

Turkey



Operational highlights

- UNHCR's extensive capacity-building and refugee law training activities with the Turkish Government and civil society continued in 2006; over 300 government officials and 100 civil society members participated successfully in workshops, seminars, on-the-job training schemes and internships.
- In the absence of a fully established national asylum system, UNHCR continued to operate a mandated status determination procedure for non-European asylum-seekers to identify those in need of international protection and subsequently, resettlement as a durable solution. The Office conducted refugee status determination (RSD) procedures for more than 2,300 applications (3,900 people) in 2006. In addition, UNHCR received more than 3,900 new asylum applications representing close to 4,550 people, a 16 per cent increase compared to 2005.
- A durable solution was found for more than 1,600 refugees who were resettled in third countries.
- UNHCR provided assistance to an average of 2,900 refugees and asylum-seekers per month, ensuring that their daily needs were met.
- The Turkish Government made progress in the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Adoption of the European Union (EU) *Acquis* in the Field of Asylum and Migration, with the adoption in

June 2006 of an implementation directive within the 1994 Asylum Regulation. This is a positive development in improving the asylum environment in Turkey, as the implementation directive contemplates the transposition of EU legislation into national legislation. The implementation directive covers both asylum-seekers from European and non-European countries, as well as stateless persons and situations of mass influx.

Working environment

Turkey's candidacy for membership of the European Union is a major factor influencing UNHCR's working environment. The accession process has now become the main driving force and is supported by a clear agenda, a general time frame and new resources. Turkey has made a commitment to lift the "geographic limitation" of the 1951 Refugee Convention, in the course of the accession negotiations, once the necessary legislative and institutional framework, infrastructure and staffing are in place, and provided that the EU Member States demonstrate sensitivity on the issue of burden-sharing. A major challenge remains the creation of an asylum and migration authority and the administrative status of such an authority within the Turkish Ministry of the Interior.

Insecurity and political instability in Iraq created major constraints for the Government of Turkey and for UNHCR with regard to achieving durable solutions for certain refugee groups. On UNHCR's advice, the Government maintained its policy of not returning Iraqi refugees. Nonetheless, due to a lack of durable solutions many Iraqi refugees continued to live in a precarious situation and remain dependent on UNHCR for assistance. The number of Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR increased by 300 in 2006.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

UNHCR's direct involvement in refugee matters in Turkey has made a significant difference in the joint efforts to achieve key 2006 objectives, which were:

- The development of new arrangements for the reception and protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in conformity with international standards.
- Effective capacity-building of key officials responsible for refugee and asylum matters.
- Monitoring Turkey's implementation of the 1951 Convention and ensuring that asylum-seekers are admitted and have fair access to the national asylum procedures.
- Ensuring efficient refugee status determination for asylum-seekers under UNHCR's mandate.
- Promoting durable solutions for refugees through resettlement, local integration and voluntary repatriation.
- Cooperation with the Government and NGOs to meet the basic protection and material needs of refugees and asylum-seekers with an emphasis on the protection of refugee women and children.
- Raising public awareness about the problems of asylum-seekers and refugees to support Turkey's efforts to improve their integration prospects.

Protection and solutions

UNHCR formulated an asylum transition framework focusing on legislative and institutional planning and development; training strategy and coordination; integration and social support; public outreach and advocacy; and resource mobilization and management. The Office continued to carry out RSD for non-European asylum-seekers, while also advising the Government on temporary asylum and identifying refugees for resettlement. UNHCR reached a decision on more than 1,500 applications for refugee status. The backlog of pending applications rose to more than 3,500 cases, involving approximately 6,200 asylum-seekers.

The increase in the backlog included more than 1,200 Iraqi cases (approximately 2,500 people), whose applications remained on hold during 2006. UNHCR continued to register Iraqi asylum-seekers and proceeded with full RSD in cases of extreme vulnerability. UNHCR's durable solutions focused mainly on the resettlement of non-European refugees, of whom 1,600 were resettled in 2006. UNHCR expressed concern about three incidents of *refoulement* involving individuals duly registered with the Government and UNHCR. The Governments of Turkey and Iraq, along with UNHCR, renewed their efforts to find a solution for some 12,000 Turkish refugees currently living in Iraq. It is expected that the negotiations will continue and be finalized during 2007.

In the transition period, UNHCR supported the Government in providing practical on-the-job training for future RSD staff and case workers. This training involved observation of RSD interviews, country of origin research and drafting of assessments. UNHCR also implemented a standard operating procedure on sexual and gender-based violence, to improve protection.

