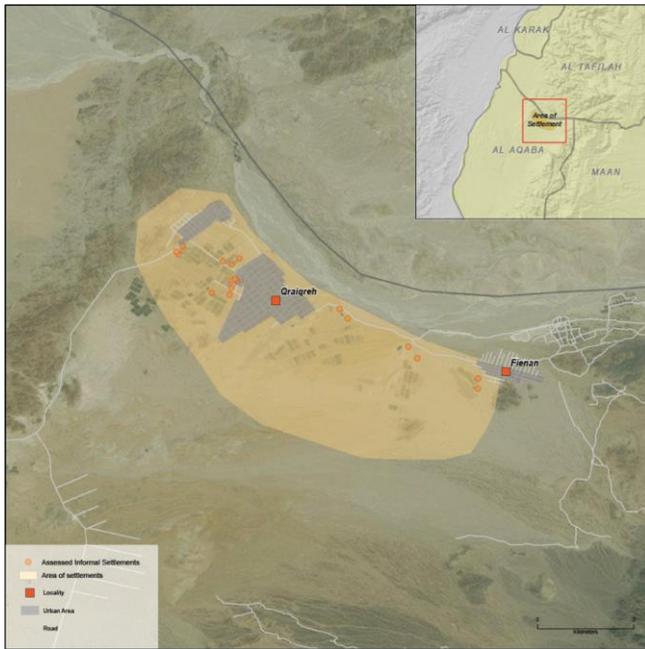


# GHWERGAH SETTLEMENT PROFILE

## AQABA GOVERNORATE, JORDAN

Data collected: 9 December 2014



Map 1: Location map of Ghwergah Settlement, Aqaba Governorate, Jordan

Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements (ITS) are reported to be amongst the most vulnerable populations in Jordan. Previous nationwide ITS assessments have indicated that the ITS population has poor access to sanitation and essential services including education, and contains a high percentage of children.<sup>1</sup> Findings indicate that ITS have become a default option for some Syrian refugees who are unable or unwilling to reside in formal refugee camps and are unable to afford housing within host communities.

Towards the end of 2014, vulnerable Syrian refugees in host communities have been placed under increasing pressure, due to repeated announcements of a reduction or elimination in food distributions and restrictions on access to basic services such as health and education. Those living in ITS have in addition faced recent action taken by government authorities to dismantle ITS and move the population to formal camps. Evictions were witnessed during the first week of December in the northern Jordan governorate of Mafraq.

REACH, in partnership with UNICEF, regularly surveys ITS communities across Jordan to help monitor this vulnerable population. On 4 December, a UNICEF vaccination campaign team alerted REACH to a large settlement site not previously

assessed in northern Aqaba governorate. REACH was deployed to assess this large informal tented settlement site, through key informant interviews with representatives from refugee population.

## METHODOLOGY

A total of 18 different communities were present at the settlement site. The *shawish* or 'coordinator' of each community was asked about both their individual community and the ITS as a whole, through a series of key informant (KI) interviews. The shawish were all male and aged between 35 and 60 years. It should be noted that information collected from KIs on behalf of households in their community can only be considered as indicative of the overall population.

Data was collected over the course of one day, with two subsequent visits to clarify data with KIs. During interviews, KIs were asked a range of questions, from information about their area of origin, to their planned movements in the coming weeks and months. Any informal discussion that took place was recorded to understand the context. This assessment sought specifically to learn about the movement patterns and intentions of the individual communities in the settlement.

Table 1: Key Terms

Informal Settlement Term	Definition
<b>Informal Tented Settlement (ITS)</b>	A collection of communities living in an area where housing is not compliant with current planning and building regulations and some services are shared
<b>Informal Tented Community</b>	A group of households living in an area where housing is not compliant with current planning and building regulations that share characteristics (livelihood, area of origin, etc...) and refer to same shawish.
<b>Site</b>	The location of a structure or group of structures
Administrative Term	Definition
<b>Governorate</b>	The highest administrative boundary below the national level. Jordan has 12 governorates.
<b>District</b>	Governorates are divided into districts. There are 51 districts in Jordan.
<b>Sub-district</b>	Districts are sub-divided into sub-districts, of which there are 89 in Jordan.

