

# TURKEY

February 2021

Key Figures (as of 31 March 2021)

## 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, while 1.6% are hosted in temporary accommodation centres managed by DGMM.

## 429

**Refugees departed for resettlement** to seven countries, 78 per cent of whom are Syrians. UNHCR provided 547 submissions for resettlement consideration in March.

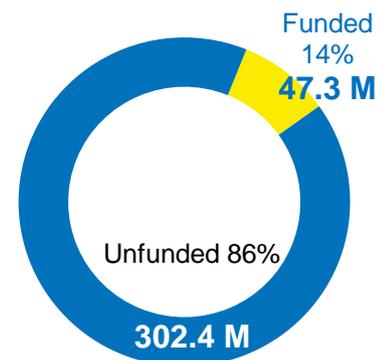
## 25,050

**Calls answered on the UNHCR Counselling line in March** with the majority of calls enquiring about resettlement opportunities followed by financial assistance.

Funding (as of 30 March 2021)

## USD 349.7 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



## Key Developments in February-March 2021

UNHCR concluded the one-off COVID-19 Emergency Cash Assistance in cooperation with DGMM and through the service provider PTT in March. By 25 March, UNHCR had reached **88,799 households** with cash payments with a collection rate of 82 per cent of the total number of households identified for the cash assistance.

UNHCR has carried out post-distribution monitoring exercises at various stages throughout the process to measure the effectiveness of the cash assistance, how it contributed to beneficiaries' needs and to better inform future CBI programmes. The final results are currently being analyzed.

UNHCR and UNDP **launched the 2021-2022 3RP Turkey Country Chapter** on 19 February with a total appeal of USD 1.03 bn. and hosting 200 representatives of government institutions, donors, UN agencies, international/national NGOs. The UN Turkey Officer in Charge, Representatives of UNHCR and UNDP, the Director General (DG) Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy DG Migration Management delivered speeches. Senior government officials recognized the importance and unique contribution of the 3RP and called for increased sustainable international support. Opening remarks were followed by presentations of the coordinated refugee response, achievements, priorities and needs for 2021-2022.

The **fifth Conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region"** took place on 30 March and was preceded by a virtual Day of Dialogue and week of side events. Turkey's Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sedat Önal and Mr. Yavuz Selim Kiran participated in Ministerial sessions; while the Deputy Minister of Family Labour and Social Services spoke at the Day of Dialogue panel on economic development and sustainable livelihoods. The Turkish Red Crescent organized a side event with IFRC before the conference. USD 4.4bn was pledged at the conference. The total UN appeal requirements are USD 10bn, for both inside Syria and the region.

## Strengthening Access to Justice

The legal clinics in Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay and Kilis provide [legal assistance](#) to persons under temporary and international protection through telephone or video calls. In March, the Sanliurfa legal clinic provided legal counselling to 120 individuals, while 190 individuals benefitted from legal assistance provided by the Gaziantep legal clinic and 184 individuals by the Hatay legal clinic. Additionally, the Kilis legal clinic provided legal assistance to 116 individuals. The clinics usually look into matters regarding international and temporary protection procedures (including registration, documentation, rejection of applications and withdrawal of decisions), matters of civil law (such as marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship), exit and re-entry procedures, family reunification and citizenship procedures.

To strengthen the provision of legal aid for refugees and asylum-seekers, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA) and UNHCR provide capacity development support to lawyers at bar associations to increase their knowledge and awareness of refugee-specific legal provisions and challenges. In March, UNHCR and UTBA organized two [international protection trainings](#) on 13 and 27 March for some 2,600 lawyers registered at Eskisehir, Sakarya, Cankiri, Istanbul, Ankara, Canakkale, Edirne, Hatay and Kilis Bar Associations. The trainings covered a wide range of topics related to international refugee law principles, temporary and international protection procedures and international protection under the Legal Framework, country of origin information, deportation and administrative detention to name only a few. Lawyers attending these trainings are included in the pool of lawyers to take up legal aid cases of international protection applicants, status holders and temporary protection beneficiaries registered through a custom developed automation system which bar associations use to submit cases which can be evaluated by a joint committee.

UNHCR held a meeting on 30 March with 18 NGO lawyers working in the Marmara region. The lawyers were from nine NGOs including ASAM, Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF), Support to Life (STL), WALD Academy and others active in Istanbul, Edirne, Kirklareli, Canakkale and Yalova. The meeting focused on trends in administrative detention procedures; trends in international protection procedures; and information on the UNHCR-UTBA project. The meeting was an opportunity for lawyers to showcase some good practices they undertake such as referral practices and methods to facilitate access of refugees to legal support. It also allowed them to voice challenges they face through their work where clients are confronted with international protection rejections, de-activation of the health insurance and other serious legal issues.

## 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. In February and March, a number of meetings took place to support refugee initiatives and work closely with the local authorities.

UNHCR organized a series of [inter-agency coordinated meetings](#) and events with the authorities dedicated to the 2021-22 [3RP roll-out](#) for stronger provincial coordination and engagement in refugee issues. Public institutions, UN agencies and civil society organizations across the different regions joined the meetings. One of these included a Mardin-specific session on the Syrians Barometer presented by Prof. M. Murat Erdoğan for the Governor of Mardin and the directors and officials of the Metropolitan Municipality and provincial directorates of Migration Management and Family Labour and Social Services.

