

TURKEY

August 2019

Key Figures (as of 30 August 2019)

4 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey including over 3.6 million Syrian nationals and close to 400,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities

4,552

Individuals received entrepreneurship training through UNHCR and its partners. 163 individuals received business licenses and 502 business grants

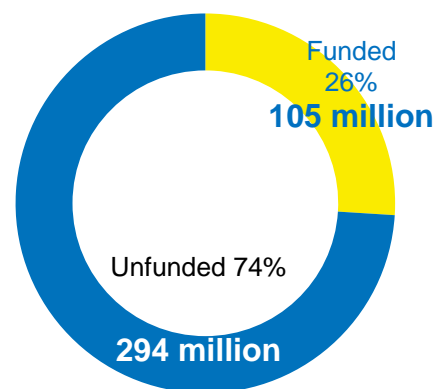
775

Refugees benefitted from Turkish language courses in Public Education Centres in Ankara, Konya, Bursa and Kayseri with the support of UN HCR

Funding (as of 03 September 2019)

USD 399.6 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Key Developments in August 2019

In cooperation with DGMM and the İzmir Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM), UNHCR organized the first three-day regional **Migration and Harmonization Workshop** for PDMMs in İzmir on 26-28 August. Topics covered included protection, registration, and activities fostering social cohesion and harmonization. Academics from prominent universities in İzmir contributed to the discussions. In total, 35 participants, including DGMM Deputy Director, Director of DGMM Harmonization and Communication Department, UNHCR's Representative in Turkey, PDMM Directors of seven provinces, and migration experts from nine provinces attended. Participants exchanged experiences and good practices in order to reach collective solutions to identified challenges.

The deadline given to **Syrians, who are unregistered in Istanbul** to return to their provinces of registration, was extended to 30 October (from a previous deadline of 20 August) according to the Turkish Minister of Interior. The media reported that the Minister had stated that unregistered Syrians were being referred to Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) and were being registered and transferred to provinces. UNHCR has been closely engaging with DGMM, in providing support as necessary whether in terms of equipment, staff or communications materials, and has been monitoring the situation, both in Istanbul and in provinces receiving Syrians from Istanbul.

Border crossings for Syrian nationals for **Eid al-Adha visits** started on 22 July 2019 according to announcements released on websites of Governorates of Gaziantep, Hatay, and Kilis. According to these announcements, departures from Turkey to Syria ended on 9 August, and returns to Turkey started on 19 August and will continue until the end of 2019. According to media reports, some 40,150 Syrian nationals crossed into Syria through Öncüpınar Border Gate for Eid al-Adha between 22 July and 9 August, while around 4,000 Syrian nationals had returned to Turkey through the same border gate by 26 August. The procedures implemented for Eid al-Adha visits are identical to those implemented for Eid al-Fitr. According to the media, around 7,000 Syrian nationals who had crossed into Syria for Eid al-Fitr have already returned to Turkey through the Öncüpınar border gate.

Promoting Access to and Provision of Protection

Cooperation with border authorities

In an effort to improve reception conditions in relevant locations in the border areas of the Aegean region, UNHCR delivers humanitarian assistance to border authorities, including the Turkish Coast Guard, Gendarmerie and National Police, for intercepted, rescued and apprehended individuals. Over 2,500 food packs, 2,300 bottles of water, 2,700 canned food and other core relief items were provided to border authorities, enabling them to respond to the needs of persons rescued or intercepted in some 65 incidents at the Aegean Sea border in August.

With growing trends in the Aegean region, the number of persons with specific needs identified among the intercepted and rescued persons has increased. This has created a surge in case referrals. Most cases involve Afghan nationals seeking international protection, unaccompanied children, persons with medical needs and pregnant women.

Support to registration and development of the national asylum system

A workshop on Strengthening Cooperation with Local Administrations and Development Agencies was held in Antalya from 30 July to 1 August for 35 staff from development agencies, municipalities, the Union of Municipalities as well as UNHCR, DGMM and PDMMs. The workshop provided a consultative platform on services provided to refugees through DGMM, UNHCR, Development Agencies and Municipalities. Also in August (21-23), UNHCR organized a workshop on International Protection and the Role of NGOs and with Migration Research Centres conducting migration studies and research on protection response in cooperation with DGMM. Over 70 participants from 20 NGOs and six research centres, as well as UNHCR and DGMM participated in the workshop. The workshop covered coordination of assistance, social cohesion, negative perceptions towards refugees, financial challenges of research centres, refugee challenges regarding livelihood opportunities and language.

