

# Frequently Asked Questions for Syrian Refugees in Turkey

2017



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

*For more information about your rights, obligations and services available  
for you, please contact UNHCR Counselling Line: 444 48 68*

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# LEGAL FRAMEWORK

## **Legal framework for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey**

On 22 October 2014, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey issued a regulation on Temporary Protection (TP), as per Article 91 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection. According to Provisional Article 1 of the Temporary Protection Regulation, the regulation applies to Syrian nationals, as well as stateless persons and refugees from Syria. Mentioned individuals who came to Turkey due to the events in Syrian Republic since 28 April 2011 shall be covered under Temporary Protection.

The regulation in Turkish is available at:

<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022 -15-1.pdf>

## **What is the Temporary Protection regime and to whom does it apply?**

The Temporary Protection (TP) regime established by the Government of Turkey (GoT) is in line with international standards for dealing with sudden and large increases of numbers of refugees crossing the border.

The Directorate General of Migration Management is the responsible governmental entity for all asylum procedures in Turkey including the Temporary Protection.

As part of the Temporary Protection regime, Syrian nationals, refugees and stateless persons from Syria who seek protection from the Turkish authorities should under normal circumstances be admitted to Turkey, seek and receive TP. They should also not be sent back to their country of origin unless they themselves request to do so.

Under the Temporary Protection regime, beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are to be provided with protection and assistance in Turkey, which includes legal stay in Turkey until a more permanent solution is found, protection against forcible returns, access to reception arrangements where immediate needs are addressed.

All Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection who seek protection shall be covered by the Temporary Protection regime, including those who are not able to present any identification documents from Syria; unless determined otherwise by the Turkish authorities as per relevant articles of the Temporary Protection Regulation.<sup>1</sup>

The rights granted to Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection whether they are residing in or out of the camps are enumerated under the Temporary Protection

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically Article 8 of Temporary Protection Regulation

Once/if you have been admitted to Turkey from Syria or from a third country (with a visa), you have a right to seek and receive Temporary Protection Regulation which enshrines a range of rights, services and assistance including access to health, education, social assistance and access to the labour market.

If you wish to seek protection, you need to inform the Turkish authorities that you are seeking TP from the Government of Turkey – Directorate General of Migration Management or Provincial Directorates of Migration Management.

### **Can I as a Syrian apply for international protection in Turkey?**

According to the Temporary Protection Regulation (Article 16 and Provisional Article 1), individual international protection applications of Syrians within the scope of the TP (Syrians, stateless persons and refugees who came to Turkey due to the events in Syria since 28 April 2011) shall not be processed for the duration of the TP implementation in Turkey even if they have lodged an application for international protection. Those who applied for international protection before 28 April 2011 shall be covered under Temporary Protection upon their own request.

### **Does the Temporary Protection regime guarantee access to Turkey?**

Admission to Turkey is managed by the Turkish authorities. All border gates and border crossing points (land, air, and seaports) are strictly managed by the Turkish authorities. Given that the situation at the borders are highly volatile due to changing security situation, the Turkish authorities determine which border gates or crossing points remain open for admission of Syrians.

Under normal circumstances, Syrian passport holders may legally access Turkey through open land borders without visas. Since January 2016, those Syrians coming to Turkey from third countries, through air or sea entry points, need to present a valid passport and a visa in order to be admitted to Turkey. Failure to present a valid passport and a visa may lead to being returned to the third country where they travelled from.

The admission of Syrians without passports at official open border crossings is strictly controlled by the Turkish authorities and admission is generally limited to emergency medical situations and at times for family reunification cases.

UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government for unrestricted access to the territory, and also to draw the attention of authorities to the protection risks that Syrians face when forced to resort to irregular entry.

Once/if you have been admitted to Turkey from Syria or from a third country (with a visa), you have a right to seek and receive Temporary Protection from the



Turkish authorities. If you have entered irregularly, you should later be able to regularize your stay through registration at Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (please also see ***What if I entered and stayed in Turkey irregularly (illegally)?***).

### **Can Palestinians ex-Syria also enter Turkey without a visa?**

In principle, Palestinians, who seek to enter Turkey from Syria are subject to the same rules applicable to Syrians under the Temporary Protection Regulation. The Temporary Protection regime specifically ensures that Palestinians from Syria are granted the same protection envisaged for Syrian nationals. Palestinians who arrive to Turkey via a third country through air or sea borders need to similarly present an official passport and visa for admission to Turkish territory. The practice to date indicates that, in the absence of a visa, they may be returned to the third country they have travelled from.

Refugee and stateless persons including Palestinians who were in Syria but are coming from third countries, can be covered under Temporary Protection. However, Turkish authorities may take their international protection applications instead of Temporary Protection.

### **I have applied for Temporary Protection but have been rejected. What should I do?**

If you have arrived to Turkey from a third country (other than Syria) before 22 October 2016 and sought TP from the Turkish authorities, you may have been refused Temporary Protection for having arrived from a third country. However, since the mentioned date, the Turkish authorities have resumed processing TP applications of Syrians arriving from a third country in addition to those arriving directly from Syria. Therefore, please re- approach the relevant Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in your province to seek protection.

If you have followed the above mentioned procedures and have still been refused TP by the Turkish authorities, the Turkish authorities may have other concerns regarding your background or identity. In this case, you have the right to seek legal assistance/aid to know the reason of your exclusion (please see below for ***Where could I receive legal support, aid or assistance as a Syrian?***) and/or apply for a residence permit under Law on Foreigners and International Protection as any other foreigner in Turkey. Having a residence permit will not provide you the same safeguards, such as protection from forcible return, and rights, such as free access to health services, as the TP regime. You may seek assistance from Provincial Directorates of Migration Management in this regard and/or reach out to UNHCR for counselling on what steps to follow.

### **What if I entered and am staying in Turkey irregularly (illegally)?**

Individuals who seek Temporary Protection in Turkey shall not be punished (such as administrative fines) for entering Turkey through irregular (illegal) ways or for irregular stay as long as they are identified by Turkish authorities when entering Turkey or if they approach the Turkish authorities themselves within a reasonable time period and provide a valid reason for irregular (illegal) entry and presence in Turkey. Therefore, if you have entered Turkey irregularly, you should approach the Turkish authorities as soon as possible for registration and explain why you had to resort to irregular ways during your entry or stay.



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# REGISTRATION WITH THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES

## **Should I register with the Turkish authorities?**

The Government of Turkey is the principal provider of protection in Turkey. Registration with the Turkish authorities therefore is the most important way of securing your rights in Turkey. Registration is an important obligation for foreigners in Turkey as it forms the legal basis for your legal stay in Turkey and allows you access to public services. Registration protects you against forced return to your country.

Syrians seeking protection who do not register with the authorities cannot benefit from any services or assistance in Turkey, including access to health, education, social assistance or work opportunities. If you are not registered, UNHCR, other UN agencies and NGOs would also face obstacles when trying to assist you. Therefore, it is extremely important that all Syrians register with the Turkish authorities.

## **How can I register with the Turkish authorities?**

Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey are registered by the Turkish authorities. The Temporary Protection Regulation clearly mandates Directorate General of Migration Management to carry out the registration of individuals under the Temporary Protection regime. The Directorate General of Migration Management is the national asylum institution working under the authority of the Ministry of Interior; it was established under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection.

Registrations of Syrians are conducted throughout Turkey except for a few provinces. You should approach the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in the province where you wish to register. During registration, you are expected to provide correct identification information and submit any available documents you may have from Syria and cooperate with the Turkish officials. If you do not have any documents from Syria, authorities would take your registration based on your testimony. If you need an interpreter during your registration, please request this from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management as you have a right to ask for an interpreter, free of charge.

The registration location is de facto according to the province.

As of the beginning of 2016, Syrians seeking protection in Turkey need to be pre-registered by the Turkish authorities before being able to register as TP beneficiaries. During pre-registration, the bio-data, contact details, fingerprints and photos of applicants are taken by the Alien's Police. You may find out about the location/address

of the registration locations from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of the province you are at.

During pre-registration, you will be provided with a preliminary pre-registration document indicating you need to approach the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in 30-days to receive the Temporary Protection Identification Document (TPID). This preliminary document entitles lawful stay in the country and is issued free of charge.

The 30-day period is foreseen for completion of security checks. This period however may be extended based on the backlog of the Provincial Directorates of Migration Management and/or individual circumstances of the applicant. Syrians have access to emergency health services during the pre-registration period. If you have a new-born baby who needs to be registered, s/he would be prioritized for issuance of TPID cards as long as you provide the birth report or certificate.

You will be interviewed by the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management prior to any action if you could not pass the security check. Directorate General of Migration Management shall issue a decision on individual basis if a person is assessed to be excluded from Temporary Protection. Since every administrative decision can be challenged at the courts, persons can appeal the decision of Directorate General of Migration Management through legal procedures. (Please also see ***What if I entered and stayed in Turkey irregularly (illegally)?***).

Applicants who pass the security checks will be issued with the TPID card and will have access to the entire set of rights and services regulated in the Temporary Protection Regulation. As mentioned, the waiting periods for registration may vary depending upon the location of the refugee and the volume of registration that the authorities may have pending.

The Directorate General of Migration Management retains the authority for carrying out registration of refugees residing in camps through registration facilities located within each camp.

All Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey are protected against forced return to Syria. Nobody shall be returned to Syria against their will.

## **What is the Syrian verification exercise?**

- **What is verification?**

Verification is a way for an authorized party, in our situation the Government of Turkey, to update the data taken about you and your family during registration, add new data,

complete missing data and provide you with updated and useful information on access to services and assistance in Turkey as a Syrian refugee. Since your registration with the Turkish Government you may have had changes in your family composition, i.e. new birth, death, marriage, divorce, some of your family members may have left Turkey, your needs may have changed, new address and contact information, etc. This is the time to give all this important information so that the Government and other service providers can assist you accordingly. Additionally, it is very important that you double check that your contact information is accurate so that you can be contacted when information needs to be shared with you.

- **Who is conducting the verification?**

The verification project is managed and conducted by the Turkish Government: the Directorate General of Migration Management, in collaboration with Provincial Directorates of Migration Management. In your province, the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management will conduct the verification. UNHCR has been supporting Directorate General of Migration Management in developing this project.

- **Why is Directorate General of Migration Management conducting verification?** The Turkish government and their service providers need to have updated and more detailed information in order to identify the needs of the refugees and to respond accordingly. This includes looking at the possibility of obtaining work permits, referral to medical service providers, assistance providers, enabling the school enrolment of your children, etc.

- **What information is going to be verified?**

All the data that was provided during the registration interview will be verified, i.e. name, contact information, address, family members, specific needs, etc. The fingerprinting and photograph of you and your family members will also be verified and recorded if it has not been already. Any new or missing information or changes in your situation will also be recorded, such as marriage, death, disabilities, divorce, etc.

