

TURKEY

January 2019

Key Figures as of 31 January 2019

4 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey, including over 3.6 million Syrian nationals and close to 400,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities

2,153

Refugees submitted for resettlement consideration to 11 different countries in January 2019

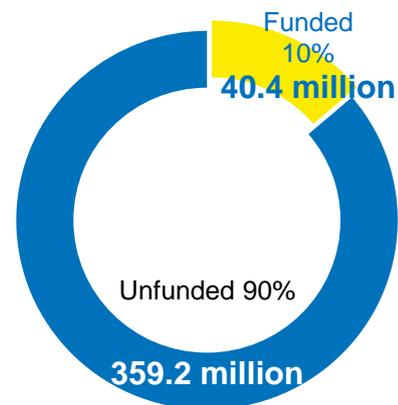
2,270

calls received and refugees counselled by the Refugee Counselling Call Centre in Sanliurfa enrolled in January 2019

FUNDING (AS OF 22 JANUARY 2019)

USD 399.6 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Update on the key developments in January 2019

The Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) expands its engagement and **cooperation on harmonisation** following a series of participatory assessments in 2018 with refugee and host community leaders on the challenges and opportunities of social cohesion, and the Government's preparation of a **National Action Plan** and a **Harmonization Strategy Paper** which will be priorities for 2019. The results of the assessments were presented to the local authorities and recommendations to strengthen inter-action and social cohesion drawn. The action plan envisages closer coordination among service providers to increase the quality of services offered to foreigners, as well as improve information-sharing with communities to support social cohesion and overcome misperceptions.

As part of the efforts to pursue **Alternatives to Camps**, post-relocation monitoring of refugees who were assisted in relocating to host communities from closed or decongested Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) was undertaken. The monitoring **questionnaire** is administered through phone interviews of 500 households and follow-up **household visits** are planned, jointly with the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM).

In January, UNHCR completed a series of **focus group discussions** (FGDs) in 11 provinces on communication channels and tools, and on information about individual status and situation in Turkey. These FGDs complement the data gained through the **nationwide CwC survey**, carried out in late 2018 with some 5,000 respondents from the refugee communities across Turkey. The survey and the FGDs give refugees the opportunity to voice their opinions and suggest solutions.

Specifically, key findings supported the need to continue working towards increasing refugees' knowledge of their rights and obligations. In addition, the survey and FGDs confirmed the widespread use of smartphones and social media in the different refugee communities. These findings will allow UNHCR to further refine and target its communications interventions.

Promote access to and support the provision of protection

Protection sensitive border management and cooperation with border actors

As part of the on-going **cooperation with the Gendarmerie General Command (GGC)**, the third training for Gendarmerie staff took place in January with the participation of 36 GGC field personnel, two representatives of the Turkish land forces staff, one representative of the Turkish coast guard and one staff of the General Directorate of Security. In response to observed knowledge gaps, the training covered the international and national legal framework for refugees, access to protection within the scope of mixed migratory movements, identification of persons with protection needs, and national referral mechanisms.

Support to registration, verification and development of the national asylum system

To strengthen international protection procedures in Turkey, DGMM renewed the request for **UNHCR to provide on-the-job mentoring and coaching** considering the positive impact so far. As a result, UNHCR observed 44 interviews at the Ankara International Protection Bureau (known as the Decision Centre), using checklists, and engaging in case discussions with Decision Centre staff. UNHCR's presence at the Ankara Decision Centre is ongoing. Marked improvements have been noted in the quality of interviews, the provision of information to applicants, as well as the use of interviewing techniques. In addition, two sessions on **interviewing techniques** were attended by some 35 DGMM and PDMM personnel to provide recommendations and an opportunity to practicing their implementation.

Access to legal counselling and legal assistance

In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, **staff in Turkish national courts** are taking part in capacity development activities to increase their knowledge and awareness of refugee-specific legal provisions and challenges. In January, 40 **chief clerks and clerks serving at criminal and civil court front desks** attended the second training of its kind on international and national refugee law, refugee rights and obligations, the roles of relevant institutions, cultural awareness, working with trauma victims, and interviewing techniques for refugees. It was observed that the language barrier poses a great challenge for the registry clerks during service provision to refugees, which prompted participants to suggest hiring full-time interpreters at the courthouses and establishing in-house help desks to support refugees.

To strengthen the **provision of legal aid** for refugees and asylum-seekers, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA) and UNHCR continued to provide support to 18 bar associations. Some 300 cases were submitted for legal aid appointments through a custom developed automated approval **system**. The cases mainly concern applications to administrative and civil courts, including first instance and appeal stages as well as oral and written counselling. The appointments were made for individuals of 22 different nationalities, the majority of which concerned Syrian nationals, followed by Afghan, Iranian and Iraqi nationals.



