

TURKEY



Operational highlights

- Almost 15,000 people approached UNHCR in Turkey to seek asylum in 2011, a 75 per cent increase in the number of new applications over the previous year.
- The situation in the Syrian Arab Republic drove more than 22,000 people to flee to the Turkish province of Hatay in 2011, with close to 10,000 still there at the end of the year. Turkey declared a temporary protection regime for all Syrians seeking protection in the country.
- Overall, the protection environment in Turkey has improved. Draft asylum legislation was submitted for endorsement by the Government before being sent to Parliament for adoption. The Government again permitted the waiving of residence fees for most asylum-seekers, and allowed UNHCR to gain access to asylum-seekers in detention as well as in the transit zone at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport.
- UNHCR made 5,000 refugee status determination (RSD) decisions.
- At the intergovernmental event in Geneva in December 2011, Turkey pledged to broaden its protection space by ratifying the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to adopt its first asylum law, and to provide temporary protection to Syrians fleeing violence in their country.

- UNHCR submitted around 6,500 refugees for resettlement, among the highest number of annual submissions so far from Turkey.

Working environment

In view of Turkey's "geographic limitation" to the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR undertakes RSD for non-Europeans. However, Turkey provides non-European refugees with temporary asylum, in principle pending a solution for them elsewhere. Almost all asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey live in urban settings, save for the Syrian nationals under temporary protection who are hosted in camps (tented settlements or container cities).

Turkey has advanced a number of positive developments, including in terms of legislation, following the establishment of the Asylum and Migration Bureau (AMB) under the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) some years ago. UNHCR was invited to participate in working groups and has contributed to the drafting of laws on asylum, which were in the final stages of preparation in 2011 prior to being sent to Parliament.

The unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic drove more than 22,000 people to cross into the Turkish province of Hatay in 2011, with close to 10,000 still there at the end of 2011. The UN Country Team designated UNHCR as the lead agency for coordinating activities in Hatay. UNHCR urged the central authorities to establish a legal framework for Syrians asking for protection in Turkey, and welcomed the

Government's decision in October 2011 to declare a temporary protection regime for them.

UNHCR coordinated with the MOI and assisted in the relocation of persons of concern (about 2,000) who were residing in Van at the time of the earthquakes in October and November 2011.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives and targets

UNHCR's objectives in Turkey were to advance the protection environment in the urban settings and to maximize the protection space available. The Office aimed to achieve these goals through close liaison with central authorities in Ankara, local authorities in the cities and a network of partners and NGOs.

Favourable protection environment

- UNHCR has seen a marked reduction in cases of *refoulement* of asylum-seekers from Turkey in the past few years. UNHCR registered only one such case in 2011.
- There has also been a substantial increase in the number of persons permitted to access the asylum procedure from detention. Following interventions by UNHCR with the Turkish authorities and further to guidance from authorities, more than 90 per cent of these cases were granted access to the national procedure.
- UNHCR welcomed the decision of the Turkish police to start taking applications for asylum from persons arriving at Istanbul's airport. In addition, capacity-building activities and support by UNHCR helped police officials to increasingly address protection issues in the context of mixed migration flows. According to governmental statistics, 99 per cent of those claiming asylum from

removal centres were released and granted access to the relevant procedures.

- The MOI and other relevant ministries received legal support from UNHCR in drafting the Foreigners and International Protection Law and secondary legislation. Several joint missions and capacity-building activities were conducted in cooperation with the MOI's Asylum and Migration Bureau as well as the General Directorate for Security which improved the quality of the national RSD procedure. UNHCR also strengthened its cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in developing protection policies that have an impact at the regional level.