- **Who will be verified through this verification exercise?**

All Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection who are living in Turkey under Temporary Protection; this means all Syrians who have been registered with the Turkish Government and have a TPID card. However, not all Syrians are expected to come forward at the same time. The project will roll out in phases, taking place at different times in different parts of the country. In due time, the schedule for the remaining provinces will be available from Directorate General of Migration Management and be communicated to you through Directorate General of Migration Management / Provincial Directorate of Migration Management / UNHCR.

- **Who will not be verified through this verification exercise?**

Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection who are not registered yet or have only completed the pre-registration phase, which was introduced as a first step in March 2016, but are still waiting for their registration are not included in this verification project at this point.

Other refugees who are not Syrian will not be verified through this project. Mixed families of Syrian and non-Syrian individuals, however, will be verified (i.e. non-Syrian man married to a Syrian woman, non-Syrian woman married to a Syrian man, non-Syrian woman widow/divorcee with Syrian children).

- **What happens if I and/or my family do not obtain an appointment to be verified or do not show up to our appointment?**

Please make another appointment and explain to the authorities why you failed in your first appointment.

- **Will verification affect my status in Turkey?**

You are covered under the TP provided by Government of Turkey as long as you are residing in Turkey. This means nothing will change in your status and in the protection you receive from the Turkish authorities. The verification will re-confirm your presence in Turkey, update your information and record your changes, if any. As such, you will remain to be known to the Government and benefit from the rights, services and assistance given to Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey.

- **Does being verified mean I am registered or recorded with UNHCR?**

No. Registration of Syrians in Turkey is conducted by the Directorate General of Migration Management / Provincial Directorate of Migration Management only. UNHCR is supporting the relevant Turkish authorities to verify already registered Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in order to ensure provision of assistance and services for those who qualify.

- **Where and when is the verification being conducted?**

The verification exercise is divided into different phases; it will take place at different times throughout the country. You will be informed when verification starts in your province through the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. You can also call the DGMM call center on 157 or visit [www.goc.gov.tr](http://www.goc.gov.tr) or [www.unhcr.org/turkey](http://www.unhcr.org/turkey) for further details.



- **How can I make an appointment for verification?**

It is sufficient for the head of the household or his/her spouse or an adult dependent to obtain an appointment by going to a verification center and requesting an appointment. Do not send your children, friend, or relative to take an appointment on your behalf. Please call the DGMM call center on 157 or visit [www.goc.gov.tr](http://www.goc.gov.tr) or [www.unhcr.org/turkey](http://www.unhcr.org/turkey) for further details.

- **What should I bring with me to take an appointment?**

You should take all your family members and the TPID cards of your family members, passports, Syrian ID cards and all other documents you possess.

- **Who can make an appointment for me/my family?**

We do not have this information yet, however it is advisable that the head of the household approaches Provincial Directorate of Migration Management to obtain an appointment. Do not send your children, a friend, or relative to take an appointment on your behalf. Make sure you take with you all official ID, including the TPID card, for you and your family when you approach Provincial Directorate of Migration Management to obtain an appointment.

- **What do I do if I am not registered with the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management?**

If you are not registered with the Turkish authorities, please approach the closest Provincial Directorate of Migration Management and take an appointment for your registration as soon as possible. You will eventually be part of the verification exercise but at a later stage and you will be notified in due time.

Please remember that international protection in Turkey and access to rights can only be received upon registration with the Turkish authorities: access to basic health care, access to schools, and application for a work permit, assistance given by the authorities, etc.

- **Do I make an appointment for verification in the city that I was registered in or residing in at the moment?**

According to the information that UNHCR has received, you can be verified in the city that you are residing in. You can double check this information with the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management officials in your province.

- **Will I be resettled to a third country if I approach for verification?**

Completing the verification process is not linked to resettlement. Resettlement does not apply to everyone as there are limited quotas. Submitting a case for resettlement also has its own criteria that may or may not be applicable to you. The Turkish authorities are referring vulnerable cases for resettlement consideration. The

verification exercise may help the authorities to identify the needs of families with vulnerabilities if they are not already known to them.

- **What if I do not take part or do not want to take part in the verification exercise?**

Not taking part in the verification project is not to your advantage and we highly advise you not to do so. The government may consider that you have left Turkey and may close your application for temporary protection. This may put you in an irregular (illegal) status and bar your access to your rights and the available assistance. In case of a serious situation, you may be at risk of deportation from Turkey. Therefore every Syrian refugee is strongly recommended to approach the relevant authority and place to attend the verification procedure.

- **When will verification end?**

Verification will be completed as soon as possible for all Syrians. All Syrians are expected to approach PDMs for completion of verification.

**I do not want to seek protection from the Turkish authorities as a refugee.  
Do I have alternative ways of staying in Turkey?**

Syrians who do not wish to benefit from the Temporary Protection framework may apply for a residence permit (*ikamet*). There are different types of residence permits as envisaged by Law on Foreigners and International Protection and residence permit applications will only be considered if the individuals meet the requirements envisaged for the specific type of residency under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection including the need to have a valid passport and demonstrating an amount of money in your bank account etc. Further guidance on requirements for obtaining residence permits may be received from Provincial Directorate of Migration Management offices throughout the country.

It is important to note however that Syrians who do not wish to seek protection from the authorities may be deprived of assistance from UNHCR that they might otherwise receive as refugees. This is because UNHCR is mandated to assist asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey.

- **I wanted to seek Temporary Protection from the Turkish authorities but I was not able to. What can I do?**

If you wanted and attempted to seek protection from the Turkish authorities but you were not able to receive Temporary Protection, please explain this to UNHCR



and/ or its partners so that UNHCR can try to assist you in receiving Temporary Protection. You may also see legal assistance.

### **Would registration with the Turkish authorities limit my possibility to seek asylum in another country?**

In principle, registration with the Turkish authorities is not an obstacle against seeking asylum in another country. Each country has its own asylum policy and how they would process your application would very much depend on the particular legislation of the country you would be seeking asylum.

### **How can I be placed in camps / temporary accommodation centers?**

The Emergency and Disaster Management Agency of the Republic of Turkey (AFAD) is responsible for the management of refugee camps in Turkey. However, placement to a camp needs to be coordinated through Directorate-General of Migration Management. Accordingly, if an individual wishes to be placed in a camp, he/she would need to approach the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in the province where s/he is and submit a petition indicating reasons for requesting camp placement. Provincial Directorates of Migration Management through their central authority (Directorate General of Migration Management) will coordinate the requests with the relevant governorates and AFAD on the availability of space and possibility of placement and will inform you if your request can be accommodated.

It is worth noting that the demand for camps has surpassed the available spaces in the camps. Whether or not a Syrian refugee is placed and registered in a camp, as well as which camp, is at the discretion of the Government of Turkey. As per the temporary protection regulation, persons with special needs identified by Directorate General of Migration Management or by the governorates shall be prioritized for camp placement.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

### **Are registered Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection free to move within Turkey?**

Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection living outside of the camps need to obtain a travel permission document (*yol izin belgesi*) from the Provincial Directorates of Migration Management in the province where they are residing. The travel permission may be issued for temporary periods, allowing the individual to travel to another city/province. In some locations, Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are also obliged to abide by regular reporting duties such as signature duties. Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection who are residing in provinces where there is such a reporting duty shall abide by their duties.

Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection staying in camps would need to obtain leave permissions from camp management if they wish to leave the camps for movement within the province where they reside. If they wish to travel to another province, they would also need to obtain a travel permission document from the Provincial Directorates of Migration Management as explained above.

### **Can I change my city of registration/residence in Turkey as a Syrian under Temporary Protection?**

If you are a Syrian under temporary protection and wish to change your city of registration/residence, you need to approach the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in the city where you are residing and provide a petition explaining the reasons why and where to you wish to change your city of residence. If you are already in a city other than your city of registration, you may also approach the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of that particular city to request the city change. The Provincial Directorate of Migration Management authorities may accept your petition or ask you to go back to your original city of residence and file your petition there.

There are certain criteria indicated within the applicable law that could allow a change of your city of residence/registration such as family links or health-related issues. Provincial Directorates of Migration Management will inform you whether your request can be accommodated or not.

### **What if I do not reside in the city where I am registered?**

If you are living in another city other than your city of registration, you would not be able to access the rights, services and assistance in this city. If you wish to benefit from the rights, services and assistance in Turkey, you either need to reside in your city of registration or change your city of registration to where you are currently residing (*see point above*).

In some locations, Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are also obliged to attend signature / fingerprinting duties on a regular basis.

If you do not abide by your duties outlined under the Temporary Protection Regulation, there could be consequences such as administrative fines or limitations on your rights.

### **Can I travel back and forth from Turkey while under Temporary Protection?**

No. If you travel from Turkey to another country (Syria or a third country), your protection under Temporary Protection would be cancelled. Although in principle you would have the right to seek protection upon re-approaching the Turkish border gates (land, air, seaports), there are no guarantees that you would be admitted or your application would be processed by the Turkish authorities.

If you wish to exit Turkey permanently, you need to obtain an exit permit from Directorate General of Migration Management through the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of the city in which you are registered.



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## RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF SYRIAN BENEFICIARIES OF TEMPORARY PROTECTION

### **What are my rights under the Temporary Protection?**

Once you are registered under the TP, and issued with a TPID card, you will be provided with protection and assistance in Turkey. This includes stay until a more permanent solution is found, protection against forcible returns, access to reception arrangements where immediate needs are addressed as well as a range of other rights, services and assistance.

The range of rights, services and assistance applicable to Syrian beneficiaries of temporary protection, whether they are residing in or out of the camps, are enumerated under the temporary protection regulation and includes access to health, education, social assistance, interpretation services and access to the labour market. Details about these rights may be found in below sections.

### **Do I need to comply with any duties and obligations while staying in Turkey?**

Yes. While you are in Turkey, you need to comply with the laws and administrative requirements in Turkey if you wish to receive effective protection. During registration, you need to provide correct identification information, submit any available documents to verify your identity and cooperate with the Turkish authorities. If you are asked to comply with a reporting duty, you need to abide by this duty as well. You need to inform the Turkish authorities of any changes in your identity information or civil status (such as address, marital status, birth and death in your family, official employment status, etc.) within 20 business days.

Syrians who fail to comply with their obligations in Turkey may face administrative sanctions or criminal proceedings in line with the Turkish law. If you do not comply with your obligations, your access to some rights except for education and emergency health services may also be restricted by the Turkish authorities.

Therefore, it is extremely important that you follow the rules, laws and obligations in Turkey during your residence here.

## EDUCATION

### **Can Syrian children who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection access education in Turkey? How?**

According to Turkish national law, all children in Turkey, including foreigners, have the right to receive primary and secondary school education free of charge.

