

# TURKEY

June 2021

Key Figures (as of 30 June 2021)

## 4 million

**Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey** including over 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection and over 330,000 international protection status holders and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live across Turkey in 81 provinces, while 1.5% are hosted in seven temporary accommodation centres managed by DGMM.

## 2,792

**Refugees have departed for resettlement** to 12 countries in 2021 so far. UNHCR provided over 4,415 submissions for resettlement consideration from January to end of June 2021.

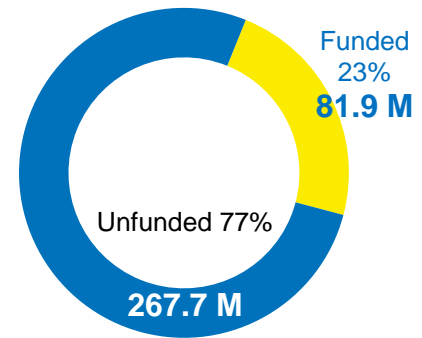
## 24,700

**Calls answered on the UNHCR Counselling Line in June** with the majority of calls enquiring about resettlement opportunities followed by financial assistance. Among those were 2,200 calls came through UNHCR's dedicated GBV line.

Funding (as of 22 June 2021)

## USD 349.7 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Online representation of students and teachers of the EBA support points established in 114 schools in 16 provinces through collaboration of the Ministry of National Education and UNHCR. ©MoNE



The Minister of National Education and UNHCR Representative at the launch of the EBA support centres ©MoNE

On 23 June, UNHCR Representative participated in the launch of the Ministry of National Education's Electronic Information Network points (EBA points) which were established in 114 schools with the support of UNHCR. The EBA support centres were set up in 16 provinces across the country and can each accommodate 15 to 20 students. UNHCR provided around 2,060 computers which were distributed in the centres, in addition to teacher support and laptops for the teachers. At the launch, the Minister of National Education, Mr. Ziya Selçuk, highlighted the support provided to students; the ministry had distributed close to one million tablets with 25 GB internet capacity to students throughout Turkey. The Minister indicated his hope that support would continue, not only as a temporary measure during the pandemic but in line with Turkey's long-term goals and vision in education.

UNHCR and the Vocational Qualifications Authority concluded a Letter of Understanding to strengthen UNHCR's support for facilitating access of individuals under temporary and international protection to the labour market by evaluating their knowledge, skills, and competencies in cooperation with the Vocational Qualifications Authority.

UNHCR organized and facilitated an online discussion platform meeting for social entrepreneurs and cooperatives in the Marmara region on 23 June. Over 60 participants from the Ministry of Industry and Technology, the World Bank, the World Fair Trade Organisation, MADE51, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, local authorities, cooperatives and social enterprises took part in the meeting. The discussion focused on unpacking the role of municipalities in strengthening cooperatives and social enterprises and presenting recommendations to increase refugee participation in the initiatives. The importance of municipal support in strengthening cooperative activities and enabling refugee participation was highlighted; as was evident through presentations given by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, and the municipalities of Sultanbeyli and Kucukcekmece on their collaborations with cooperatives. The meeting is part of a series of regional meetings within the larger context of self-reliance and the socio-economic inclusion of persons in need of international protection. The first was held in April for the Aegean region.

## World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day was marked this year by calling for greater inclusion of refugees in health, education and sport. UNHCR's core global message is that together #withrefugees we can achieve anything; with the shared experience of the pandemic showing us that we only succeed if we stand together. Together, we heal, learn and shine. In Turkey, UNHCR Representative took part in various media engagements and messages of solidarity were shared on social media from multiple media and social media channels of public institutions, organisations, partners and individuals, raising awareness and sharing information on refugees and Turkey's role as host country.



Various activities, both in person and virtually, were organised by UNHCR. The Representative participated in a tree-planting activity in collaboration with Ankara Metropolitan Municipality where he met with trainees of the International Centre for Vocational Training, which has been co-run since 2018 providing Turkish language and vocational training for persons in need of international protection and host community members. Mr. Leclerc also visited a UNHCR-supported Public Education Centre in Ankara where he met with refugee and Turkish citizens benefitting from language and skills development

training. Videos depicting these activities were produced by UNHCR and shared on social media, together with another video of a youth camp of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, thus highlighting various good practices of refugee inclusion.

On 17 June, GOAL Global hosted a virtual event named 'Home from Home: The Story of Syrian Refugees in Turkey', premiering a documentary and photo exhibition. The event included a discussion by leading experts, including UNHCR Representative, of the experience of vulnerable refugee communities in Turkey.