<sup>1</sup> Syrian Refugees Staying in Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan - A Multi-Sector Assessment Report, August 2014

## GHWERGAH ITS OVERVIEW

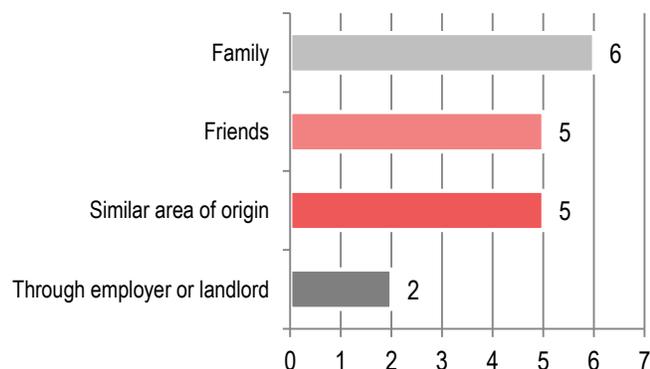
**KEY INFORMANTS ESTIMATED THAT GHWERGAH INFORMAL TENTED SETTLEMENT CONTAINS AROUND 1,025 INDIVIDUALS.**

The Ghwergah ITS is composed of multiple communities<sup>2</sup> dispersed along roads and farms near Qhwergah and Fienan villages in northern Aqaba governorate. KIs reported that their communities ranged from 15 to 120 people, with 60 being the average community size.

13 of the 18 KIs reported that their community had arrived in the larger settlement in November 2014, one community reportedly arrived in October 2014, and one reportedly arrived in December 2014. KIs indicated that many of their individual communities had been in Jordan since 2012 and had moved settlements before. In 2014 the average individual community moved twice, however some moved up to 5 times. The communities in Ghwergah had initially settled in the area to work on the farms. KIs indicated that they moved to Ghwergah to assist with the tomato harvest, however, would be willing to grow other vegetables based on demand and payment provided by farms.

11 out of 18 KIs said that their community knew other communities at the site through family ties or friendships. 5 KIs knew other communities at the site because they were from communities in the same area of origin in Syria. 2 KIs reported they knew other communities through their landlord or employer.

**Figure 1: How ITS communities know other ITS communities in Ghwergah settlement**

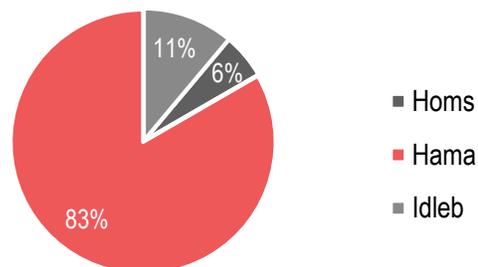


<sup>2</sup> Definitions of informal settlement terms can be found on page 1.

## DISPLACEMENT PATTERNS

**15 OF THE 18 KIs REPORTED THAT FAMILIES IN THEIR COMMUNITY WERE FROM HAMA GOVERNORATE IN SYRIA**

**Figure 2: Governorate of origin in Syria**



The majority of communities present at the site were reported to originate from Hama Governorate in Syria. Two KIs reported that their community originated from Idleb Governorate and one KI reported that they came from Homs Governorate.

13 KIs reported that their community relied on farming for income in Syria, while 5% mainly relied on unskilled labor, such as construction.

13 out of 18 KIs reported that they did not regularly move for work while in Syria, indicating that the transient life-style adopted in Jordan may be due to necessity as opposed to choice. Less than a third of KIs (5) reported that individuals in their community regularly moved for work while in Syria, usually seasonal migrations with crops. Informal discussions with KIs indicated that some households in their settlement communities had migrated seasonally for work in Jordan before the Syrian Crisis.

The communities currently staying in Ghwergah moved between one and five times in 2014. The most common number of migrations was 2, reported by 6 of the 18 KIs interviewed. The most common governorates where communities had reportedly moved in the past were Al Mafraq (35% of migrations) and Aqaba (33% of migrations).

