example, the refugee camps of Syrians and Palestinians have become permanent features, often merging with existing towns, as in the case of Al-Baqa's in Amman.

The permanence of refugee camps calls for reflection on the nature of these places. Observing at the evolution that characterise refugee, it raises the concern whether the camps have not now become cities.

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Reflection on temporariness also requires focussing on another aspect: the legacy of refugee camps. In fact, refugee camps do not always remain forever; sometimes the temporariness with which camps are built determines the end of a camp's existence. Through this perspective, the question then arises: *What happens the moment the camp loses the function for which it is built? Should the camp be decommissioned, or should it be revived by hosting new functions?*

Refugee camps are not the only temporary element typical of a territory. Among the most glaring examples of temporary structures are those that host mega events. Cities find themselves on a number of occasions where they have to prepare plans, often relatively quickly, to host events such as Expo, the Olympics, or the FIFA World Cup. Usually, planning for these events partly involves the construction of temporary facilities that will later be decommissioned or will be used for other functions; on the other hand, mega-events also involve the improvement of various infrastructures such as transportation facilities. Most importantly, an essential part of mega event projects is their legacy. Cities that host mega events design, or at least should design, from the outset the future of the built facilities. For example, after the event of Milan-Cortina 2026 Olympics, what was the athletes' and staff's housing will become a new living space for the city's young university students. Another example also in the city of Milan is the former Expo area. The area, before the event was occupied by industrial and agricultural production facilities. Thanks to the Expo event, the area has revised its complete redevelopment in order to host the event. Some

Fig. 57. Milan Expo 2015: grid layout for a temporary structure | Source: Google images

Fig. 58. Ski Jump Tower, Cortina D'ampezzo, Italy, 1956 Winter Olympics Venue | Source: Google images

Fig. 59. Refugees living in a former Olympic baseball stadium in Greece | Source: Google images

of the event facilities were built on a temporary basis and then decommissioned once the event was over. Others, however, have seen their redevelopment and today the area is home to an international centre of excellence dedicated to the advancement and well-being of people. However, mega-events do not always succeed in implementing plans that are able to breathe new life into the built structures. Often, mega event facilities are structures that stop having a specific function after the closing ceremony is over. For example, after more than a decade, the structures built for the Athens Olympics are abandoned. Even in the old Olympic village of Elliniko, some 900 refugees live in tents placed inside the baseball stadium built for the Olympics. Therefore, while on paper the word legacy remains the bastion of major events' commitment to a sustainable organizational model, this is not always the case, and often the only tangible legacy left by the last Olympics is a defined set of decaying and unused facilities. Although both refugee camps and major events leave a legacy on the territory in which they take place, their impact is obviously very different. Refugee camps primarily respond to immediate humanitarian needs that focus on short-term assistance. Mega-events aim to improve existing infrastructure, aim to stimulate the economy and transform host cities through long-term urban development. However, the processes of mega-events can be inspiring, when carried out properly, about the future and the legacy that facilities born as temporary may have. For camps it is not always possible to think of maintaining what has been built, for example in the case of Azraq camp it would be complicated to think of maintaining that space and making it become a real city as it is located in the desert and quite a distance from other urban centres. Conversely, however, in the case of Zaatari, which has a strong connection to the context, it would perhaps be appropriate to think about converting the camp from temporary to permanent.

4.3
The camp-city hybrid: exploring the urban characteristics of refugee camps

Reflecting on temporariness allows to observe and reflect on refugee camps from a new perspective. The decades-long duration of many camps has led to the development of several studies that relate urban settlements to refugee camps (Agier, 2008; Stevenson, 2011; Perouse, 2000; Dalal, XX). According to Agier (2008), the permanence of refugee camps leads to their urbanisation. Urbanisation refers to the process of development that leads a settlement to take on the characteristics of a city. The process of urbanisation affects both newly created and existing city centres. Agier reflects on the fact that camps are urbanising by describing what happened in the Dadaab camp in Kenya: "*in the beginning, everything seemed quite straightforward. The emergency only posed technical operational problems. Then the social complexity of the camp began to emerge, day by day... [as refugees] orient themselves and organise themselves in the space... the humanitarian mechanism for their survival becomes for them a network of relationships within which a semblance of social hierarchy emerges. How, in time, the empty space begins to fill and take on life, and how a kind of city takes shape without ever having been envisaged*" (Agier, 2008).

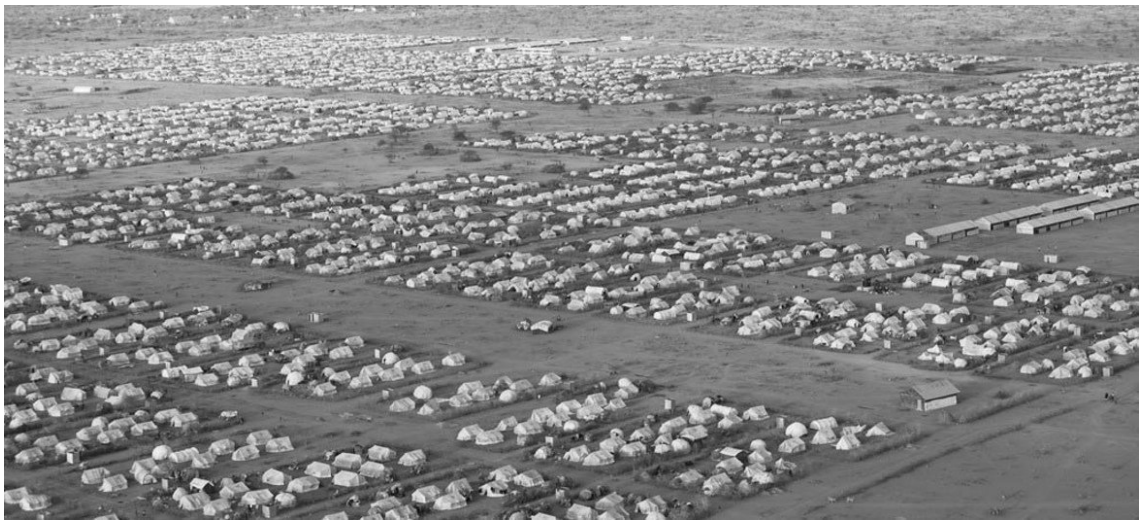


Fig. 60. The sprawling Dadaab camp in Kenya, the world's largest refugee complex | Source: IOM/UNHCR/Brendan Bannon

In the case of Dadaab, the transformation of the camp into a city takes place through the emergence of neighbourhoods – in this case along ethnic lines. Something similar happened in Zaatari, where refugees grouped themselves into communities based on origin. Moreover, in Dadaab, the urbanisation process also began with the construction of small shacks housing shops, cafes and public spaces; in the previous chapter, the analysis reported the same thing

happening in Zaatari. Thanks to Agier's reflection, it is possible to say that the camps, after an initial moment of emergency, try to transform themselves into a city; they claim to be a city.

