

TURKEY

April 2021

Key Figures (as of 30 April 2021)

4 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey including over 3.6 million Syrian nationals and close to 320,000 international protection status holders and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live across Turkey in 81 provinces, while 1.6% are hosted in seven temporary accommodation centres managed by DGMM.

1,530

Refugees have departed for resettlement to seven countries in 2021 so far, 78 per cent of whom are Syrians. UNHCR provided over 1,550 submissions for resettlement consideration in April alone.

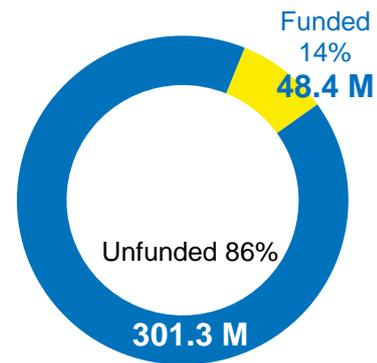
15,670

Calls answered on the UNHCR Counselling line in April with the majority of calls enquiring about resettlement opportunities followed by financial assistance. UNHCR also **received 1,510 calls on its dedicated GBV line.**

Funding (as of 20 April 2021)

USD 349.7 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Syrian artist, Akram Safvan uses his art to explore the human condition. He shares his experience of carving out a life in Turkey after the Syrian conflict forced him to leave behind his home and his art. [Watch the story of Akram here.](#)

UNHCR Representative took part in the [mission of the President of the UN General Assembly](#), H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır, which was mainly devoted to cross border activities and to advocate for the extension of the UN Security Council Resolution in July 2021. The UNGA President visited the Altınözü Boynuyoğun Temporary Accommodation Centre in Hatay and the Altınözü Culture and Art Centre, where the delegation visited production workshops run by a cooperative established by Syrian and Turkish women. The centres were included in the official mission to highlight Turkey's refugee response and policy of inclusion. The cultural centre was built by Altınözü Sub-Governorate and its furnishing was funded by UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council. In 2019, through its partner Support to Life, UNHCR established a professional kitchen, furnished the classrooms and funded Turkish language and food production courses. The centre has been operational since then and continues to provide various courses and employment opportunities to persons under temporary and international protection and Turkish women.

While in the southeast region of Turkey, the Representative also met with the governors of Gaziantep and Hatay. In Gaziantep, the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep, Ms. Fatma Sahin, and the Representative signed a [Letter of Understanding](#) outlining UNHCR's support to the municipality for the production of face masks which were to be produced and distributed to persons in need of international protection and host communities during Ramadan. UNHCR was to provide the raw material for the masks. The signature took place in a ceremony organised at Gaziantep Municipality.



Ms. Fatma Sahin and Mr. Philippe Leclerc sign a Letter of Understanding in Gaziantep. Photo ©Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality

Social Cohesion, Education and Self-Reliance

In collaboration with the Yunusemre District Municipality, UNHCR organised the first of a series of [meetings on access to higher education](#) on 17 April with the participation of 18 YOS (foreign student examination) students and DAFI scholars. The DAFI scholars shared their experiences on preparing for and taking the foreign student exam, as well as scholarship programs for foreign students, university enrolment processes, and potential job opportunities for foreign students. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions on free YOS preparation courses, tuition fees for non-Syrian students and scholarship opportunities. UNHCR shared relevant online information with the participants on access to higher education including UNHCR resources, available scholarships in Turkey, and national guidance booklets. A similar meeting took place in Istanbul this month. The online sessions will be carried out on a regular basis and will eventually lead to networking activities that will continue without UNHCR's involvement in the longer term. UNHCR is therefore compiling common frequently asked questions for partners who provide counselling to refugee youth.

On 13 April UNHCR organised the first [Regional Discussion Platform for Social Enterprises and Cooperatives](#) (PSEC1) for the Aegean Region bringing together relevant actors to understand the needs and dynamics of social entrepreneurship and sustainable income generation for refugees. The forum was within the larger context of self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion of persons in need of international protection. UNHCR collaborated with the Ministry of Trade (MoT) and the World Bank (WB) in organising the event and designing the discussion areas. Around 80 participants from 38 different institutions participated in the event, including the still then, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, the Ministry of Trade, the World Bank, UN agencies, development agencies and NGOs, local authorities and cooperatives.