UNHCR participated in a [District Migration coordination meeting](#) organized by the district governor of Tarsus and hosted by Tarsus Municipality. Various community stakeholders participated in the meeting and UNHCR gave a presentation on overall national asylum procedures, access to rights and services, and the rights of refugees. The meeting was publicized locally.

Distribution of material needs and hygiene kits to vulnerable populations continues across the country. In the Central Anatolian region, UNHCR continues its distributions through the local authorities, of hygiene items in 28 provinces and core relief items including mattresses and blankets in 30 provinces targeting refugees and host communities. In the Marmara region, UNHCR, through its partners, completed hygiene kit deliveries to 15 municipalities based on requests from municipal leaders. Thus, the total number of hygiene kits delivered to municipalities in the Marmara region between February and March is 42,700 kits.



UNHCR distributes hygiene kits in the Marmara region through its partners

## Social Cohesion, Education and Self-Reliance

In coordination with Mustafa Kemal University in Hatay, UNHCR organized a [Social Cohesion Forum](#) which took place for three consecutive weeks, on 16, 23 and 30 March. UNHCR delivered presentations on education, livelihoods and economic inclusion. IOM and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) also contributed to the social forum and its discussion, as did academics from Mustafa Kemal and Necmettin Erbakan universities. Participating students, 47 in total, actively discussed access to the labour market and accommodation and shared positive feedback about the forum.

UNHCR launched its [Higher Education Cash Grant](#) for the spring semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. The process is ongoing and UNHCR received over 1,700 applications in March. The applications are being reviewed to identify eligible candidates.

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. Those of a practical nature continue to take place in person such as cooking apprenticeship, computer-based technology, dry cleaning and apparel and textiles. In March, the vocational courses at eight public education centres in Ankara Bursa, Kayseri and Konya benefitted 250 individuals, 82 per cent of whom are female. The Ankara Metropolitan Municipality (AMM) Vocational Training Centre (VTC) benefitted 50 individuals, 56 per cent of whom are female through their vocational training and 83 individuals, 64 per cent of whom are female, through Turkish language programmes. The AMM VTC had resumed in-person training in February.

AMM also held [private sector consultations](#) to facilitate the employment process of the training programme graduates. In March, AMM met with companies of the services and hospitality, machine industries, food and beverage, and clothing sectors, as well as engineering companies, digital agencies and a publishing company. Since November 2020, AMM has contacted 42 companies and 56 people through its Access to the Job Market programme.

## International Women's Day



UNHCR coordinated International Women's Day (IWD) activities across the country through its field offices. The theme for 2021 was "Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World". In light of the COVID-19 restrictions, many activities were held virtually. UNHCR also supported local authorities, municipalities and NGOs across the country to organize IWD events. Activities which took place in various provinces all adhered to COVID-19 precautions and mitigation measures and were an opportunity to foster social cohesion and bring together Turkish and refugee women, men and children.

In the Central Anatolian region, IWD activities included a trip to a ski resort, a display of Afghan products and crafted items, dance performances and local music, and an exhibition of souvenirs and handcrafts made by refugee women. Other events presented local and national food and art, intermingled with public speeches, demonstrating leadership roles within the communities, and an exchange of experiences between the refugees and host community. Ankara Metropolitan Municipality organized volleyball matches involving refugee and host women. The municipality also held an exhibition of bridal dresses produced through courses taken at the International Vocational Training Centre (UMEM) with UNHCR's support in 2018. Participants of all events wore masks with the UNHCR #WithRefugees slogan printed in Turkish and many events were covered by the local press.

In Istanbul, UNHCR participated in the [Migration, Social Cohesion and Women Assemblies](#) panel of the City Council's IWD-themed workshop advocating for refugee women representation at city councils. UNHCR provided information on stakeholder coordination and responsibility for a collective refugee response, especially those of municipalities and city councils. UNHCR also underlined the importance of refugee women's participation in decision-making processes. UNHCR in Istanbul also participated in the IKS/GIZ workshop entitled "Side by Side Together! Women's Collective Memory in Refuge and Building a Common Future" and provided information on UNHCR's activities in refugee women's inclusion in the arts and culture.

### Additional Activities in March

UNHCR in Turkey organized an [experience sharing session with refugee community groups](#) in collaboration with UNHCR's Ukraine office. The session facilitated dialogue, exchange and sharing of good practices between refugee groups on several community-led initiatives. Nine diverse community groups of different nationalities, age and gender came together and presented their community projects, lessons learnt and upcoming plans they are working on. The exchange provided an opportunity for a lively discussion and was publicised on UNHCR's social media accounts.



UNHCR in Turkey continues to follow the [COVID-19 vaccine situation](#) closely. UNHCR has been following up with its partners and counselling line on the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the national vaccination programme. UNHCR has also offered support to key national institutions to assist and possibly facilitate the process. At the field level, UNHCR is liaising with the local authorities and partners to facilitate refugees' access to COVID-19 vaccination. Foreigners registered in Turkey, including refugees, have been included in the vaccination rollout.

Ahead of the [fifth Conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region"](#) on 30 March (also known as the [Brussels V Conference for Syria](#)), UNHCR and UNDP co-hosted with the EU virtual consultations with civil society. One session focussed on self-reliance and inclusive recovery, and the other on protection and assistance needs. The consultation aimed to enhance and deepen the dialogue with civil society and gather recommendations to shape the Day of Dialogue of 29 March. Over 80 participants joined the two consultations and provided rich input, both in terms of the current needs of refugees but also ideas to address protection risks and support refugees after the added socio-economic effects of COVID-19.

### Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2021

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### LINKS

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