

Turkey



Working environment

The context

Turkey, while party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, maintains the geographical limitation only to people originating from Europe. Despite this limitation, it provides non-European refugees with protection and temporary asylum, pending UNHCR's search for durable solutions elsewhere.

UNHCR has a direct and operational role advising the Government on the protection of individual non-European asylum-seekers. It works with the Turkish authorities to ensure that asylum-seekers reach safety, are not detained, subject to *refoulement* and have access to the procedures for temporary asylum. The Office conducts refugee status determination (RSD) for non-European asylum-seekers, resettling identified refugees.

By the end of July 2007, the number of registered asylum seekers in Turkey (more than 4,000) was almost twice as high as at the same time the previous year. Some 40 per cent of them were from Iraq. It is estimated that there are also more than one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country.

Mixed movements of migrants and asylum-seekers into and across Turkey pose a particular challenge for the Government, as the country lies along migratory routes leading from Africa, South Asia and the Middle East to Europe. The authorities intercept tens of thousands of irregular migrants every year, many originating from countries affected by conflict and civil war. Furthermore, a rising number of asylum-seekers and migrants from Africa are arriving on Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

UNHCR's operations in Turkey are further influenced by the country's candidate status to the European Union (EU). The Government has committed itself to implement EU laws and practices on asylum and in related areas, such as migration, border management and human rights.

A National Action Plan on Migration and Asylum, approved by the Government in April 2005, 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. It also envisages the lifting of the geographical limitation to the 1951 Convention by 2012, providing a timeframe for phasing out UNHCR's operational role in Turkey.

Some 10,000 Turkish refugees remain in Iraq. Their voluntary repatriation will require an improvement of the security environment in Iraq in order for UNHCR and its partners to initiate information-sharing and confidence-building activities.

In recent years, Turkey has emerged as a donor to UNHCR.

The needs

Faced with resource limitations, UNHCR has reduced direct assistance to meet the basic needs of asylum-seekers and refugees. While refugees' medical needs are met by Turkey's public health sector and some local charity organizations provide additional assistance, many refugees live on the brink of destitution. The Office will support extremely vulnerable individuals in emergency situations and initiate a limited number of self-reliance activities. To strengthen public and civil-society support, UNHCR increased its outreach to all the provincial cities where refugees and asylum-seekers live and provide vocational training and counselling.

Of particular concern to UNHCR are Iranian refugees who entered Turkey from Iraq. These refugees have limited prospects for durable solutions. Due to limited integration opportunities in Turkey, they face significant hardship.

Total requirements
2008: USD 5,535,009
2009: USD 6,059,897

Main objectives

UNHCR's programme in Turkey has two components. The annual programme seeks to strengthen asylum, find solutions for refugees and provide support to the most vulnerable to meet their basic needs. The second component is a programme under the Iraq supplementary budget to address the protection and assistance needs of people who have fled Iraq, including support for durable solutions.

Annual programme

- Foster collaboration with the relevant authorities for the establishment of an asylum system corresponding to the Turkish *National Action Plan on Migration and Asylum* by building on UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of Action for the protection of people of concern within mixed migration flows.

- Enhance institutional capacity for RSD and build administrative capacity for reception through on-the-job training for officials.
- Facilitate protection, durable solutions and social support for Iraqi and Iranian refugees and other people of concern to UNHCR. This includes improving access at Turkish entry points through monitoring and creating effective protection networks of Government and civil-society partners.
- Promote the local integration of refugees in Turkey.

Supplementary programme

- Provide basic material assistance to persons who have fled Iraq and are in need of protection.
- Respond to the durable-solution needs of Iraqi refugees, including when appropriate submitting applications to resettlement countries.
- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Turkish refugees in safety and dignity and support their reintegration as required.

Key targets for 2008 and 2009

Annual programme

- Up to 3,000 of the most vulnerable recognized refugees will receive limited subsistence support.
- The Office will undertake RSD for up to 3,000 asylum-seekers each year.
- The waiting period between application submission and final decision will be reduced to nine months, a significant improvement over the current waiting period, which is often more than a year.
- 2,000 recognized refugees are resettled each year.
- Operational partners, including officials, undertake joint visits to places where there may be persons of concern, which promotes cooperation and increased understanding among officials of their RSD responsibilities.

Supplementary programme

- Up to 7,000 of the most vulnerable recognized Iraqi refugees will receive a nominal subsistence allowance to meet basic needs.
- The Office will undertake RSD for up to 900 Iraqi asylum-seekers each year.
- About 2,000 recognized Iraqi refugees will be resettled each year.
- The quality of resettlement submissions to governments will remain high, resulting in a 90 per cent acceptance rate.

