

Caring for those most vulnerable

UNHCR, with generous funding from its donors, including the Government of Kuwait has provided 10 pre-fabricated health clinics in camp and non-camp areas, for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. The primary health clinics offer free service, referrals to hospitals and medicines and are a lifeline to a population desperate for help.

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey. 5 May (UNHCR): “My son has fever and diarrhea,” says Samia (30). “I am waiting to see the doctor, we are treated very well here,” she says. Originally from Aleppo, Samia is one of many patients, waiting to see the doctors at the pre-fabricated health clinic in Ceylanpinar camp, home to 19,000 refugees from Syria.

Zainab (65), is here with her children and grand children. A widow, she was forced to leave Aleppo three years ago, when their home was hit by a rocket propelled grenade. “All the apartments near our house also fell down because of the rocket bomb,”

she says, waiting for a referral to the hospital in Ceylanpinar town, where she will be treated for respiratory

problems. The authorities provide free transport for patients who are referred to the larger hospital in town—the clinic provides primary and basic health care on site. “People treat us with respect here,” she says. “Even when there is a line, they sometimes let us elder people go first.”



Finishing touches to the pre-fabricated health clinic in Kahramanmaraş camp, handed over to the authorities at the end of April. ©UNHCR/N.Bose



Nur Sultan vaccinating a child in the clinic in Ceylanpinar camp. ©UNHCR, N. Bose

Nur Sultan (44) is a Turkish nurse who works full time at the clinic, without a salary. “We lack staff,” she says. “It is not easy to see to so many patients on a day,” busy vaccinating children as she speaks. About 400 refugees use the clinic on a daily basis. But she wanted to come and work with refugees. “This could happen to me as well,” she says, simply. “I could become a refugee. We are all human beings.”

The Government of Turkey has done a remarkable job of providing for refugees, including free primary health care. However, with numbers so high —1.7 million Syrian refugees in country—its capacities are stretched. Turkey hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees globally. To help cope with rising needs, UNHCR, with generous funding from its donors and in

particular the Government of Kuwait, has provided ten such pre-fabricated health clinics in camp and non-camp areas: Ceylanpinar (camp and town); Akcakale camp, Viransehir camp, Adiyaman camp, Nizip town, K.Maras camp, and Kilis and Reyhanli towns. Each clinic costs US \$ 800,000 and the Government of Kuwait has funded four of these in Turkey. Kuwait, however is one of UNHCR's most generous funders to the Syria crisis globally, with US \$ 110 million in 2013--the largest ever for UNHCR from a Gulf nation--followed by US \$ 100 million in 2014.

In the border town of Ceylanpinar, the pre -fabricated clinic is an extension of the local government hospital, located right next door. With six doctors in attendance at the clinic, about 15,000 people use its facilities in a month. This includes the Syrian refugees in the town--estimated to be at 20,000 people--- as well as locals.

Jelan (33) originally from Damascus, works as a dishwasher in a local restaurant in Ceylanpinar town. Her elder sister does the same and they support an extended family of nine. Huddled together in two rooms, the family survives on a hand-to-mouth existence. She is at the clinic to be treated for tonsillitis. "I have come here before," she says. "We



come, because this is for Syrians. Once, when I was very sick, I got medicines free of charge. Normally we pay a small cost for medicines." Eighty per cent of the cost is always covered by the clinics, in some areas, even 100%.

Refugees are grateful for the services the clinic provides in the camp and in town. For a people who have fled the most appalling of situations in the most traumatic of conditions, any help is thought of as a God-send.

"Our rents are high," continues Jelana. "We live in difficult situations. We have no money, we have nothing. Without the clinic, we could even die," she laments.

Mohammad Rustom (30), lives in the camp with this wife, three children and 80-year old mother. They escaped from Aleppo following the route of the river, Asi. Terrified of drowning on the way, they were eight people in a rickety small boat, plus luggage. He is grateful that his family is alive and is able to use the facilities the camp offers. "Before, there was a tent, instead of a proper clinic," he says. "This is so much better, we are very happy with the clinic.

The waiting area in the clinic in Ceylanpinar camp. All the pre-fabricated clinics are built in the same style and offer similar services: basic health care, including medical examinations. Complicated cases are referred, to near-by hospitals.

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Thank you, Kuwait."

UNHCR remains grateful to the generous funding it receives from all its donors to its operations in Turkey. In particular, to the Government of Kuwait for funding four of these pre-fabricated clinics that are a life line to thousands of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

By: Nayana Bose, in Ceylanpinar (town and camp) and Kahramanmaras camp

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