Syrian children who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection may enroll in Turkish public schools and temporary education centers (TEC). Enrolment procedures are determined by the Provincial Education Commissions set up under the Provincial Directorates of National Education in each province and may vary slightly from place to place. If you wish to enroll in a public school or TEC, please approach the Provincial or District Directorate of National Education of where you reside with any available education documentation you have from Syria. If you do not have documentation, you may still approach and be enrolled.

Provincial Education Commissions are responsible for placing children in schools and for determining the grade into which they will be admitted. Decisions on a child's grade are based on documentation showing the level of education reached in Syria. Where this documentation is not available, this determination will be based on an interview or the completion of a written assessment.

TECs are institutions (schools) that have been established for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. These centers exist in camps and in urban areas and teach in Arabic, using a modified form of the Syrian curriculum. At the end of the school year, children are issued a document certifying their attendance and successful completion of the school year, with their results. Families residing in camps should approach the camp schools directly to enroll their children; those living in urban areas should approach the Provincial Directorate of National Education in order to be enrolled in TECs in some provinces, families may be referred to the TEC directly by the Provincial Directorate of National Education to complete enrolment procedures.

The Ministry of National Education is placing greater emphasis on the inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish schools. As of the start of the 2016/17 school year, all Syrian children entering kindergarten or Grade 1 will be required to study the Turkish curriculum. Language support classes will be offered to assist and support Syrian children. Ministry of National Education has committed to providing additional classes and support to help Syrian children to maintain their proficiency in Arabic.

Catch-up courses, programmes and Turkish language classes will be provided during after-school hours, weekends, mid-term and summer breaks for students who have been out of school for a long time and who require additional academic assistance and support.

### **Procedures and documentation required for enrolling in Turkish schools and Temporary Education Centres (TECs)**

Although the Ministry of National Education circular (2014/21) sets out a general framework for the enrolment of Syrian refugee children in both Turkish schools and TECs, Provincial Directorates of National Education determine procedures which are applied locally. The information that follows is based on visits to Provincial Directorates of National Education in Southeast Turkey.

When counseling refugees, please first confirm the procedures in place in the province(s) in which you operate with the Provincial Directorate of National Education. The information which follows is based on practices that are common in Southeast Turkey.

#### ☐ **Enrolment in Turkish schools**

Parents should approach the Provincial Directorate of National Education in order to request that their child be enrolled in a Turkish school. Thereafter officials from the Provincial Directorate of National Education will determine: (i.) the grade into which the child will be placed, based on his/her previous educational history and abilities, and (ii.) the identification of the school where the child will be enrolled.

In order to be enrolled in either a Turkish school or TEC, it is necessary to be registered with the Turkish authorities and have either a residence permit (*ikamet izin belgesi*), Temporary Protection identification document (*gecici koruma kimlik belgesi*) or the Foreigners Identification Card (*Yabancı Tanıtma Kartı*). In cases where an application has been made to register with authorities, but an identification document has not yet been received, students may be enrolled as “guest” students.

The determination of the grade into which the child will be enrolled is usually carried out by the Accreditation Commission. Grade determination is based on documentation showing the level of education reached in the country of origin. Where this documentation is not available, this determination will be based on an interview or the completion of a short written assessment.

When applying for enrolment in Turkish schools, parents should provide the following documentation:

- Proof of registration with Turkish authorities – in the form of residence permit (*ikamet izin belgesi*), Temporary Protection identification document (*geçici koruma kimlik belgesi*) or the Foreigners Identification Card (*Yabancı Tanıtma Kartı*);
- ☐ Report cards from enrolment in schools in Turkey (including documents issued by TECs) or from schools in Syria (if available);
- ☐ Documentation showing current place of residence (if available). This may be used to determine the nearest school into which the child will be placed.

Students who have applied for registration with Turkish authorities, but who have not been issued with an identification number may be enrolled as “guest students”. Once their identification document has been issued, they will be officially enrolled, and data entry will be done either to the e-school or YOBIS information management systems. Please note: this will not be done automatically and once the identification document has been issued it is the refugee’s responsibility for communicating this to the school and ensuring that the child’s enrolment status is updated.

It is not necessary for a child to be able to speak Turkish before enrolling in a school. Children cannot be denied access to school if they are unable to speak Turkish.

#### ☐ **Enrolment in TECs**

Procedures for enrolment in TECs may be less standardized than procedures for enrolment in Turkish schools. Please check local practices before providing refugee counseling.

#### ☐ **Procedures for enrolment in TECs operating in urban areas**

When applying for enrolment in Turkish schools, parents should provide the following documentation:

- Proof of registration with Turkish authorities – in the form of residence permit (*ikamet izin belgesi*), Temporary Protection identification document (*geçici koruma kimlik belgesi*) or the Foreigners Identification Card (*Yabancı Tanıtma Kartı*);
- ☐ Report cards from enrolment in schools in Turkey (including documents issued by TECs) or from schools in Syria (if available);
- ☐ Documentation showing current place of residence (if available). This may be used to determine the nearest school into which the child will be placed.

In many provinces in Southeast Turkey, parents may approach TECs directly to request admission.

#### ☐ **Procedures for enrolment in TECs operating in camps**

Families residing in camps should approach the temporary education centers in the camps directly to enroll their children.



### **Can refugee students get a report card (Karne) when they complete their education in Turkey?**

Student beneficiaries of Temporary Protection enrolled in Turkish schools can obtain a report card (Karne) at the end of each semester. The report cards issued by the Ministry of National Education are recognized internationally.

### **Can refugee students get a graduation certificate when they complete their education in Turkey?**

Student beneficiaries of Temporary Protection can get a graduation certificate (diploma) on completion of the 12th Grade at a Turkish school. These diplomas are recognized internationally.

In late 2016, Ministry of Education announced that graduates of TECs have to go through a process of registration into open high school and sit for a number of course exams. Approach the Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of National Education for further information on registration.

### **University access by Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection**

Syrian youth may apply to attend Turkish universities, provided that they satisfy language and academic requirements. For the 2016/17 academic years, the Council of Ministers announced that tuition fees would be waived for Syria students studying at state universities. The decision of the Council of Ministers is renewed annually.

Students wishing to study in Turkey will need to demonstrate that they are able to pass the foreign students' examination (YOS) which is administered by each university. Universities may charge fees those applying to write the YOS examination (usually around 50 USD).

YOS application fees must be paid at each university at which you submit an application. It is therefore important to research different universities and make informed decisions about where you wish to study and your course of study. Information on study programmes and admissions requirements are available on university websites. Information for applications for foreign students also appear on the website.

### **Requirements for enrolment in Turkish universities**

Usually, foreign students are required to have a valid passport in order to be admitted to a Turkish university.



Although higher education policy is determined by YOK (Higher Education Council), many functions and powers are delegated to universities. This may lead to slight differences in practice between universities.

#### ☐ **Identification documents**

In order to enroll in universities in Turkey, Syrian students need to be registered with authorities and have a valid identification document issued by Turkish authorities (residence permit/ Temporary Protection ID/ foreigner identification card).

For Syrian students, universities have relaxed the requirement that foreign students must hold a valid passport. Universities will accept official identification documents issued by the Turkish authorities in place of a passport.

#### ☐ **YOS/ Foreign student examination**

Students wishing to study in Turkey will need to demonstrate that they are able to pass YOS which is administered by each university. Universities may charge fees to those applying to write the YOS examination. (In 2014 the average cost of these examinations was 50 USD. This fee is not refundable).

The following link provides information on the dates on which YOS examinations will be written in different universities:

<http://kurslar.metropolegitimkurumlari.com/2015-yilinda-yos-yabanci-uyruklu-ogrenci-sinavi-duzenleyecek-olan-universiteler>

#### ☐ **Proof of completion of secondary school (Grade 12)**

Students should be able to demonstrate that they have completed Grade 12. If the student completed Grade 12 in Syria or under any examining body other than the Ministry of National Education (e.g. Syrian Education Commission in Turkey, Libyan Ministry of Education) they will need to have their high school transcript validated by the Ministry of National Education's Accreditation Unit.

Certificates issued by Ministry of National Education after the Grade 12 validation (conducted June 2015) will be considered official records of achievement and may be used when applying for admission to Turkish universities and may also be used for applications for scholarships for Turkish universities.

#### ☐ **Students who have completed or partially completed higher education programmes in Syria**

The term "lateral transfer" refers to recognition of courses completed in a country other than Turkey. Rules related to **lateral transfer** only apply to degree programmes that were started, but not completed. The completion of individual courses may be

recognized in order to allow students to continue their studies and not have to start studies from the first year.

If a refugee student has completed a degree in a country other than Turkey and wishes to have it recognized in order to be able to enroll in an advanced degree (Masters or Doctoral programme) this process is referred to as **accreditation**.

Lateral transfer procedures are decided and implemented differently in different institutions.

□ **Proof of previous university registration and academic transcripts from universities in Syria**

Students may be given until the end of their current course of study (i.e. until the end of the final year of study in university) to produce proof of high school diplomas obtained in Syria and transcripts of any courses completed in partial fulfillment of a university degree.

• **Registration as “special students”**

Students who do not have documentation attesting to previous educational performance or who are waiting for lateral transfer processes to be completed may enroll in universities as “special students”. This status allows students to attend courses, complete assignments and sit for examinations. Once the required documentation for admission is presented to the university or after lateral transfer processes have been completed, students can regularize their enrolment status and be officially credited for the courses attended and passed. All state universities in Turkey may admit Syrian students with the status of “guest” or “special” students.

It is important that students consult the university calendars for the universities in which they wish to register in order to obtain information on the specific requirements for that university, including the list of documentation that must be submitted with an application, dates for submissions of applications and dates of YOS examinations.

### **Bursaries and scholarship programmes for Syrians in Turkey**

Syrian students wishing to apply for a bursary to study at Turkish universities should apply to [www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr](http://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr). This is a competitive scholarship application and there is no guarantee of the award of a scholarship. UNHCR also offers scholarships for studies at Turkish universities through the DAFI scholarship programme. Application details are announced on the UNHCR Turkey website ([www.unhcr.org/turkey/](http://www.unhcr.org/turkey/)) In South-Eastern Turkey, there are INGOs offering limited scholarships for studies at the universities in the region (<http://spark-syria.eu/turkey/>).

### □ **Scholarships available for Syrians to study outside Turkey**

There are a number of scholarship programmes that have been established for Syrians whose studies have been interrupted due to the conflict in Syria. A number of governments, universities and private institutions advertise scholarships for international study. Two such examples are:

- ❑ DAAD (German Academic Exchange Programme)
- ❑ Chevening Scholarships offered by the British government

Refugees wishing to study outside of Turkey are advised to undertake individual research on the opportunities available and submit individual applications to these programmes.