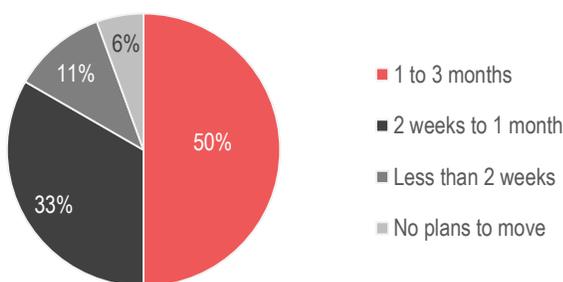
96% of all migrations inside Jordan were for reasons including work or livelihoods. These reasons included moving with the crop season (73% of migrations), working on new farms, and accepting farming jobs with higher pay. Only 9% of movements were related to rumours or fear of evictions. **Weather was a frequent secondary reason mentioned for movement to Ghwergah from the north during October to December**, as the area stays warmer during the winter compared to northern governorates such as Al Mafraq.

## INTENTIONS

**94% OF COMMUNITIES PLAN TO MOVE TO A NEW AREA WITHIN 3 MONTHS.**

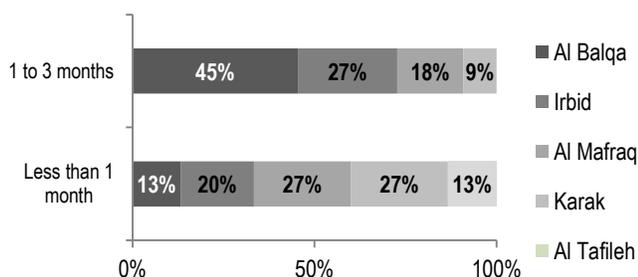
**45% of planned migrations within the next 1 to 3 months are towards Al Balqa.** Karak and Al Mafrqa were the most common destinations within the next four weeks (27% of planned migrations). Only 2 KIs out of 18 reported that their community planned to move within the next 2 weeks. Only 1 KI reported that that their community had no plans to move from the current site.

Figure 3: Timeframe within which communities plan to move to new area



**Reasons for planned migrations included searching for work; higher wages; and a warmer climate through the winter.** One KI indicated they were moving to Al Karak governorate the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of December to work for 2.5 months through the winter season, then intended to move to Al Mafrqa in the spring. This, along with other evidence from KI comments indicate that communities are following seasons of crops.

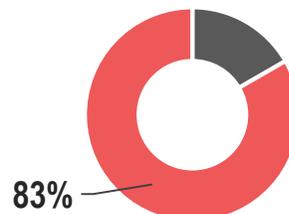
Figure 4: Planned destinations of residents in Gwergah ITS



## ASSISTANCE

**83% OF ITS COMMUNITIES HAD RECEIVED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

Figure 5: Proportion of communities that had received humanitarian assistance



Anecdotal evidence from informal discussions with KIs indicates this includes monthly UNHCR assistance and WFP food vouchers. **14 of the 18 KIs reported that their community had received vaccination assistance from UNICEF.**

## UNICEF AND REACH

UNICEF has supported REACH since 2012. Over the past two years, REACH has worked with UNICEF in Za'atari Camp, Azraq Camp, and host communities in Jordan. In the past year REACH provided consistent WASH monitoring in Za'atari and Azraq camp, and camp and host community assessments in the WASH, health, education, and protection sectors.

The UNICEF and REACH partnership has been addressing information gaps in informal tented settlements in Jordan since 2013. Little comprehensive knowledge was available on ITS in Jordan before UNICEF and REACH interventions, making Syrian refugees in ITS one of the most invisible refugee groups in the country.

In partnership with UNICEF, REACH has conducted 2 multi-sector, comprehensive assessments of ITS (one in December 2013 and one in July 2014), an exercise to monitor the locations of ITS in September 2014, as well as multiple district profiles and presentations of key findings. These assessments have provided information to aid actors on the locations, estimated populations, and needs of Syrian refugees in ITS. All data from these assessments are publicly available for aid actors and may be requested through UNICEF or REACH.

### About REACH Initiative

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information, you can write to: [jordan@reach-initiative.org](mailto:jordan@reach-initiative.org) or: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org). Visit [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org) and follow us @REACH\_info.