

Turkey



Working environment

The context

UNHCR's operations in Turkey are shaped by the Government's decision to maintain the "geographic limitation" which restricts its obligation under the 1951 Refugee Convention to people uprooted by events in Europe. Until a national asylum system for non-Europeans seeking international protection is established, UNHCR will continue to conduct refugee status determination (RSD) under its mandate. Turkey nevertheless provides non-European refugees with temporary asylum, pending UNHCR's efforts to secure their resettlement.

Turkey's candidacy for membership of the European Union (EU) also continues to influence UNHCR's operations in the country. The Government has committed itself to implement the EU *Acquis* on asylum, migration, border monitoring and human rights.

A "National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU *Acquis* in the Field of Migration and Asylum" provides a roadmap for the development of a comprehensive asylum system. The plan includes the creation of a specialized agency for asylum and migration, a regional network of reception centres and other measures for the protection of refugees and solutions to their plight. It

sets 2012 as the target for eliminating the geographical limitation to the 1951 Convention, thus providing a time frame for the phase out of UNHCR's direct operational role in Turkey.

Turkey lies along major migration routes leading from Africa, South and South-West Asia and the Middle East into Europe. The complex nature of contemporary migratory movements poses a particular challenge for the Government. The authorities intercept tens of thousands of irregular undocumented migrants each year as they attempt to transit through the country, usually with the assistance of human smugglers or in the hands of traffickers. Many originate from countries mired in conflict and civil war, and are clearly in a refugee-like situation. A large number are African asylum-seekers who approach UNHCR without any resources and in need of emergency assistance and medical treatment.

Progress on the voluntary repatriation of approximately 13,000 Turkish refugees still in Iraq depends on the improvement of the security environment in the country. Only then will UNHCR and its partners be able to assess their intentions and initiate information sharing and confidence-building activities. The success of voluntary repatriation is also tied to the security situation and socio-economic conditions in the area of return in eastern Turkey.

The needs

In the absence of a fully established national asylum system, UNHCR has to continue to conduct refugee status determination under its mandate, exercise an intensive protection and monitoring role, find solutions for those recognized as refugees, mainly through resettlement, and provide basic assistance and essential services during their temporary stay in Turkey. Whereas some medical needs are met by the public sector, most non-European refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey live on the brink of destitution, and despite being remarkably resilient, depend on the assistance provided by UNHCR.

The Government has designated the Social Services and Child Protection Institutions to support with their network of social workers and institutions the welfare of refugees and asylum-seekers (particularly women and children). In order to help fulfil these responsibilities effectively, UNHCR provides specialized training and, through its Gender and Children Team as a steering group, supports the expansion of the social counselling network to the provincial cities where most refugees and asylum-seekers live.

Of particular concern to UNHCR are those Iranian refugees who entered Turkey from Iraq. These refugees have very limited prospects for resettlement, for return to their first country of asylum or for repatriation. Due to the limited integration perspectives and their material hardship, these refugees are in need of UNHCR's assistance.

Total requirements: USD 6,716,171
(Annual programme only. The financial requirements for the supplementary programme are being finalized.)

Main objectives

UNHCR's 2007 programme in Turkey has two components. The first is an annual programme covering the Office's objective to strengthen asylum in Turkey and find solutions for refugees, besides providing them their



UNHCR has arranged a play area for children of asylum-seekers to wait while their parents put forward their claims. *UNHCR Ankara.*

basic needs. The second component is a programme under the Iraq supplementary budget that will provide assistance to Iranian refugees, who had previously sought refuge in Iraq, and will support the reintegration of Turkish refugees currently in Iraq if they opt to repatriate.

Annual programme

- Support the establishment of a new legal framework to provide refugees with effective access to international protection as Turkey moves towards lifting the geographical limitation to the 1951 Convention.
- Develop institutional arrangements for RSD supported by a dedicated cadre of specialists in asylum issues.
- Explore the possibilities for local integration of refugees in Turkey. This would entail legislative reforms and programmes to promote economic self-reliance and social inclusion.
- Build new partnerships with civil society to ensure that national NGOs, foundations, universities, bar associations and other actors play a role as service providers for refugees and asylum-seekers and as advocates for their protection.
- Work to establish a framework agreement that will permit the voluntary return of Turkish refugees from Iraq.

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Islamic Rep. of Iran	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350
	Various	760	760	760	760
Asylum-seekers	Iraq	2,500	2,500	2,000	2,000
	Islamic Rep. of Iran	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,700
	Various	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Returnees (refugees)		50	50	500	500
Total		8,860	8,860	8,810	8,810

Supplementary programme

- Provide basic material assistance to the Iranian refugees who entered Turkey from Iraq.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Turkish refugees in safety and dignity and support their reintegration as required.

Key targets for 2007

Annual programme

- The backlog of asylum applications is reduced by 20 per cent.
- The Government is assisted to enact new asylum legislation that permits the local integration of refugees.
- 1,700 refugees are resettled in third countries.
- 1,000 non-European refugees and asylum-seekers are provided with financial assistance.
- Scheduled RSD and resettlement interviews are conducted every month for an average of 110 refugees and asylum-seekers who are provided local travel allowances.

