



Working environment

UNHCR's role in Turkey is the country's candidacy for membership of the European Union, which requires it to adopt all EU legislation relating to asylum and migration.

The context

Turkey's geographical position along historical migration routes and as a neighbour to many refugees' countries of origin poses unique challenges in the context of migration and asylum. Another factor that affects

In this regard, the Government approved a *National Action Plan* in 2005 which foresees the creation of a national asylum agency and passage of an asylum law by 2012. The plan also envisages the lifting of the

Planning figures

| Type of population | Origin | Jan 2009 | | Dec 2009 | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Total in country | Of whom assisted by UNHCR | Total in country | Of whom assisted by UNHCR |
| Refugees | Iraq | 7,000 | 7,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 |
| | Islamic Rep. of Iran | 2,800 | 2,800 | 2,750 | 2,750 |
| | Various | 500 | 500 | 600 | 600 |
| Asylum-seekers | Iraq | 3,000 | 3,000 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| | Islamic Rep. of Iran | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,500 | 3,500 |
| | Various | 2,300 | 2,300 | 2,600 | 2,600 |
| Returnees (refugees) | | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Others of concern | Russian Federation | 310 | - | 310 | - |
| Total | | 18,930 | 18,620 | 21,780 | 21,470 |

geographical reservation on Turkey's protection obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention, which are restricted to persons originating from Europe.

People who flee countries outside of Europe cannot currently receive refugee status in Turkey, but they can gain access to temporary asylum pending UNHCR's search for durable solutions elsewhere. Consequently, the Office maintains a direct operational role in the refugee determination procedure for all non-Europeans. It works with the Turkish authorities to ensure that asylum-seekers reach safety, are not detained or subject to *refoulement*, and have access to the procedures for temporary asylum.

Asylum-seekers in Turkey must live in 30 designated cities while awaiting refugee status determination (RSD) interviews. Delays can be long. Asylum-seekers have no access to work or social assistance. They, and refugees, are required to pay a high administrative fee to obtain a temporary resident permit, or *ikamet*, and are subject to the often daily obligation to report to authorities in their municipality.

Refugee children have access to education, but not all medical needs are met. Social assistance and support mechanisms are not well established and vary among the various designated cities in which refugees and asylum-seekers reside.

The number of new asylum applications has increased considerably in 2008. From January to August, a 47 per cent increase in new asylum applications was registered compared to the same period in 2007. Whereas the number of Somali asylum-seekers decreased by 33 per cent compared to 2007, the number of Afghan asylum-seekers has doubled. The majority of new asylum-seekers are Iraqis, all of whom are submitted for resettlement as Turkey excludes local integration of non-European refugees.

At the same time, mixed migration flows are a challenge for government authorities and UNHCR. While more than 75,000 irregular migrants, many of whom originate from countries tormented by civil strife or human rights abuses, are intercepted each year, there is no appropriate screening system to identify persons in need of international protection unless they approach UNHCR.

The needs

UNHCR will continue to conduct RSD and strive to ensure that refugees and other people of concern are protected, despite the absence of a fully established national asylum system and the geographic limitation on Turkey's obligations under the

1951 Convention. The Office will help to find durable solutions by facilitating resettlement and voluntary repatriation. Furthermore, UNHCR will support extremely vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers and improve their living conditions by fostering receptive conditions and self-reliance opportunities.

Direct assistance to meet the basic needs of asylum-seekers and refugees has been reduced. Despite nascent charity efforts, many people of concern to UNHCR live on the brink of destitution. To strengthen public-private partnerships and civil society support, UNHCR hopes to be able to sustain its outreach to all the provincial cities where refugees and asylum-seekers live.

Of particular concern to UNHCR are Iranian refugees who entered Turkey from Iraq. These refugees have few prospects for durable solutions. Due to limited integration opportunities in Turkey, they face significant hardship. UNHCR will continue to work with all its partners to find solutions for these refugees.

Main objectives

UNHCR's programme in Turkey has two components. The annual programme seeks to strengthen asylum system development, find solutions for refugees, and provide basic support for those with specific 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 such as resettlement (see Iraq situation chapter). UNHCR's main objectives in Turkey are to:

- Enhance institutional capacity for reception and RSD. This includes access to territory as well as fair and effective asylum procedures for up to 10,000 new asylum-seekers.



Refugees learning to make pickles in Ankara.

- Build on existing ties with the relevant authorities to improve the chances of finding durable solutions for people of concern to UNHCR, including through local integration and voluntary repatriation.
- Enhance protection networks within the Turkish Government and civil society and with international partners.

Key targets

Annual programme

- The waiting period between the submission of an application and a final decision will be reduced to nine months.
- Border monitoring mechanisms are agreed and implemented in collaboration with the Government.
- Some 5,200 refugees are resettled from Turkey.
- An improved identification and response system for individuals with specific needs is established.
- A Turkish Refugee Council is established.

Supplementary programme

- Up to 8,000 Iraqi refugees are protected and helped to find durable solutions.
- Up to 4,000 Iraqi asylum-seekers are received and registered.
- Some 4,000 Iraqi refugees are resettled in third countries.
- Iraqi asylum-seekers do not suffer prolonged waiting periods for RSD interviews and final decisions.