Strengthening access to justice by refugees

The legal clinics established in South East Turkey provide legal assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees on a broad range of issues which affect them directly. The Şanlıurfa Legal Clinic provides legal assistance regarding international and temporary protection procedures (including registration, documentation, rejection of applications and withdrawal of decisions), access to rights, civil issues (such as marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship), deportation, exit and re-entry procedures, family reunification, resettlement and citizenship procedures. Although the Gaziantep and Hatay Legal Clinic premises are not yet fully functional, lawyers have started to provide one-to-one legal counselling to refugees and asylum seekers. Some 96 per cent of those who frequent the clinic and have benefitted from legal assistance provided by the Gaziantep and Hatay Legal Clinics are Syrian refugees.

Strengthening Protection and Access to Quality Services of Refugees with Specific Needs

Child protection, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) prevention and response, identification of and social support to refugees with specific needs

The UNHCR Counselling Line started operating at the beginning of July 2019 from its new premises in Ankara where multilingual operators answer calls and provide counselling to refugees and asylum seekers. In August, the UNHCR Counselling Line answered 20,318 calls in August and provided counselling on services, procedures, referrals and existing support mechanisms. In response to the increasing number of received calls through the Arabic line, the Counselling Line's capacity was extended and six additional Arabic speaking counsellors were recruited in August reaching a total number of 32 counsellors. As a result, a significant increase in the answer rate for queued calls was observed, from 54% in July to 70% in August.

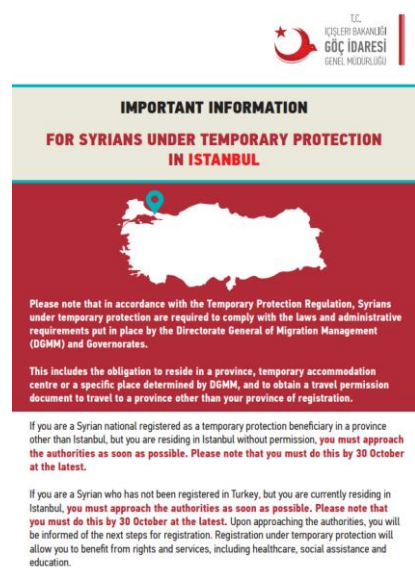
UNHCR also counselled 46 refugees through the UNHCR Gaziantep hotline number. Calls from across the country were received and queries were mainly related to resettlement, medical assistance, registration, child protection, detention, LGBTI, and ESSN assistance.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services

In an effort to strengthen the existing national social protection systems, UNHCR organized the first two-day regional **Social Service Workshop for Social Service Centre personnel** in İzmir on 6-7 August. The 34 workshop participants included staff of the centres, including UNHCR-recruited social workers, interpreters and drivers, as well as managers working across İzmir, Denizli, Muğla and Antalya. Participants were introduced to employee rights, obligations and field safety along with topics on working with persons with specific needs, stress management, interpretation and interview techniques. Participants also had the opportunity to share their observations and experiences from the field and collectively brainstorm solutions to identified problems.

Communication with communities

UNHCR worked closely with DGMM to produce information materials to ensure that the developments in Istanbul regarding compliance with obligations related to registration and residency, are clearly conveyed to Syrian refugees. In August, in cooperation with DGMM leaflets and posters were produced to relay information on necessary procedures. These have been shared online and have been printed and disseminated to UNHCR’s partners in Istanbul. DGMM also disseminates them in public institutions and spaces including PDMMs, hospitals and transport hubs.



Sample leaflet disseminated in public areas in Istanbul to inform Syrian nationals of compliance procedures. ©UNHCR

Through its main digital communication platforms, Help and Services Advisor, UNHCR shares information about rights, obligations and available services for refugees and asylum seekers. In August, Help reached 553,000 unique visitors since its launch in August 2017. Services Advisor received over 190,000 unique visitors. UNHCR’s followers continue to grow on the CwC Facebook page with approximately 39,000 followers. In preparation for the school year, UNHCR published posts encouraging persons of concern to enrol their children in school, explaining the procedures involved. UNHCR also informed refugees of the Istanbul procedures through its online platforms and published a post on rights and obligations of Syrians under temporary protection.