Sometimes refugees face difficulties applying for visas once scholarships are granted by awarding institutions. The level of support provided by different awarding bodies/ governments varies.

### **Online courses and training programmes**

In addition to being able to attend higher education programmes, a number of institutions also offer on-line programmes. Not all on-line programmes are recognized as valid qualifications – either in Turkey or other countries. Refugee students should investigate the status and recognition of qualifications offered through on-line programmes before paying for them.

### **Unregistered universities operating in Southeast Turkey**

UNHCR has been made aware of a number of universities operating privately in Southeast Turkey that offer courses that are taught in Arabic and which award degrees through universities in third countries (including Yemen and Sudan). These institutions are not recognized by the Turkish authorities and certificates from these institutions are unlikely to hold any validity in Turkey for further study.

We would urge NGOs not to disseminate information about programmes offered by these institutions which are not operating legally in Turkey.

## Recognition of school or university certificates from Syria in Turkey

All foreign school certificates, certificates including for the Grade 12, must be validated by the Provincial Directorate of National Education if these documents are used to gain access to schools or higher education institutions. Students who graduated from high school in Syria and who wish to study further in Turkey must approach the Accreditation Unit in the Provincial Directorate of National Education in order to obtain the necessary accreditation documents.

The Higher Education Council (YOK) is responsible for the validation of degrees and qualifications obtained in other countries. Information on the procedures to be followed can be obtained from the YOK website.

## Why is it important to enroll refugee children in schools in Turkey even if a refugee hopes to go to a third country?

Even if you have been accepted for resettlement, it can take time before you actually depart from Turkey. During this time, it is important for your children to be in school.

The longer that your children are out of school, the more difficult it will be for them to adapt to a new schooling system after resettlement.

Attending school also has important social and emotional benefits that will help your child adapt to schooling in a new country. Attending school provides children with a routine, which has been shown to have important emotional benefits; it also allows children to socialize and interact with people outside their immediate family which helps them develop important social skills that will be necessary when they start life in a new country.

- ❑ The Turkish education system is recognized internationally. When you travel to your country of resettlement, be sure to if your child goes to school in Turkey, it will be easier for them to adjust to going to school in another country.
- ❑ The longer your child is out of school, the more difficult they will find it to adjust to learning in a new country.
- ❑ School is not just about learning - going to school brings many social and emotional benefits for refugees.
- ❑ Learning Turkish will make it easier for your child to learn another language take with you report cards (KARNE in Turkish) issued at the end of each semester.

The more your child learns while in Turkey, the easier it will be for him/her to adjust to learning in a new country

Missing out on years of schooling while in Turkey could have serious long-term effects for your child's educational performance and their ability to adjust to being in a new country or returning home. The longer your child stays out of school, the

more support they will need when going back to school (in your country or after resettlement) and there are serious risks of them performing poorly or dropping out of school that could affect future employment opportunities.

## **Skills and vocational training opportunities for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey**

Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection may attend Turkish language courses and skills, hobby and vocational courses offered by Public Education Centers (*Halk Egitim*) free of charge. A Temporary Protection identity document is required in order to be registered for courses offered by Halk Egitim. Each Halk Egitim may determine which courses it offers and may open new courses based on local demand.

The Ministry of Labour has indicated that persons under Temporary Protection may participate in vocational training programmes offered by ISKUR. All courses are open for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. Additionally there are many opportunities offered by UNHCR. Please click on the link to access vocational courses or support available in your province:

<http://www.iskur.gov.tr/en-us/jobseeker/courses.aspx>

## **Why is it important to learn Turkish for refugees and refugee children?**

### **👤 Children**

Children need to learn Turkish in order to be able to learn in school, make friends and be part of the community in which they are living.

Even if you hope to move to another country (be resettled), it will be useful for children to learn Turkish as these skills will be useful when learning another language. Knowing more than one language is increasingly important in the world and for future employment success.

### **👤 Adults**

Learning Turkish is a basic survival skill while living in Turkey! Learning Turkish will help make daily life and basic tasks easier (shopping, using public transport), help build friendships with others living in the same area, and help in emergencies (communicating with doctors or police). The ability to speak Turkish is also very important when seeking work.

## Language training programmes for Syrians

There is a high demand for language course by Temporary Protection beneficiaries who wish to communicate better with those around them, to attend Turkish universities and to be able to access the labour market. A number of NGOs and community centers offer free language classes. Language classes may also be offered free of charge through the Halk Egitim. These courses are certified by Halk Egitim. At present only A1 and A2 level courses are offered through Halk Egitim.

Classes are opened if 12 or more people make a request for a class to be offered.

UNHCR partners can also provide more information on language courses available in your city.

### ☐ **TOMER language courses**

Students wishing to attend university must complete an academic language programme (TOMER) and must obtain a C1 level certificate (there are six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). TOMER programmes are being offered in some camps and urban areas through YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad).

Those wishing to attend university should find out what level of language proficiency certificate is required by their university. Some universities will accept a B2 level certificate for entry into a Bachelor's level programme, but expect that the student be able to obtain a C1 certificate before graduating.

TOMER courses are most widely recognized and certified Turkish language programmes. This course, however, may be expensive if paid directly by the student. UNHCR continues to support Syrian students living in the camps or urban areas with the higher education scholarships. In addition to providing language support, students are receiving guidance on application procedures for Turkish universities and may also receive additional academic support that would help prepare them for the YOS examinations. The TOMER scholarship package in the urban areas covers tuition fee, language textbooks, exam fees, monthly stipend and some social activities.

### ☐ **Procedures applicable to Syrians under Temporary Protection wishing to write TOEFL examination in Turkey**

UNHCR has been informed that some Syrians who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection have been experiencing difficulties either when applying to write TOEFL examinations in Turkey or on the day of the examination as the identification documents issued to them by the Turkish authorities have not been accepted as valid forms of identification at the testing centers. In order to guard against fraud, TOEFL has strict policies on the types of identification documents that can be used when sitting

examinations. Many Syrians in Turkey are not able to satisfy the criteria laid down for persons who wish to write the TOEFL examination outside of their country of origin, and the ID documents issued to Syrians who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey are not listed as one of the documents accepted at TOEFL examination centers.

UNHCR has been in discussion with the TOEFL examining body in order to better understand the procedures applicable to Syrians in Turkey who are registered with the Turkish authorities. UNHCR has been informed that Syrians in Turkey should follow the general procedures laid down in the ETS/ TOEFL registration guidelines for persons who are “unable to meet ID requirements”<sup>2</sup>.

□ **Procedures to be followed when requesting to have ID document accepted as a valid form of identification by TOEFL test centers**

The person who will be writing the test is responsible for contacting the ETS (TOEFL) Office of Testing Integrity (OTI) and requesting special authorization to use an **ID document issued by the Turkish authorities**. This should be **done well in advance** (at least one week before the test is written).

It is important that the person should already have applied to write the test and have been issued with a TOEFL test registration number or an ETS ID number.

Emails should be sent to *TSReturns@ets.org*

The email header should state: **TURKEY REFUGEE – verification of ID documents**

This will help to expedite the processing of the enquiry as TOEFL receives many emails on the above email address.

The email should contain the following information:

- ❑ the name of the applicant
- ❑ **TOEFL test registration number or ETSID number** (NB: This information is required)
- ❑ **Copy of ID document that will be used** (NB: This must be attached to the email)
- ❑ the location (city) of the centre at which the test will be written
- ❑ the date of test (if available)
- ❑ contact information of the person wishing to write the TOEFL examination (email and telephone number)

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<sup>2</sup> For details, please see: <https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/id/>

In cases where Syrian applicants encounter difficulties, please feel free to inform UNHCR of the difficulties encountered so that the relevant persons in the Office of Testing Integrity can be informed of the matter.

Please also note that the name submitted when registering to take the test **MUST** match the name on their identification document (every letter and punctuation mark must match).

☐ **Excerpts from the information on the TOEFL website**

[www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/id](http://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/id)

☐ **Unable to meet ID requirements**

If you have been granted political asylum, have refugee status or are otherwise unable to meet the ID requirements, you **must** contact the ETS Office of Testing Integrity (OTI) **at least seven days before you register**. You must receive approval from OTI **before** you register. Be prepared to submit any requested documents to OTI for review. If you do not contact OTI and as a result you are not permitted to test or your scores are held or canceled, your test fee will not be refunded.

**ETS Office of Testing Integrity (OTI)**

**Phone:** 1-609-406-5430

(Monday–Friday 7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. U.S. Eastern time, except U.S. holidays)

**Fax:** 1-609-406-9709

**Email:** [TSReturns@ets.org](mailto:TSReturns@ets.org)

☐ **General ID document requirements**

With few exceptions, ID documents must meet **all** of the following requirements. Each ID document must:

- ☐ be an **original** document; photocopied documents are not acceptable
- ☐ be **valid**; expired documents (bearing expiration dates that have passed) are not acceptable
- ☐ include your **full name** exactly matching the name and the ID document used to register, excluding hyphens, accents or spaces
- ☐ include a recent, recognizable **photograph** include your **signature** (the name on the ID and the signature **name must** match).



## LIVELIHOODS

### **Under which conditions can I work legally in Turkey as a Syrian beneficiary of Temporary Protection?**

Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection must have a TPID card number starting with 99, must be registered under Temporary Protection for at least six months, must lodge the application in the province of residence and must not have previously obtained a work permit.

The work permit application can be lodged by the employer to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MoLSS), who wishes to employ the TP beneficiary, through *e-devlet* gateway. Those TP beneficiaries who meet the criteria for an independent work permit

i.e. who are or would like to become owner of a business, may directly lodge an application as well. The e-government of Turkey is used for work permit application and the whole process is carried out online. It is a simple process and UNHCR provides support via its partners both for the employer and the potential employee.

An explanatory e-mail indicating that the beneficiary of Temporary Protection is granted work permit will be sent to the employer once the work permit application is approved by the MoLSS. Furthermore, the outcome of the application can be viewed from the “Application Tracking System” section under the online work permit automation system created by the MoLSS<sup>3</sup>. A work permit document in the form of a card, which is issued by the MoLSS for the employee, will be sent by courier to the address where he/she will work.

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<sup>3</sup> You can access “Application Tracking System” via: [https://app2.csqb.gov.tr/yabancilar/faces/basvuruSorgulaDiskurum.jspx?\\_af.ctrl-state=gk5i6d192\\_3](https://app2.csqb.gov.tr/yabancilar/faces/basvuruSorgulaDiskurum.jspx?_af.ctrl-state=gk5i6d192_3)

## **What documents are required to obtain a work permit for a beneficiary of Temporary Protection?**

The Temporary Protection identity (TPID) card including foreigner ID number starting with 99, a photograph of the individual, a contract signed between the employer and the employee, the e-Government password of the employer, related documents (activity document, other documents, latest capital and partnership information of the organization, latest tax return, power of attorney, etc.) of the workplace *where necessary*, are required.

