

# TURKEY

May 2020

Key Figures (as of 29 May 2020)

## 4 million

**Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey** including almost 3.6 million Syrian nationals and close to 330,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live across Turkey in 81 provinces

## 40,135

**Users and 115,008 views** on the Help website in May, and over **4,200 visitors** on the Services Advisor platform

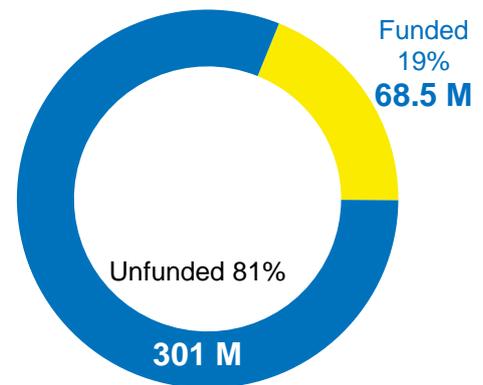
## 12,500

**Hygiene kits delivered** to local authorities and **distributed** to refugee and host community households in May.

Funding (as of 28 May 2020)

## USD 369.5 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



**UNHCR Turkey** @UNHCRTurkey · May 13

👨‍⚕️ Doctor  
🌱 Humanitarian

Dr. Zakira Hekmat came to 🇹🇷 from 🇰🇪 as a refugee years ago. After learning Turkish&studying medicine, she became a doctor.She also founded an NGO to help other refugees in Kayseri. She joined her fellow Turkish doctors to respond to COVID-19. Her message:



Refugees have contributed to UNHCR's social media platforms with messages for the community.

## Protection during times of COVID-19

UNHCR continues to cooperate with the **Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM)** in the strengthening of registration and international protection status determination procedures. In view of COVID-19, only the registration of persons with special needs (including those with medical needs) were being processed by PDMMs. Similarly, protection desk personnel processed the referrals of urgent cases and recorded basic information of new cases so they could be processed as a matter of priority, once COVID-19 related measures were eased. UNHCR has been following up with DGMM to identify solutions for the registration faced by refugees with specific needs and those whose health insurance had been de-activated. The cases were discussed with DGMM and passed on by DGMM to the respective PDMMs for relevant action.

**A Training Cooperation Protocol was signed between the Justice Academy of Turkey and UNHCR** establishing a framework for cooperation modalities in planning, designing and carrying out training activities targeting judges and public prosecutors working in the civil and administrative jurisdiction. The training activities are designed to find solutions for legal problems faced by refugees in the fields of private law, criminal law and administrative law in Turkey.

UNHCR supports the **Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS)** in 43 provinces throughout Turkey. During COVID-19, the social services and psychosocial support to persons with specific vulnerabilities continued to be provided and followed-up through tele-communication and have extended to refugees. The services included support lines, soup kitchens and food distribution, which increased significantly in May due to the pandemic and in most cases, cooked or dry food was serviced directly to homes. Information on Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (SONIM) support lines and KADES were disseminated through text messages, with these services also applying to refugee women and children in Turkey.

In May, the **legal clinics** in Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay continued to provide legal assistance through telephone or video calls responding to matters related to international and temporary protection procedures, civil law, exit and re-entry procedures, family reunification and citizenship procedures. The Şanlıurfa Legal Clinic provided legal counselling to 70 individuals and the Hatay Legal Clinic to 41 individuals, while 23 individuals benefitted from legal assistance provided by the Gaziantep Legal Clinic. Due to the COVID-19 mitigation measures, the clinics could not carry out outreach activities. Nevertheless, teleconference meetings and webinars on case management and legal counselling organised by the legal counsellors in south east Turkey continued, attended by 160 participants.



Municipalities are the first port of call for the support provided to host communities and refugees. UNHCR-supported teams distributed hygiene kits in Izmir together with Buca Municipality. ©UNHCR

## Communication with Communities

The **UNHCR Counselling Line** has been operating in full teleworking mode since March with 34 operators. In May, the line answered 9,073 calls. The majority of callers enquired about resettlement followed by financial assistance. The calls were from 75 cities in Turkey but mostly from Istanbul followed by Denizli and Ankara. The **Refugee Call Centre** in Şanlıurfa answered 213 calls in May. Most queries were about financial support, social assistance, resettlement, legal assistance and assistance for persons with specific needs.

Through its main digital communication platforms, **Help** and **Services Advisor**, UNHCR continues to share information about rights, obligations and available services with refugees and asylum seekers. By the end of May, Help had reached approximately 763,523 unique visitors since its launch in 2017. The Services Advisor platform continues to be updated with information to serve refugees better during the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, the Services Advisor Platform was visited by 4,233 new users. Help provides information to refugees across a range of themes, from registration and documentation to education and livelihoods, while Services Advisor is an inter-agency tool for refugees to search for and find details of service providers in their area. In Turkey, Help is available in four languages (English, Turkish, Arabic and Farsi). In May, the Help website got 40,135 users and 115,008 views.