There are several reasons why it is possible to say that refugee camps are cities. The first is certainly the constant increase in the population of the refugee camps. A population so large that it resembles the numbers of cities – in Kakuma camp (Kenya), for example, there are 184,550 refugees. Perouse points out that urban characteristics such as building density and the accumulation of infrastructure also make the camp a city. The camp is transformed into a city by the dynamics that develop between the camp residents and the physical environment that surrounds them. Stevenson (2011) clarifies this point by referring to Lefebvre's words on the notion of social space: "*camps acquire meaning as a place [as a city] by serving as a backdrop for the lives of residents who find ways to cope with and adapt their rituals, routines and daily patterns to the camp environment*" (Stevenson et al., 2011).

Fig. 61. Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement | Source: UNHCR Kenya

The birth and transformation of the camp takes place in two distinct phases, characterised by two different urban planning processes. In the first phase – the emergency phase – the camp is built using a top-down approach. In this approach, planning is carried out by planners – who are seen as experts – who impose their proposals on those who will experience the planned space. Camps are initially planned according to guidelines imposed from above. It is then the humanitarian agencies that form the basis of the camp. This approach does not anticipate or consider the urbanisation that takes place within the camps. The

second phase – that of urbanisation – takes place through an informal bottom-up approach. Bottom-up planning means that local governments or committees formed by local citizens are responsible for the urban planning of their districts. This approach is often used because it is more people-centred than the top-down approach. In refugee camps, this process takes place informally as refugees act on their own to modify and adapt the territory to their needs. Refugees undertake to modify their territory, driven by the desire to live a life of dignity on a par with those living in formal cities. In a reflection by Jane Jacobs, it is possible to capture the meaning of what is highlighted in this paragraph. Jacobs explains that in cities there are many resources that are shaped both by top-down approaches – the intervention of an expert hand – and by bottom-up approaches – the intervention of citizens – in order to adapt them to urban life. In the refugee camps, these resources do not exist at the outset, they have to be constructed; it is the refugees themselves who create them informally.

The concept of informality leads to another consideration: *does the refugee camp take the form of a city or a slum?* There is no answer to this question because the definitions of city and slum are ambiguous and change over time and in different contexts. However, it is possible to say that the camp becomes a hybrid between a city and a slum.

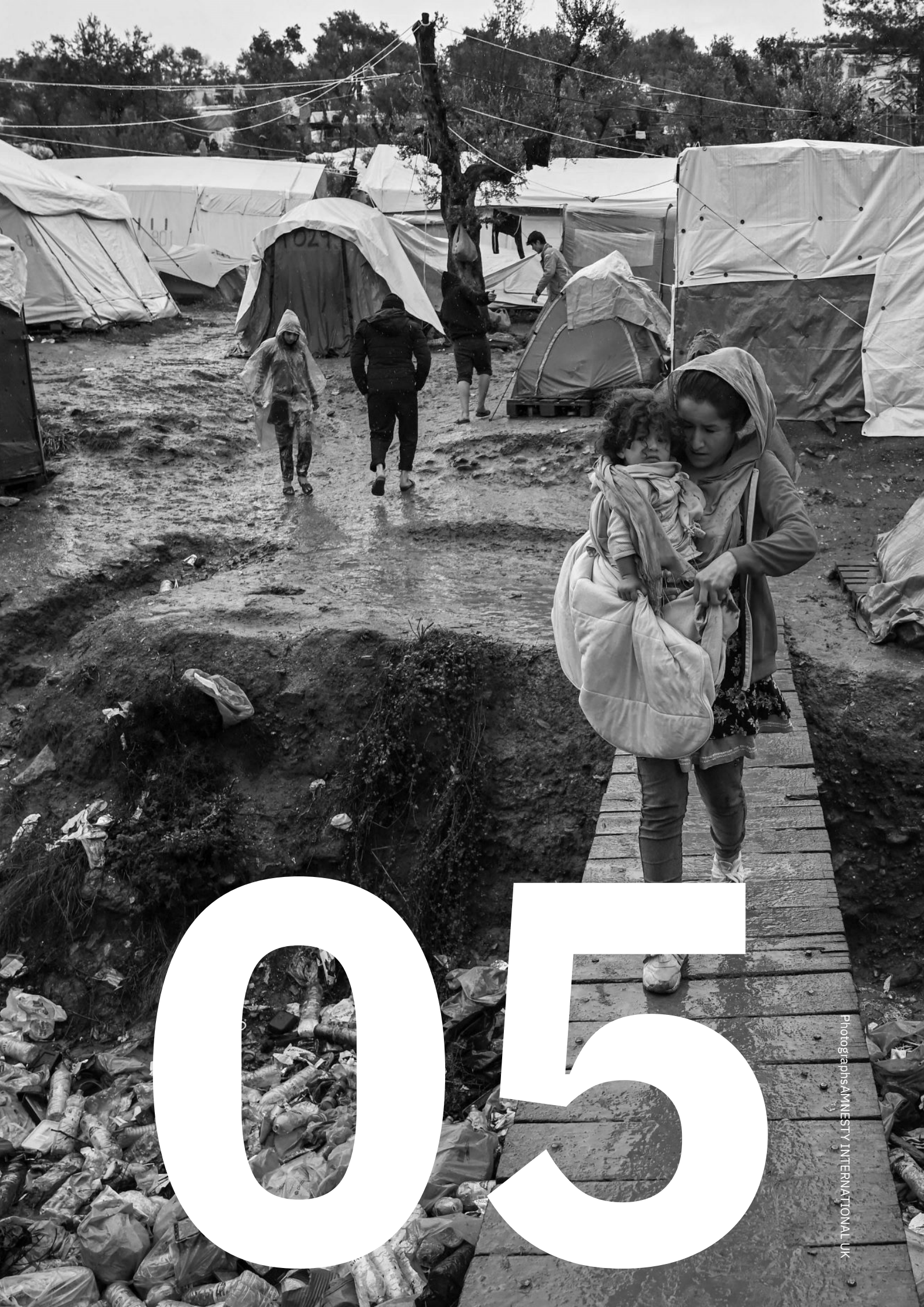
According to Perouse, the definitions of urban settlement are potentially open to include refugee camps around the world, but the big difference is that in the city live free people, in the camp live people who are not free, people who are controlled. So, what prevents a refugee camp from becoming a city is political rather than social or physical. It has to do with the fact that host states impose limits on the rights of refugees; they impose, as seen, that refugees cannot be considered citizens as much as the citizens of that state. As Deborah Gans and Matthew Jelacic have defined it "*the difference between the camp and the city lies not in its temporary status, but in the suspension of the right of self-determination of its inhabitants*".

