

Working with Partners and Public Institutions

- Turkey continues to host the largest number of refugees in the world. UNHCR and its partners work in support of the refugee response provided by the Government of Turkey. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection and Temporary Protection Regulation provide a strong legal framework for the legal stay and access to rights and services for persons in need of international protection, including access to education, health care and social services, upon registration with the authorities.
- In supporting the refugee response in Turkey, UNHCR works in partnership with line ministries and public institutions at the national, provincial and local levels, including municipalities, international and national non-governmental organisations, United Nations sister agencies, the private sector, as well as with refugees and host communities. The Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) is UNHCR's main government counterpart in the refugee response.
- UNHCR co-leads with UNDP the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in response to the Syria crisis, and coordinates the support of partners to Turkey's refugee response to address unmet needs and to avoid duplication and gaps. UNHCR also chairs the International Protection and Migration Results Group of the Turkey 2016-2020 UN Development and Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS).

COVID-19 Response

- In March, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the adoption of necessary measures to ensure physical distancing, and in order to respond to the immediate needs of refugees and asylum seekers, UNHCR adjusted its operation and prioritized communication with communities, emergency cash assistance, and the provision of hygiene and protective items.
- UNHCR's **counselling line** operated, without interruption, in teleworking mode with 34 operators, responding to the many queries and concerns of refugees. **Communication with communities** was intensified on all digital platforms, including the Help website and the UNHCR Turkey Information Board, providing information on topics ranging from registration procedures to COVID-19 awareness messages and information on COVID-related measures and available services, in four languages. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, DGMM and other partners, UNHCR printed and disseminated multi-lingual information posters and leaflets on COVID-19 across the country as well as instructions and measures for refugees to access PDMM premises once the restrictions eased. A WhatsApp Communications Tree was created to facilitate rapid information-sharing between UNHCR and refugees through its focal points and partners, benefitting close to 11,300 receivers. Services Advisor, the inter-agency tool for refugees to search for information on service providers in their area, was improved and updated with national and local services available to refugees.
- In cooperation with DGMM, UNHCR launched a **COVID-19 emergency cash assistance** scheme, initially for 20,000 refugee households impacted by the pandemic, as a response to immediate economic hardship. The assistance is in line with the one-off cash support to vulnerable citizens of Turkey and avoids duplication with existing social safety schemes. By early September, over 20,000 households had received the cash transferred through the Turkish Postal Service (PTT) and a subsequent phase targeting 85,000 households was launched.
- UNHCR supported 28 institutions, including but not limited to DGMM, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), the Turkish Coast Guards, Gendarmerie, municipalities and governorates, with **hygiene and personal protection equipment** such as masks and gloves. Additionally, over 65,900 hygiene kits were delivered to refugees and host community members in 35 provinces and over 125,500 core relief items were delivered to six temporary accommodation centres.
- UNHCR also cooperated with local authorities, municipalities and partners across the country to identify needs, map services, provide assistance and support refugee initiatives to mobilise themselves and their communities.

Strategic Directions and Priority Activities

Promoting access to and the provision of protection

- UNHCR promotes access to and the provision of protection by working in close partnership with DGMM, the Turkish Coast Guard and Land Forces, the Gendarmerie General Command, the Ministry of Justice, and the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA), advocating for the admission of persons in need of international protection, their access to fair and efficient procedures and promoting procedural standards and safeguards, including by improving access to information and legal assistance. Cooperation with DGMM to support continuous registration and international protection procedures remains a priority.
- UNHCR supports the efforts of DGMM and its provincial directorates (PDMMs) on continuous registration by providing personnel, including interpreters, interviewers and protection staff. UNHCR is currently supporting DGMM in the implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures across the country.
- As part of the cooperation, DGMM and UNHCR have been working on an online appointment system which was launched in June. The appointment system enables international protection applicants and status-holders to book online for various procedures at PDMMs including updating personal data, renewal of ID cards and requesting travel permits. The appointment system has helped to facilitate the processing at PDMMs and to enhance COVID-19 measures.
- UNHCR supports four legal clinics which provide legal assistance and legal information to refugees. During the COVID-19 restrictions, the legal clinics resorted to phone and video conferencing to provide legal assistance, suspending information dissemination or outreach activities. Legal clinics have now resumed their in-person legal assistance.
- UNHCR is also working closely with the Justice Academy to establish a framework of cooperation to find solutions for legal problems faced by refugees in the fields of private law, criminal law and administrative law in Turkey. A training cooperation protocol was signed in May.

