

# TURKEY

February 2019

Key Figures (as of 31 February 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

## 3,533

Refugees submitted for resettlement consideration to 11 different countries so far in 2019

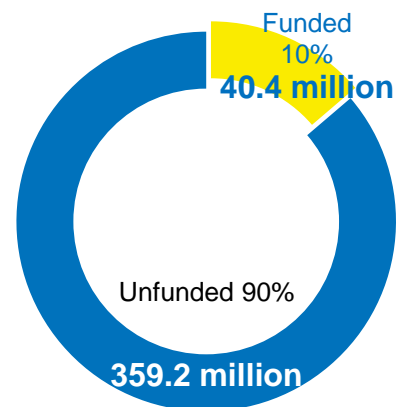
## 100

Ministry of Justice staff received international protection training in February 2019 to strengthen access to legal services by refugees

Funding (as of 22 January 2019)

## USD 399.6 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



## Update on the key developments in February 2019

In cooperation with the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), the **verification** of registration records of over 2.7 million Syrians was completed as of 15 February. Thanks to the verification, the data of 76 per cent of the registered Syrian population in Turkey has been verified and updated.

Through the protection desks at verification centres, Syrians with specific needs who had not yet been identified were able to register their needs and benefit from referrals to key services.

As part of the collaboration with DGMM on the closure and decongestion of **Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs)** discussions took place on the eligibility for the second instalment of the relocation grant for persons who had not yet updated their registration since leaving the TACs. This led to an additional 6,800 refugees receiving their entitlements out of the total of close to 11,160 refugees, who relocated to host communities from TACs. Furthermore, UNHCR continued to assess the impact of the Alternative to Camps programme through post relocation monitoring targeting a sample of some 930 persons. In February, over 460 beneficiaries were interviewed by phone surveys and the other half of the sample population will be interviewed through house visits by a third party in consultation with DGMM.

The **Budapest Process** held its 6th Ministerial Conference in Istanbul on 19-20 February 2019, gathering 46 countries, European institutions, and 10 regional and international organisations. The five-year Call for Action and the Istanbul commitments were proposed during the Conference, adopted by close to 40 countries, and finalized for endorsement. States agreed to endorse and implement the Call for Action to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration along the Silk Routes, which also includes respecting the rights of refugees in line with international standards. In addition, the Istanbul commitments build upon the achievements of the Budapest Process and introduce five commitments to be upheld in migration management, including to human rights, partnership and solidarity.

## Promote access to and support the provision of protection

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

In cooperation with DGMM, UNHCR continued carrying out various **capacity development activities** to strengthen Turkey's registration and international protection procedures, ranging from observation of interviews and on-the-job mentoring to targeted trainings and technical meetings with caseworkers and managers of DGMM and Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM). For instance, upon DGMM's request, UNHCR observed 46 international protection status determination interviews at the Ankara International Protection Bureau (Decision Centre), and provided support by promoting Quality Assurance methodologies, holding case discussions, coaching the drafting of decisions and providing feedback to the Decision Centre staff.

In cooperation with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), two capacity development sessions were facilitated to support protection procedures and continuous registration activities. Firstly, a **Country of Origin Information** (COI) workshop took place in Ankara with 30 participants, including DGMM and PDMM staff, and experts from European Union (EU) member-states. A session on **interviewing techniques** was held in Ankara for 35 staff recruited to support DGMM continuous registration activities.

The joint DGMM-UNHCR Registration Working Group meet to review the findings and recommendations of the **registration assessments missions** UNHCR had conducted in 36 provinces in September-October 2018 and January 2019. DGMM and UNHCR agreed on the way forward, which included continued joint assessment missions, and the development of a referral system among provinces to help strengthen access by asylum-seekers to the national registration system.

## 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)

In February, UNHCR organized two rounds **of trainings on international protection** for over 70 Antalya Provincial Directorate of Family, Labour and Social Services (PDoFLSS) staff working across five districts. As the training curricula focused on the protection of refugee children and women, it targeted personnel working in specialized services dedicated to the care of vulnerable children and women, including Social Service Centres and different women and child-care institutions and departments. The training was also attended by Antalya PDMM, which was crucial for the development of a referral pathway between PDoFLSS and PDMM, particularly with regard to persons with specific needs.

In Istanbul, UNHCR participated in the **coordination meeting** on the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, organized by the Istanbul Governorate and chaired by PDoFLSS, which provided an overview of the current status of Istanbul Provincial Action Plan against SGBV (2017-2020) and the way ahead for 2019. It was reiterated that UNHCR will cooperate with Istanbul Security Directorate, Gendarmerie Command, PDMM, and PDoFLSS to deliver sessions on international protection and SGBV prevention and response in the refugee context.

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

In cooperation with the **Istanbul** Governorate, a project was designed to bring Turkish and refugee children together through extracurricular social cohesion activities under the supervision of teachers, who had previously been trained to implement such activities. In February, the pilot training session took place in the Güngören district with the participation of over fifty 7th and 8th grade students, half of whom are Syrian and half Turkish. The session was observed by the Provincial Directorate of National Education, partners, and UNHCR. With this experience at hand, activities are aimed to be initiated during the spring at 19 different schools in six districts of Istanbul.

