

# COUNTRY OPERATION

# TURKEY

## AT A GLANCE



### Main Objectives and Activities

Protect non-European refugees and asylum-seekers by ensuring access to a fair and efficient refugee status determination procedure, and by providing assistance pending resettlement or other lasting solutions; assist and counsel Bosnian refugees pending the identification of long-term solutions; facilitate and monitor the voluntary repatriation of Turkish refugees from northern Iraq; provide temporary assistance to refugees from Kosovo, and assist in family reunification and monitor voluntary repatriation to Kosovo; provide emergency relief items to earthquake victims; and sensitise officials in Government agencies to the importance of refugee and migration issues.

### Impact

- UNHCR ensured that refugees and asylum-seekers had access to adequate status determination procedures and that their basic humanitarian needs were met while in Turkey.
- Training of government officials involved in refugee matters led to a greater understanding of refugee rights and protection matters.
- An increased UNHCR presence at border areas led to better monitoring and more reliable information on the situation of persons of concern to the Office.
- UNHCR facilitated the resettlement of 1,844 non-European refugees, repatriated 211 Bosnian and 110 Turkish returnees, and succeeded in the reunification of 21 refugees from Kosovo with their families.

### Persons of Concern

MAIN REFUGEE ORIGIN/ TYPE OF POPULATION	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHICH: UNHCR-ASSISTED	PER CENT FEMALE	PER CENT < 18
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Refugees)	510	510	51	29
Iraq (Refugees)	600	600	48	47
Islamic Republic of Iran (Refugees)	1,150	1,150	44	32
Yugoslavia FR (Refugees)	380	80	53	52
Other Refugees	160	160	-	-
Asylum-Seekers	5,100	-	-	-
Returned in 1999	110	110	-	-

### Income and Expenditure - SP Activities (USD)

WORKING BUDGET	INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS	OTHER FUNDS AVAILABLE*	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
251,907	1,000,000	(596,199)	403,801	353,597

\* Includes opening balance and adjustments.  
The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

### The Context

The capture and trial of the leader of the Kurdish separatist PKK party gave rise to a series of PKK statements renouncing armed struggle and even separatism, which raised hopes for peace in south-eastern Turkey. The arrival of 18,000 refugees from Kosovo and extensive media coverage of the Chechen humanitarian crisis stirred deep feelings of public sympathy and gave a new impetus to UNHCR's programme in Turkey. Two major earthquakes caused enormous casualties and material loss. Improved relations between Greece and Turkey contributed to the European Union (EU) decision to accept Turkey as a formal candidate for membership, raising expectations of far-reaching structural, legal, political and economic changes.

Turkey remained committed to a policy of offering protection to refugees of both European and non-European origin, without compromising its fundamental national security concerns, nor the geographical limitation Turkey applies to the 1951 Convention. This situation continued to require active engagement of UNHCR in order to assure the protection of many individuals, the rapid processing of asylum claims and the creation of lasting solutions for refugees through resettlement. The Government showed a renewed interest in strengthening its institutional and operational capacity to deal with asylum and migration. Turkey's acceptance as a candidate for EU membership opened up the prospect of bringing Turkey's asylum procedures into closer harmony with international standards.

### Constraints

As a consequence of the geographical limitation Turkey has imposed on the 1951 Convention, non-European refugees are only granted temporary protection. Recognised refugees therefore still have to be resettled through UNHCR's programme, and many are still largely dependent on humanitarian assistance during their stay in Turkey.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

### Protection and Solutions

An increase in asylum applications by two-thirds since 1998 led to a backlog, frustration among asylum-seekers and individual protection problems in border areas. It did not, however, impede a general improvement in the protection of refugees. No *refoulement* of

recognised refugees was recorded. An important amendment to the 1994 Asylum Regulation, which was adopted in June, extended from five to ten days the deadline for application following entry into the country. This greatly reduced the number of extra-procedural refugees (i.e. persons recognised by UNHCR under its mandate but barred from registration under the national procedure). UNHCR continued to provide regular advice to the Government on the implementation of the amended Regulation.