Fair protection processes

- UNHCR made 5,000 decisions in regular RSD procedures, covering more than 10,000 asylum-seekers. It achieved its target with regard to the time taken for refugee status determination (RSD), limiting waiting periods at first instance and at the appeal stage to eight months each. The majority of first instance decisions were issued within six months, and the appeal backlog was eliminated.
- However, the unanticipated 75 per cent increase in new asylum-seekers later in the year made it difficult for UNHCR to maintain reasonable waiting periods for registration and RSD.
- The number of satellite cities where refugees reside continued to grow, reaching 51, which posed a serious challenge for outreach activities through NGOs, as they are currently present in only 22 of these locations.
- The reduction of residence permit (*ikamet*) fees in 2011 was an important step in improving the living conditions of people of concern.

Persons of concern

| Type of Population | Origin | Total | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Per cent female | Per cent under 18 |
|--------------------------|---|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Refugees | Iraq | 7,100 | 7,100 | 43 | 33 |
| | Islamic Rep. of Iran | 3,000 | 3,000 | 43 | 22 |
| | Afghanistan | 2,700 | 2,700 | 45 | 45 |
| | Somalia | 1,100 | 1,100 | 48 | 38 |
| | Various | 600 | 600 | 39 | 30 |
| Asylum-seekers | Iraq | 3,700 | 3,700 | 43 | 36 |
| | Islamic Rep. of Iran | 2,600 | 2,600 | 42 | 19 |
| | Afghanistan | 2,400 | 2,400 | 43 | 48 |
| | Somalia | 600 | 600 | 48 | 42 |
| | Kyrgyzstan | 310 | 310 | 45 | 44 |
| | Uzbekistan | 240 | 240 | 46 | 49 |
| | Syrian Arab Rep. | 210 | 210 | 36 | 34 |
| | Occupied Palestinian Territory | 140 | 140 | 36 | 37 |
| Various | 700 | 700 | 34 | 24 | |
| Stateless | Stateless people | 800 | - | - | - |
| Others of concern | Syrian nationals granted temporary protection by the Government of Turkey | 9,300 | - | - | - |
| | Various | 310 | - | - | - |
| Total | | 35,810 | 25,400 | | |

A Syrian refugee girl in front of the family tent in Boynuyogun tent city, in Hatay province.



Basic needs and services

- Thanks to normative improvements, the school attendance rate among children aged 6 to 17 years increased by approximately 17 per cent compared to 2010.
- UNHCR supported the most vulnerable refugees with subsistence allowances, assistance for temporary accommodation and sanitary materials as well as medical screening, basic treatment and medicines.
- UNHCR supplied the Turkish Red Crescent Society with tents (2,000), blankets (10,000) and bed mats (10,000). These supplies were initially meant for the Syrian arrivals in Hatay, but were released to help cope with the earthquake in Van. Later in the year, UNHCR donated a further 2,000 tents and 40,000 blankets, bringing the total donations in 2011 to 4,000 tents, 50,000 blankets and 10,000 bed mats.

Durable solutions

- As formal local integration was not procedurally available, resettlement continued to be the main durable solution available to non-European refugees in Turkey. More than 6,800 persons were submitted for resettlement in 2011, with acceptance in the first submission maintained at 90 per cent.
- Only seven refugees in Turkey requested UNHCR to facilitate their repatriation in 2011, while 241 returned spontaneously. Prevailing conditions in the main countries of origin were not conducive to voluntary return.

External relations

- The designation of UNHCR as lead agency for the Syrian situation enhanced the public perception of the Office as a

credible interlocutor with both expertise and accurate information. This has contributed to creating an environment of understanding, improving dialogue and facilitating access to people of concern. It also helped to improve understanding and awareness of the situation of non-Syrians who have sought protection in Turkey.

Logistics and operational support

- UNHCR supported its partners' operations in Turkey by verifying standards of assistance, ensuring consistency with organizational objectives and policies, project monitoring and financial reporting. The Office facilitated programme delivery by overseeing implementing partners' financial planning, monitoring and control.

Constraints

The absence of a legal framework for asylum continued to be a constraint in managing protection and assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey. The absence of a national institution focused exclusively on asylum remains a challenge, although in part overcome by constructive relationships with other national entities.