Şanlıurfa Legal Clinic was established in 2018 to offer legal assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. Photo: E.Gürel / UNHCR

During January, the **Şanlıurfa Legal Clinic** provided legal assistance to 82 individuals on international and temporary protection procedures, access to rights, civil matters, family reunification, voluntary return and resettlement. In addition, the legal clinic started to conduct awareness raising and outreach activities at the TACs in Şanlıurfa following the Governorate's approval. Three information sessions on the national legislation on marriage, divorce and violence against women were organized at Suruç, Ceylanpınar and Harran TACs with the participation of 160 residents.

Strengthen access to quality services for refugees through public systems, and national and local institutions

Cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS)

UNHCR has **extended its 2018 protocol with MoFLSS through a Letter of Intent** on 4 January, until a new protocol is finalized and signed between parties. It covers cooperation on Social Service Centers (SSCs), Family Support Centres, and support to persons with specific needs, including women, children, elderly, and disabled people. Prior to the signature of the new protocol, bilateral meetings and agreements with key stakeholders are taking place. On 4 January, the Ministry's Department of Psychosocial Services in Migration, Disaster and Emergencies shared a draft work plan for UNHCR's support to SSCs.

In cooperation with the Şanlıurfa Governorate and PDoFLSS, a **Refugee Counselling Call Centre (RCC)** is currently operating with eight staff to answer queries and refer complex cases to three SSCs. In January, the RCC received some 2,270 calls with a 99 per cent answering rate, closed over 1,520 cases and referred more than 730 cases to the three SSCs' teams.

Identification, referral and social support of refugees with specific needs

UNHCR Turkey continued to implement its **programmes tailored to the protection needs** of specific groups. These programmes include accommodation assistance, travel assistance, medical examinations at a contracted clinic, medication assistance and psychiatric assessments by contracted psychiatrists for persons with specific needs. Socio-economic assessments were also conducted for adolescents released from state orphanages and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) refugees. In addition, in January, over 4,100 households received cash support worth 1.5 million Turkish Liras.

Social cohesion

Jointly with the Governorate of Ordu, the provincial Directorate for Migration Management and the Mülteci Destek Derneği - Refugee Support Center, UNHCR facilitated the **"Social Cohesion: Achievements and Challenges"** conference on 17 January. The conference aimed at fostering dialogue and cooperation, and looked into Turkey's approach to and experiences with social cohesion specific to refugee and host communities. As part of the conference, artwork, including paintings, made by Iraqi, Iranian, and local Turkish artists was showcased. Participants included hundreds of refugees residing in Ordu, as well as representatives from the Governorate of Ordu, PDMM, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR, among others.



Artworks with the theme "Living Together", made by Iraqi, Iranian, and Turkish artists, were exhibited in Ordu. Photo: MUDEM

A meeting to discuss the **root causes of social tensions** among refugee and host communities took place on 23 January with seven local opinion leaders in Denizli. The main underlying causes of social tensions were identified as cultural and lifestyle differences, in addition to other factors related to misinformation, particularly with regard to the Iranian LGBTI community, refugee eligibility and assistance provided through UN agencies. The local community leaders noted that further engagement of refugee community leaders would be an important step towards dissipating social tensions among the two communities. As a result, it was decided to **identify refugee community leaders** among Iranian, Afghan and Syrian communities and engage them in discussions and solutions to promote social cohesion.

Engaging at the local level (municipalities, governor offices, imams, mukhtars)

In the Izmir Buca Municipality, a one-day training was organized for staff working at the newly established **Refugee Support Desk**. The topics included refugee rights, case management, reporting techniques, and services and referral mechanisms. The Refugee Support Desk was established to provide counselling and translation services to local actors such as mukhtars, municipal staff and school teachers on matters concerning refugees.

Promote and prepare for durable solutions for refugees

Self-reliance and livelihoods support

Collaboration with the private sector continues to contribute to refugee employment and employability. In January, a series of meetings took place in Istanbul with GAP Inc. and several non-governmental organizations to create new partnerships and promote the Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement (P.A.C.E.) programme. P.A.C.E. was initially created to support women in the global apparel industry and still continues to give women the foundational life skills, technical trainings, and support that will help them advance in the work place as well as in their personal lives. As a result of these meetings, GAP Inc. and UNHCR decided to collaborate with ASAM and the MUDEM - RSC to launch a work place empowerment programme.

January 2019

Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey and their unrestricted and regional funds in 2019 as of 22 January

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CONTACTS

Rebecca Blackledge, Senior External and Donor Relations Officer, Turkey, blackled@unhcr.org, Tel: +90 312 409 7338

Alice Kidman, Associate Donor Relations Officer, Turkey, kidman@unhcr.org, Tel: +90 312 409 7301

LINKS

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