Strengthening protection and access to quality services for refugees with specific needs

- UNHCR supports strengthening protection and access to quality services for refugees with specific needs by focusing on child protection services (in particular for unaccompanied or separated children), the prevention and response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, as well as social services for persons with specific needs. UNHCR actively engages with line ministries and institutions at the national, provincial, municipal and local levels, in particular with the **Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS)** and its social service centres, as well as with civil society partners to support the identification, referral and response to refugees with specific needs.
- UNHCR provides personnel and logistic support to MoFLSS, including 76 Social Service Centres, two child support centres and two violence prevention and monitoring centres. UNHCR and partners keep in close contact with refugees, including by telephone or online to provide information, awareness-raising and counselling, while continuing to identify, refer, and process protection cases. UNHCR also assists over 10,000 persons with specific needs and protection concerns with **cash for protection assistance**.

Promoting social cohesion and harmonisation

- DGMM and UNHCR cooperate closely to implement **social cohesion and harmonisation interventions** aimed at encouraging dialogue and interaction between refugees, host communities and service providers. Social cohesion initiatives and engagement events, which were suspended in the past months, are now being redesigned to reach out to refugees and host community members through alternative modalities. Prior to COVID-19, some 1,700 refugees, NGOs, academics and local authorities had participated in awareness-raising events on social cohesion.
- UNHCR's field teams have supported **small scale initiatives** such as soap and mask production with the participation of both refugee and host community members. By the end of August, 12 initiatives had been directly supported by UNHCR in the Anatolian region, in Hatay and in Istanbul.

Working towards durable solutions

- UNHCR promotes and prepares for durable solutions for refugees. This entails working with public institutions, particularly İŞKUR, the Turkish Employment Agency, private companies and development actors to improve refugees' access to self-reliance opportunities. UNHCR works closely with the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) with regards to higher education and language training for higher education preparation. UNHCR also processes cases of individuals with the most acute vulnerabilities and protection risks for resettlement purposes; advocates for safe complementary pathways such as family reunification; and monitors the voluntary nature of spontaneous returns in cooperation with DGMM.
- The COVID-19 situation significantly affected both processing for **resettlement** and **monitoring of voluntary returns**. For resettlement, remote interviewing measures were set in place and interviews resumed in June. By the end of August, UNHCR had provided close to 5,000 refugee submissions for 2020 and 2,220 refugees departed for resettlement to 12 countries. Resettlement departures from Turkey restarted in July. The total number of voluntary return interviews observed by UNHCR in 2020 by end of August is close to 8,900 individuals, with voluntary repatriation procedures having resumed in June.
- To enhance the **self-reliance** of refugees, UNHCR provides financial and administrative support to refugees through its partners to obtain work permits and open businesses. UNHCR supports İŞKUR through interpreters who have helped to register over 7,000 refugees in their database as job seekers and provided counselling services to over 8,600 refugees, and through the procurement of a software system to match job seekers to employers. Refugees continue to benefit from soft skills and entrepreneurship training, vocational courses and Turkish language courses, most of which have transferred to online platforms. Eight Public Education Centres (PEC) are also being renovated and refurbished for vocational and lifelong skills training.
- With regards to **higher education**, and in cooperation with YTB, UNHCR currently facilitates and supports 566 DAFI scholars and 83 active students through its scholarship programme encompassing both Syrian students and students of other nationalities. UNHCR developed a coaching and mentoring toolkit to be used by university advisors as a counselling tool for refugees who are struggling academically or socially. The toolkit proved especially useful during the COVID-19 period. By working closely with the Ministry of National Education, UNHCR has supported PECs with human resources and material assistance to facilitate delivery of services to refugees and the host community. Turkish language classes currently benefit 750 refugees.

Increasing multi-stakeholder support to the refugee response

- UNHCR has prioritized multi-stakeholder support to the refugee response by engaging with a range of partners, including development actors and the private sector, and by strengthening coordination with UN and civil society partners.
- UNHCR worked with **3RP partners** to develop the 3RP Partner Support Appeal to Turkey's Response to COVID-19 which was launched in May. A subsequent Turkey Consolidated 3RP-COVID Appeal for 2020 combining both the 3RP requirements and the COVID-19 related requirements in the sectors of protection, food security and agriculture, education, health, basic needs and livelihoods was completed in June. The appeal amounted to a consolidated USD 1.3 billion, including USD 163 million to address the immediate impact of COVID-19. The consolidated appeal fed into the Global Humanitarian Response Plan and was presented at the virtual Brussels IV Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region at the end of June.
- **Public information** material is regularly disseminated through UNHCR's social media channels, as are positive refugee and host community stories, and social cohesion initiatives. World Refugee Day was marked virtually through online events and solidarity messages on social media by over 30 mayors across Turkey.
- A data portal of **Good Practices in the Refugee Response** in Turkey was launched in June 2020 and provides information on good practices initiated by public institutions and national and international organisations in Turkey in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees. A number of good practices on mitigating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on refugees have also been added to the portal.

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