Prepared petition and agreement formats are available on the website of the Ministry of Labour:

<http://www.calismaizni.gov.tr/calisma-izni/sozlesme-ve-dilekce-ornekleri/>

## **What is a work permit exemption and how can it be obtained?**

Persons working in seasonal agriculture and husbandry are exempted from the work permit. However, beneficiaries of Temporary Protection, who will be working in seasonal agriculture and husbandry, need to lodge work permit exemption applications with the Provincial Directorate of Work and Labour in their registered provinces of residence. Support is provided by UNHCR partners for this process, please check the contact details of the office closest to you.

## **What is the employment quota? How is it applied?**

In a single workplace, the number of persons under Temporary Protection cannot exceed 10 per cent of the Turkish employees. As an example if you have 100 Turkish employees, you can employ 10 Syrian refugees. You can still employ one Syrian refugee if you have less than 10 employees or even one Turkish employee.

## **Is there a quota for seasonal workers?**

No, there is currently no quota limitation for beneficiaries of Temporary Protection who will work in seasonal agriculture and husbandry.

## **Can Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection start their own businesses?**

Yes, they can. They can register their businesses under official institutions just like Turkish nationals. Owners of businesses shall apply for their work permits individually. There is support available for UNHCR in the form of entrepreneurship training, support and an incubator operating in Istanbul for start-ups. Additionally, UNHCR provides support via its partners for registration of new businesses.

**Are there any grants that I can receive to set up my own business?**

Yes. Business start-up grants are currently available via UNHCR and (I)NGOs in Turkey for a limited number of start-ups. Syrians can approach relevant organizations to benefit from business start-up grants.

Additionally the Government of Turkey has incentives for entrepreneurship. Relevant information can be accessed at:

*<http://www.kosgeb.gov.tr/site/tr/genel/detay/1231/girisimcilik-destek-programi>*

**What skills and vocational training opportunities exist for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey?**

Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection may attend Turkish language courses and skills, hobby and vocational courses offered by Public Education Centres (Halk Egitim) free of charge. A TPID is required in order to be registered for courses offered by Halk Egitim. Each Halk Egitim may determine which courses it offers and may open new courses based on local demand.

The MoLSS has indicated that beneficiaries of Temporary Protection can participate in skills training programmes offered by ISKUR. All courses are open for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. Additionally there are many opportunities offered by UNHCR.

### **Can I find work after completing vocational training?**

Your skills gained during vocational training could potentially be matched with available work opportunities. The first step is becoming registered with ISKUR Turkish Labor Agency in order to find a job. Additionally you may approach Turkish Human Resources Consultancy companies. UNHCR partners will support you if you approach them for ISKUR registration and contact with Human Resources Companies. The following links prepared by ISKUR also provide comprehensive information in Turkish and Arabic version will soon be available online:

[http://www.iskur.gov.tr/Portals/0/dokumanlar/isarayan/aig\\_prog/mek.pdf](http://www.iskur.gov.tr/Portals/0/dokumanlar/isarayan/aig_prog/mek.pdf)

[http://www.iskur.gov.tr/Portals/0/dokumanlar/isarayan/aig\\_prog/ek3\\_mesleki\\_egitim\\_kurslari.pdf](http://www.iskur.gov.tr/Portals/0/dokumanlar/isarayan/aig_prog/ek3_mesleki_egitim_kurslari.pdf)

### **Can I have a bank account (TL or foreign currency account) in Turkey?**

You can have a bank account provided that you submit

- Your valid passport,
- Your Temporary Protection identification card issued by Turkish authorities,
- In case you do not have a valid passport, you can apply for a bank account provided that you submit
- Your Temporary Protection identification card issued by Turkish authorities,
- A document or bill showing your residence address,
- Your tax number issued by Turkish Tax authorities (tax offices).

The bank will assess your application. In case your application is accepted, you can have Turkish bank account and foreign currency account.

If you have further problems in having a bank account in Turkey, you can receive further counselling from UNHCR and its partners.

### **Can I receive or send money abroad through the banking transactions?**

As long as you have a bank account in Turkey, you can carry out transactions in banks in Turkey.

## HEALTH, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, MEDICAL, SECURITY AND SUPPORT

### **What support is available to Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection with medical needs?**

In relation to access to health and medical services, free access to medical treatment is facilitated for all Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (meaning one needs to be registered under Temporary Protection) residing inside and outside the camps under the responsibility of Ministry of Health (MoH). Additionally, emergency health care is accessible to everyone in Turkey.

The Temporary Protection Regulation (Article 27) and relevant circulars clearly sets forth the situation concerning access to health and medical assistance for beneficiaries of Temporary Protection.

The costs of health services including primary, secondary and tertiary public health services shall be provided in line with the Health Implementation/Budget Law (Saglik Uygulama Tebligi) on equal footing to Turkish citizens.

Receiving medical assistance at private hospitals would not be possible unless an official referral is received from the health services chain or unless an emergency occurs.

There are also Migrant Health Centers (MHC) established for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection which employ Arabic-speaking staff and are available in some provinces. Up to-date information regarding the MHC can be obtained from MoH website or World Health Organization (WHO). For a list of MHC in Istanbul, please see this link:

<http://www.istanbulhalksagligi.gov.tr/kurumsal/kuruluslar/gocmen-sagligi-merkezleri>

UNHCR and its partners also provide counselling and assistance to persons with serious medical conditions. Therefore, you may also contact UNHCR and/or its partners.

### **I have psychological problems. Can I receive assistance?**

Provision of psychosocial services are under the coordination of Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP), with the support of partners. If you require psychological services, please approach social service centers (SSC) of the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Policies (PDFSP) in your province of residence. It is important to note however that not all PDFSP have interpreters available at their centers therefore you may face obstacles in accessing psychological support services at these locations.

You may also approach primary health clinics or public hospitals which provide psychological and psychiatric support in the province of your residence. Similarly, language could be a barrier for receiving assistance.

UNHCR's partners also have psychologists who provide psychological support to Temporary Protection beneficiaries or may also provide you with interpreter support while accessing governmental services. In such cases, you may also consult with UNHCR and/or its partners.

### **I have medical problems. Are medical services free in Turkey?**

In relation to access to health and medical services, free access to medical treatment is facilitated for all Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection residing inside and outside the camps.

### **Where and how can I access medical assistance?**

In relation to access to health and medical services, free access to medical treatment at public health facilities is facilitated for all registered Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection residing inside and outside the camps. Emergency health care is accessible to all.

The Temporary Protection Regulation (Article 27) clearly sets forth the situation concerning access to health and medical assistance for persons covered under Temporary Protection, with the Ministry of Health in lead of coordination and supervision of provision of medical services.

Under the regulation, the patient contribution fee is not collected for primary and emergency health services, and the respective treatment and medication. Secondary and tertiary health care is likewise provided under the Regulation in accordance with the SUT.

The cost of the medical treatment is borne by AFAD up to a certain limit determined as per the Health Implementation Directive (Sağlık Uygulama Tebliği) determined for beneficiaries of general health insurance (Genel Sağlık Sigortası). Registration is a pre-requisite for access to medical treatment.

### **Where can I receive assistance as a person with disability?**

If you have a disability, you need to first obtain a 'health board report' on disability and then submit this to PDFSP in order to be considered for possible disability assistance from the Turkish authorities.

In order to obtain the health board report, you need to first approach a full-fledged state hospital indicating your disability and health condition. These reports are free of charge since 15 August 2016. You may obtain these reports as long as you are registered and have a TPID card. In order to receive the disability report, you need to present the following documentation:

- TPID card and its copy
- 5 passport size photos taken in the last 6 months
- Official referral from an institution or a petition stating the purpose of the request (e.g. in order to apply for disability care allowance from MoFSP)
- If the person is below 18 years old or lacks mental capacity, his/her parents or legal guardian should apply to the hospital with the necessary documentation on guardianship (court documents).

After obtaining the health board report (which usually takes around 20 days), you should approach PFDSP – Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SASF) offices to apply for disability allowance.

### **I am an older person and do not have any support in Turkey. Can I receive any assistance?**

If you are an elderly person and do not have any support in Turkey, you may approach PDFSP in order to receive assistance. If you cannot approach the Turkish authorities, UNHCR and/or its partners can also assist you by providing the necessary counselling and making the necessary referrals aiming to secure your well-being.

### **I have been exposed to or I am under risk of sexual and/or economical and/or psychological and/or physical violence due to being a woman, man, transgender and/or due to my personal sexual or gender preferences. Can I receive any assistance?**

If you have been exposed to such violence, you may approach Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Policies (PDFSP), SONIM (Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers) where available and if easier to another Turkish institution such as the Turkish police, gendarmerie or Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. In order to be able to receive immediate assistance, you need to be registered with the Turkish authorities. If due to different reasons (such as language barriers), you may also contact UNHCR and/or its partners who would assist you with necessary referrals to health facilities, psychological support needs, security/safety and legal concerns as necessary and required. There are women and male shelters in Turkey to host survivors of violence where you can be accommodated.

If you are LGBTI, UNHCR will do its best to assist you through cooperation with LGBTI NGOs in Turkey.

If you are a child survivor of SGBV, you can approach Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Policies as well as UNHCR and its partners who will refer you to the PDFSP in line with your best interests. After an assessment of your best interests, necessary action will be undertaken. In cases where you do not want the authorities or UNHCR and its partners to contact your parents to get consent for the interview with you, your views would be respected. Nevertheless, some of the information you disclose may need to be shared with specialized colleagues to ensure you are provided with the required assistance.

### **What would happen after reporting a violence incident to the relevant authorities?**

After you report a violence incident to one of the authorities underlined the previous question, services and support mechanisms will be assessed and provided for you on your individual case.

If you are a woman at risk and a survivor of domestic violence, you will be supported by Turkish Authorities:

- Preventive Measures will be given by Judge and may include: removal of the perpetrator from the home by law enforcement and suspension of the perpetrator by law enforcement.
- Protective Measures will be given by Governors/Law Enforcement and may contain: temporary accommodation (woman shelter), temporary financial assistance, psycho-social assistance.

If you are a child survivor of SGBV, you can approach Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Policies (PDFSP) as well as UNHCR and its partners who will refer you to the PDFSP in line with your best interests. Depending on your situation, the necessary action will be taken and the appropriate referral to either governmental institutions or other service providers will be done. If you don't want UNHCR and its partners to contact your parents to get consent for the interview with you because you don't feel comfortable or they are the perpetrators, we will respect your will. Nevertheless, we might have to disclose some of the information that you will share with some specialized colleagues who can provide you with the needed assistance.

