

TURKEY

April 2020

Key Figures (as of 28 April 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

330,000

COVID-19-related posters, leaflets and booklets printed by UNHCR in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Health and distributed

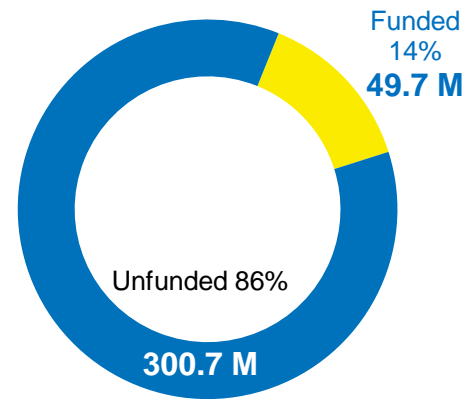
60,000

Followers and likes of UNHCR's Communication with Communities Facebook Page

Funding (as of 29 April 2020)

USD 350.4 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Information posted on the UNHCR Turkey Information Page on Facebook. Posts are in Arabic and Farsi.

Communication with Communities

The **UNHCR Counselling Line** has been operating in full teleworking mode since 23 March with 34 operators. Until 30 April, the line answered a total number of 13,059 calls without interruption in service. In April alone, 8,814 calls were answered with a 97 per cent answer rate for queued calls, providing counselling on services, procedures, referrals and existing support mechanisms, and more specifically providing temporary and international protection status holders access to the Government's messaging on COVID-19 in different languages, as well as related information and counselling. In April, the calls were generally related to financial assistance, resettlement and assistance for persons with specific needs. The **Refugee Call Centre** in Sanliurfa answered 237 calls in April. Most queries were about financial support and social assistance.

Through its main digital communication platform, **Help**, UNHCR continues to share information about rights, obligations and available services with persons of concern. Help provides information to refugees across a range of themes, from registration and documentation to education and livelihoods. In Turkey, Help is available in four languages (English, Turkish, Arabic and Farsi). In April, the Help website got 42,562 users and 130,330 views.

UNHCR's followers continue to grow on the Facebook page, known as the **UNHCR Turkey Information Board**, with approximately 60,000 followers and likes. UNHCR doubled its Facebook posts in April, reaching 70 posts including four videos reaching around 1,300,000 people. The posts on, and replies to, refugee queries were predominantly COVID-19 related.

The **Services Advisor** platform continues to be updated with information to serve refugees better during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the pandemic was declared and mitigation measures announced, services which were being provided remotely were identified and marked accordingly, and agencies providing specific services to alleviate the negative impact of COVID-19 on refugees were contacted to include their services in the platform. Some 23 partners (out of 79) in 284 locations changed to remote service provision, while 10 partners added services to minimize the impact of COVID-19. The majority of these services are awareness-raising, counselling, psychosocial support and referrals. In April alone 4,963 new users visited the platform.



Sample of the COVID-19 posters developed and distributed in coordination with the Turkish Ministry of Health. Posters were produced in Arabic and Farsi.

A dedicated tab on COVID-19 was created on the Help website, which contained important announcements, resources and useful links in four languages (English, Turkish, Arabic and Farsi). A dedicated tab on education was added within the COVID tab as a resource for students and parents. UNHCR also produced 330,000 COVID-19-related posters, leaflets and booklets printed by UNHCR in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. The materials were distributed to UNHCR, partners, Provincial Directorates of Migration Management in 81 provinces and the Ministry of Health.

A designated **UNHCR Turkey WhatsApp Communications Tree** was created to facilitate rapid information-sharing between UNHCR and refugees and asylum seekers through its focal points and partners. The tree is in Arabic and Farsi and managed by UNHCR, UNHCR focal points in each field location, partner focal points, linked to WhatsApp groups run by refugee committees and communities or partners who can receive the key messages. By the end of April, UNHCR was able to reach 8,216 persons through the WhatsApp tree.

UNHCR also cooperated with the communications team of "Your Guide in Turkey", a website that provides information on living in Turkey to Syrians and other Arabic speakers. The information, which is posted on six Facebook pages managed by the team, has more than 400,000 followers.

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. In South East Turkey, UNHCR completed a consultation exercise with 32 mukhtars in neighbourhoods with high numbers of refugees across the region in order to understand how COVID-19 is affecting communities and how mukhtars are identifying and responding to the needs.

UNHCR partner Support to Life distributed non-food items and hygiene kits provided by UNHCR to 110 Syrian families newly arrived in Hatay from Idlib, and working with the Gaziantep Provincial Department of Family, Labour and Social Services in the distribution of 5,000 hygiene packages through the loyalty support groups of the governorate.

