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Jordan calls on U.N. to declare Syrian refugee crisis an 'international threat'



Jordan on Thursday called on the U.N. Security Council to declare the exodus of refugees from Syria a threat to international security and to organize a visit to the region. Jordan fears that with more than 505,000 Syrian refugees now in the country it risks being overwhelmed and drawn into the crisis, diplomats said. Jordan's U.N. ambassador Prince Zeid al-Husseini said in a letter to the Security Council that the huge influx across the border since the Syria conflict erupted in March 2011 "threatens the security and stability of our country." He added that between 1,500 and 2,000 people a day are crossing the border and that Jordan believes the crisis has "implications for international peace and security." The ambassador said the refugee crisis must be declared "a threat to international peace and security", the 15-nation council must organize a trip to the refugee camps in Jordan and a special council meeting should be held. On top of bringing Syrian political rivalry to the country, Jordanians, already suffering from high unemployment and inflation, accuse the refugees of taking their jobs and blame them for higher rents. The U.N. High Commissioner expects the number of refugees in Jordan to soar to 1.2 million by the end of 2013, equivalent to a fifth of the population. Lebanon, which says it has 400,000 refugees registered officially -- while aid workers say there are 650,000 has also said the U.N. Security Council should take a greater role in the crisis. The U.N. says there are more than 1.3 million refugees in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq and that it is now the biggest humanitarian crisis it faces.