

Turkey

Over 3.5 million Syrian refugees registered of 31 August, according to Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM).

94 per cent of Syrian refugees live in urban areas and peri-urban areas while the remaining live in 19 camps operated by DGMM.

368,227 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities registered by UNHCR as of 31 August. The majority are Afghans (46 per cent) and Iraqis (39 per cent), followed by Iranians (10.5 per cent), Somalis (1.5 per cent) and other nationalities (3 per cent).

Update on Achievements

Alternatives to Camps: Following the decision of the Directorate for Migration Management (DGMM) to close five tented temporary accommodation centres (TACs), namely Islahiye, Nizip 1, Karkamis in Gaziantep, Midyat in Mardin and Adiyaman the relocation was underway in August Residents of TACs were offered the option of relocating to urban areas or to other TACs defined by DGMM. UNHCR supported the relocation process by assisting the logistical transfer to people moving to other TACs and by providing financial support to those moving to host communities. The financial assistance was meant to help refugees cover their basic needs for the initial period of three months following the move; the amount was calculated on the basis of the minimum expenditure basket in close cooperation with DGMM and WFP. It was provided through PTT cards. An interagency task team was formed with the participation of UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM to help guide the process, discuss the necessary actions once refugees are settled in host communities, and look into lessons learnt. By 8 August, camp residents registered their choice to relocate to other camps or to host communities with the respective Provincial Directorates for Migration Management (PDMMs). Three-quarters of nearly 30,000 refugees opted to relocate to host communities with a majority preferring to stay in the same provinces than their TAC, namely Gaziantep, Adiyaman and Mardin.



Syrians in the process of relocation. Photo: UNHCR

UNHCR phase-out of registration: In an important and welcomed step in the implementation of the international protection procedures established by the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, the Government of Turkey decided to move to a fully decentralized registration procedure for all persons seeking international protection in Turkey. Following discussions over the last months, 10 September was agreed as the date to end UNHCR's registration activities. DGMM and UNHCR developed information materials to provide timely and accurate information on the change to asylum-seekers. Safeguards to ensure that persons have access to registration in the provinces without delays have been and continue to be discussed by DGMM and UNHCR. To that end, UNHCR presented various documents and proposals to DGMM including a communication strategy, a satellite city profiling chart, information on the reception registration referral systems in other host countries, a proposed referral tool, a chart on verification centres as well as entry and referral maps.

Promoting Access to and Provision of Protection

Support to registration, verification and development of national asylum system: In August, a total of 16,364 asylum-seekers were registered by UNHCR, of whom 12,673 were from Afghanistan, 1,971 from Iraq, 1,026 from Iran, 218 from Somalia, and 296 individuals from other nationalities. As of 31 August, the total population of concern to UNHCR in Turkey (active cases) was 368,227 individuals, of whom 59,360 are refugees, and 308,867 are asylum-seekers.

Mandate refugee status determination (RSD) interviews for 877 individuals were conducted in August (first Instance, appeal, re-opening or verification procedures), involving asylum-seekers from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and other countries. RSD decisions for 483 individuals were issued, including negative decisions for four individuals.

Strengthening Access to Quality Services for Refugees through Public Systems and National and Local Institutions

Advocacy and support inclusion of refugees in national systems: UNHCR initiated discussions with Izmir's Provincial Directorate of National Education (PDoNE) in an effort to enhance social cohesion in schools through the provision of Training of Trainers on refugee rights and referral mechanisms for the Psychological Counselling and Guidance teachers working in public schools across Izmir's six main refugee-host districts, namely Konak, Karabaglar, Bornova, Buca, Bayrakli and Torbali. The trainings aim to enhance mutual dialogue and understanding among the school counsellors and the Syrian students and parents.

Child protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) prevention and response: In August, UNHCR launched the project "Building Cross-sectorial Bridges to Combat SGBV" to provide sustainable self-reliance to women at risk of SGBV. The project includes capacity-building to stakeholders for SGBV mainstreaming, identification of those at risk of and survivors of SGBV for enrolment into multi-sectorial interventions including Turkish language teaching with cash incentives to cover transportation costs to be followed with vocational training courses. An additional component of the project includes delivery of awareness-raising sessions targeting children at risk of child marriages and their parents in separate sessions on risks and consequences of child marriages with active support for school enrolment and other multi-sectorial needs as required per case, including psycho-social support. The project will be implemented by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in Ankara, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) and Mavi Kalem in Istanbul and by the UNHCR's partner Support to Life (STL) in Hatay.