If you are a child married to an abusive husband, you should approach UNHCR and its partners for counselling to take immediate action to remove you from your current living arrangement and refer your case to the relevant governmental authorities



to find the appropriate facility under Ministry of Family and Social Policies where you can be protected from further harm.

### **What sort of assistance does a women's shelter provide for survivors of sexual and Gender-based violence?**

When you request state officials to ensure your physical security against threats by the perpetrator, you will be placed in a women's shelter, meaning that you will be under the protection by Turkish authorities.

A women's shelter is coordinate and managed by the Provincial Directorates of Migration Management (PDMM) in provinces. A women's shelter provides the following services;

- Accommodation,
- Psycho-Social Assistance,
- Pocket Money,
- Legal Assistance,
- Guidance and counselling,

You will get more detailed information of services from the staff of PDMMs before the placement.

### **I have a security problem and need assistance.**

Within the context of the Temporary Protection regime, the Government of Turkey is responsible for ensuring the protection, security and safety of all Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. Therefore, if you have an urgent problem such as security problems you need to approach the relevant Turkish authorities in the province you are at such as the Turkish police, gendarmerie, Provincial Directorates of Migration Management. You may also contact below provided numbers in order to receive appropriate counselling and referrals regarding your problems:

- Turkish Police Hotline: 155
- Gendarmerie Hotline: 156
- Directorate General of Migration Management hotline: 157
- UNHCR Refugee Support helpline in Turkey: 444 48 68
- Queries can also be sent by e-mail to [TURAN@UNHCR.ORG](mailto:TURAN@UNHCR.ORG)

### **What recourse to assistance do Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection have if they are victims of a crime in Turkey?**

All Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection may avail themselves of the protection of the Government of Turkey. In practice this means that they may approach the authorities, including the police or gendarmerie, and report and seek assistance for any crime that they may experience while in Turkey. It should be noted that while the absence of registration with the authorities would not prevent any individual approaching a police station and seeking assistance, registration is the only way to ensure full access to protection and assistance offered by Turkey.

### **As a Syrian beneficiary of Temporary Protection, can I benefit from social assistance in Turkey?**

Yes you can. Social assistance is coordinated by MoFSP – Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASF) (in Turkish: *Sosyal Yardimlasma ve Dayanisma Vakfi*). Social assistance may involve regular or one-time financial assistance for health, education, shelter, disability, widows, etc. Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection with TPID numbers starting with 99 would be eligible for almost all of the assistance provided by the Turkish authorities.

You may need to provide specific documentation for some of the assistance provided by SASF. In order to find out what type of assistance and what documentation is required for the type of assistance you may be eligible for, please approach the closest SASF office in your province of residence.

### **Does UNHCR provide any financial assistance to Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection?**

UNHCR has provided winter support assistance for the refugees, especially for the most vulnerable in urban areas whose vulnerabilities increase over the winter period with rising costs. The assistance is given in the form of a debit card. However it is not possible to withdraw cash from the machines by this debit card. From November 2016-March 2017, over 580,000 persons received winter cash assistance. All camp-based refugees received winter clothes, high thermal blankets, and/or heaters. A winter assistance programme will be developed for the 2017-18 winter season. You would not be able to apply individually for such assistance as UNHCR makes the selection through its partners and informs refugees. Information about other cash assistance programmes will be shared by UNHCR.

## CHILDREN

### **What support mechanisms are available for unaccompanied Syrian refugee children who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection?**

Protection for all children, regardless of nationality, is ensured by the legal framework of Turkey's Child Protection Law No. 5395. Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) is the responsible agency for provision of support and assistance to children in Turkey.

In any proceedings regarding an unaccompanied child, a Best Interest Assessment would be necessary.

Under the existing legal framework, contingent upon the Syrian child's registration with the authorities, and availability of resources and the capacity of the state, suitable care arrangements by the Government of Turkey, education, as well as medical care, is to be provided to identified unaccompanied Syrian children.

UNHCR continues to provide guidance to the authorities on identification of the most suitable care arrangement that serving the specific circumstances of the child. Syrian unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) could also be referred to UNHCR, which will follow up together with the Turkish authorities on the appropriate response and support.

### **I am younger than 18 years old and I am alone in Turkey. What can I do?**

You should approach PDFSP or Provincial Directorate of Migration Management to ensure a proper assessment and assistance is provided to you. UNHCR and its partners may also support you by undertaking a Best Interest Assessment to understand your situation better. Once a proper assessment is made, the best option and solution for your situation would be determined in consultation with you. The Turkish authorities and UNHCR will also assist you in attempting to find your family members and if they are found to see if you should/can be unified with them.

### **I have been placed in a child institution or a camp compartment for children. However, I do not want to stay here. Can you help me?**

If you have family members in Turkey who can provide evidence of the family relationship, these family members can approach the relevant PDFSP to apply for family re-unification – which will be done through a social assessment conducted by the social worker of PDFSP.

If you do not have anyone in Turkey and you have been placed in a child institution where you are facing problems, you should immediately report any incident or concern to the Turkish authorities or UNHCR and/or its partners for action that could include individual assessment, counselling, and referrals to other available interim care options based on the specifics of the case.



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## LEGAL AID

### **Where could I receive legal support, aid or assistance as a registered Syrian?**

Turkey has 81 provinces/cities and in each of these provinces, there are Bar associations (Baro). Syrians under Temporary Protection have the right to approach and request legal aid from these Bar associations for any legal issue you may face. You would then be represented by a lawyer in the judicial process.

Depending on your financial situation, you may need to cover the relevant costs for legal assistance or you may also be able to benefit from free legal aid provided by the Legal Aid Bureaus under each Bar Association in Turkey if it is determined by the authorities that you do not have the financial capacity to hire a lawyer.

UNHCR and its partners also provide legal counselling to refugees and may assist you in requested legal aid support from the Bar associations. Therefore, if you cannot manage to receive legal aid yourself, you may also seek assistance from the available UNHCR offices or partners in the province you are at or reach out to UNHCR through the phone lines or email.

If you are under administrative detention, a relative of yours or an NGO may request legal aid support on your behalf to appeal the decision of the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management.



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## ROLE OF UNHCR

### **Does UNHCR Turkey register Syrians?**

UNHCR Turkey is not carrying out registration or refugee status determination of Syrians, as their protection is ensured by the Temporary Protection regime. Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are therefore registered by the Turkish authorities.

UNHCR however supports the GoT and humanitarian partners in identifying vulnerable Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection with specific protection needs who may require additional/complementary protection interventions. Individuals referred to UNHCR for a protection assessment may be contacted by a UNHCR staff for follow up. A protection assessment is meant to determine the most appropriate solution to your protection needs in the country of asylum. A protection assessment is not a registration process.

### **What is the role of UNHCR Turkey in ensuring the protection of Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection?**

UNHCR has been requested by the authorities to support the Temporary Protection regime through the provision of technical advice, voluntary repatriation monitoring and related activities, in all provinces where Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection are hosted.

In Southeast Turkey, UNHCR has a presence in Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Hatay. UNHCR teams visit regularly all refugee camps and provide technical assistance on registration, camp management, identification of vulnerabilities, voluntary repatriation, technical support on education, health and nutrition, water sanitation and site planning.

In non-camp locations, UNHCR has multi-functional mobile teams which frequently visit areas hosting large numbers of Syrians throughout the country. The presence of UNHCR ensures outreach to Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and aims to establish relations with local authorities, stakeholders and institutions actively engaged in working with Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection on the ground including AFAD, Kizilay, NGOs/INGOs and provincial directorates of various Ministries' technical units. During the visits to both camps and urban areas, UNHCR seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and achievements of the situation of Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection both in camps and urban areas. UNHCR also documents and disseminates good practices observed in order to advance protection standards and to find practical solutions.

## What assistance does UNHCR Turkey provide?

UNHCR provides policy and technical advice to the Government of Turkey, including in the areas of protection such as access to territory, registration, documentation and legal counseling and management of urban refugee caseloads. UNHCR Turkey seeks to assist the camp officials and local authorities in finding practical solutions to protection and other technical issues coming up in the camps and urban areas where the Syrian refugee's population mainly concentrated.

In relation to material assistance, UNHCR Turkey has and will continue to provide core relief items and non-food items (NFIs) including, tents and shelter materials, blankets, tarpaulins, kitchen sets, vocational training kits and clothes for children. UNHCR also supports to the Government of Turkey through the provision of mobile registration centers for the registration of non-camp refugees, prefabricated and mobile health clinics that will be used both in and out of the camps to provide health services for refugees, and also wash containers to improve sanitation in the camps. Wheelchairs for disabled refugees has been also procured and delivered to those in need.

Most recently, UNHCR has supported the establishment and funding a number of community centers/multi-functional services centers providing a wide array of assistance and services to Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection living in communities, outside of camps. There are many opportunities offered by UNHCR and partners related to work permit application support, access to work opportunities and vocational training as well as entrepreneurship programs.

## Are all services provided by UNHCR and UNHCR partners free of charge?

Yes. All services provided by UNHCR and its partners are free of charge. If any UNHCR staff, UNHCR partner staff or a third person on behalf of UNHCR or its partner request any money in exchange of services, please do not make any payments and immediately report this to UNHCR (complaint boxes, UNHCR helpline, email or fill out the form at: <http://www.unhcr.org/php/complaints.php> ).



## RESETTLEMENT

### **Does UNHCR Turkey resettle Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection?**

Resettlement and humanitarian admission are processes through which refugees who are vulnerable in their country of asylum can be moved to a third country. Certain governments have informed UNHCR of their interest in resettling Syrians from the region. Currently there are limited opportunities for resettlement which are available for the most vulnerable refugees from Syria. Not every refugee who is vulnerable would be considered for resettlement.

UNHCR works in collaboration with Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management to identify individuals eligible for resettlement processing. The final decisions with regards to resettlement are taken by the receiving countries and not UNHCR.

Resettlement is not a right. It is also not an application based process. It is a last resort solution for the most vulnerable refugees. Only a very limited number of refugees will have access to this solution. Refugees cannot choose the country of resettlement. The final decisions with regards to resettlement are taken by the receiving countries and not UNHCR.

If resettlement is identified as an appropriate durable solution, you will be contacted by UNCHR staff. Resettlement is free. Anyone asking for money or claiming that they can help you get resettled is committing fraud. This is a crime and punishable by Turkish laws.

Refugees found to be resorting to fraud in an attempt to access the resettlement process will have their cases placed on-hold pending investigation and/or withdrawn from resettlement consideration.

All Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Turkey continue to be covered by the Temporary Protection regime and should register with the authorities.

### **Would it be possible to apply for resettlement?**

Resettlement is not an application based process and it is not a right. It is a last resort solution for the most vulnerable refugees. Only a very limited number of refugees will have access to this solution.

