

# TURKEY

October 2020

Key Figures (as of 31 October 2020)

## 4 million

**Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey** including over 3.6 million Syrian nationals and close to 330,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live across Turkey in 81 provinces.

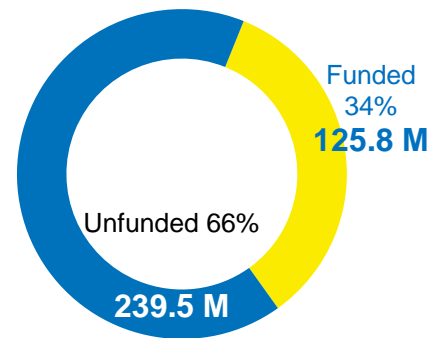
## 3,382

**Refugees departed for resettlement** in 2020 as of end of October, 77 per cent of whom are Syrians. UNHCR has so far provided over 5,633 submissions for resettlement consideration in 2020.

Funding (as of 03 November 2020)

## USD 364.8 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



### 3RP National Planning Workshop

The first National Planning Workshop of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in response to the Syria Crisis (3RP) 2021-2022 for Turkey took place virtually on 16 October with participation by representatives of the Government of Turkey, donors, national and international NGOs, and UN agencies. Following opening speeches by the UN Officer in Charge in Turkey, Representatives of UNHCR and UNDP, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a presentation by the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) on priorities, 3RP sector and inter-sector coordinators presented the outcomes of the planning consultations and outlined priorities for the plans for the forthcoming 3RP. The workshop welcomed more than 140 participants online.

In her opening speech, the Deputy Director General for Asylum, Migration and Visas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlined the importance of fair and equitable responsibility sharing, especially during COVID-19, and the need to realise pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum. The Deputy Director General underlined that the 3RP mechanism, which forms the basis of international support for Syrian refugees, had proved to be effective by making a difference in the lives of refugees and host communities the importance which Turkey attaches to the cooperation with the UN in working towards sustainable solutions to refugee crisis.

The UN Turkey Officer in Charge emphasized the importance of the planning workshop to solidify the ongoing dialogue, coordination and partnership between actors, and underlined the need for a collective response in working towards long term solutions while mitigating the worst impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UNHCR Representative outlined that the focus of the support through the 3RP remained on the evolving humanitarian and resilience needs of refugees in Turkey, on the host communities and on the institutions which responded to the needs of both and outlined, how the profound impact of COVID-19 on already vulnerable groups, including refugees, as well as on the wider socio-economic context, required to take into account new realities in terms of increased needs and vulnerabilities as well as adapted service delivery modalities.

The UNDP Representative underlined that support to Turkey remained essential not only to maintain and build on the progress achieved so far, but also to demonstrate what can be achieved with the right policy environment, strategic response and sustained donor support. This was the only way to build back better in order to deliver on global commitments, on burden-sharing with host countries and to leave no one behind.

National sector and inter-sector consultations took place in Istanbul, Izmir and South-East Turkey in September and October to inform the development of the 3RP plan for 2021-22. These were carried out with donors, international financial institutions (IFIs), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), the Union of Municipalities and civil society organizations. The consultations focused on the three cross-cutting areas of localisation, social cohesion and leaving no one behind.

### Protection and Social Cohesion

Two **regional workshops with academics** as part of the UNHCR-DGMM Joint Harmonization Initiative took place in October, one covering the South Eastern region of Turkey and the second covering the Central Anatolian region. The first meeting was attended by 19 academics from five universities who discussed the studies and projects they are conducting with refugees and shared their observations on social cohesion. Some 60 academics from 24 universities in Central Anatolia participated in the second meeting. The participants shared their views, including on the role of the media, NGOs and local administrations.



UNHCR supports the **Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MOFLSS)** by providing personnel and logistical support to 74 social service centres, three child support centres, three Provincial Directorates, as well as the Directorate General of Family and Community Services. In October, UNHCR purchased an online meeting and collaboration platform for the Directorate General of Family and Community Services and the Directorate General of Child Services to facilitate online and remote meetings and trainings. UNHCR also distributed IT equipment to 26 child institutions in Istanbul and Ankara to facilitate coordination and training in digital format.

