

# TURKEY

May 2021

Key Figures (as of 31 May 2021)

## 4 million

**Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey** including over 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection and over 330,000 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.

## 1,955

**Refugees have departed for resettlement** to 11 countries in 2021 so far. UNHCR provided over 800 submissions for resettlement consideration in May despite the full lockdown period from 29 April to 17 May when no resettlement interviews took place.

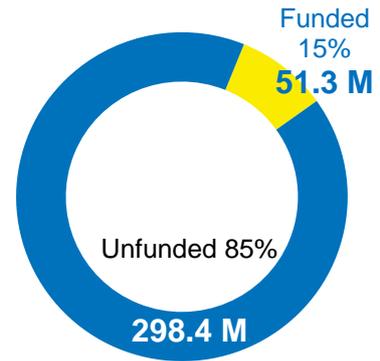
## 14,285

**Calls answered on the UNHCR Counselling Line in May** with the majority of calls enquiring about resettlement opportunities followed by financial assistance. Among those were **1,300 calls on UNHCR's dedicated GBV line.**

Funding (as of 25 May 2021)

## USD 349.7 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



Speeches delivered at the opening ceremony of the two projects: Supporting Removal Centres' Capacities and Fostering Alternatives to Administrative Detention and Supporting DGMM in the Management, Reception and Hosting of Irregular Migrants funded by the European Union.

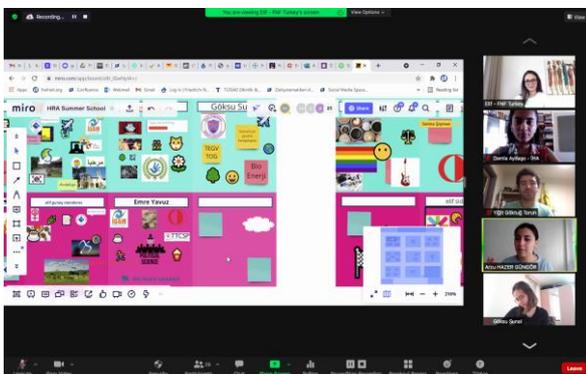
The [opening ceremony](#) of the project “Supporting Removal Centres' Capacities and Fostering Alternatives to Administrative Detention”, funded by the European Union and which will be implemented by UNHCR and IOM for a 36-month period, took place on 31 May. Representatives from various ministries, public institutions, foreign representations of European countries, international organizations, civil society organizations and academia took part in the opening. Opening remarks were delivered by the Deputy Minister of Interior, the Director General of Migration Management, the Director General of Financial Cooperation and Project Implementation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Head of Delegation of the European Union, IOM Chief of Mission and UNHCR Turkey Representative. The speakers all expressed positive regard for the long-standing cooperation in the area of migration management and international protection in Turkey, and the dedicated work and support of all institutions and organizations involved.

The speeches were followed by brief presentations on the Removal Centre Project and activities to be implemented jointly by UNHCR and IOM. The launch of the second phase of the project, “Supporting DGMM in the Management, Reception and Hosting of Irregular Migrants” implemented by DGMM with funding from the European Union also took place on that day. The two projects aim to strengthen the institutional, technical and operational capacities of the removal centres to provide improved services to persons under administrative detention.

## Legal Aid and Protection

On 27 and 28 May, the Legal Counsellors Group, part of the South East Turkey Protection Working Group organized the first two sessions of its [2021 Legal Webinar Series](#) which will last through July. UNHCR co-facilitated the first two webinars: one in cooperation with IOM on International Protection with around 230 participants, and the other in cooperation with CARE on Temporary Protection with around 250 participants. Participants of both webinars were from national and international NGOs, donors, municipalities and UN agencies. Eleven more sessions are planned to be held within the coming months. A similar series of webinars was held in 2020 and found to be beneficial to develop the capacity of caseworkers to address the gaps concerning access to legal remedies.

UNHCR facilitated a session on international protection and appeal procedures in support of the [refugee law certificate training](#) organized by the Ankara Bar Association. Approximately 400 lawyers attended the one-day virtual training which covered procedures and protection mechanisms for persons with special needs, as well as deportation and administrative detention procedures, smuggling and human trafficking and legal aid practices. Participants engaged with the facilitators and posed various questions directly related to their work, specifically on appeal mechanisms.