UNHCR works in collaboration with Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management to identify individuals eligible for resettlement processing.



The final decisions with regards to resettlement are taken by the receiving countries and not UNHCR.

Due to the limited number of cases taken by the resettlement countries, resettlement chances of cases granted refugee status is very limited.

If your case is selected for resettlement consideration, UNHCR will contact you.

### **If I am selected for resettlement consideration, which steps will resettlement include?**

If selected for resettlement consideration, UNHCR will contact the concerned person and his/her family members. They will have an interview with UNHCR staff. All family members should be present at the interview with all their ID documents and any other relevant documents.

After the resettlement interview, refugees will be informed of UNHCR's assessment on their resettlement case. Some refugees may not be submitted to resettlement countries due to not meeting the eligibility criteria for resettlement.

UNHCR will also assess the resettlement country. Refugees cannot choose the country of resettlement.

If UNHCR finds the case eligible for resettlement, it will be submitted to the most suitable resettlement country.

Resettlement country will make arrangements for an interview with the refugee. UNHCR and IOM will contact the refugee to confirm the date and place of the interview.

You will then be informed on the country's decision on your case. If the decision is positive, as a next step, travel arrangements will be made.

### **What is the average waiting time after resettlement interview?**

As you were informed during the resettlement interview, the fact that you were interviewed does not guarantee that you will be resettled. Resettlement is a long process that may take months or more than a year depending on the resettlement countries and their procedures. Please check the UNHCR online results page ([www.results.unhcr.org.tr](http://www.results.unhcr.org.tr)) and/or phone the UNHCR Refugee Support helpline (444 48 68).

UNHCR will be in touch with you during the different stages of the resettlement process.

### **Would it be possible to add more people to a refugee case already submitted to a resettlement country?**

All applicants have to be registered with Turkish authorities and then they have to submit to UNHCR their documents indicating their dependency with the persons that they wish to be added to their case. After reviewing the documents, UNHCR staff will contact you and clarify your options.

### **Would it be possible to accelerate a refugee's case, with a long waiting process, in terms of resettlement procedures?**

Resettlement processing depends on a number of factors, your personal circumstances, the countries' procedures, etc. The length of your stay in Turkey does not influence processing times. If your circumstances change, you have new information or documents you would like to provide, please inform UNHCR and the Turkish authorities accordingly.

You can follow the progress on your case and your case's resettlement status through the UNHCR online results page ([www.results.unhcr.org.tr](http://www.results.unhcr.org.tr)) and/or phone the resettlement counseling hotline. The UNHCR Refugee Support helpline (444 48 68).

### **How should a refugee follow up his or her exit permit?**

Once the resettlement cases are accepted by the resettlement countries, travel arrangements will be made. It is important to note that for every case departing Turkey, UNHCR will work to obtain exit permission from the Turkish government.

You will be informed of your departure date by UNHCR and advised to go to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management for exit permit request. If you face any problem, phone the IOM hotline and IOM will inform UNHCR.

### **What would a refugee do if his or her case was rejected by a resettlement country?**

Every case rejected by a resettlement country is re-evaluated by UNHCR. You will be informed of the reevaluation result – whether your case will be presented to another country or not.

Only USA allows cases to lodge an appeal against their negative decision. For all other resettlement countries, there is no appeal procedure. We understand your frustration, but decisions on acceptance are taken by countries and UNHCR can neither influence nor change those decisions.

### **After rejection, is there still hope to be resettled?**

The number of resettlement places is limited. If you have been interviewed and then informed that you would not be submitted, or if your case was submitted to a resettlement country and denied, the chances of reconsideration are small.

### **I was told that if I paid money to someone, I would be resettled. Is this true?**

No, it is not. You have been lied to. You will lose your money, and you will not get resettled. People who tell you such lies are seeking to take advantage of your situation, avoid them at all costs. They may show you information to persuade you that they are connected to UNHCR. Do not believe them.

If you have been approached by someone claiming they can help your case, please inform UNHCR via our complaint box outside the office, when being counselled in person or through the UNHCR Refugee Support helpline, or by notifying one of UNHCR's partner agencies. Your concerns are taken seriously, and will be treated confidentially. Your resettlement case will not be affected. If you do not want to use your name or case number, you can present your complaint anonymously.

If you have any information about a UNHCR staff member involved in any kind of fraud, please inform us using the complaint box, or search "UNHCR Make a Complaint" on the Internet and provide information there.

For complaints about UNHCR staff: <http://www.unhcr.org/php/complaints.php>



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# FAMILY TRACING AND REUNIFICATION

## **I have lost my family members. Can I find them?**

If you have lost your family members inside Turkey, you may approach the police (Directorate General of Security – Department of Law and Order (Asayis) – Unit for Missing Persons) and provide any detail you may have for them to assist you in finding your family members. Please see the below link in Turkish:

[http://www.asayis.pol.tr/Sayfalar/kayip\\_ve\\_aranan\\_sahislar.asp](http://www.asayis.pol.tr/Sayfalar/kayip_ve_aranan_sahislar.asp) x

Additionally, regardless of where your family member may be, in Turkey or not, you may also approach Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) Society (*Kızılay*) office, available in almost all provinces and districts in Turkey.

Once you approach Kızılay, you will be asked to fill in a Tracing Request Form (*Kayıp Araştırma Talebi Formu*). You may also email TRC directly: [tracing@kizilay.org.tr](mailto:tracing@kizilay.org.tr)

If you cannot receive assistance through these channels, you may also approach UNHCR and/or its partners who will collaborate with TRC and other Turkish authorities to assist you.

## **Some of my family members are in Syria or in another country. Can I be unified with them?**

- **Family reunification in Turkey**

According to the Temporary Protection Regulation (Article 49), applications for family reunification in Turkey with relatives (spouse and children) who may be residing abroad and wish to join in Turkey, shall be evaluated by Directorate General of Migration Management, which may work in cooperation with relevant public institutions and organizations, international organizations and civil society organizations, as relevant. Such requests therefore should be raised directly with the Turkish authorities by the Temporary Protection beneficiary residing in Turkey.

- **Family reunification outside of Turkey**

Anyone who wishes to lodge an application for family reunification outside of Turkey should be in direct contact with the relevant embassy. According to the laws of most countries, family reunification procedures require that the family member in the third country approaches the immigration authorities there first, in order to initiate the process. Most countries only accept family reunification requests of nuclear family members (spouses and children below the age of 18).

While UNHCR can assist with providing information, the most efficient way for a person with a nuclear family member in another country is for this person to approach the relevant embassy.

All Syrians accepted by a third country on the basis of family reunification need to get registered with the authorities prior to their departure from Turkey; otherwise they may not be allowed to leave the country.

For exceptionally vulnerable cases brought to UNHCR Turkey's attention, such as, for example, unaccompanied children who may have parents residing in a third country, UNHCR Turkey has used its good offices to facilitate a speedy family reunification by liaising with relevant embassies, and has ensured appropriate care arrangements while the children are in Turkey.

For family reunification assistance, you may also approach Turkish Red Crescent.



# VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

## Can I return to Syria if I want?

If you wish to return to Syria voluntarily, you need to approach the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in your province of registration. The Provincial Directorate of Migration Management coordinates voluntary repatriation proceedings for Syrian beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. UNHCR, depending on its capacity may also observe the voluntary repatriation interviews where you would be provided a counselling over the security situation in Syria and to establish the voluntariness of your return.

Please remember that beneficiaries of Temporary Protection cannot be returned to Syria against their will as this would constitute a breach of international law.



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## CIVIL MATTERS

### **Can I officially get married in Turkey? What is the applicable law in Turkey if two refugees or one refugee and a Turkish citizen want to marry?**

Turkish law is the applicable law for marriage procedures of refugees in Turkey. According to Turkish legislation, a Turkish national and a refugee or two refugees with different nationalities can get married before the Turkish authorities. All marriages conducted by the Turkish authorities are subject to the relevant articles of the Turkish Civil Code and related regulations. It is important to note that only official marriages are legally recognized in Turkey as defined under the Turkish Civil Code.

### **Many refugees marry through religious and/or traditional ways in Turkey. Is it necessary to get official marriage in Turkey?**

Only civil marriages performed by authorized marriage officers are allowed in Turkey. The formalities commence with the submission of the necessary documents by the parties to the marriage office where one of the parties reside. Application shall be made in writing or orally. Any other forms of marriage, other than official marriages, are not recognized in Turkey. Getting an official marriage is important to secure and guarantee the legal rights of spouses, especially women and children. Only after the civil marriage is a religious marriage (by imams) permitted.

### **What is the legal age of marriage in Turkey?**

According to the Turkish Civil Code, individuals cannot marry before completing 17 years of age. Therefore, the legal age of marriage is 18 in Turkey.

### **Can somebody younger than 18 years old marry in Turkey? If so, how?**

There are only few exceptions in the Turkish Civil Code with respect to legal age of marriage. One can marry with a court decision and the consent of his/her parents or legal guardian if completed 16 years old, and with the consent of the parents or legal guardian when completed the age of 17. A person with limited capacity legally even if he/she has completed legal age of majority (18), the consent of his/her legal representative will be required for marriage.



### **Are there any legal sanctions according to the Turkish law for persons who marry unofficially below the legal age of marriage?**

An unofficial “marriage” with a child is considered as ‘child abuse’ under the Turkish Penal Code. Perpetrators are punished with imprisonment terms pursuant to the Turkish Penal Code. According to the Child Protection Law No. 5395, state institutions, health and education institutions, as well as NGOs are obliged to inform the Turkish authorities about a child facing any kind of protection risk. Additionally, anyone, who is aware of a crime being committed, is obliged to inform the authorities.

### **What are the other conditions for marriage in Turkey?**

According to the Turkish Civil Code alongside above mentioned age requirements, one has to fulfill below conditions in order to marry:

Only those persons who have sufficient mental capacity to make fair judgments are allowed to marry. Mental illness is a bar to marriage.

Marriage between close relatives is prohibited. This include the marriages between ascendants and descendants such as between siblings; between paternal uncle, maternal uncle, paternal aunt, maternal aunt and their nephews/nieces; between one of the spouses and ascendants and descendants of the other even though the marriage which created affinity has ended.

A second marriage cannot be conducted unless the first is terminated.

An adoptive parent is not allowed to marry his/her adopted child, as well as his/her descendants and spouse.

Formerly married woman whose marriage was dissolved cannot marry before the expiration of 300 days from the date of dissolution. If the woman obtains a medical report indicating that she is not pregnant, the 300 days waiting period is not required.

### **In some countries, polygamy is allowed. Is the situation same in Turkey?**

No. Both the conditions and form of marriage is regulated under the Turkish Civil Code, which is also applicable for refugees. According to the Turkish Civil Code, polygamy is not allowed. Therefore refugees cannot marry unless the previous marriage is terminated. Polygamy and fraudulent marriage perpetrators are punished with imprisonment terms pursuant to the Turkish Penal Code.

