

# UNHCR promotes skill development of Syrian refugees to enhance employability in Türkiye and upon return home.

One of the most effective ways for refugees to restore their lives with dignity and peace is through the opportunity to work and earn a living. Being able to work and utilise their skills and talents allows refugees to contribute to their host communities and help rebuild their homeland upon voluntary return.



*Vocational workshops, including ceramics, textiles, and culinary arts, supported by UNHCR to enhance the skills of refugees and host community members.*

## Highlights

- On 14 August, the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) announced that **411,649 Syrians have returned** to their country safely and voluntarily, since the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024. According to the registration figures of PMM as of 7 August, **2,555,560 Syrians live in Türkiye** under Temporary Protection (TP).
- During July and August, UNHCR conducted field visits to Public Education Centres (PEC) in Sancaktepe, Zeytinburnu, Kağıthane and Esenyurt. In these four PECs in Istanbul province, UNHCR has established vocational workshops on culinary arts, bakery, textile, ceramics, hairdressing, dry-cleaning and toy-carpentry for refugees and host community members. Most of the participants who have completed the course secured employment in small-scale workshops and advanced toward self-reliance. As part of its collaboration with Ministry of National Education, UNHCR supported the renovation of 90 vocational workshop facilities in 38 PECs across 21 provinces in recent years.

In addition to the language barrier, the lack of childcare facilities remains a major obstacle preventing women from attending the vocational courses. UNHCR solicits enhanced engagement from private and public sector donors to address the challenges.

# Recent Developments

## National

UNHCR Representative Ms Angela Li Rosi undertook a mission to Niğde from 28 to 29 July 2025, in the context of the 5<sup>th</sup> Niğde Summer Festival, organized in collaboration among Niğde Municipality, UNHCR, relevant public institutions, and local NGOs, following an official invitation from the Municipality. During the visit, the Representative met with Governor Mr. Cahit Çelik and Mayor Mr. Emrah Özdemir to discuss ongoing cooperation in fostering social cohesion between host and refugee communities.



*UNHCR Representative met with the Governor of Niğde.*

The Representative also participated in the festival activities, engaging with both refugee and host communities and emphasizing the value of inclusive, community-based initiatives in strengthening social ties. The festival offered a range of traditional and recreational activities, including darts, horseback riding, archery, and traditional wrestling. It was a unique example of public–NGO collaboration, attracting 2,000 participants from Niğde, Kayseri, Nevşehir, Kırşehir, and Aksaray, that generated positive local visibility and reinforced community engagement. The 5<sup>th</sup> Niğde Summer Festival is an example of inclusive cultural events that help strengthen a sense of community and mutual understanding.

## Regional

On 31 July, the Ministry of National Education in Türkiye initiated a [cooperation protocol](#) between Türkiye and Syria aimed at supporting the reconstruction process in Syria through the education sector. Under this protocol, Türkiye will organise teacher training programs in Syria, while Syria will facilitate work visas and residence permits for Turkish educators and their families. Furthermore, fieldwork has commenced to establish a Turkish school in Aleppo, with plans to update the Syrian curriculum and the creation of a joint education working group. These steps aim to strengthen educational cooperation and contribute to the rebuilding of Syria's educational infrastructure.

On 2 August, scheduled flights between Istanbul and Aleppo resumed after 13 years, with Turkish Airlines operating on this route and plans to expand services, while AJet launched daily flights from Sabiha Gökçen Airport to Aleppo on 4 August.

## Global

On 10 August, the UN Security Council [reaffirmed](#) its commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity, while condemning interference in the country's transition. It criticised all forms of harmful or disruptive interference in Syria's political, security, and economic transformation, warning that such actions threaten stability. The statement called on all nations to avoid any action that could destabilise Syria further. Additionally, the council expressed serious concern about the July incidents in the southern Suwayda region and strongly condemned the escalation of violence there.



# Protection-Assistance & Advocacy

## Communicating with Communities

UNHCR Türkiye engages with refugee and asylum-seeker communities through its four dedicated communication platforms, i.e. **HELP** website, **Facebook Information Board** and two WhatsApp groups (in Arabic and Farsi). Through these platforms, UNHCR shares a wide range of informative and awareness-raising content on various topics, including earthquakes, fire safety, civil documentation matters related to voluntary return, sexual exploitation and abuse, anti-fraud awareness, and UNHCR's official communication channels.



Examples of awareness raising materials.

In addition, in July, a total of 704 posters and 32,440 flyers, aimed at raising awareness, facilitating easy access to official communication channels and combat misinformation, were dispatched to UNHCR field offices and local NGOs for nationwide distribution.