Participants of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation training programme take part in interactive online exercises during the training.

On 24 May, UNHCR kicked off a jointly facilitated [training programme with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the Human Rights Academy](#). The three-week programme focuses on providing a comprehensive understanding of refugee protection to young professionals with backgrounds in social sciences and law, and to prepare them to respond to refugee protection issues and needs they would encounter. Four sessions were held in May with 25 participants, focusing on general principles of refugee protection and the international and national legal frameworks on international protection. The training is planned to continue in June.

## COVID-19 Support

UNHCR is reaching out to refugee communities across the country to inform them about Turkey's [COVID-19 vaccination scheme](#) and to raise awareness on the benefits of vaccination in the interest of public health. Among these efforts in the South East region, UNHCR organized three [focus group discussions](#) with male and female groups from Adana and Hatay on the usage of the HES code and on the vaccination. While the use of HES code is generally understood, refugees expressed their reluctance to get vaccinated; some also expressed an inability to obtain an appointment because of language barriers. UNHCR conducts regular meetings with its partners to better understand the situation and to advise and suggest solutions. While there is a reluctance in some provinces in the South East region, in others, the rate and speed of vaccination are high both among refugees and the host community.

### 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.

In the Marmara region, UNHCR delivered around 18,800 packages of baby diapers to 11 municipalities in six provinces in May. The municipalities in turn will distribute the diapers to the vulnerable communities, both host and refugee. The request for diapers came from the municipalities who witnessed a general increase in families' need of basic items in view of the difficult economic situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimated numbers of diapers were made in cooperation with municipalities based on information of refugee populations within their areas of jurisdiction. During the month of Ramadan and especially with the full lockdown, UNHCR and its partners were engaged in mapping municipal service provision, advocating for the inclusion of refugees in their support programmes. At least seven municipalities in the region included refugees in their food distributions.

UNHCR delivered over 700 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste to the Altınözü Health Directorate in Hatay. The items will be distributed to the children residing in Altınözü temporary accommodation centre as part of a health project conducted by the health directorate.

### Inter-Agency

UNHCR, together with UNFPA, coordinated and co-chaired the first [National Gender-Based Violence sub-Working Group](#) meeting which had not convened since early 2019. It was held on 5 May with 64 participants from 40 organizations, including multiple women-led and refugee-led organizations, as well as national and international NGOs, all of which constituted around 88 per cent of the participants, and UN agencies. During the meeting, co-chairs facilitated discussions around expectations of the sub-working group, terms of reference, the national workplan.

The [third-round of the protection sector inter-agency needs assessment](#) was released in May. The assessment, which is conducted on a quarterly basis, was carried out via 16 sector partners and nine municipalities in January 2021 with a sample size of 1,173 individuals (representing a total of 5,862 persons at the household level). The comparative analysis shows the impact of COVID-19 on refugee communities and their needs with regards to thematic areas, including protection and community level concerns; access to information; access to rights and services, including health and education; work and income; and access to basic needs. The third round also included thematic inquiry areas on access to legal aid, emergency preparedness and occupational health and safety. The findings of the assessment revealed that, overall, levels of information on rights and services

remain high, with 75% of respondents indicating having enough information on rights and services, and 89% indicating they were able to receive information in their own language. Access to essential services seem to be deteriorating slightly over time. The working status of a large majority (76%) has changed negatively, which was also evident in previous rounds of the assessment. There is a decrease in socio-economic indicators over time, and protection and community level concerns remain serious, however unchanged compared to the previous round. The highest ranked protection concern is increased stress at both individual (62%) and community (61%) levels, particularly for Afghan (87%) and Iranian (86%) nationals.

## Education

UNHCR Representative engaged with students of the Faculty of Business of Izmir's Dokuz Eylül University in an online session on 27 May. Through the discussion with the students, Mr. Leclerc gave an overview of asylum and international protection policies, the refugee situation in general and specifically in Turkey, as well as the role of UNHCR and the Government of Turkey in the protection of refugees and durable solutions. The Representative addressed students' questions and provided some insight into his own experiences working for the UN Refugee Agency. UNHCR established a cooperation with the university, which was reflected in a Letter of Understanding signed in June 2021.



UNHCR Representatives and students of DEU Faculty of Business in an online discussion on protection and asylum.

## Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2021

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## LINKS

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