Financial information

Requirements increased sharply in 2011 to cover registration and RSD, the influx from the Syrian Arab Republic and the response to the earthquake in Van. The funds provided helped UNHCR to ensure protection delivery, deal with unpredictable developments, maintain its credibility vis-à-vis the national authorities, preserve asylum space and strengthen practical cooperation with different governmental departments.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR's operations in Turkey were handled by its Country Office in Ankara, Field Office in Van and field units in Istanbul and Silopi. Following the series of strong earthquakes in Van, activities there were suspended temporarily and some of the staff transferred to Ankara.

UNHCR's presence in 2011

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| □ Number of offices | 4 |
| □ Total staff | 139 |
| International | 8 |
| National | 77 |
| JPOs | 1 |
| UNVs | 26 |
| Others | 27 |

Working with others

UNHCR worked with the General Directorate of Consular Affairs in the MFA and the General Directorate for Security within the MOI, as responsible entities for asylum matters. The Office also collaborated closely with the Asylum and Migration Bureau of the MOI. Strong relations were maintained with the Ministries of Labour, Health, and Education as well as the Social Solidarity Foundation, the Social Services and Child Protection Directorate, and civil society.

UNHCR's main implementing partners—the Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) and the Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF)—provided refugees with psychosocial counselling and assistance in gaining access to their rights. They also conducted outreach activities and undertook protection interventions.

Active cooperation was maintained with other UN agencies. For the Syrian situation, UNHCR is the lead agency for planning and coordination among the UNCT members.

UNHCR worked closely with IOM and ICMC to facilitate resettlement departures, as well as on migration, asylum and trafficking issues.

Overall assessment

Significant progress was made in 2011 in the delivery of protection and assistance to people of concern to UNHCR: the Government of Turkey submitted two draft laws for ratification of the two Statelessness Conventions; the number of cases of *refoulement* sharply diminished and essentially disappeared; and access to territory for persons seeking protection improved.

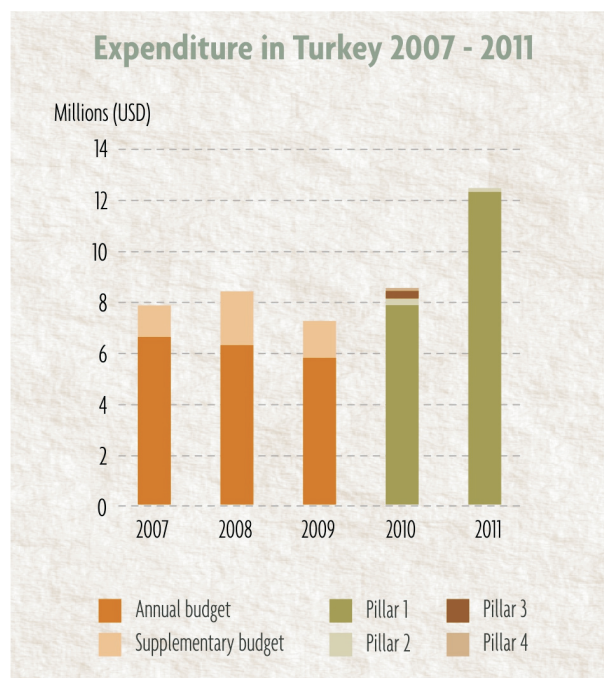
Turkey kept its borders open to receive some 22,000 Syrians fleeing violence in their country, while immigration police at Istanbul's airport started accepting asylum applications. Important headway was made in the area of facilitating the education of refugee children. Advancement in the areas of self-reliance and livelihoods will be further concentrated on in 2012. UNHCR reached one of the highest figures of resettlement submissions in a year with around

6,500 refugees submitted for resettlement, mainly to the United States, but also to Canada, Australia, Norway and Germany.