A total of 1,844 non-European refugees, of whom 20 were considered especially vulnerable, were resettled in third countries. UNHCR also monitored the repatriation of 211 Bosnians. Following the arrival of 18,000 refugees from Kosovo, the Office undertook family reunification and repatriation. A total of 499 persons were identified as being separated from their families and 21 were reunited with their families in other countries. At the end of 1999, 79 refugees from Kosovo remained in Kırklareli camp and about 200 were living elsewhere in the country. With regard to Turkish returnees, fifteen monitoring visits were carried out to various places of return in the south-east. This was well received by both the local authorities and the returnees. Apart from the arrest (on charges of sedition) of 17 returnees and the subsequent imprisonment of six of them, no major problems were reported regarding the overall legal situation of the returnees.

The absence of consistent gender sensitive standards was identified as one of the major gaps in the asylum system throughout the region. In December, one sub-regional workshop raising awareness on this issue was organised in Turkey, in which UNHCR staff, NGO representatives and government officials participated. A checklist of standards on gender sensitive asylum procedures was adopted and action plans were produced.

### Activities and Assistance

**Community Services:** UNHCR undertook recreational and community-based activities, such as sports, handicraft and language courses in the Kırklareli Gaziosmanpaşa camp for refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia. Salaries of qualified refugees who helped with translation and equipment needed for registration and family reunification were covered. The Office also funded a survey to assess the needs of urban refugee and asylum-seekers and an accommodation allowance. Financial support was given to needy Bosnian families to cover rents, work fees or residence permits for those

unable or unwilling to return home. Non-European refugee women benefited from special counselling and medical services. They were also encouraged to develop their skills (e.g. knitting, handicraft and languages). A pilot project on reproductive health issues was conducted successfully in two cities for more than 250 refugees. Eleven counselling missions were undertaken to various cities. They catered for 138 vulnerable refugees, including 106 women heads of household. Social counselling services were extended to address the needs of 500 non-European refugees and asylum-seekers in Istanbul. A total of 373 refugee children not attending local schools received education kits in Farsi and Arabic. The Office procured data-processing equipment to register Turkish returnees in Silopi, and various supplies to support small income-generating projects (e.g. carpet weaving).

**Domestic Needs/Household Support:** Blankets were distributed to the victims of the earthquakes in the most affected areas in Marmara and Bolu provinces. In Kirklareli Gaziosmanpasa camp, various relief items (beds, mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans) were distributed to refugees from Kosovo upon arrival. UNHCR also covered heating of refugee dwellings in the camp and the procurement of winter clothing and footwear for Bosnian and Kosovar refugees and asylum-seekers. A monthly subsistence allowance was paid on a case-by-case basis to needy Bosnian and non-European refugees and asylum-seekers. This allowance covered food, living expenses, transportation and 20 per cent of their medical costs. UNHCR also funded local travel costs for non-European refugees coming to Ankara for eligibility interviews or counselling. Turkish returnees were given various items such as mattresses, sheets, blankets and kitchen sets.

**Education:** Following an assessment of their needs, the Office provided educational supplies and uniforms for Bosnian refugee children at local schools in Kirklareli and in Istanbul.

**Food:** Monthly food packages (flour, rice, beans, tuna fish, sugar, vegetable oil, dry instant yeast) were distributed to vulnerable Bosnian and Kosovar refugees living in Istanbul. In the Kirklareli Gaziosmanpasa camp, Bosnians and Kosovars received hot meals. Some food items were provided for refugees voluntarily repatriating to Kosovo. Two-month family food packages were given to Turkish returnees (flour, rice, bulgur wheat, beans, lentils, tomato paste, margarine, tea, sugar, and soap).

**Health/Nutrition:** In the Kirklareli Gaziosmanpasa camp, a health unit (a doctor and two nurses) provided primary health care and first aid. In addition, UNHCR funded an ambulance and a driver, as well as medical supplies. Some 200 Bosnian refugees were treated at various medical centres in Istanbul. Special attention was paid to pregnant women, children needing vaccinations, and people in need of regular medication for chronic conditions. Vulnerable refugees benefited from free medical treatment through the Bosnian dispensary and state hospitals in Istanbul. UNHCR also paid for expensive medication for Turkish returnees that could not be covered by the Government and some medical costs for resettlement procedures.

**Legal Assistance:** UNHCR hired a lawyer in the border city of Agri, to give non-European asylum-seekers access to asylum procedures and legal aid, and to defend them in court if necessary. The Office maintained its presence at the borders to prevent *refoulement*. The first training and exchange programme organised with the Aliens Department of the Ministry of Interior (in June) successfully raised awareness of refugee rights among immigration officers and improved co-operation with UNHCR on international protection problems. The Aliens Department and other government branches were encouraged to expand collaboration with UNHCR. An introductory course on refugee affairs was initiated with border police and training programmes were also organised for lawyers' associations, academic forums and other institutions.