Supplementary programme

- A subsistence allowance is provided to all vulnerable Iranian refugees who entered Turkey from Iraq.
- An estimated 450 Turkish refugees are repatriated from Iraq.

working to increase the engagement of government institutions and civil society groups in supporting refugees and asylum-seekers. The Government has been requested to play a bigger role in providing services to asylum-seekers when UNHCR discontinues routine medical, education and shelter support for them in 2007.

Finally, UNHCR will encourage Turkey to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Constraints

Delays or obstacles in EU membership negotiations might negatively affect the aligning of the asylum system to the EU *Acquis* and to international standards. Reception facilities and processes might not develop on time, and the procedural and institutional framework for RSD might not be established by 2012.

The inability to secure additional resources or delays in the handover of assistance responsibilities to the authorities might result in an insufficient provision of basic needs to refugees and asylum-seekers, and as a consequence, create social hardship.

The continuing uncertainty over Iraq's nation building and its weakening security situation might create major population movements to Turkey, which will be an additional challenge for Turkey and UNHCR in terms of protection, durable solutions and assistance responses.

Strategy and activities

While the involvement of the Government and civil society groups in UNHCR's operational activities will gradually increase during the transition period, the Office will retain its core responsibility for ensuring that individual non-European refugees and asylum-seekers are protected and assisted. To help streamline asylum procedures, UNHCR will continue to provide advanced "on-the-job" training in RSD to government officials.

Resettlement opportunities for non-European refugees will be pursued as a protection and responsibility-sharing tool. At the same time, UNHCR will encourage resettlement countries to adopt more flexible selection criteria in terms of nationalities and case profiles. UNHCR is confident that when conditions are conducive to their return, some of the Turkish refugees in Iraq will repatriate. UNHCR estimates some 450 refugees may opt to repatriate in 2007 with UNHCR's logistical and material assistance.

The organization will meet the basic subsistence needs of non-European refugees and asylum-seekers while also

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

Number of offices	4
Total staff	67
International	6
National	53
UNVs	4
JPOs	3

Coordination

UNHCR's office in Turkey will continue its coordination, training and capacity-building activities with the relevant government agencies including the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate for Security, Gendarme General Command, Coast Guard General Command, Turkish Land Forces, Ministry of Justice and the Social Services and Child Protection Institutions. UNHCR will also promote closer cooperation between the Government and

civil society by providing opportunities for dialogue, besides engaging government institutions and national NGOs and foundations in joint operational activities. UNHCR will participate with the UN Country Team in the UN Development Assistance Framework process.

Partners

Implementing partners

NGOs: Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants, Human Resources Development Foundation, International Catholic Migration Commission.

Operational partners

Government: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for Consular Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Gendarmerie General Command, General Directorate of Security, Social Services and Child Protection Institutions.

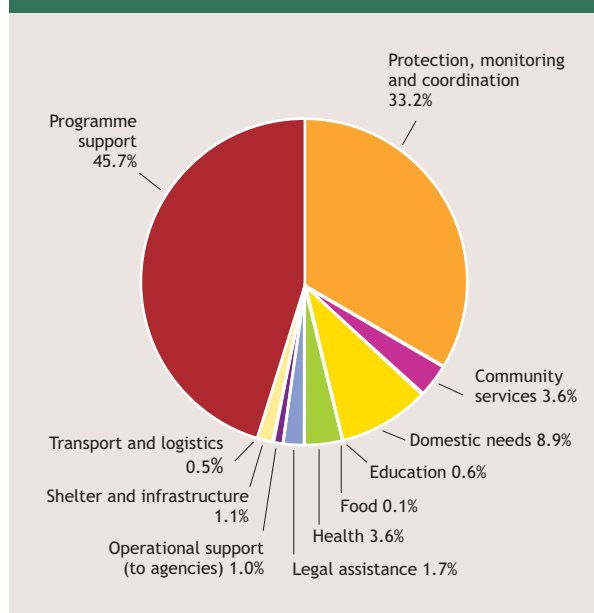
NGOs: Bar Associations of Turkey, Caritas, Human Rights Centre and Women's Community Centre (Van), Refugee Legal Aid Program of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly.

Others: Bilgi University, (Istanbul), Hacettepe University School of Social Work, IOM, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkish Red Crescent Society, United Nations Country Team.

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Protection, monitoring and coordination	2,346,404	3,558,097
Community services	250,850	27,775
Domestic needs	632,000	568,501
Education	41,000	0
Food	6,550	0
Health	252,000	0
Legal assistance	121,600	505,055
Operational support (to agencies)	73,000	67,454
Shelter and infrastructure	80,000	0
Transport and logistics	33,000	23,215
Total operations	3,836,404	4,750,097
Programme support	3,229,117	1,966,074
Total	7,065,521	6,716,171

2006 Annual Programme Budget by sector



2007 Annual Programme Budget by sector