The UNHCR Turkey Information Board directs users to services available on the inter-agency platform Services Advisor. Information is posted in Arabic, Farsi and also in English.

UNHCR's followers continue to grow on the **UNHCR Turkey Information Board Facebook page**. In May, UNHCR published information posts related to services available during COVID-19, curfew announcements and recent regulations in education and livelihood sectors. By the end of May, the UNHCR Turkey Information Board Facebook page had approximately 66,000 likes and over 68,000 followers (with a reach of 1,034,733 impressions). The **WhatsApp Communications Tree** which was created on 27 March to facilitate rapid and zero-cost information-sharing between UNHCR and refugees and asylum seekers through its focal points and partners reached 41,270 clicks (and 11,269 receivers) in May.

UNHCR has partnered with **Google's Social Impact Team** for the Help Turkey website. Thanks to the 'google search' optimization features, the information contained within the Help website will appear at the top of Google searches related to refugee protection related questions in Turkey. The impact of the first optimized features recorded on 22 May shows a reach of 1,060 clicks in 28 days creating 12.8 thousand total impressions.

## Engaging at the local level in the COVID-19 Response

UNHCR cooperates with municipalities across the country to map services being offered by municipalities in the COVID-19 response and to identify services also available to refugees, and also collaborates closely with mukhtars in order to understand how COVID-19 is affecting communities and how mukhtars are identifying and responding to the needs.

UNHCR completed consultations it undertook with mukhtars from 28 neighbourhoods across South East Turkey. The mukhtars who participated in the consultations represent communities which host around 180,000 refugees. Unmet needs of refugees for basic assistance were highlighted. The consultations showed that assistance provided by provincial directorates, governorates and municipalities seem to be generally inclusive of refugees. Mukhtars are regularly directly involved in identifying the most affected families, and the coordination with public institutions needs to be further encouraged and supported.

UNHCR supports the local authorities and organisations to respond to a growing need for **hygiene items and personal protective equipment**. Through its partners across the country, UNHCR has delivered over 12,500 hygiene kits in South East Turkey, Izmir and Istanbul. In May, 3,500 hygiene kits were delivered to the Istanbul Governorate for distribution. In Izmir, some 4,000 hygiene kits were distributed in May, while in Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa, UNHCR delivered 5,000 hygiene kits to the local authorities to support vulnerable households. In all regions, the distributions are undertaken through municipalities and partners and have benefitted both refugee and host community households.



In Ankara, Turkish and refugee men and women have been working together to produce soap and face masks. ©UNHCR

A number of initiatives, supported by UNHCR, have emerged with refugees mobilising to produce and provide masks and soap bars for their communities, benefitting both host and refugees: The Earth is Home Association (Dunya Evimiz) in Ankara which started soap production through a UNHCR-supported project and produced 700 face masks.

In Tokat, the Association for Struggling Against Drugs and Substance Addiction produced 10,000 masks and 3,000 soaps. The initiative received the support of the local authorities and its benefits extended to the employment of six tailors in the company of a textile entrepreneur. In Kayseri, the Association ARSA produced masks and soaps in May generating around 1,000 masks per day. In Trabzon, the Association TAHA

produced some 55,000 masks and distributed them to government offices in Trabzon. With the support of UNHCR, TAHA also produced 2,400 bars of soap to be distributed to host and refugee community members. Mask production is also ongoing with the use of 10 sewing machines provided by UNHCR.

## Increasing Multi-Stakeholder Support to the Refugee Response

The **3RP Partner Support Appeal to Turkey's Response to COVID-19** was launched on 7 May as part of the Middle East and North Africa regional launch of the 3RP COVID-19 Appeal. The 3RP Turkey ad-hoc appeal is co-led by UNHCR and UNDP and was collaboratively prepared with partner inputs, amounting to a total of USD 156.9 million. The regional ad-hoc appeal will feed into the Global Humanitarian Response Plan on COVID-19, coordinated by OCHA.

### Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2020 as of 28 May 2020

USA | European Union | Japan | Norway | Switzerland | Germany | CERF | Slovenia | United Kingdom | Denmark | Canada | Sweden | Finland | Netherlands | Ireland | Private donors

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### LINKS

[Regional Portal - Syria Regional Refugee Response](#) | [Regional Portal - Mediterranean](#) | [UNHCR Turkey website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Services Advisor](#) | [UNHCR Help](#)