To understand how the refugee camp relates to slums, it is useful to digress a little into the meaning of slum.

"*[Slum], Ghettos in Chicago, Banlieue in Paris, Hood in Los Angeles [...]. Tanaké in Beirut, Champa in Guatemala City, Ciudad Pérdidas in Mexico City, Favelas in San Paolo, Villa Misera in Buenos Aires*" (Fava, 2008), are all terms for urban areas in which economically and socially disadvantaged people find themselves

living. Slums are areas where the populations almost unanimously considered to be the edge of humanity live. Slum are described in the *Cities Without Slums Action Plan* as: "*neglected part of cities where housing and living conditions are appallingly poor. Slums range from high-density, squalid centra city tenements to spontaneous squatter settlement without legal recognitions or rights, sprawling at the edge of cities. Slums have various name as favelas, bidonvilles... yet they share the same miserable living conditions*" (Cities Alliance, 1999). Slums are characterised by the lack of basic services, particularly accesses to sanitation facilities, clean water, waste collections system of electricity supply. in this context, unhealthy living conditions prevail in slums. In addition, slums are characterized by an inadequate quality of housing and in most cases, houses are built in an informal way and through non-permanent materials as mud or wood. In such environments, high-density is highly present indeed UN-Habitat declared that "*many slums dwelling units are overcrowded, with five and more persons sharing a one-room units used for cooking, sleeping and living*". Slums are inhabited by low-income people, and they are areas where social upgrading become exceedingly difficult. Slums usually also have elevated levels of crime and other measures of social dislocation. Slums are thus marginal areas that arise from informality; the same happens in refugee camps. Slums and camps are similar in that they are both places where the nation-state is disrupted or removed (Dalal, 2014). This distance amounts to exclusion from the privileges and rights of being a citizen. The similarity between the two settlements is thus clearly visible in the physical layout they have, they are both two areas "*thought of as temporal spaces of abnormality waiting to be evacuated and dismantled*" (Dalal, 2014). The difference between the two, however, lies in the fact that refugee camps are not recognised as part of the urban fabric; for slums this is different. Slums are recognised areas of the city where something, however, has broken down and led to the exclusion of the area from the rest of the formal city.

In conclusion, from the research carried out it is possible to say that refugee camps can be observed as cities. As Ana Asensio writes, "*a refugee camp is also a city. A temporary city, in theory. An ephemeral city whose inhabitants have been placed there like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. A stand-by city that architecture has not embraced*". Therefore, if camps can be called urban settlements, they should be planned in the same way as urban contexts.



05

Photographs AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK

Conclusion:
shaping the future of refugee camps

"We live in the age of the refugee, the age of the exile"

Ariel Dorfman

Migration and displacement have been intrinsic to human history, reflecting the dynamic nature of societies and the pursuit of better lives. Understanding the profound impact of migration and the pressing challenges of the refugee crisis is crucial in comprehending the urgency and relevance of this issue in our contemporary world and the foreseeable future.

This chapter centres on the role of refugee camps as vital spaces of protection for displaced individuals. Originally conceived as temporary environment, refugee camps have evolved into semi-permanent settlements due to protracted conflicts and complex global challenges. Consequently, refugee camps have transformed into quasi-cities, featuring improved infrastructure, services, and long-term planning.

Moreover, the chapter analyse key factors to shape the future of refugee camps, encompassing political, legal, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Crucially, there is a growing consensus that the construction of new camps should be avoided, with a focus instead on the integration of refugees into existing urban and rural contexts. Therefore, the planning process should be flexible, continuously evolving to meet the evolving needs of refugee populations, while incorporating diverse sectors and perspectives to develop comprehensive and holistic strategies.

Overall, this research seeks to advance our understanding of the evolving role and future prospects of refugee camps, envisioning them as catalysts for positive change and integration rather than as isolated enclaves. By recognizing the potential of refugee camps to transform into thriving communities and by addressing the complex challenges they face, we can contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

The history of human beings is characterised by movements between continents and states in search of places where they can live in the best conditions. Human beings are born nomads and continue to be so. The reasons that lead to nomadism are many and very different. In the contemporary era, many people living in favourable economic conditions decide to embark on a nomadic life in order to explore the world and find the place that makes them feel at home; they undertake this journey, however, with the knowledge that they can return to their place of origin at any time they wish. In contrast, many people are forced into nomadism. Migrants and refugees flee their home countries because of wars, economic or political crises, persecution, but also because of the ever-present disasters caused by climate change. Today, conflicts and the effects of environmental disasters are increasingly felt and have longer and longer durations that often result in the long-term impossibility of returning home.

