

TURKEY

December 2020

Key Figures (as of 31 December 2020)

4 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey including over 3.6 million Syrian nationals and close to 320,000 international protection status holders and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live across Turkey in 81 provinces.

4,048

Refugees departed for resettlement in 2020 as of end of December, 78 per cent of whom are Syrians. UNHCR provided close to 6,100 submissions for resettlement consideration in 2020.

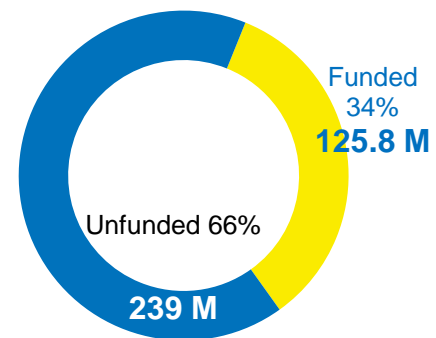
79,401

Households received one off COVID-19 emergency cash payments by end of December.

Funding (as of 30 December 2020)

USD 364.8 million

requested in 2020 for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Key Developments in December 2020

On 14 December, **UNHCR turned 70**. As UNHCR marks 70 years globally and 60 years in Turkey, it remains committed to working with the Government of Turkey, refugees, partners and the interagency community to protect people who have been forced to flee. Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees worldwide and its refugee response is based on a comprehensive legal framework, in particular the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013) and the Temporary Protection Regulation (2014).

The **data portal of good practices** in the refugee response in Turkey which was launched in June 2020, continues to provide information on good practices initiated by public institutions and national and international organisations in Turkey in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees. To date, the portal contains 58 good practices, including some on mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees.

UNHCR continues to carry out the one-off **COVID-19 Emergency Cash Assistance** in cooperation with DGMM and through the service provider PTT to households identified in need. By the end of December, UNHCR had reached 79,401 households (372,651 individuals) who had received cards to obtain their cash payments. Payments continue throughout January to reach the target of 85,000 households.

Protection and Social Cohesion

Regional meetings with NGOs on social cohesion were organised by UNHCR in December as part of the UNHCR-DGMM Joint Harmonization Initiative. Five meetings covering six geographical regions of Turkey, including the Aegean, Marmara, Central Anatolia, Mediterranean and South East Turkey and Eastern Anatolia were held thus reaching a total of 260 representatives from 167 NGOs. The first of these meetings had taken place for the Black Sea region on 30 November. The purpose of the meetings was to encourage cooperation between the public sector and civil society, to identify gaps and good practices, raise awareness on harmonization policies and practices, and to facilitate the inclusion of civil society in policy-making processes related to social cohesion. Overall, the meetings facilitated a rich exchange of views between NGOs and public institutions. A high-level participation from the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), as well as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), and the Turkish Red Crescent contributed to the meetings with valuable insights. UNHCR and DGMM will continue to engage with NGOs on social cohesion to facilitate their involvement in social cohesion activities at the regional and provincial levels.



Screenshots from the final Regional NGO Meeting held with participants DGMM, UNHCR and civil society participants from Eastern and South East Anatolia

UNHCR organised a **virtual meeting with national and international asylum experts** to promote exchange of information and good practices on 14-16 December as part of its efforts of cooperation in the reinforcement of Turkey's national asylum system. UNHCR's Deputy Representative and 33 staff from DGMM and Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMMs) participated in the meeting which included international experts from the Swiss State Secretariat of Migration (SEM), the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), and the Dutch Central Body for Sheltering Asylum Seekers (COA). The meeting provided a platform for interactive discussions between the international participants and DGMM and PDMM staff on registration procedures and reception conditions, refugee status determination procedures, quality assurance mechanisms and integration policies in Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Turkey.

A workshop on **Statelessness Determination Procedures** was held virtually on 15-16 December with the participation of 16 staff from DGMM and PDMMs as well as two international experts specialized in Statelessness from UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Europe. The workshop discussed mechanisms in place in Turkey and in other countries for determination of statelessness in line with international standards and obligations and to support review of standard operating procedures (SOPs) on statelessness determination procedures. Discussions were held on the SOP and its annexes including a 'Checklist for Statelessness Determination Procedures'. The SOPs and a leaflet on the 'Determination of Statelessness, Procedures, Rights and Obligations' in line with the discussions held at the meeting are currently being finalised.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence



22 partners

UNHCR collaborated with 22 different partners at their field offices across various locations



116 activities

were conducted by UNHCR and partners



84,972 individuals

were reached through online/remote and face-to-face activities across Turkey

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (GBV) campaign which was launched on 25 November continued to 10 December with UNHCR conducting and coordinating a range of activities and initiatives with its partners. UNHCR implemented 116 activities countrywide which reached close to 85,000 individuals of different nationalities as well as Turkish from diverse age, gender and vulnerability groups. UNHCR collaborated with 22 partners ranging from municipalities, provincial and local authorities, grassroots and refugee communities, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Activities included live TV and radio broadcasts, concerts and drama performances, art classes, and remote outreach and information dissemination. Video messages from women leaders with a call to unite for women refugees' empowerment beyond the 16 Days of Activism were posted online. While COVID-19 presented significant challenges in terms of physical gatherings for activities, innovative communication modalities

including the use of virtual and tele-outreach tools for information dissemination were devised. Social media, local billboards, SMS messaging, remote counselling and distribution of materials therefore played an important medium for a diversified outreach.