Activities and assistance

Community services: UNHCR engaged psychologists to follow up on seriously traumatized refugees and

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Islamic Rep. of Iran	2,100	2,100	42	28
Asylum-seekers	Iraq	2,500	2,500	47	32
	Islamic Rep. of Iran	2,000	2,000	40	22
	Somalia	700	700	43	28
	Afghanistan	300	300	43	48
	Sudan	100	100	6	6
	Various	600	600	41	17
Total		8,300	8,300		



UNHCR Ankara

In 2006 UNHCR was still in charge of refugee status determination for non-European refugees in Turkey.

asylum-seekers. More than 2,500 psychosocial and legal counselling sessions were carried out. UNHCR also organized training programmes on refugee protection for the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, aimed at improving coordination and counselling services for refugees and asylum-seekers in Ankara, Istanbul and in provincial cities.

Domestic needs and household support: A total of 570 refugees and asylum-seekers received financial assistance on a monthly basis. In addition, close to 1,200 Iranian refugees who previously resided in Iraq were also provided with financial assistance.

Education: More than 830 asylum-seeker and refugee children enrolled in Turkish public schools received education assistance, which included school uniforms, text books and supplies. UNHCR also supported recreational programmes for some 30 children.

Food: An average of 350 refugees and asylum-seekers with special needs received monthly food assistance during the first half of 2006. As of June 2006, a private

donor provided food assistance to UNHCR to support vulnerable refugees. A total of 277 asylum-seekers and refugees benefited from this measure.

Health and nutrition: Through state hospitals, one contracted clinic and pharmacies, UNHCR provided basic health care to an average of 1,250 refugees and asylum-seekers per month. Close to 50 people voluntarily underwent tests on sexually-transmitted diseases and received counselling from the clinic. More than 240 refugee women and adolescent girls were provided with sanitary supplies on a monthly basis. Medical care, health and psychosocial support was provided to victims of SGBV. The Turkish Social Services and Child Protection Agency provided protection to 25 separated children, as well as legal assistance to victims of domestic violence. UNHCR's Inter-Unit Committee on Special Cases handled cases involving separated, abused or exploited children; survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, torture or other trauma; isolated older persons and others rendered vulnerable by medical conditions, mental illness or physical disabilities. In November

2006, an assessment mission was undertaken by UNHCR to review the adequacy of the national response to HIV and AIDS in relation to the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Legal assistance: Legal assistance focused mainly on extensive protection training and capacity-building activities, resulting in over 300 government officials and 100 civil society members gaining specialized skills. UNHCR also provided legal counselling to refugees and asylum-seekers in eastern and south-eastern Turkey.

Operational support: Public information activities continued to promote tolerance towards refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the country. UNHCR also helped to cover the staffing and other administrative costs of implementing partners who provided counselling services for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Shelter and other infrastructure: UNHCR provided accommodation in Ankara to more than 350 extremely vulnerable individual refugees and asylum-seekers, including 14 separated children.

Transport and logistics: UNHCR facilitated travel to Ankara for an average of 110 refugees and asylum-seekers per month, to attend eligibility interviews or to complete resettlement formalities.

Constraints

One of the main protection challenges was the search for durable solutions for the almost 1,200 Iranian refugees who reached Turkey from Iraq in 2002 and who cannot return to Iraq or the Islamic Republic of Iran. UNHCR's negotiations on durable solutions for this group had, by the end of 2006, failed to overcome the Government's concern that resettlement would act as a pull factor and result in more asylum-seekers coming to Turkey.

Although asylum-seekers and refugees have formally access to the labour market, in practice the administrative requirements in the legislation make it almost impossible for them to obtain work permits. They also have limited access to social services, which are not always available in all the cities where refugees and asylum-seekers are assigned to live. As most asylum-seekers and refugees are not self-sufficient, they depend on the limited resources UNHCR provides.