### Communication with Communities

In October, the **UNHCR Counselling Line** responded to 18,751 calls. The majority of callers enquired about resettlement (57%) followed by financial assistance (15%), and calls were received from 72 provinces across the country but mostly from Istanbul followed by Gaziantep and Ankara. Some 2,280 calls came from the separate counselling line for individuals at risk of, or survivors of, SGBV providing both a recorded counselling message on reporting mechanisms and available support channels and services, and SGBV-related counselling through experienced operators. Out of around 990 individuals who chose to be connected to an operator for counselling, over 600 received SGBV-related counselling while around 385 were transferred to UNHCR's regular counselling line.



International Day of the Girl Child is celebrated on 11 October of every year

The **International Day of the Girl Child** was celebrated on 11 October with the theme "My Voice, Our Equal Future." UNHCR's social media channels portrayed the stories of Shangra and Bayan, two refugee girls residing in Turkey, drawing attention to their resilience, strength and commitment to education. Videos of their stories were disseminated in Turkish, English, Farsi and Arabic.

In October, UNHCR published information posts on its **digital platforms** related to a variety of topics including legal services available to refugees and asylum seekers, higher education grants, access to legal aid, the International Day of the Child with its key messages and human stories, the HES code video and SGBV key messages.

UNHCR also reached refugees through sending bulk SMS. Over 77,280 SMS were successfully sent regarding an HES code video which was developed in Arabic and Farsi to assist refugee communities to access public institutions and services.

### Engaging at the Local Level through Cultural Initiatives

For many years now, UNHCR worked with the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) on a number of activities, both local and within the umbrella of wider cultural events.

As part of the 48th Istanbul Music Festival, IKSV partnered with UNHCR for a concert of the Together Strong Voices Choir II composed of Turkish and refugee children. The choir, which performed online on 2 October, was established in February of this year with the support of the Istanbul Development Agency (İSTKA) and UNHCR in collaboration with IKSV's Alt Kat project. From March to September, the 22 choir members and their conductor met online for rehearsals. Their **digital concert** offers a multilingual repertoire celebrating the collaborative work of the children.

UNHCR also supported IKSV's Alt Kat initiative through a series of digital workshops, with the participation of refugee and host community children. The workshops took place in October and will continue in November. In October, five workshops were held, each with around 20 children from refugee and host communities aged 9-12 or 9-13. They covered sound mapping, dance and movement, environmental drawing, masks and poster design, and musical dynamics. Tutorials were uploaded on IKSV's YouTube channel with English, Arabic and Farsi subtitles.



Furthermore, the 5th Istanbul Design Biennale kicked off on 15 October. UNHCR's contribution and support of the biennale was visible through Arabic language audio applications and translation of content into Arabic; as well as technical preparation and filming of the Critical Cooking Show which is scheduled to air in December.



Preparations for the online concert by the Together Strong Voices II Choir that took place within the performances of the 48<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Music Festival ©IKSV

### Durable Solutions

As of end of October 2020, UNHCR provided over 5,633 resettlement submissions (4,625 Syrians and 1,008 refugees of other nationalities) to 18 countries; and 3,382 refugees (2,602 Syrian and 780 of other nationalities) departed for resettlement to 14 countries. Remote interviews are being undertaken by UNHCR with the support of the Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM) of Ankara, Izmir, Gaziantep and Mardin. In October, refugees departed to Sweden, Romania and France for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak. Furthermore, a selection mission from Switzerland interviewed refugees in Istanbul. This is the first in-person selection mission occurring in Turkey since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

### Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2020

USA | European Union | Germany | Japan | France | Norway | Unilever (UK) | Switzerland | CERF | Slovenia | United Kingdom | Denmark | Canada | Sweden | Finland | Spain | Ireland | Private donors

### CONTACTS

**Amira Abd El-Khalek**, Reporting Officer, Turkey, [abdelkha@unhcr.org](mailto: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](#)