Promoting Social Cohesion and Harmonization

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As part of DGMM’s Harmonization Initiative, an **‘Engaged Conversations’** was held in Kayseri on 7-8 August. This is the fourth event held this year which brings together officials and members of the refugee and host communities. Focus group discussions were held with refugees from Iran and Syria as well as host community service providers and community leaders. A plenary discussion was also held on issues affecting refugees and host community members such as rights, obligations, services, perceptions and interactions. Around 416 refugees and host community members were engaged in the discussions, along with representatives of DGMM, PDMM, NGOs and UNHCR. Musical and folkloric performances showcased the talents of the community. Another **‘Engaged Conversations’** took place in Hatay on 21-22 August. It also included Syrian refugees and host community members and service providers, as well as a wider event hosting some 563 refugees and host community members. Also in August, a **‘Neighbourhood Gathering’** was held in Hatay, bringing together 133 refugees and host community members. Syrian refugee children performed folkloric plays from different regions of Turkey and depicted migration stories. A range of speeches were delivered by distinguished participants including the Deputy Governor of Hatay, the Deputy Director General of DGMM, the Head of Harmonization and Communications Department, and the Provincial Director of Migration Management. A presentation was also

delivered by DGMM on misconceptions surrounding refugees and migrants and gave an overview of Syrians' rights and obligations.

Engaging at the local level (municipalities, governor offices, imams, mukhtars)

UNHCR organized two **information sessions on international and temporary protection for mukhtars** in cooperation with the provincial directorates of migration management in Uşak and Denizli on 22 and 23 August. The sessions aimed to raise awareness on refugee rights, obligations and available services among mukhtars engaged across different neighborhoods in the two provinces as well as promote two-way communication and social cohesion among the refugee and host communities. Over 70 mukhtars from 58 neighborhoods attended, along with representatives of the provincial directorates and the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SASFs).

In Gaziantep, UNHCR began to distribute 20,000 copies of the '**Discover Gaziantep**' booklet, published in four languages (English, Turkish, Arabic, Farsi). Discover Gaziantep is a community support project that was initiated in 2017 in cooperation with Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality. The official launch is expected to take place in October as part of a workshop on social cohesion. On another note, ASAM is rolling out theatre performances of the Youth Committee across South East Turkey as part of its community support activities to promote social cohesion. The latest performance was held in Maras on 4 August with an audience of 400 people including Maras' Deputy Governor.



Cover of the English version of the Discover Gaziantep booklet. ©UNHCR

Working towards Durable Solutions

Education

Turkish language courses continue to take place with 775 beneficiaries in Ankara, Konya, Bursa and Kayseri; among which 79 are refugees from countries other than Syria. A total of 932 refugee students (861 Syrians and 71 from other countries) were provided with university scholarships by UNHCR through the DAFI scholarship programme which plays an integral role in enabling refugees to access higher education, as well as support to extend the coverage of the YTB's Turkiye Burslari programme. YTB is the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities. UNHCR partners with YTB for a number of educational activities, one of which is support to its university scholarship programme for international students.

Self-reliance and livelihoods support

UNHCR works with partners to provide livelihood support to refugees and host communities. In August, UNHCR partner, World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD) assisted in the employment of 106 refugees in a supermarket chain, and ACTED started a vocational training programme where 105 beneficiaries were selected for courses in information and documentation management, children's dress sewing, and regional food manufacturing. Also in August, HABITAT provided job readiness career planning training to 148 beneficiaries, and Turkish labour law training to 123 beneficiaries. In total, HABITAT has trained 874 beneficiaries.

UNHCR's support to refugee entrepreneurs continues through training, mentorship and financial support. HABITAT has provided entrepreneurship, financial and IT literacy trainings to 440 beneficiaries in total as of August 2019. So far, UNHCR has reached a total of 4,552 individuals with entrepreneurship training and 163 individuals with business licenses and 502 individuals with business grants.

Overall, from January 2016 to August 2019, UNHCR's livelihoods activities have reached 27,418 individuals with skills, language and vocational training programmes. Counselling on access to the labour market and entrepreneurship has reached 49,339 individuals.

Resettlement and complementary pathways

As of end of August, over 11,300 submissions for resettlement of refugee cases (72 per cent Syrian and 28 per cent refugees of other nationalities) were made to 16 countries. Almost 8,100 refugees departed for resettlement (78 per cent of them Syrian).

Monitoring the voluntary nature of self-organised returns

UNHCR monitors the voluntary nature of self-organised returns and ensures that all who wish to return are provided with necessary information as to the consequences of their decision. In cases where return is sought as a result of protection-related issues, UNHCR provides counselling on possible interventions in Turkey to enable individuals to make informed decisions. As of 31 August, the total number of voluntary return interviews observed by UNHCR stands at 21,151 individuals (11,068 families) in 2019.



Training Social Service Centre staff during the regional social service workshop in Izmir.
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Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey and their unrestricted and regional funds in 2019 as of 03 September

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CONTACTS

Amira Abd El-Khalek, Reporting Officer, Turkey, abdelkha@unhcr.org, Tel: +90 312 409 7420

LINKS

[Regional Portal - Syria Regional Refugee Response](#) | [Regional Portal - Mediterranean](#) | [UNHCR Turkey website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Services Advisor](#) | [UNHCR Help](#)