**Operational Support (to Agencies):** UNHCR covered the administrative costs of its implementing partners (office supplies, communications, salaries). In order to promote public awareness and support, public events were organised, such as seminars and exhibitions of photographs and drawings. Two television channels aired programmes about refugees during the repatriation of refugees to Kosovo (and at other times). A quarterly magazine and an e-mail forum on refugee issues were created. At universities, more lectures were delivered than in previous years on refugees and migration. Ongoing personal contacts with journalists led to improved coverage of refugee affairs in the Turkish media.

**Shelter/Other Infrastructure:** UNHCR donated tents for earthquake victims. Minor repairs were undertaken in refugee centres and camp facilities; spare parts for the heating system were procured. Vulnerable non-



European refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as refugees arriving for a resettlement interview, were accommodated when necessary in Ankara, Istanbul or border cities. Bosnian refugee children were accommodated in a guesthouse when they went to Ankara in April for Children's Day.

**Transport/Logistics:** Relief items were transported to victims of the August 1999 earthquake in Adapazari and Bolu provinces, as well as to Bosnian and Kosovar refugees in Kirklareli camp. UNHCR also covered the cost of fuel and maintenance for three vehicles.

## ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Management

UNHCR in Turkey consisted of a head office in Ankara supported by three offices in Istanbul, Silopi and Van. There were nine international members of staff (including six JPOs) and 27 nationals in Turkey. UNHCR's offices in Turkey and Iraq collaborated closely to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Turkish refugees from northern Iraq.

### Working with Others

UNHCR worked with a total of seven implementing partners in 1999. In order to help serve non-European refugees, new partnerships were forged with NGOs to conduct research and public information campaigns and to work on reproductive health, social counselling, and the needs of refugee children. Partnerships were also established in response to the influx of refugees from Kosovo.

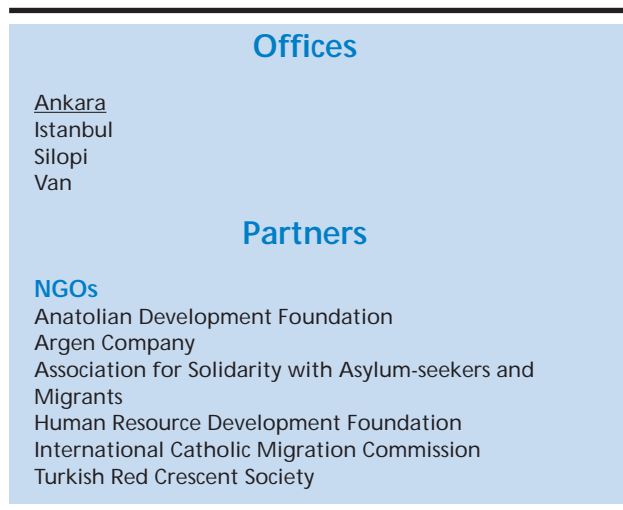
Two national NGOs, a number of Turkish academics and IOM helped UNHCR implement training activities. A discussion group on gender was created at UNHCR's initiative to exchange information and promote co-ordination. IOM organised the departure of refugees for resettlement, family reunification and voluntary repatriation.

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

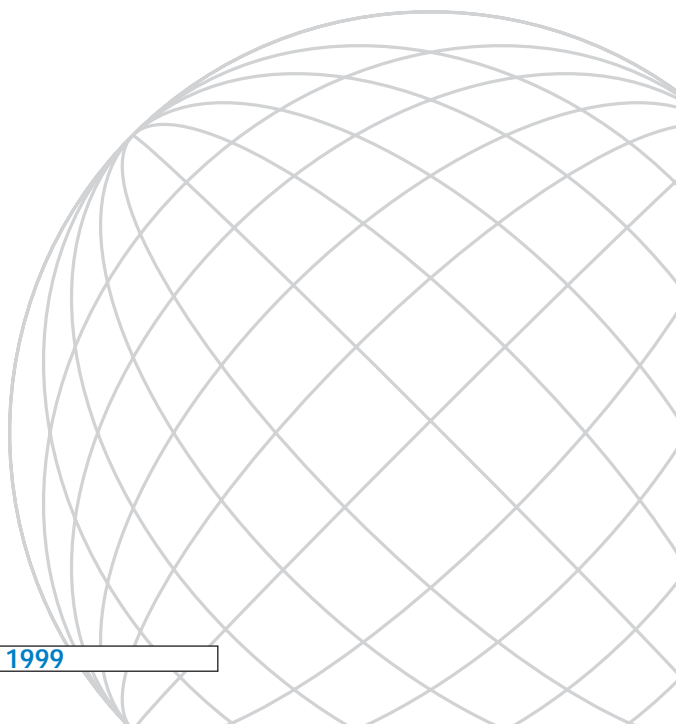
Training activities led to better personal relations and trust between UNHCR staff and government officials. Future training will focus on long-term capacity-building and a more comprehensive dialogue with the Government on asylum policies, practices and procedures.