It is in this context that the research proposed in the previous chapters was set. Through an understanding of the topic of migration and refugees, it was possible to understand how relevant this topic is in the contemporary world and how much more relevant it will be in the coming years. It was also possible to observe the types of aid that humanitarian agencies offer to refugees and to analyse the importance that refugee camps play in this context. The refugee camp is the housing solution in which millions of refugees find refuge today. It is the place where thousands of children were born and for whom the refugee camp and the host state have become their home. Thanks to the analysis of the Zaatari camp, but also thanks to the references made to the Palestinian cases, it was possible to observe how much refugee camps are becoming durable solutions for refugees' protection. Palestinian refugee camps have existed for more than fifty years and will probably not cease to exist. The Zaatari camp has existed for more than ten years and although the situation in Syria seems to be coming to an end, the return home will be longer than expected – since a war entails destruction and destruction entails redevelopment. In this sense, it is possible to say that nomadism due to war and persecution will not end soon. And it is therefore possible to say that every country, every state, every city must consider where in the near or distant future it will be possible to accommodate people fleeing their country.

In relation to this, it is believed that regardless of political views and opinions, every country should have a plan for dealing with refugees. A plan that not only covers political, social and economic aspects, but also the physicality of the movement to the country. Each country should therefore know in advance of a

possible wave where to host the refugees. Such a plan should consider that the aid response of refugees, as seen, takes two main forms: integration into the existing urban context or protection within planned refugee camps.

UN-Habitat produced the report Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas in 2020. In this report, UN-Habitat specified that refugees or migrants arriving in urban contexts usually have to live in urban contexts that are already experiencing multiple challenges. Challenges such as "*high levels of unemployment and underdeveloped formal economies, poorly functioning infrastructure and services, lack of adequate and affordable housing, and constraints on land and property rights*" (UN-Habitat, 2020). Integration in already difficult contexts may expose refugees to even more challenges. Accordingly, UN-Habitat proposes some elements that urban planners and other experts should consider when aiming to integrate refugees and migrants into the existing urban context. It is specified here that planning must be dynamic, so that it can be updated and then modified to reflect changes in the refugee population, their needs and thus their impact on the existing territory. Furthermore, it is necessary for planning to consider multiple sectors and perspectives in order to achieve the most comprehensive plan possible. The sectors and perspectives UN-Habitat propose to use are those typical of an urban development plan. UN-Habitat considers six levels of analysis structured as follows (UN-Habitat, 2020):

LEVEL	SUB-LEVEL
Geography	Topography
	Climate
	Watersheds and basins
	Protected/ecologically sensitive areas
	Hazards
Administrtion	Regional and national alignment - Administrative boundaries (regions, districts, wards, neighbourhoods)
	Land use and zoning, including development plans
	Utilities and services
Historical and cultural context	Growth patterns
	Build and cultural heritage
	Neighbourhood typologies
	Social and recreational facilities

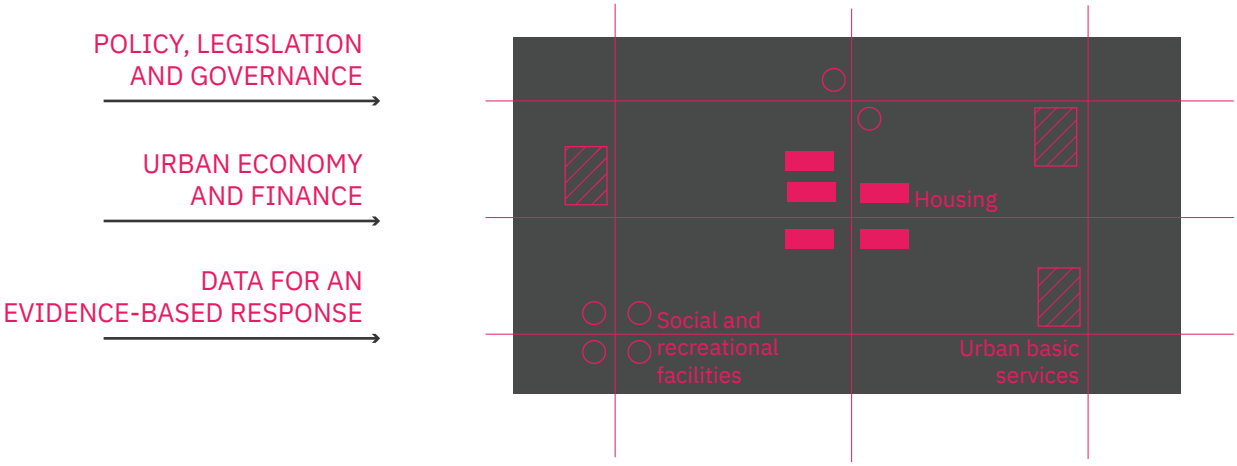
Table 10. Level of analysis for an urban development plan | Source: UN-Habitat, 2020

Socio-economic context	Demography (housing - number of people per household, conditions of dwelling unit, employment, education)
	Displacement (registration, distribution)
Connectivity	International, national, and regional connectivity
	Public transportation (lines, stops, pedestrian realm)
Built Environment	Density
	Open and public space networks

These levels must function as the basis for first producing analyses of the six themes and the resulting sub-themes; then the responses to the analyses must go on to structure the plan for integrating refugees into the urban context. UN-Habitat then suggests that the responses be encapsulated in six other thematic areas that serve as key inputs in the development of the response to refugees and migrants. These include policy, legislation and governance; urban economics and finance; data for an evidence-based response; housing; basic urban services; and social and recreational facilities.

As integration with the urban context is not the focus of this thesis, two examples from the six thematic areas proposed by UN-Habitat will be proposed here. A brief analysis of the indications provided on the theme of housing and social and recreational facilities and two practical examples will be proposed below.