In Istanbul, based on the request of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, UNHCR distributed 10,500 hygiene kits and 2,050 packs of baby diapers to local authorities in the Marmara Region. UNHCR also created a pool of interpreters to support Istanbul Governorate, together with the district governorates and municipalities, in their efforts to reach out to refugees during COVID-19.

A partnership between UNHCR and Denizli Metropolitan Municipality was consolidated on 22 April with the signing of a Letter of Understanding which aims to support self-reliance and access to livelihoods, also including women from the host community.

The Governorate of Sanliurfa established a psychological support line related to COVID-19. Social service experts, psychologists and child development specialists have been assigned to respond to the calls. A similar service is provided by four social service centres in Adiyaman province, one of which offers counselling in Arabic.

On 13 April, UNHCR supplied 500 bottles of liquid soap to an NGO working with refugees living with disabilities and their caregivers. The soap will be used for raising awareness on handwashing within the home.

UNHCR cooperated with Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and district municipalities in the delivery and distribution of hygiene items and personal protective equipment. The cooperation extended to Manisa's Yunus Emre District Municipality which distributed 500 UNHCR-procured hygiene kits on 1 April to refugees and local community members. In Manisa, COVID-19 information materials produced by the Ministry of Health in Arabic and Farsi were also delivered to households, and individuals were counselled on access to services in emergency situations. Furthermore, 2,670 hygiene packages were provided to authorities in Izmir on 20 April including the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Buca District Municipality, Buca Sub-Governorate and Izmir Provincial Directorate of Religious Affairs. The items were distributed taking precautions to ensure that there is no duplication of assistance across districts.



A team, working with Yunus Emre Municipality, supported by UNHCR, identified households in need as a result of C-19, those over 65, and those with chronic diseases in Manisa. The families were provided with supplementary hygiene kits and C-19 related information in Arabic and Farsi. ©UNHCR

Education during times of COVID-19

UNHCR continues to support **tertiary education** for the 2019-2020 academic year through DAFI which supports 595 Syrians and 67 refugees of other nationalities. UNHCR also supports 149 students in coordination with YTB through cash grants.

UNHCR and YTB agreed to adapt the role of 27 **Higher Education advisors** to provide more targeted support to its 744 Syrian scholarship students with increased monitoring and support to help with challenges in online learning. The role of the higher education advisors will include regular follow up through phone calls, WhatsApp and Facebook groups. YTB is re-allocating students to the advisors and UNHCR is developing first 'questions' and a new toolkit to guide and structure the advisors' activities. The support 'toolkit' will include a 'directory of services' which advisors can use to refer students for assistance outside the scope of 'academic' support.

Some 700 refugee children supported with Turkish language courses have now transitioned to online learning. The Ankara Provincial Directorate of Family, Labour and Social Services (PDoFLSS) has been treating the continuation of all courses delivered to children as a priority action which has greatly benefitted the refugees. Following the suspension of all classroom learning by the Ministry of National Education, PDoFLSS had already put in place measures for free and accessible remote online learning. PDoFLSS teachers provided online courses to project beneficiaries, using the existing curriculum as well as the learning programmes of the Yunus Emre Institute and the Directorate General for Migration Management. The teachers also provided internet quotas as a support to the children so they could participate in online meetings. The teachers provided online group courses to children through Zoom and WhatsApp platforms, as well as individual or smaller-group sessions with children who need additional tutoring, as deemed necessary. The teachers also prepared online pre-recorded training videos which the children could access at any time through their family members' WhatsApp groups.

In April, a total 1,182 refugees were supported with different cash programmes, promoting engagement and access to education.

Increasing Multi-Stakeholder Support to the Refugee Response

In compliance with the COVID-19 mitigation measures, all interagency coordination efforts now take place through virtual platforms, including all 3RP sector meetings and the monthly Syria Task Force meeting. The comprehensive shift to virtual coordination aims to ensure that inter-sectoral support to the refugee response continues.

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **3RP Partner Support to Turkey's Response to COVID-19** co-led by UNHCR and UNDP was finalized with partners across sectors with a view to assess how 3RP programmes in Turkey have been impacted by the pandemic and might be re-prioritised to effectively support the Government's response to COVID-19 and to identify new initiatives to respond to the impact. The total additional needs across six sectors stand at USD 157 million.

Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2020 as of 29 April 2020

European Union | USA | Japan | Switzerland | CERF | Germany | Finland | Sweden | Canada | Norway | Netherlands | Denmark | United Kingdom | 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](#)