## How is a marriage conducted in Turkey?

Marriage is conducted by marriage officers at the Marriage Departments of municipalities. Therefore couples need to submit the relevant documents to the municipalities.

## Which documents do I need to submit to the authorities in order to marry?

Below are the necessary documents to be submitted to the Marriage Departments of municipalities:

- Petition of the marriage: the couple must file a petition of marriage which is called “*evlenme beyannamesi*” signed by each party,
- International protection applicant registration document; international protection applicant identity document; international protection status holder identity document; Temporary Protection identity document
- For minors and persons with limited capacity written consent of legal representative with certified signature,
- Medical report confirming the applicants’ being free from diseases preventing them to get married,
- Four photographs,
- Celibacy document certifying that the person is not married.

## How can I obtain the ‘celibacy document’?

As refugees flee from their countries due to fear of persecution, you are not expected to approach the authorities of your country of origin to obtain such a document. Pursuant to Article 13 of the Marriage Regulation of the Directorate General of Population and Citizenship and in line with the circular issued by the Directorate General of Population and Citizenship on 13 October 2015, a document indicating the marital status of the person can be issued by Provincial Directorates of Migration Management based on the documentation submitted or the testimony of the refugee during registration with the Turkish authorities.

## Since this document is issued in line with the refugees’ testimonies, what will happen if I conceal my previous marriage in my country of origin and get married in Turkey?

Refugees are obliged to conform to Turkish laws and regulations and Turkish laws are applied for the offenses which are committed in Turkey. Therefore, polygamy and fraudulent marriage perpetrators will be punished with imprisonment terms pursuant to the Turkish Penal Code after the legal proceedings.

### **After marriage is conducted in line with the Turkish Law, do I need to make any other notification to the authorities?**

Any type of civil incident needs to be notified to the Population Department and Provincial Directorate of Migration Management within 20 days in the provinces in line with Article 8 of the Law on Population Services, Article 90 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and Article 33 of the Temporary Protection Regulation.

### **Where can I get information about marriage procedures?**

You can get further information about marriage procedures from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, UNHCR and UNHCR's Implementing Partners

- **Divorce**

### **Many refugees are married back in their countries of origin or former residence, before they come to Turkey. Are they able to divorce in Turkey?**

Yes. Civil status acquired in line with the rules of the country of origin is recognized by the Turkish authorities. Turkish legislation is the applicable law when it comes to divorce procedures of refugees. When a refugee wants to divorce in Turkey, s/he is subject to the provisions of the Turkish Civil Code.

### **What are the procedures for divorce? Can I get legal support for the divorce procedures?**

You have to submit a divorce petition to the relevant Family Court. You may get legal assistance through the Legal Aid Bureaus of the Bar Associations regarding divorce procedures. Upon request, a lawyer free of charge may be appointed by the Bar Association if it is assessed that if the person does not have the means to cover the expenses of the judicial proceedings.

### **If do not have my marriage certificate from my country of origin, will it be a problem during divorce?**

Family courts will request all relevant documentation in order to proceed with the divorce application. Therefore, apart from the marriage certificate, any other documents available on the civil status of the person would be necessary. In the absence of documentation, since refugees may not be able to bring relevant documentation from their countries of origin, or re-obtain their documents from the authorities of their country of origin, a document obtained from Provincial Directorate of Migration Management stating the civil status of the person should be submitted to the court as a supporting document.

### **When refugees are married through religious ceremony in their countries of origin, can they still divorce in Turkey?**

Civil status of refugees acquired in line with the rules of the country of origin is recognized in Turkey. In some countries, religious marriages are recognized as official marriages. Therefore, the religious marriage conducted in the country of origin would also be recognized in Turkey, as this is a form of official marriage in that country. Other traditional forms of marriage, as long as, the person had testified so during registration with the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, would be recognized in Turkey, even if an official document certifying the marriage could not be submitted at the time of registration. In any case, recognized marriages will be dissolved in Turkey in accordance with the provisions of the Turkish Civil Code.

### **Some families are separated during flight, and sometimes one of the spouses might have been residing in the country of origin or in a third country, or his/her whereabouts may not be known. In such situation, can the spouse in Turkey file for a divorce?**

For the court to decide on a divorce case, both spouses must be present during the court hearing. If one of the spouses is not available, his/her lawyer is required to be present during the hearing. In such a situation, the refugee still can file a divorce case, however in the absence of one of the spouses, the court will not be able to finalize the divorce which will cause delays in the process.

### **After the court grants me a divorce, do I need to inform the authorities?**

Any type of civil incident needs to be notified to the Population Departments and Provincial Directorate of Migration Management within 20 days in the provinces in line with Article 8 of the Law on Population Services, Article 90 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and Article 33 of the Temporary Protection Regulation.

### **Where can I get information about divorce procedures?**

You can get further information about divorce procedures from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, UNHCR and UNHCR's Implementing Partners, and Bar Associations.

- **Birth registration**

### **Why is it important to register the birth of a child in Turkey?**

Birth registration is both a right and obligation for foreigners, including refugees, in Turkey. Under the national legal framework, every birth that occurred in Turkey has to be notified to the Population Departments either at the place of birth or anywhere else within 30 days following the birth.

Birth registration is important as it establishes a child's identity and enables children to access rights such as education and health care. Without birth registration and documentation, children may have problems proving their state of nationality which puts them at risk of becoming stateless. Birth registration proves the age of the child and protects the child from being vulnerable to protection risks such as trafficking, child labour, child marriage, illegal adoption and sexual exploitation. Birth registration also proves the parental linkage between the child and the parents and protects the unity of the family. It can also help family unification of the child with the parents in the future in case of family separation.

### **How and where should I register the birth of my child?**

Births that took place in Turkey needs to be notified to the Population and Civil Registry Departments under the Governorates. Notification shall be done by the mother, father or legal guardian of the child. In the absence of parents or legal guardian, grandmother, grandfather, adult siblings or persons accompanying the child shall notify the Population Department. According to Turkish law, notification needs to be made to the Population Departments within 30 days. Any notification done later than 30 days is subject to monetary fine.

### **Which documents do I need to submit to the Population Department during birth registration?**

Notification can be made through submission of official documents or, if documents cannot be submitted, through oral statements of the notifying party. Official documents include a birth report from the hospital, if the birth took place in a hospital, or an official report from the doctor or midwife, if the birth took place at home. Alongside mentioned documents, identity documents of the parents (identity documents issued by Provincial Directorates of Migration Management) shall be submitted to the Population Departments.

For children born out of wedlock from a Turkish father and refugee mother, the mother needs to submit a document issued by the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management certifying the civil status of the women together with her identity information.

### **Is it not enough to report the birth to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management?**

Reporting the birth of the child to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management is important as the child will be issued an identity document certifying his/her legal status in Turkey. However, still, it is necessary to register the birth of the child to the Population Department, as upon request, the child will be issued an internationally recognized birth registration certificate, which is recognized in other countries as well. Please note that the identity documents issued by Directorate General of Migration Management will be confiscated upon termination of the status of the person in Turkey, however birth registration certificate will remain with the family, even if the family departs from Turkey.

### **If the child was born out of wedlock, can his/her birth be registered?**

Even if the child is born out of wedlock, birth registration can be conducted at the Population Department.

### **If the birth of a refugee child born in Turkey is registered with the Population Department, will that child get Turkish citizenship with birth registration?**

No. Birth registration does not itself confer nationality upon a child. The process for registering births is distinct from the process whereby individuals acquire nationality.

### **Where can I get information about birth registration?**

You can get further information about birth registration from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, UNHCR and UNHCR's Implementing Partners and Population Departments.

## FRAUDULENT ACTS

### **How can I relay some confidential messages, complaints and feedback to UNHCR?**

If you have any information you wish to relay to UNHCR, you can convey this to UNHCR by writing a letter, and putting this in the feedback/complaints boxes available at UNHCR offices and partners' offices or sending it via e-mail to [turan@unhcr.org](mailto:turan@unhcr.org). You may or may not provide your name. These are confidential feedback boxes which only designated UNHCR officials have access to. These boxes are opened by the designated UNHCR staff on a regular basis who ensures that the feedback received from you is followed up and responded to.

You can also convey any information, messages, complaints and feedback to UNHCR through email, direct gate counselling and/or phone counselling lines provided in this document.

Your feedback or complaint could be about your own situation, fraudulent information or acts committed against you or another individual/group, UNHCR and/or partners' way of treatment and/or any other issue that you wish to provide feedback to UNHCR about.

You may also address your complaint to UNHCR Headquarters, Inspector General Office by sending a fax to the confidential fax number: +41 22 739 7380; calling telephone hotline: +41 22 739 8844; or by sending an e-mail to: [inspector@unhcr.org](mailto:inspector@unhcr.org)



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## OTHER

### I need translation support. What should I do?

In some health care institutions and Provincial Directorates of Migration Management, Arabic speaking staff are available but their numbers may not be sufficient to meet the needs of Syrians in Turkey. In such cases, UNHCR and/or its partners can assist you in case of an urgent need as well. You may also contact different NGOs who may be able to provide interpretation support.

### Where can I obtain further information about my rights and assistance?

- UNHCR counselling line – accessible from everywhere in Turkey  
**4444868**
- Directorate General of Migration Management hotline can be accessed through Alo **157** (Arabic speaking staff available).
- The hotline numbers for UNHCR Turkey are as follows:
  - **(+90312) 405 80 66** (General counseling line) – For your questions related to protection
  - **(+90312) 405 81 27** (Syrian line) - For your questions related to protection (Available every day after 10:00 AM until 17:30)
  - **(+90312) 409 7006** (Social counselling line) – For your questions about your well-being in Turkey
  - **(+90312) 409 7005** (Solutions counselling) – For your questions about voluntary repatriation or your questions on your resettlement case. If you have a file with UNHCR, you may also check your results at [sonuclar.unhcr.org.tr](http://sonuclar.unhcr.org.tr) or [results.unhcr.org.tr](http://results.unhcr.org.tr). (Available every week on Thursday between 15:00-16:00pm)

Queries can also be sent by e-mail to **TURAN@unhcr.org**.

Additionally, the following numbers could be helpful:

- Ministry of Family and Social Policies (women and children at risk, elderly, persons with disabilities, LGBTI, etc.) Call Center: **183** (Arabic speaking staff available)
- Ministry of Health Call Center: **184**
- Police: **155**
- Gendarmerie: **156**
- Ministry of Health: **444 4728** (Available in Turkish, English, Arabic)

You may also approach UNHCR partners in the province where you are staying for further information and counselling on your rights, services and assistance.



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