In December, UNHCR continued to disseminate awareness-raising materials as part of the inter-agency GBV/mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) awareness-raising initiative. Twelve videos (six Arabic and six Farsi) and 48 posters (24 Arabic and 24 Farsi) were disseminated through social media, the Help website and UNHCR's WhatsApp communication tree. The videos reached some 18,557 views since mid-November. The materials were also shared widely through inter-agency platforms.

For the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) which is commemorated on 3 December of every year, UNHCR organised events in five provinces of the Central Anatolian region in cooperation with its partners. These events included online sessions, radio and TV broadcasts with the participation of refugees with special needs to raise awareness on the efforts, challenges and inclusion in everyday life within their communities.



Billboards of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign were placed in different areas across South East Turkey ©UNHCR

Engaging at the Local Level

UNHCR cooperates with local authorities, municipalities and partners across the country to identify needs, provide material assistance and support refugee initiatives mobilising themselves and their communities. Distribution of material needs and hygiene kits to vulnerable populations continues across the country.

In South East Turkey, Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality is undertaking the production of face masks through a project supported by UNHCR. In the first phase of production which took place in December, some 350,000 face masks were produced by Turkish and refugee women. The target is to produce one million masks to be distributed to refugees and members of the host community.

UNHCR organised a series of conflict mitigation trainings for refugees and mukhtars in Hatay and Adana which took place in December. The trainings focused on understanding conflict, conflict analysis and resolution strategies, as well as social cohesion, principled negotiation and solution-oriented communication. Participants were identified in cooperation with local authorities, including the Metropolitan Municipality of Adana. Refugees, including refugee committee members and volunteer group members from both temporary and international protection applicants participated in the training.

Another training on social cohesion and conflict resolution was held in Istanbul from 23 to 25 December for students. Over 30 Turkish and refugee students applied for the training and selection rested on 14 students who engaged in meaningful community work or social responsibility in order to increase their network skills and knowledge of community protection. The training was provided on behalf of UNHCR by an external consultancy company with experience in social work trainings.

Durable Solutions

UNHCR had found 600 applicants eligible for the [Higher Education Cash Grant \(HECG\)](#) programme which had received over 3,500 applications from Turkey. Upon a further review, an additional 150 applicants were found eligible to receive grants. UNHCR is also undergoing an analysis of the results of a survey conducted

during the HECG application process which includes questions on topics related to access to education, the impact of financial support on academic performance and challenges which university students face in adapting to university environments. The survey will help to inform future programming for temporary and international protection applicants in Turkey.

UNHCR's higher education scholarship holders and beneficiaries of higher education cash grants were presented with the possibility of taking certified online courses offered on the online education platform, EdX, which includes courses of universities such as Harvard and MIT. The opportunity, which was made possible through an agreement with UNHCR headquarters, allowed 64 refugees to be selected to benefit from multiple courses on the platform. In December, 58 university students registered to take 156 EdX courses.

In December, four mentoring sessions to support higher education scholars' engagement with community work and volunteerism were organised by UNHCR in cooperation with the Association of Assistance Solidarity and Support for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers (MSYDD). The first session had taken place in November. The online meetings involved DAFI scholars and higher education scholarship holders across the country providing them with an opportunity to guide refugee students in their access to higher education.



In support of **self-reliance** and in response to difficult socio-economic conditions, UNHCR has been working through its partners to provide online vocational courses, Turkish language courses, soft skills online training and online entrepreneurship training. Given additional COVID-19 access restrictions, most of the training courses are being provided online. Nevertheless, some continue to take place in person such as cooking apprenticeship, service and hospitality, dry cleaning and apparel and textiles.

Habitat Association, with the support of UNHCR, organised an online entrepreneurship bootcamp on 13 December where refugees presented 31 business ideas to a selection committee in the possibility of turning them into sustainable enterprises. Of the 31 business ideas, 13 projects were selected and prioritized for future referrals to grant mechanisms available at the Turkish Small and Medium Industry Development Organisation (KOSGEB) and The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK). The remaining 18 business ideas were included in the IMECE Circle Network for entrepreneurs. Some of the projects presented at the boot camp included a laboratory for entrepreneurs and students to develop their ideas and create prototypes, a mobile educational game application, smart home systems for security and control, and a restaurant specializing in Syrian and Turkish food.

As of end of December, UNHCR provided 6,097 **resettlement** submissions (5,108 Syrians and 989 refugees of other nationalities) to 14 countries; and 4,048 refugees (3,126 Syrian refugees and 922 of other nationalities) departed for resettlement to 15 countries despite the lack of resettlement departures between March and September due to COVID-related travel restrictions. Remote interviews continue to be undertaken by UNHCR in eight locations with the support of the Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM) of Ankara, Izmir, Gaziantep, Kayseri, Mardin and Istanbul following the halt of face-to-face interviews on 15 March.

Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2020

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CONTACTS

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

LINKS

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