Strategy and activities

UNHCR will foster collaboration with various partners and counterparts to strengthen international protection in Turkey. For the time being, the Office will retain its responsibility for the RSD of individual non-European asylum-seekers. UNHCR will continue its advisory efforts in RSD matters for its respective State counterparts.

As the Government of Turkey intends to complete its action plan on asylum by 2012, by which time UNHCR should cease its operational involvement, the Office will promote the integration of refugees and strengthen support and self-reliance networks for them.

Resettlement will remain the principal durable solution for approximately 3,900 recognized refugees.

Constraints

UNHCR will require additional funds to respond to growing demands for expert advice and maintain its essential protection, assistance and solutions programmes.

Lack of human resources and budgetary limits increase the backlog of applications and waiting periods for asylum-seekers.

The prevailing instability of countries neighbouring Turkey may affect the access of people in need of international protection to fair and efficient asylum procedures.



UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Muazzez Ersoy feeds a young boy at a lunch she hosted for refugee families in the Turkish capital, Ankara.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

	2008	2009
Number of offices	4	4
Total staff	66	64
International	6	6
National	51	49
UNVs (National)	5	5
JPOs	4	4

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2008		Dec 2008 / Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Islamic Republic of Iran	2,350	2,350	2,500	2,500	2,750	2,750
	Iraq	4,000	4,000	7,000	7,000	8,000	8,000
	Various	460	460	560	560	660	660
Asylum-seekers	Islamic Republic of Iran	2,500	2,500	3,000	3,000	3,500	3,500
	Iraq	800	800	900	900	1,000	1,000
	Various	2,000	2,000	2,300	2,300	2,600	2,600
Returnees (refugees)		1,000	1,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Others of concern	Various	310	-	310	-	310	-
Total		13,410	13,110	21,560	21,260	23,810	23,510

Coordination

UNHCR's offices in Turkey will continue coordination, training and capacity-building activities with many partners including the Ministry of the Interior, the General Directorate for Security, Gendarmerie General Command, Coast Guard General Command, Turkish Land Forces, Ministry of Justice, and social-service and child-protection institutions. The Office will seek to promote closer collaboration between State authorities and civil society and enhance dialogue between State, academic and international-protection institutions. UNHCR will participate in the UN Country Team and the UN Development Assistance Framework.

Partners

Implementing partners

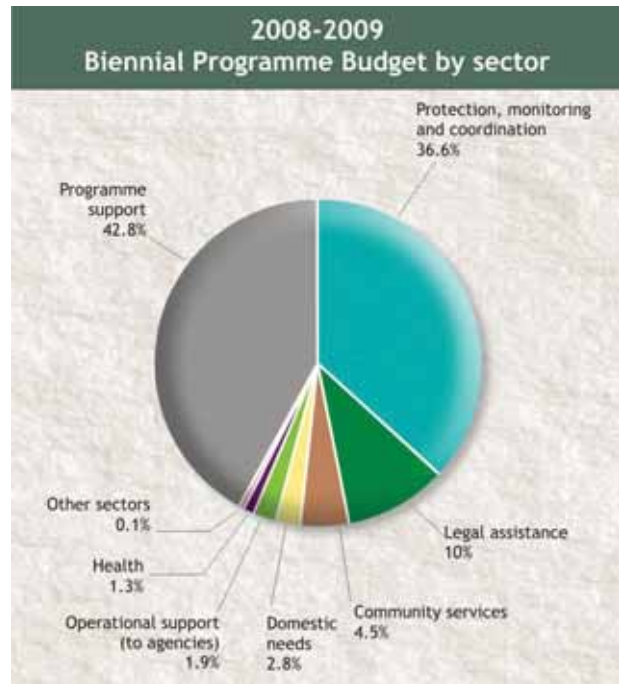
NGOs: Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants, Human Resources Development Foundation.

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), International Catholic Migration Commission, 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	2007			2008	2009
	Annual Programme Budget	Supp. Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	3,558,097	169,950	3,728,047	1,836,729	2,412,060
Community services	27,775	0	27,775	255,507	267,246
Domestic needs	568,501	475,200	1,043,701	200,000	120,290
Education	0	65,000	65,000	0	0
Health	0	246,000	246,000	74,817	72,417
Legal assistance	505,055	145,000	650,055	549,459	611,589
Operational support (to agencies)	67,454	14,800	82,254	101,347	116,435
Transport and logistics	23,215	80,000	103,215	10,870	3,623
Total operations	4,750,097	1,195,950	5,946,047	3,028,729	3,603,660
Programme support	1,966,074	293,671	2,259,745	2,506,279	2,456,238
Total	6,716,171	1,489,621	8,205,792	5,535,009	6,059,897

Note: The Supplementary Programme Budget excludes a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.