Unmet needs

- 64 per cent of targeted children of concern in urban areas were supported to attend primary education. Financial and medical assistance were kept to the bare minimum.
- With the increase in number of satellite cities as well as the number of persons of concern, the presence of implementing partners can ensure an outreach in only less than half of the satellite cities.

| Partners | |
|--|--|
| Implementing partners | |
| NGOs: Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants, Human Resources Development Foundation | |
| Operational partners | |
| Government agencies: Bureau for Development and Implementation of Asylum and Migration Legislation and Administrative Capacity (Asylum and Migration Bureau), Coast Guard Command, Gendarmerie General Command, General Directorate for Security of the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate for Social Solidarity and Assistance, Human Rights Presidency, Land Forces Command, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Education, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Secretariat General for EU Affairs, Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundations in Cities, Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), Under-Secretariat of the Ministry of Interior | |
| NGOs: Amnesty International, Ankara Refugee Support Group, Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers (<i>Multeci-der</i>), Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People (<i>Mazlum Der</i>), Bar Associations, Bonjour Ankara Group, <i>Cansuyu</i> , Caritas, Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH), Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Human Rights Association, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, International Blue Crescent, International Catholic Migration Commission, Kaos-GL, <i>Kimse Yok Mu</i> , Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation, Turkish Red Crescent Society, Van Women Association | |
| Others: IOM, United Nations Country Team | |



Budget, income and expenditure in Turkey | USD

| | PILLAR 1 Refugee programme | PILLAR 2 Stateless programme | Total |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| FINAL BUDGET | 20,197,926 | 249,392 | 20,447,318 |
| Income from contributions | 3,771,833 | 0 | 3,771,833 |
| Other funds available | 8,522,568 | 147,010 | 8,669,578 |
| TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE | 12,294,401 | 147,010 | 12,441,411 |
| EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN | | | |
| <i>Favourable protection environment</i> | | | |
| National legal framework | 137,042 | 0 | 137,042 |
| National and regional migration policy | 217,364 | 0 | 217,364 |
| Prevention of statelessness | 0 | 117,206 | 117,206 |
| Cooperation with partners | 130,574 | 0 | 130,574 |
| Access to territory | 353,138 | 0 | 353,138 |
| <i>Non-refoulement</i> | 353,691 | 0 | 353,691 |
| Subtotal | 1,191,809 | 117,206 | 1,309,015 |
| <i>Fair protection processes and documentation</i> | | | |
| Reception conditions | 1,319,799 | 0 | 1,319,799 |
| Access to asylum procedures | 567,365 | 0 | 567,365 |
| Fair and efficient status determination | 1,974,786 | 0 | 1,974,786 |
| Subtotal | 3,861,950 | 0 | 3,861,950 |
| <i>Basic needs and essential services</i> | | | |
| Basic domestic and hygiene items | 1,898,843 | 0 | 1,898,843 |
| Primary health care | 355,290 | 0 | 355,290 |
| Education | 177,109 | 0 | 177,109 |
| Services for groups with specific needs | 1,686,220 | 0 | 1,686,220 |
| Subtotal | 4,117,462 | 0 | 4,117,462 |
| <i>Durable solutions</i> | | | |
| Voluntary return | 354,636 | 0 | 354,636 |
| Rehabilitation and reintegration | 34,193 | 0 | 34,193 |
| Resettlement | 427,284 | 0 | 427,284 |
| Local integration | 306,705 | 0 | 306,705 |
| Subtotal | 1,122,818 | 0 | 1,122,818 |
| <i>External relations</i> | | | |
| Public information | 552,169 | 0 | 552,169 |
| Subtotal | 552,169 | 0 | 552,169 |
| <i>Logistics and operations support</i> | | | |
| Programme management and coordination | 1,165,483 | 29,804 | 1,195,287 |
| Subtotal | 1,165,483 | 29,804 | 1,195,287 |
| Balance of instalments with implementing partners | 282,710 | 0 | 282,710 |
| Total | 12,294,401 | 147,010 | 12,441,411 |