In the Turkish context, the crisis in Kosovo demonstrated that UNHCR had valuable expertise to share with local organisations responding to large refugee influxes. Local social welfare services benefited from UNHCR's experience in community services, psychosocial support, and certain aspects of site planning.

The involvement of experienced local NGOs in programmes aimed at refugee women and the expansion of counselling services had a very positive impact on refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. Communications between UNHCR and the NGOs will be streamlined to further improve services. The agreement with the Government to create a long-term training programme is expected to open up opportunities for transferring part of UNHCR's activities to the Government. Any future hand-over strategy must also include increased coverage by the media, politicians and civil society of refugee rights and protection in order to foster a healthy consensus on asylum issues.



TURKEY



### Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects			Prior Years' Projects		
	General Programmes	Special Programmes*	Total	General Programmes	Special Programmes	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	2,256,974	133,937	2,390,911	17,591	0	17,591
Community Services	100,512	65,516	166,028	885	0	885
Domestic Needs / Household Support	935,572	13,690	949,262	1,777	0	1,777
Education	1,785	0	1,785	0	0	0
Food	25,442	985	26,427	0	0	0
Health / Nutrition	209,813	16,502	226,315	28,879	0	28,879
Legal Assistance	576,283	10,542	586,825	1,357	64,597	65,953
Operational Support (to Agencies)	303,598	0	303,598	15,426	2,036	17,462
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	26,137	0	26,137	0	0	0
Transport / Logistics	88,996	989	89,985	0	0	0
Instalments with Implementing Partners	91,697	19,316	111,013	(11,173)	(2,036)	(13,209)
<b>Sub - total Operational</b>	<b>4,616,809</b>	<b>261,476</b>	<b>4,878,284</b>	<b>54,742</b>	<b>64,597</b>	<b>119,339</b>
Administrative Support	202,555	0	202,555	0	0	0
<b>Sub - total Disbursements/Deliveries</b>	<b>4,819,363</b>	<b>261,476</b>	<b>5,080,839</b>	<b>54,742</b>	<b>64,597</b>	<b>119,339</b>
Unliquidated Obligations	73,338	92,121	165,459	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,892,701</b>	<b>353,597</b>	<b>5,246,298</b>	<b>54,742</b>	<b>64,597</b>	<b>119,339</b>
<b>Instalments with Implementing Partners</b>						
Payments Made	1,104,374	19,316	1,123,690	414,784	740	415,524
Reporting Received	1,012,677	0	1,012,677	425,958	2,775	428,733
Balance	91,697	19,316	111,013	(11,173)	(2,036)	(13,209)
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	571,822	6,801	578,623
Refunded to UNHCR	0	0	0	20,541	(2,709)	17,832
Currency Adjustment	137	0	137	(9,041)	(2,430)	(11,471)
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>91,834</b>	<b>19,316</b>	<b>111,150</b>	<b>531,067</b>	<b>5,044</b>	<b>536,111</b>
<b>Unliquidated Obligations</b>						
Outstanding 1 January	0	0	0	350,764	83,342	434,106
New Obligations	4,892,701	353,597	5,246,298	0	0	0
Disbursements	4,819,363	261,476	5,080,839	54,742	64,597	119,339
Cancellations	0	0	0	296,022	18,745	314,767
<b>Outstanding 31 December</b>	<b>73,338</b>	<b>92,121</b>	<b>165,459</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\* Expenditure reported under Special Programmes includes USD 134,200 for activities related to the South-Eastern Europe Operation. This amount is only reported in the Regional Overview for South-Eastern Europe.