UNHCR also participated in an event on [Social Entrepreneurship Community of Practice](#) (SECoP) organised by the World Bank on 15 April to foster constructive dialogue and knowledge exchange contributing towards maximizing the potential of social enterprises and entrepreneurship in Turkey. UNHCR had previously organised in February 2021, together with the World Bank and the Ministry of Trade, a Roundtable Meeting on Cooperatives and Social Enterprises as the initial step of the PSEC1 and more recently the regional discussion mentioned above.

Engaging at the Local Level

UNHCR cooperates with local authorities, municipalities and partners across the country to identify needs, provide material assistance and support refugee initiatives mobilising themselves and their communities. Distribution of material needs and hygiene kits to vulnerable populations, both host and refugee, continues across the country.

[Hygiene materials](#) generously donated by the multinational supplier company, Unilever UK, were distributed to persons in need of protection and to host community members across Turkey enabling the most vulnerable to stay safe by enhancing their hygiene at home. The donation includes 300,000 disinfectants and 150,000 bars of soap and was distributed through UNHCR's partners. Read more about Unilever's hygiene support to refugees and the host community in Turkey [here](#).



Distribution of hygiene items donated by Unilever takes place in Trabzon. Photo ©Afghanistan's Hazaras Culture and Solidarity Association in Trabzon.

Access to Justice and Legal Aid

UNHCR completed the [trainings on international protection with 21 bar associations](#) to strengthen the provision of legal aid for refugees and asylum-seekers. The Union of Turkish Bar Associations (UTBA) and UNHCR had undertaken a series of trainings in March and April to provide capacity development support to lawyers at bar associations to increase their knowledge and awareness of refugee-specific legal provisions and challenges. A total of 5,400 lawyers attended the trainings in March and April from bar associations across the country. Lawyers attending these trainings are included in the pool of lawyers assigned to take up legal aid cases of international protection applicants, status holders and temporary protection beneficiaries registered.

Deepening the engagement with the Ministry of Family and Social Services

The Representative also paid a [courtesy visit on 6 April](#) to the [Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services](#), H.E. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk. The Minister thanked UNHCR for its ongoing cooperation and support in social protection, livelihoods, and with its advocacy for larger support by the international community to Turkey. Support provided by UNHCR in 2021 was also discussed during the meeting with an agreement to soon conclude a comprehensive cooperation protocol to cover all areas of cooperation with the Ministry. UNHCR collaborates closely with the ministry for the implementation of the national policy of inclusion of refugees in social protection mechanisms. The cooperation with and support to the ministry focuses on strengthening the capacity of social service centres, child institutions and violence prevention and monitoring centres which provide protective, preventive and supportive services, as well as counselling and rehabilitation. They are supported by UNHCR through staff, vehicles and materials.



Minister Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk and Mr. Philippe Leclerc discuss means of ongoing cooperation during a courtesy visit at the Ministry.
Photo ©MoFLSS

UNHCR works closely with [social service centres \(SSCs\) of the Ministry of Family and Social Services](#) to strengthen collaboration on identifying and implementing solutions for refugees. In April, UNHCR engaged with five SSCs in the Marmara region to discuss activities and challenges which refugees face. Various overarching protection concerns amongst refugees were identified as caused by COVID-19 related factors, thus diminishing livelihoods opportunities. Due to a lack financial means, for instance, many refugee families are unable to provide children access to digital classrooms because of insufficient technological devices in their households, thus affecting their children's education. The decrease in access was noted to be correlated to other child protection concerns such as child labour, where an increasing number of children are engaged in various forms of labour to support their families, with a simultaneous decrease in the average age of children engaged in labour. Through close dialogue with the SSCs, UNHCR is providing tools and technical knowledge to assist in overcoming this phenomenon, while linking the social service centres with relevant stakeholders to work towards resolving the challenges through adherence to official and confidential identification and referral pathways.

Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2021

European Union | USA | Germany | Japan | Republic of Korea | Google | Switzerland | Finland | Sweden | Canada | Norway | Netherlands | Denmark | Ireland | Belgium | Private donors

CONTACTS

Amira Abd El-Khalek, Reporting Officer, Turkey, abdelkha@unhcr.org, Tel: +90 312 409 7420

LINKS

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