



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR TURKEY – DONOR IMPACT STORIES

“It came just at the right time”

Istanbul/Ankara - Turkey, December 2016 (UNHCR): It is a freezing cold morning, when we all bustled into the Sherif family’s ground floor apartment in Istanbul’s Tarlabaşı neighbourhood. The kids were busy dipping their breadsticks into their tea munching on their breakfast, when a group of us from UNHCR and our local partner ASAM came through the door. We are here to carry out a household assessment of the family, to see if they are eligible for UNHCR’s winter assistance. The excitement of visitors sends the three children running around the room.

Over the course of the 2016-2017 winter season, UNHCR plans to provide one-off winter assistance to over 510,000 vulnerable refugees living in urban, peri-urban and rural areas across 50 of Turkey’s 81 provinces. In order to identify beneficiary families, UNHCR is carrying out house visit through four partner NGOs.

Vulnerable families may receive debit cards in PTT post offices throughout the country, which can be used in all shops across the MasterCard network. The assistance ranges from USD 200 to USD 300, depending on family sizes. This assistance was made available with the support of several donors, in particular the Government of the United States.

Husseyin Ali Sherif and his family fled to Turkey from Aleppo two years ago. While Husseyin Ali has a stand selling water in Istanbul’s central Taksim square, an injury sustained five years ago has left him struggling to work long hours. His wife, Varda was recently hospitalized after the birth of their fourth child, who died after just seven days. Varda’s treatment exhausted the family’s savings, leaving them



A refugee caseworker visits the Sherif family to assess their needs and vulnerability for UNHCR’s winter assistance. Istanbul ©UNHCR /Esther Judah

in debt and unable to pay the rent. The house visit find Sherif’s family eligible for UNHCR’s winter assistance.

“We will use this assistance to buy coal and wood for the stove. We have been collecting plastic to burn in the last few days.” Varda says. The temperature dropped significantly since winter has fallen, and heating is a priority for all families.

In Ankara, Ali was very happy to receive the card from a PTT office. “It came just at the right time”, with the first snow falling over the city. As of 15 December, 56,415 families have received UNHCR’s winter assistance. Over TL 45 million



A mother signs the form upon receiving the assistance at a PTT office in Istanbul. ©UNHCR/Emrah Guler

have been loaded to the cards, and over TL 40 million has been spent by the beneficiaries, indicating the urgent needs of those receiving them.

The Government of the United States has contributed over USD 66 million to UNHCR Turkey in 2016. These funds helped UNHCR to provide all types of protection and assistance activities for Syrian refugees living outside of the refugee camps in Turkey.

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