UNHCR completed a first of 29 planned dedicated focus group discussion (FGD) sessions on SGBV risks, as well as community-led and identified prevention and response mechanisms. Through the plan, 29 sessions of FGDs will be conducted in seven provinces reaching 230 persons in locations with highest occurrence of SGBV incidents per proGres records including Samsun, Kayseri, Mersin, Ankara, Konya, Eskisehir and Erzurum. Results will be summarized and recommendations will inform advocacy and programming in 2019.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS): Training and capacity development support activities targeting more than 100 staff of the Provincial Directorates for Family, Labour and Social Services (PDoFLSS) working in Social Service Centres, child care institutions, Violence Prevention Centres and women's shelters in Istanbul and the Aegean region continued in August. The sessions focused on the national legal framework on international and temporary protection, birth registration, human trafficking, and the protection of refugee children and women.

Social cohesion: In an effort to identify the root causes of social tensions, protection gaps, and possible areas of cooperation with local authorities, a mission to Mersin was conducted by UNHCR in August. Mersin hosts 208,267 Syrian refugees who account for 11 per cent of the provincial population. Five social tension incidents involving refugees and host community members were reported in Mersin between July 2016 and February 2018. During the visit, UNHCR, inter alia, met with the Deputy Governor, Sub-Governor of Mersin, PDMM, NGOs, PDoFLSS, the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR), the Bar Association, and Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Mersin as well as the Municipality of Tarsus and mukhtars association in Tarsus. In addition, nine Focus Group Discussions were held with persons of concern on access to rights and services, and social cohesion. UNHCR will analyse the findings, maintain contact with actors in Mersin on

ideas discussed during the meetings and take further steps to respond to some of the identified challenges in cooperation with local authorities.

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

UNHCR has been cooperating with World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD) in Istanbul in order to promote the engagement of municipalities in the refugee response by way of strengthening their complementary role in social protection services. In August, WALD increased the number of social protection desks under the auspices of municipalities from 4 to 12. Every social protection desk is operated by a lawyer, a psychologist, an interpreter, and a social worker, who provide information on rights, duties, and available services. The desks and municipalities also play a role in streamlining district-level referrals through informing and mobilizing other services providers to extend services to refugees by conducting district level coordination meetings.



UNHCR Deputy Representative in Turkey Jean-Marie Garelli's visit to the Sancaktepe Municipality together with WALD. Photo: WALD

Education: On 9 August, as part of their Higher Education Preparation Programme for Syrian Students in Turkey, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) and UNHCR organized a graduation ceremony for the programme's participants. In Ankara, some 100 students from Gazi, Yıldırım Beyazıt, Erciyes, Karabük, and Selçuk Universities, who successfully completed the higher education preparation programme with a C1 level proficiency certificate in Turkish, attended the ceremony and received their certificates. Over the course of the 2017-2018 academic year, more than 4,300 Syrian youth had the opportunity to attend an advanced Turkish language learning programme. For 2018-2019 academic year, UNHCR will continue to support access by refugee students to higher education, including through the provision of cash grants.



The graduation ceremony for the participants of the Higher Education Preparation Programme for the Syrian Students in Turkey took place in Ankara. Photo: UNHCR / E. Gürel

Promoting and Preparing Durable Solutions for Refugees

Resettlement: As of 31 August, 11,441 submissions (7,792 Syrians and 3,449 refugees of other nationalities) were made and 5,277 refugees departed on resettlement (4,826 Syrians and 451 refugees of other nationalities). By end August, the confirmed quotas for Turkey for 2018 are around 18,000. So far in 2018, 29,574 individuals were referred for resettlement consideration by DGMM. 86 missions were conducted outside of Ankara to interview refugees for resettlement consideration.

Monitoring voluntary nature of self-organized returns: On 1 August, crossings into Syria for Eid al-Adha commenced through Karkamis, Cilvegozu, and Oncupinar border gates and ended on 19 August. Like the previous Eid period, Syrian refugees applied for temporary return within the scope of Eid al-Adha through an online appointment system to the respective border gate and were issued travel permits from PDMMs where they reside to travel to the border. Arrivals back into Turkey have commenced on 26 August and will continue until 31 December as per the national authorities' instructions. Syrian refugees are required to keep and present their documentation upon their return to Turkey. To measure perception of Syrian refugees who returned temporarily to Syria during the Eid-period, the Post-Eid Perceptions questionnaire was finalised with relevant partners. Three trainings were conducted in Istanbul, Gaziantep and Izmir with UN Agencies and NGOs that will participate in the exercise to capture impressions of Syrian refugees on their visit. In total, approximately 700 Syrians, who returned to their countries with the permission given by the Turkish Government, will be interviewed. The results of the interviews will be analysed into a perceptions report, expected by mid-January 2019.

Self-reliance and livelihoods support: FAO and UNHCR launched their 2018 agricultural livelihoods trainings with the "Vocational Training Inauguration Ceremony" on 15 August in Gaziantep. The project "Enhancing Agricultural Knowledge of Refugees and Host Communities to Expand Livelihood Opportunities" is funded by the EU and aims to increase the self-reliance of 500 beneficiaries coming from refugee and host communities in Adana, Mersin, Izmir, Gaziantep, Mardin and Sanliurfa in 2018.

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