Housing issues are very much related to the more general state of vulnerability in which refugees live. in fact, people displaced by limited resources face no small amount of difficulty in accessing public housing and housing subsidies. They therefore rely on private rental housing, or on housing in informal settlements such as unfinished buildings. Housing problems are thus partly related to inadequate land-use planning, which does not yet consider the need to involve displaced people in public and social housing, and partly also by policy choices that clearly choose to exclude these people. This situation results in a more general segregation in both social and spatial terms. UN-Habitat and UNHCR's response in this regard aims to protect the right to adequate housing; this right is recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The two U.N. agencies emphasize that seven characteristics must be considered in each context to ensure this right: of legal security of tenure; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; habitability; accessibility; location; and cultural appropriateness. The report, stresses that has play a priority role in this regard is the criterion of legal security of tenure. It is specified here that



UNHCR'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Protection
Age, gender and diversity inclusion
Equity
Participation
Sustainability
Efficiency
Accessibility

UN-HABITAT'S CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Social Inclusion
Resilience
Safety

Fig. 62. Systemic Approach to the City: 6 Thematic Areas | Source: own elaboration based on UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2021

"*everyone should have some degree of property security in order to be protected from forced evictions, harassment and other threats, regardless of their ownership status (e.g., owner, renter, camp resident, squatter). In addition to In addition to being an integral component of the right to adequate housing, security of tenure also contributes to self-sufficiency*" (UN-Habitat, 2020). Next is an example implemented by the agency in order to secure the right to housing.

UNHCR Accommodation Scheme - Greece

Host city population	Athens 3.15 million - Thessaloniki 811,000
Phase	Post-emergency
Area of Intervention and Beneficiaries	In total, since November 2015, 64,577 individuals have benefitted from The Accommodation Scheme. 86% of individuals in The Accommodation Scheme are Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians or Congolese (DRC).
Emergency Type	Primarily conflict-induced
Emergency start date	July 2015
Emergency end date	the official emergency status ended in 2017. New influxes started again in July 2019 but as of March 2020, UNHCR has not officially declared it an emergency.
Intervention start date	November 2015
Intervention end date	Ongoing
Partners	Praksis, Nostos, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Iliaktida, Solidarity Now, Arsis, Intersos, Omnes, Perichoresis, and the municipalities of Athens (ADDMA), Thessaloniki (MUNTHESS), Trikala (E-TRIKALA), Livadia (KEDHL), Larissa (DIKEL), Nea Philadelphia - Nea Chalkidona (KEDFX), Karditsa (ANKA), Tripoli (PARNONAS), Piraeus (KODEP), Tilos (TILOS) and a consortium of municipalities in Crete (HDA).
Project objective	The Project was created with a view to transitioning to more durable reception proposals; therefore, UNHCR developed an urban housing program as part of the Housing Integration Support Program (ESTIA)-a program funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). In partnership with the Greek government, NGOs and local authorities, UNHCR provides urban housing and cash assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. The program's urban housing enables displaced persons to have a normal daily life and facilitates their access to services, including education, and the eventual integration of those who will remain in the country.

Table 11. UNHCR Accomodation Scheme, Greece | Source: UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2021

Social and recreational infrastructure refers to health facilities, schools, public spaces, government institutions, markets, sports impacts, and community centers. These places are considered very important in order to foster interaction between the host and host communities. Such spaces also allow support the development of economic activities and thus are crucial from a livelihood perspective. Shared social and recreational facilities are a form of economic, cultural and social expression for diverse groups, including women, children and the elderly, in cosmopolitan urban areas. Improving the quality of facilities and services and their accessibility can bring long-term benefits to host and

displaced communities. Next is an example implemented by the agency in order to create public spaces that are able to unite and relate the two communities: refugee and host community.

Restoration of Chaarani Stairs as a Public Space for Social Inclusion

Host city population	Tripoli 229,000 (Lebanon)
Phase	Post-emergency
Area of Intervention and Beneficiaries	Qobbe neighbourhood; Beneficiaries 6,365 Individuals (14.5% of which are Syrian refugees)
Emergency Type	Primarily conflict-induced; instability
Emergency start date	2008 and 2011
Emergency end date	/
Intervention start date	October 2018
Intervention end date	Ongoing
Partners	UN-Habitat, Solidarités International (SI), EVA Studio, Municipality of Tripoli
Project objective	Qobbe is a residential neighborhood in Tripoli, northern Lebanon, that has been affected by violent clashes since 2008. The influx of refugees from Syria has brought an additional layer of complexity and tensions between host communities and refugees. The first phase of the program, funded by the Lebanese Humanitarian Fund (LHF), involved the rehabilitation of 200 substandard buildings (SSBs), residential buildings, street lighting, rehabilitation of public spaces, and solid waste management initiatives. As a continuation of the “El Hay” program, SI is now working on the rehabilitation of the secondary public access to the Chaarani stairs in collaboration with EVA Studio, funded by UN-Habitat. This project aims to improve the living environment of vulnerable host and refugee families through the physical improvement of public spaces by encouraging their maintenance through workshops and awareness campaigns.

Table 12. Restoration of Chaarani Stairs as a Public space for social inclusion (Lebanon) | Source: UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2021