On 16 June, the Turkish Heritage Organization hosted a virtual discussion for World Refugee Day. During the discussion, the Representative said, "It is important to celebrate the resilience and capacity of refugees, so that all people can stand again on their feet." This is Mr. Leclerc's first World Refugee Day in Turkey since his appointment as UNHCR Representative. He said, "I am proud to work in Turkey, where we as a country take this issue responsibly with open hearts. We have the privilege of hosting the largest refugee population in the world."

Furthermore, UNHCR Turkey Deputy Representative attended a bridal exhibition held in Ankara displaying the products of persons in need of international protection and the host community who had received sewing and tailoring training through the 'Empowerment of Refugees' initiative run by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality and UNHCR Turkey. The Deputy Representative also participated in an online panel as part of the film festival, 'Unheard Stories' organised by the European Commission, featuring ten films by various directors depicting the stories and experiences of refugees in host countries.

## Engaging at the Local Level



Three workshops (virtual neighbourhood gatherings) with mukhtars for 2021 were held on 10, 15 and 22 June as part of the DGMM-UNHCR Joint Harmonization Initiative. Twenty-five mukhtars from Istanbul's Beykoz district and 10 participants from government institutions, including DGMM, Istanbul PDMM, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Family and Social Services participated in the first workshop. Around 30 mukhtars from Istanbul's Maltepe and Ataşehir districts and 22 participants from public institutions and NGOs including İŞKUR participated in the second meeting; and in the third, 52 mukhtars from Istanbul's Sile district and 78 officials from various public institutions participated. Information was shared on national policies and programs concerning international protection, social cohesion and the activities undertaken by DGMM. A discussion was held where mukhtars were able to share observations on social cohesion in their neighbourhoods as well as challenges they encounter. Overall, the meeting

highlighted the crucial role of mukhtars in ensuring refugee's access to rights and services, fostering social cohesion among communities, and coordination between relevant stakeholders.

## Missions to the Provinces of Turkey

In the first week of June, UNHCR Representative, Mr. Philippe Leclerc, travelled to the Aegean region where he paid courtesy visits to a number of officials including the governors of Izmir and Manisa, the sub-governor of Kuşadası, the mayors of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and Buca and Yunusemre District Municipalities. The Representative signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Izmir Metropolitan Municipality to expand ongoing cooperation to promote social cohesion and inclusive service provision for refugees by developing the existing Citizen Communication Centre into a multi-lingual centre with an established feedback mechanism. An LOU was also signed between UNHCR and Yunusemre District Municipality in Manisa for ongoing partnership on joint interventions and activities to promote social cohesion through community mobilization activities targeting children and youth. Mr. Leclerc stressed the importance of collaborating with municipalities to enhance social inclusion and help

vulnerable people. UNHCR also signed an LOU with Dokuz Eylül University to strengthen ongoing collaboration on joint interventions and activities.

On 10-11 June, the Representative was on mission to the southern province of Mersin where he took part in the kick-off of a football match in Tarsus district where refugee children are included in sports activities. The Representative participated in a number of engagements during the mission, including a working dinner hosted by the Tarsus District Mayor with government and NGO officials including the Tarsus District Governor to discuss potential areas of cooperation; as well as meetings with the Governor of Mersin and senior officials to discuss opportunities between UNHCR and relevant institutions to improve the protection space.



UNHCR signed an LOU with Dokuz Eylül University to strengthen ongoing collaboration on various activities ©UNHCR/E.Gürel

In Mersin, Mr. Leclerc also held a meeting with representatives of 32 local and Syrian NGOs to exchange information about their activities and capacity-building prospects. He also participated in an awareness-raising meeting with mukhtars and another with refugee representatives, both of which were carried out jointly with PDMM in the Erdemli district of Mersin. The Representative met with the Mayor and District Governor of Erdemli to discuss concrete steps to be taken to improve the protection space and strengthen social cohesion between the host community and refugees. The bilateral meetings held by Mr Leclerc during his visit to Mersin and the sports and social cohesion activities he participated in were widely covered by national and local media outlets.

The Representative also travelled to Turkey's eastern region to better understand the situation of irregular migration at the border points with Iran. Mr. Leclerc met with the governors of Van and Ağrı provinces and the district governors of Caldiran and Dogubeyazit as well as PDMM and law enforcement officials, the gendarmerie and police, in Van and Ağrı. Discussions revolved around movements at the borders, challenges experienced, and a potential framework of support which UNHCR could provide in collaboration with DGMM.



Turkish and refugee youth take part in friendly football match in Tarsus district ©UNHCR/E.Gürel

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

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