Strategies and activities

UNHCR will foster collaboration with various partners and counterparts to strengthen international protection in Turkey. It will retain responsibility for the RSD of individual non-European asylum-seekers. It will also work to decrease the backlog of asylum applications, thereby reducing the waiting period and limiting the hardship of destitute asylum-seekers.

The Office aims to foster protection-sensitive and systematic border monitoring, as well as to establish a regional dialogue to improve access to Turkey for asylum-seekers. It will pursue opportunities for local integration for small groups of refugees. With some 5,200 departures planned for 2009 (including of 3,000 Iraqis), resettlement will be an important protection tool as it remains the only viable durable solution for refugees who cannot return home.

Constraints

The lack of security in neighbouring countries renders durable solutions for some special groups of refugees more difficult.

The Office will continue to address requirements that arise from its core mandate. The effective resolution of the persistent backlog of asylum applications is a major challenge.

Organization and implementation

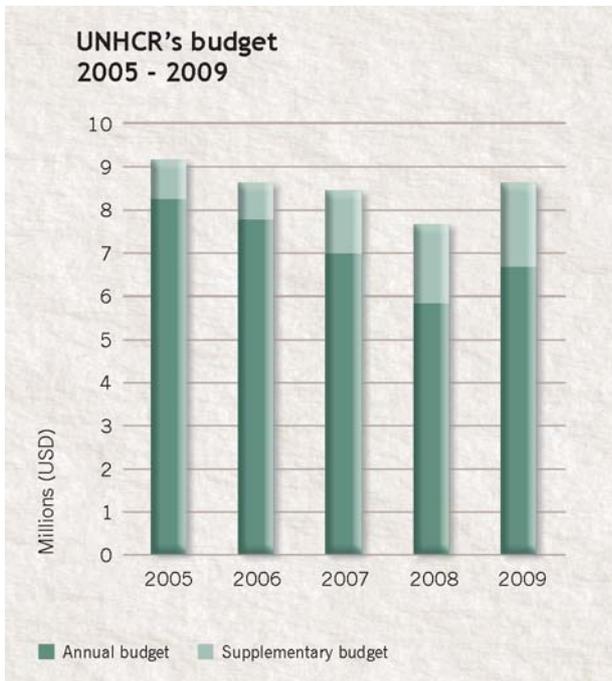
| UNHCR presence: | |
|-------------------|----|
| Number of offices | 4 |
| Total staff | 92 |
| International | 5 |
| National | 59 |
| JPOs | 3 |
| UNVs | 25 |

Coordination

UNHCR offices in Turkey will continue to coordinate their activities with all relevant local and central authorities, including the General Directorate of Security for the Ministry of Interior, the Gendarmerie General Command, the Coast Guard General Command, the Turkish Land Forces, the Foreign Ministry, governorates, and the Social Service and Child Protection Agency. The Office will seek to promote closer collaboration among State authorities, civil society, academia and international-protection institutions. Furthermore, UNHCR is part of the UN Country Team and participates in the formulation and review of 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, General Directorate of Security, Ministry of Interior, Gendarmerie General Command, 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 |

UNHCR's budget 2005 - 2009



Financial information

UNHCR's Annual Programme Budget in Turkey has gone down since 2005 although the number of asylum-seekers has gone up exponentially. UNHCR's budget is limited and does not allow for significantly strengthening the asylum system or meeting the needs of the most destitute. The Office's involvement in the Iraq situation has, however, kept the total requirements more or less at the same level.

Budget (USD)

| Activities and services | 2008 | | | 2009 | | |
|---|------------------|--|------------------|------------------|--|------------------|
| | Annual budget | Supplementary budget Iraq Situation | Total | Annual budget | Supplementary budget Iraq Situation | Total |
| Protection, monitoring and coordination | 1,836,729 | 647,652 | 2,484,381 | 2,687,079 | 158,134 | 2,845,213 |
| Community services | 255,507 | 220,000 | 475,507 | 205,041 | 333,544 | 538,585 |
| Domestic needs | 200,000 | 360,000 | 560,000 | 223,125 | 387,000 | 610,125 |
| Education | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 44,100 | 44,100 |
| Food | 0 | 6,000 | 6,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Health | 74,817 | 220,000 | 294,817 | 201,681 | 179,750 | 381,431 |
| Legal assistance | 549,459 | 150,000 | 699,459 | 656,272 | 420,806 | 1,077,078 |
| Operational support (to agencies) | 101,347 | 0 | 101,347 | 40,000 | 10,000 | 50,000 |
| Transport and logistics | 10,870 | 80,000 | 90,870 | 50,481 | 54,800 | 105,281 |
| Total operations | 3,028,729 | 1,683,652 | 4,712,381 | 4,063,679 | 1,588,134 | 5,651,813 |
| Programme support | 2,506,279 | 160,578 | 2,666,857 | 2,616,857 | 364,650 | 2,981,507 |
| Total | 5,535,009 | 1,844,230 | 7,379,239 | 6,680,536 | 1,952,784 | 8,633,320 |

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.