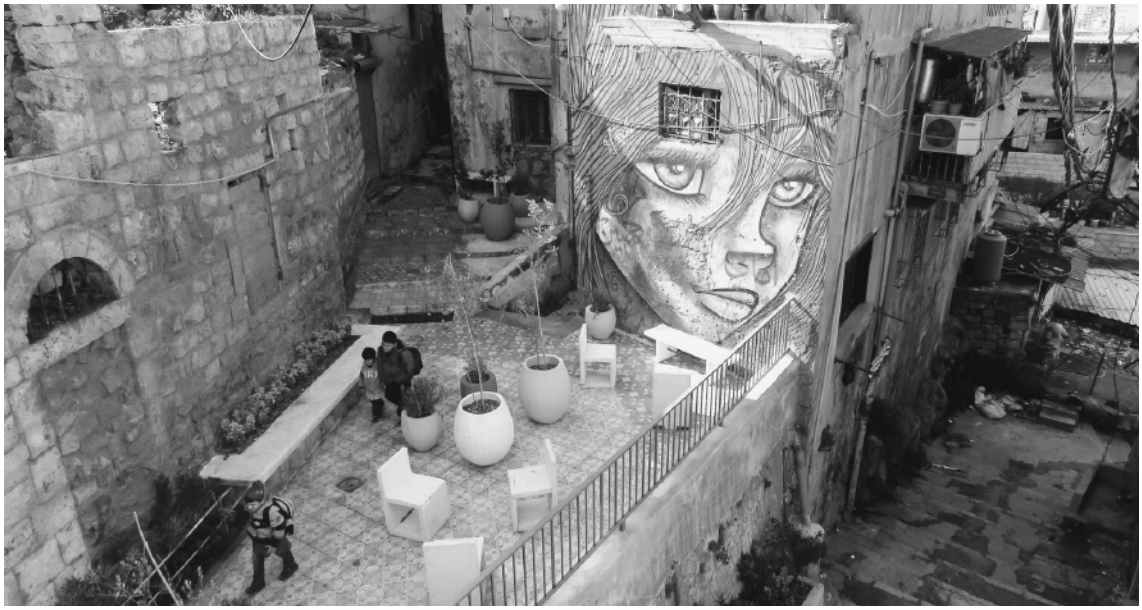


Fig 63. Charaani Public Stairs / Emergent Vernacular Architecture (EVA Studio) | Source: Camille Fatier, 2020

refugees into the urban context may actually also prove to be a good basis for the development of the plan for building refugee camps. Indeed, if it has been established that the refugee camp can be imagined as a city, it must be planned in the same light. In fact, international guides proposed by humanitarian agencies already propose planning based on the development of a proto city. Today, however, the camp is planned as an emergency response and only later is an attempt made, with no small amount of difficulty, to adapt the emergency construction to better living conditions typical of a city. This leads the camps to become urban ghettos. It is for this reason that each state should adopt a plan previously devised to respond to the emergency. There are many considerations to be made in relation to the improvements to be proposed. However, the focus here is on one essential aspect. The camp, for reasons mainly related to political and legislative dynamics, must be constructed as a closed place within which to enclose refugee persons. This entails, as analysed also in the case of Zaatari, the construction of walls that do not allow people to leave the camp and at the same time make it difficult for people not belonging to humanitarian agencies to enter. It is for this reason that refugees in Zaatari, for example, have started to develop small businesses, in order to be able to replicate city life in a setting that cannot be reached from outside. For this reason, it is believed that a solution that can be adopted in the design of refugee camps is that of self-sufficient villages.

A self-sufficient village is a community that aims to become more socially, culturally, economically and ecologically sustainable. Self-sufficient villages are built with the aim of producing the least negative impact on the natural environment. Such villages are planned in such a way as to minimise dependence on existing infrastructure. They are also based on activities such as organic farming, permaculture and other approaches that promote biodiversity. Johnathan Dawson explains that in self-sufficient villages, "*their residents value and practice community living; their residents are not overly dependent on government, corporations, or other centralised sources for water, food, shelter, energy, and other necessities. Rather, they attempt to provide these resources themselves; their residents have a strong sense of shared values, often characterised in spiritual terms; they often serve as research and demonstration sites, offering educational experiences for others*" (Dawson, 2006).

Looking back at the history of urban planning, the planning of self-sufficient villages is not a new story: from Howard's Garden City in the late 19th century, to Lloyd Wright's Living City in the 1960s, to the Smart Forest City in Mexico designed by Stefano Boeri. More recently, the housing model called **ReGen**

Village (ReGen is short for regenerative) is in this sense an excellent example of how a field could be planned. The model facilitates the development of self-sufficient communal neighbourhoods that can ideally be located anywhere in the world. In fact, the project is designed to be deployed in the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Germany, and there are also development plans for the United Arab Emirates, China and Africa; all areas of the world with very different economic, social and environmental characteristics. The project, developed by the architectural firm EFFEKT, combines a number of innovative technologies: energy-positive houses, renewable energy, energy storage, organic food production, vertical agriculture and others. The model was structured precisely with the aim of reducing the villagers' dependence on urban life. Lynge explained that ReGen village represents "*a model that adds not only environmental and financial value, but also social value, creating the framework for the emancipation of families and the development of a true sense of community, reconnecting people to nature and consumption to production*". From a social point of view, the project is even more interesting as residents are encouraged to collaborate through the design of the village itself. Residents thus become part of the local ecosystem. The interesting aspect of this type of vision lies first and foremost in the refugees' capacity for self-management. But above all in the fact that this type of planning allows for an easy re-use of the area when the humanitarian crisis comes to an end. A refugee camp built in this perspective could then be reused for the nearby resident population or to host temporary events.

Another interesting example, however, in relation to shelters is the **Elemental** project proposed by Alejandro Aravena. The project was created in response to the earthquake that struck and destroyed Constitución (Chile). The earthquake killed more than 500 people and destroyed about 80% of the buildings in the city. Visually, the project appears very impactful: half of the houses are identical, the other half are completely unique. In fact, half of the house is designed by the architects in an economical, practical and well-insulated manner. The other half is built by the residents themselves at their own time and in their own way. The vision is that the residents end up with a better house than they would have got if built only with government subsidies, and at the same time they end up with a house that they can make their own, that they can customise. This project seems interesting in the context of the refugee camp as aid agencies are able, through donations, to provide a simple structure with the basic elements. This structure, however, is a rigid one, difficult to modify. In fact, refugees, in order to make the space more personal, move the housing structures as they please

Fig. 64. A model for future refugee camps. ReGen Village: Innovative Self-Sustaining Village Model Could Be the Future of Semi-Urban Living | Source: EFFEKT, 2016