### Social cohesion

DGMM (in particular the Harmonization and Communications department) and UNHCR agreed to continue joint participatory assessments with refugees and local community members in 2019, accompanied with local level meetings and awareness-raising sessions with the participation of local authorities in 15 provinces, which are yet to be agreed upon, to strengthen social cohesion. In addition, joint trainings will be organized for harmonisation focal points at the PDMMs, as well as for high level civil servants in each of the provinces.

## Promote and prepare for durable solutions for refugees

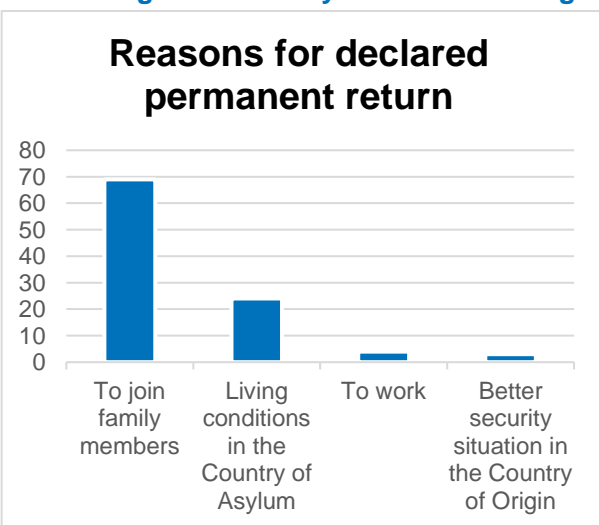
### Self-reliance and livelihoods support

A three-day training for 26 Turkish employment agency (İŞKUR) Directorate General staff took place in Ankara to further refugee inclusion into the labour markets. The training topics focused on the applicable legal framework and available public services, UNHCR’s mandate, and its livelihoods programming.



İSKUR officials received “Strengthening Public Employment Services” training in Ankara. Photo: UNHCR

### Monitoring the voluntary nature of self-organized returns



As a result of discussions with the **Manisa** PDMM, in early February, UNHCR observed the first voluntary return interviews in the province. UNHCR is now monitoring the voluntary nature of returns in nine provinces compared to eight in 2018. UNHCR monitors the interviews in the PDMMs in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa on a daily basis and in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Manisa and Kahramanmaraş on a weekly basis depending on PDMMs’ request and the intensity of returns. So far, this year, the interviews of close to 3,100 individuals have been monitored. UNHCR monitors the voluntary nature of the returns and ensures that all who wish to return are provided with the necessary information as to the consequences of their decision to return. In cases when return is sought as a result of protection-related issues, UNHCR provides counselling on possible interventions in

Turkey to enable individuals to make well-versed return decisions. UNHCR strives to expand its monitoring capacity in 2019.

## Cross-cutting support to UNHCR priorities

### Communication with communities (CwC)

As part of UNHCR’s regular **participatory assessment activities** in the Aegean region, six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in Kutahya in February with 55 adult male and female refugees of diverse ages and backgrounds from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. In the FGDs, refugees shared the protection problems they face, discussed their underlying causes and proposed solutions. Most of the refugees expressed concern over possible withdrawal of their international protection applications, possible deportation, restrictions on in-country movement, knowledge of registration, access to higher education, legal services, and formal employment given the difficulty in obtaining travel and work permits. Following the

discussions, participants took part in an information session and received informative leaflets including FAQs on work permits and HELP/Services Advisor info cards.

The Women's Committee in Izmir continued to **mobilize refugee women** by extending its membership to some 20 women from diverse ages and backgrounds. In February, the Women's Committee convened twice to discuss activities for this year's International Women's Day celebrations. The members decided to create handmade products available for purchase at handcrafts stall during the event.

A WhatsApp group was created for **university refugee students** in the Aegean region to establish a network to help disseminate information related to access to education, such as calls for scholarship applications and trainings. This tool will also serve to keep informed about the challenges in accessing education services.

### Interagency coordination

One of the main priorities in 2019 is moving towards thematic meetings to have more specific discussions, especially on the cross-cutting issues of environment, gender and social cohesion. Hence, a series of **gender thematic discussions** were organized during the Protection and Basic Needs Working Group and the Syria Task Force meetings to help further integrate and mainstream gender equality into the Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (3RP). This will enable a more effective, efficient, and far-reaching humanitarian response in line with the Sustainable Developments Goals. Discussions explored areas of convergence on gender, including specific activities, need for trainings and necessary changes in light of both the sectors' analysis and the outcomes of the UN Women Gender Sensitive Refugee Response Conference that took place in Ankara last month to highlight the importance of ensuring gender-sensitive refugee response and advocate women's participation in this process. The 2018 gender achievements and gender sensitiveness of sector strategies were analysed. It was agreed inter alia that more gender profiling and mapping was required to identify the challenges, gaps and needs of women, girls, men, boys, and persons with specific vulnerabilities.

## February 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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### LINKS

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