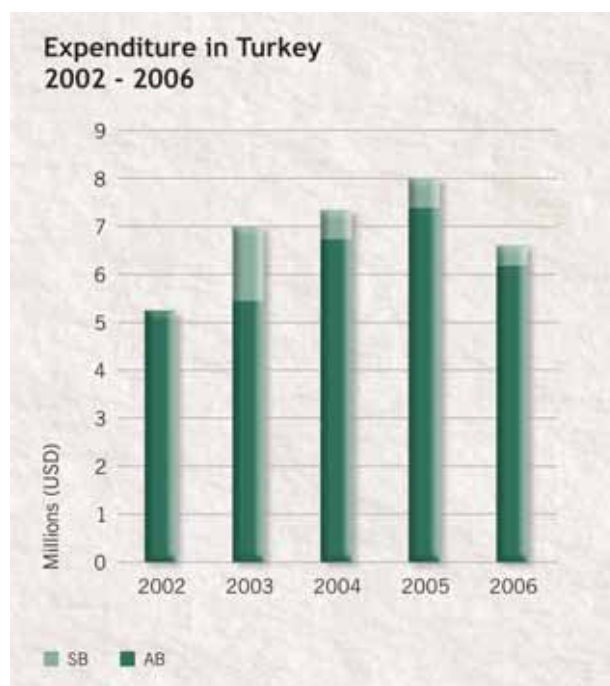
Limited access to social support mechanisms motivated many asylum-seekers not to register with the authorities in the provincial cities in which they were assigned to reside. Many opted to go to Ankara and Istanbul instead. In 2006, the Turkish Social Services and Child Protection Agency and the Social Solidarity Foundation accompanied UNHCR on joint missions to various major

refugee locations to improve protection and to increase refugees' access to national social services.

Financial Information

UNHCR's annual programme budget focused on the provision of assistance and on strengthening social support for refugees and needy asylum-seekers. UNHCR's resources were limited due to a rise in the number of asylum-seekers, an increased backlog of asylum applications, and an increasing number of persons for whom there were no immediate durable solutions.

UNHCR's expenditure in Turkey increased in 2003 with the opening of an office in Silopi in response to a possible influx of Iraqi refugees. Expenditure continued to increase in the following years due to an increasing number of asylum-seekers.



Organization and implementation

Management

The country programme was implemented from the main office in Ankara and through field offices in Istanbul, Silopi and Van. In 2006 there were a total of 70 staff members, consisting of six international staff, one Junior Professional Officer (JPO), 59 national staff members, three national United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) and one consultant.

Working with others

UNHCR continued its coordination, training and capacity-building activities with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Security, Gendarmerie General Command, Coast Guard General Command, Turkish Land Forces and the Ministry of Justice. Cooperation with the Government's Social Services and Child Protection Agency continued. UNHCR continued to participate in UN Country Team meetings and the UN Development Assistance Framework process.

Overall assessment

UNHCR has become a partner for both the Government and civil society in the development of an asylum system. The Office is, however, concerned about the delay in the creation of an asylum and migration authority within the Ministry of the Interior. Activities to raise awareness and provide public information about refugees and asylum have had an impact. Increasingly, UNHCR's initiatives to highlight the particular needs of

women and children in RSD and assistance work have been recognized by NGOs and government partners. UNHCR's legal advice activities continued to be respected by the Government and external partners.

Partners	
Implementing partners	
NGOs: Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants, Human Resources Development Foundation, International Catholic Migration Commission.	
Operational partners	
Government agencies: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Consular Affairs; Ministry of Interior, General Directorate for Security, Gendarmerie General Command; Ministry of Justice; Social Services and Child Protection Institutions.	
NGOs: Bar Associations of Turkey, Caritas, Human Rights Centre and Women's Community Centre (Van), Refugee Legal Aid Programme of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly.	
Others: Bilgi University, Hacettepe University School of Social Work, IOM, Middle East Technical University, Turkish Red Crescent Society, United Nations Country Team, World Bank.	

Budget, income and expenditure (USD)					
	Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
AB	7,762,450	429,315	5,800,625	6,229,940	6,184,417
SB ³	836,064	0	409,087	409,087	409,087
Total	8,598,514	429,315	6,209,712	6,639,027	6,593,503

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³ The SB figures apply to the Iraq Operation. The budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Previous years' projects
	AB	SB	Total	AB and SB
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,933,459	156,938	2,090,397	0
Community services	121,103	0	121,103	115,889
Domestic needs and household support	411,942	239,173	651,115	10,793
Education	40,981	214	41,195	0
Food	5,017	362	5,379	0
Health and nutrition	280,849	330	281,179	0
Legal assistance	296,919	9,630	306,550	0
Operational support (to agencies)	36,932	0	36,932	3,674
Shelter and infrastructure	99,197	195	99,392	0
Transport and logistics	40,857	2,244	43,101	0
Instalments with implementing partners	214,225	0	214,225	(130,355)
Sub-total operational activities	3,481,482	409,087	3,890,569	0
Programme support	2,702,935	0	2,702,935	0
Total expenditure	6,184,417	409,087	6,593,503	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure				(26,966)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	347,018	0	347,018	
Reporting received	(132,793)	0	(132,793)	
Balance	214,225	0	214,225	
Previous years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1st January				125,674
Reporting received				(130,355)
Refunded to UNHCR				(15,446)
Adjustments				20,127
Balance				0