PROGRAM

WHAT ARE THE BASIC NEED FOR A TYPICAL
REGEN VILLAGE OF 75-100 INHABITANTS

HOME
AREA:
3000M2

GREENHOUSE
AREA:
1000M2

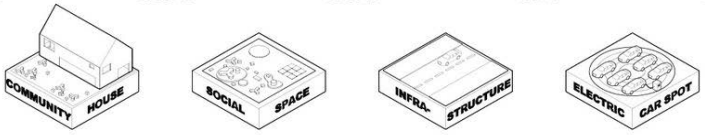
AQUAPONIC
AREA:
2500M2

SEASONAL GARDEN
AREA:
1500M2

LIVESTOCK
AREA:
450M2

SOLAR CELLS
AREA:
850M2

WATER STORAGE
AREA:
500M2



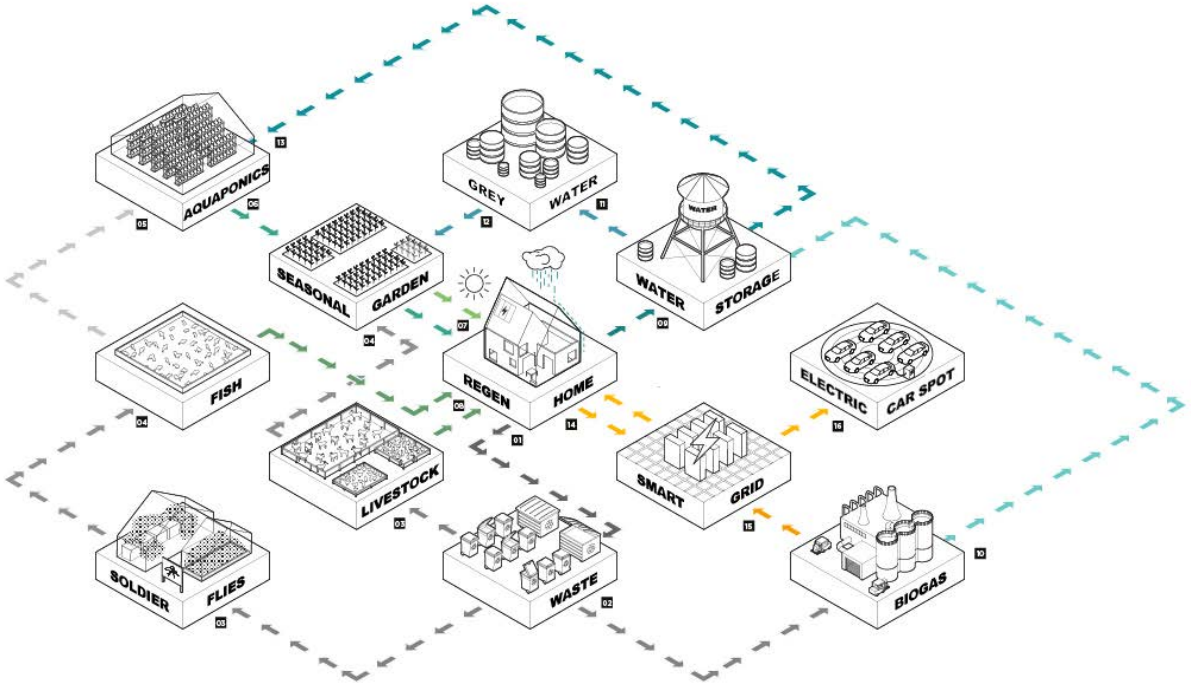
COMMUNITY HOUSE
AREA:
350M2

SOCIAL SPACES
AREA:
3500M2

INFRASTRUCTURE
AREA:
1500M2

EL-CAR PARKING SPOT
AREA:
300M2

TOTAL AREA:
15450 M2



REGEN SYSTEM

WASTE

01 HOUSEHOLD WASTE
IS SORTED, INTO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES, SO IT CAN BE RE-USED FOR MULTIPLE PURPOSES.

02 BIO-WASTE
THAT IS NON COMPOSTABLE IS USED IN THE BIOGAS FACILITY.

03 COMPOSTE
BECOMES FOOD FOR SOLDIER FLIES AND LIVESTOCK.

04 SOLDER FLIES AND LIVESTOCK MANURE
SOLDIER FLIES ARE FED TO THE FISH AND MANURE FROM LIVESTOCK IS USED TO FERTILIZE THE SEASONAL GARDENS.

05 FISH FECES
BECOMES FERTILIZER FOR THE PLANT IN THEA QUAPONIC SYSTEM

FOOD

06 AQUAPONICS
THE AQUAPONICS SYSTEM PRODUCE VEGETABLES AND FRUIT FOR THE REGEN HOME

07 SEASONAL GARDENS
PRODUCE A WIDE VARIETY OF PRODUCES FOR HOME CONSUMPTION.

08 LIVESTOCK AND FISH
ARE BEEING PROVIDED AS THE PRIMARY PROETIN FOOD SOURCE

WATER

09 RAINWATER COLLECTION ANDSTORAGE
THE SETTLEMENT IS DESIGNED TO COLLECT AND STORE RAINWATER.

10 BIOGAS FACILITY
IS PRODUCING WATER, THAT IS THEN STORED.

11 GREY WATER
IS SEPARATED TO BE REUSED

12 GREY WATER
IS USED TO IRRIGATE THE SEASONAL GARDENS

13 AQUAPONICS
CLEAN WATER FROM THE WATER STORAGE IS DISTRIBUTED TO THE AQUAPONICS SYSTEM WHEN NEEDED.

ENERGY

14 SOLAR CELLS AND SMART GRID
ON THE SETTLEMENT PROVIDES ENERGY FOR THE HOME AND DISTRIBUTES THE SURPLUS OF ENERGY TO THE SMART GRID.