## Protection and Access to Services

During July, UNHCR Türkiye Counselling Line responded to **32,104 calls** from 77 provinces. UNHCR counselled and intervened in **921 cases** involving administrative detention and negative government decisions on asylum applications. Furthermore, UNHCR continued to provide in-kind assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees. A total of **95 individuals** were referred to medical support, primarily those with inactive health insurance who were facing severe health conditions. A total of **383 individuals** were referred for transportation assistance to attend resettlement interviews.

## Access to Territory and Asylum Procedures

On 1 July, UNHCR supported the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) Partnership for Peace Programme Centre in Ankara on their Border Security and Management Training Program by facilitating sessions on human rights and refugee rights in particular, in the context of cross-border population movement. The session was attended by 25 officers from 12 countries. UNHCR has been facilitating the session twice a year for over five years.

From 5 to 6 August, UNHCR conducted a field visit to Kayseri and, within the framework of the signed letter of understanding with Abdullah Gül University, delivered a half-day information session for around 50 Erasmus exchange students from Spain, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. The session focused on the current migration and asylum context in Türkiye, and UNHCR's response. Since 2021, UNHCR has been partnering with Abdullah Gül University on key thematic areas, including information sharing, joint trainings on refugee rights, academic research, and other similar initiatives.

## Legal Aid and Legal Assistance

In July, UNHCR and the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA) conducted joint multifunctional team missions to legal clinics (LCs) in six provinces, i.e. Van, Malatya, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis and Hatay. The team monitored their achievements in the first half of 2025, exchanged views on observed challenges in the field, and reviewed the plans of the clinics for the rest of the year. From January to July 2025, these six LCs provided legal assistance to **4,517** refugees and asylum-seekers (including **860** individuals in removal centres and temporary accommodation centres) for **6,827** cases. In addition, the legal clinics reached out to 147 people, including refugees from Syria and Afghanistan, through awareness-raising sessions.





# Support for Solutions

## Voluntary Returns

Currently, UNHCR monitors voluntary returns at 23 Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM) offices in 22 provinces and at six border crossings in the south-east of Türkiye. UNHCR is also present at İstanbul and Sabiha Gökçen Airports in İstanbul and at Esenboğa Airport in Ankara. Voluntary returns from Adana Sarıçam and Malatya Beydağı Temporary Accommodation Centres are also being monitored on an ad hoc basis - when UNHCR is informed and invited for monitoring by PDMM.

## Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

On 8 August, UNHCR organised an information session for personnel of the Sustainable Employment Centre of Buca Municipality. UNHCR briefed the participants on work permits for individuals under International and Temporary Protection, exemptions for seasonal agricultural and husbandry work, the process for Syrians to self-apply for work permit exemptions through the E-state, occupations restricted for foreigners, and the penalties and sanctions for employers hiring employees without work permits.

On 13 August, UNHCR Representative Ms. Angela Maria Li Rosi met with Mr. Mahmut Arslan, President of HAK-İŞ, one of the largest trade union confederations in Türkiye, with nearly 675,000 members, to discuss enhanced cooperation on refugee livelihoods and social cohesion. UNHCR Representative commended HAK-İŞ's longstanding engagement on migration, including its early outreach to Syrian trade union counterparts and commitment to a human-rights-based approach to all migrants. She emphasised the importance of joint initiatives to expand formal employment opportunities, prevent labour exploitation, and support the sustainable integration of refugees and host communities. HAK-İŞ highlighted current projects addressing refugee employment and social inclusion, as well as research on Syrians with work permits. UNHCR and HAK-İŞ reaffirmed their shared commitment to work together to advance decent work, equality, and dignity for all refugees in Türkiye.



Meetings between UNHCR and HAK-İŞ in Ankara on 13 August. Photo courtesy: HAK-İŞ

## Inter-Agency Coordination

On 1 August, UNHCR convened a coordination meeting with over 40 participants representing UN agencies and international and national NGOs to present the appeal / needs under the 2025 update of the 3RP Türkiye Chapter, including the Return Addendum. The meeting provided a platform to discuss emerging needs, response capacities, and donor priorities for the remainder of 2025 and into 2026. Partners emphasized the importance of continued inter-sectoral coordination, engagement with PMM on voluntary return, and high-level advocacy to sustain international support and protect asylum space in Türkiye.

### Funding Information

UNHCR is grateful for generous contributions from its donors, who have provided both earmarked and flexible funding to support its operations in Türkiye (as of 31 July 2025).

### US\$ 280 million

UNHCR requested for the operation in Türkiye for 2025.