15 BIOGAS FACILITY
THE ENERGY PRODUCES IN THE BIOGAS IS ADDED TO THE SMART GRID

16 EL-CAR CHARGING STATION
THE SURPLUS ENERGY IN THE SMART GRID, WILL BE USED FOR THE EL-CAR CHARGING STATIONS.

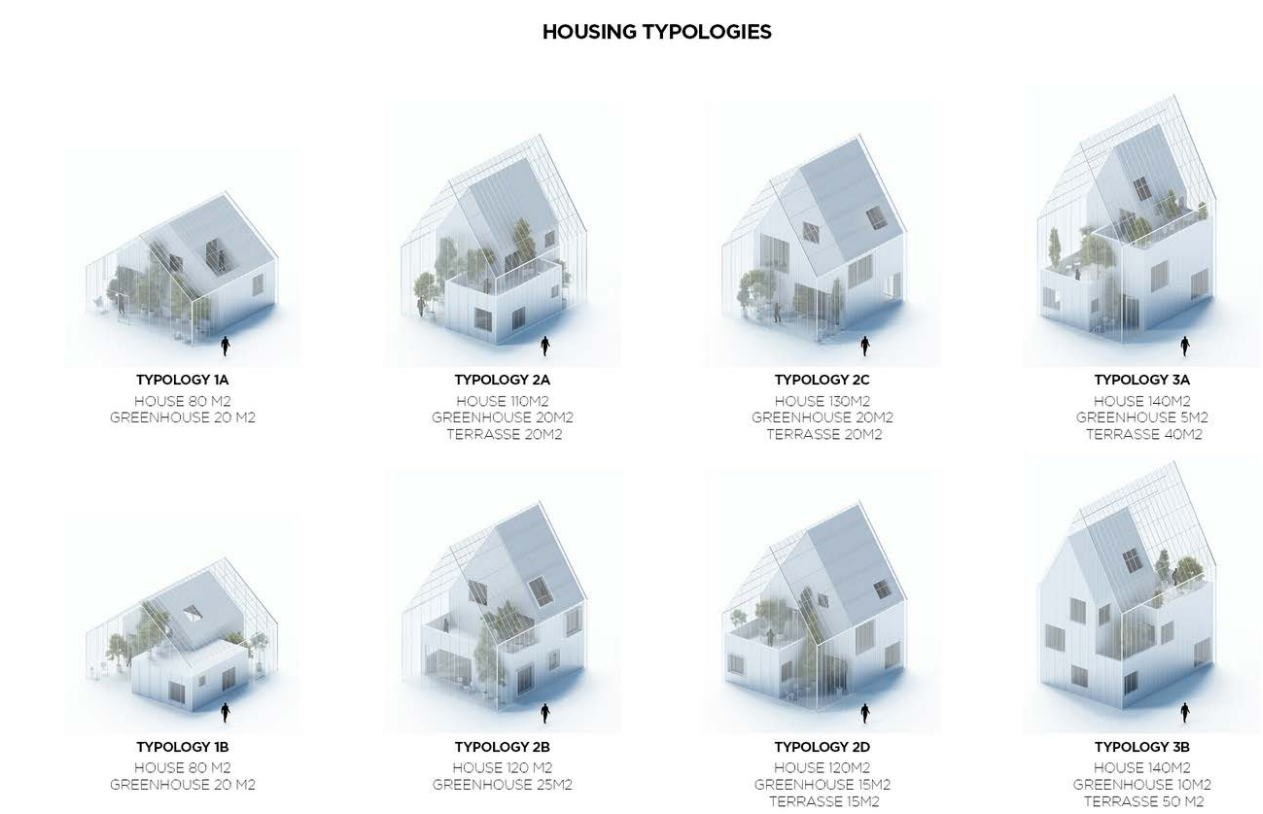


Fig. 64. A model for future refugee camps. ReGen Village: Innovative Self-Sustaining Village Model Could Be the Future of Semi-Urban Living | Source: EFFEKT, 2016

and modify the surrounding area as they see fit. Instead, humanitarian agencies would be able to provide the essentials and then leave room for the refugees to make the living space more personal.

These two project examples underline two essential aspects in the future design of refugee camps. Firstly, the importance of creating places that are capable of self-management. The closure of the camp to the outside world does not allow the pursuit of many activities useful for the pursuit of a normal life. Instead, refugees would be able to replicate typical city life. The second essential aspect is the role refugees play in modifying their space. Aravena's project emphasises the importance of making the people who are going to inhabit that place active participants. In the refugee camp, this is essential because in a place that seems so far from home, it would be possible to make the refugees feel at home.

The refugee camp in its most utopian vision should not exist; refugees should be inserted and integrated into the urban context. They should be integrated in such a way that they do not form an urban ghetto – which could take the form of a refugee camp – but should be inserted in such a way that they relate and interact with the existing community and context. In a less utopian but still difficult to realise vision, the refugee camp should be planned as a neighbourhood of new development of a city. A neighbourhood not bounded by walls and in which interactions between the inside and the outside are possible. On the other hand, in the vision that considers how the camp in its existing political and legislative conformation should be planned in such a way that it can be self-sustaining and manageable. For this reason, it was proposed to develop refugee management plans considering the planning of self-sufficient villages.

In conclusion, however, it is fair to pose a reflection. The role that politics and the choices of a government play in determining the future of refugee camps and the refugees living within them is crucial. Indeed, as much as it is possible for urban planners and other experts to propose solutions for the future of these places, these will be difficult to implement if refugees are not seen as equal citizens. In Lebanon, refugees have no right to protection; it is not possible for humanitarian agencies to plan and build refugee camps. This results in the presence of thousands of informal settlements where there is no infrastructure or services and where refugees live a life of waiting to return home. In Jordan, the government has expressly decided not to consider refugees as citizens but as temporary guests. Guests, however, who have been living on Jordanian territory for a decade now and who, even if the war were to end soon, would need another

Fig 65. ELEMENT project, Alejandro Aravena. Before and After | Source: Archdaily, 2003

few years before they could return to their country.

Politics plays a priority role here as it is not possible to think of transforming the camp into a city unless a paradigm shift takes place. Urban planning must therefore be seen as a useful tool to show and highlight the presence of a problem. Urbanism through the structuring of development plans and visions can demonstrate the importance of structuring plans that are open to the existing context and society. However, as long as the refugee is forced to remain within the walls of the camp, integration strategies between inside and outside the camp can never be implemented. All this is to say that, to reflect on possible solutions to improve life inside the camp and to understand what future this infrastructure has, is necessary. And it is necessary from an urban planning point of view to undertake strategies and ideas that are practical, not utopian. However, these will remain utopian until politics change the way it relates to refugees and until the refugee is welcomed rather than removed or confined to a protected and hidden area.

Photograph by Kevin Frayer

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