

TURKEY

September 2021

Key Figures (as of 30 September 2021)

4 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey including over 3.7 million Syrians under temporary protection and over 330,000 international protection status holders and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Over 98% of Syrian refugees live across Turkey in 81 provinces, while 1.5% are hosted in seven temporary accommodation centres managed by DGMM.

6,500

Refugees were submitted for resettlement consideration to 14 countries in 2021 so far. Close to 5,400 refugees departed for resettlement to 13 countries, 72% of whom were Syrian and 15% Afghan.

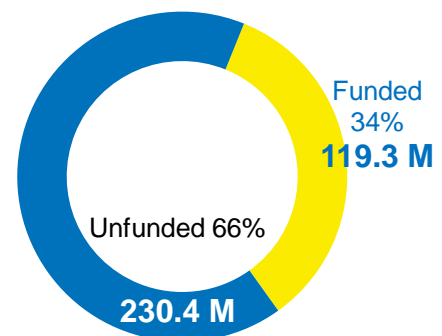
105,700

Calls received on the UNHCR Counselling Line in September constituting a 64% increase in the average monthly calls for 2021. UNHCR responded to 31,000 calls, the majority of which came from Syrian nationals (53%) followed by 24% of calls from Afghan nationals. The main queries were about resettlement opportunities followed by legal assistance. Among those, 3,400 calls came through UNHCR's dedicated GBV line, where 1,200 individuals received GBV-related counselling.

Funding (as of 28 September 2021)

USD 349.7 million

requested for UNHCR operations in Turkey



UNHCR High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, visited Turkey from 7-11 September. Read more about the visit of the High Commissioner [here](#).

Photo: @UNHCR/E.Gurel

Mission of UNHCR High Commissioner to Turkey

UNHCR's High Commissioner visited Turkey on 7-11 September. This is High Commissioner Filippo Grandi's fifth mission to Turkey. He was joined by the Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe, Ms. Pascale Moreau; Principal Communications Advisor, Ms. Anadil Hossain; and Mr. Dustin Okazaki, Special Assistant to the High Commissioner. The three-day agenda included a courtesy call with President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and meetings with the Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, in Ankara. The High Commissioner also met with senior officials in Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep, and had exchanges with donors, UN agencies, partners and refugees. In addition to acknowledging Turkey for hosting the largest refugee population, the High Commissioner held views and exchanges on the situations in Afghanistan and Syria, including expressing commitment for further advocacy for extending international solidarity both financial and third country solutions. Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a [press release](#) on the occasion, Reuters published an interview with the High Commissioner, accessible [here](#), and the Turkish Daily Sabah, among others, also reported on the visit of the High Commissioner [here](#).

Social Cohesion and Harmonization

On 1 September, UNHCR Representative met with the Deputy Minister of Interior, İsmail Çataklı. Discussions focused on continued cooperation on social cohesion and harmonization as well as potential implications of the evolving situation in Afghanistan. The Representative underlined the protection needs of the Afghan nationals already in country, reiterating UNHCR's call for more robust international support to Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries.

Engaging at the Local Level

On 22 September, UNHCR Turkey participated in a global online event on "[Cities and their contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees](#)" organised by UNHCR Headquarters and the Global Task Force on Migration (GTFM) as a follow up to the Gaziantep Municipal Forum in November 2019 and ahead of the High-Level Official's meeting expected to take place in December 2021. UNHCR Turkey is part of the GTFM steering committee. The purpose of the event was to take stock of city pledges in support of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and to highlight the critical contribution of municipalities in this respect. Turkish municipalities were well represented in the event, demonstrating Turkey's progressive approach to refugee inclusion and support for the commitments of the GCR.

On 7 and 8 September, UNHCR in Istanbul implemented the [second round of a general protection training](#) targeting various departments of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM). The training included foundational knowledge on refugee-related issues within the national context. For this round, 16 IMM personnel were trained over two days, constituting a total of 31 personnel for the two rounds. The training will be useful for the participants' day to day work as municipalities become more involved in activities that involve temporary and international protection beneficiaries and applicants.

UNHCR organized two online [trainings on conflict mediation and problem-solving with mukhtars](#): one in Adana (21-22 September) for 13 mukhtars in cooperation with Adana Metropolitan Municipality; and one in Gaziantep (23-24 September) for 12 mukhtars. The participants raised issues and challenges of concern, such as the interaction between refugee and host communities, cultural differences and coordination with state authorities. Some mukhtars were not able to attend the online trainings because of hindrances in technical skills and daily workload, and some recommended a face-to-face modality to increase participation. Overall, they showed strong motivation during the trainings and were appreciative of the practical nature of the topics covered.

In the southeast region of Turkey, UNHCR facilitated a [training of trainers on Best Interest Procedures](#) on 20-24 September in coordination with partner ASAM. Some 50 caseworkers and personnel with supervisory roles within partner organizations focusing on child protection, were able to expand on their knowledge and reporting, and their supervisory skills when conducting child protection assessments and best interest procedures.

In Gaziantep, together with the provincial directorate of migration management (PDMM), UNHCR organized a [training on persons with specific needs and gender-based violence tailored to 43 police officers](#) who work on the prevention of domestic violence and as neighbourhood guards. Participants, from

UNHCR, PDMM and the provincial directorate of family and social services (PDoFSS) discussed child protection and GBV cases, pointed out gaps and recurring problems in the field, and shared ideas for solutions involving relevant stakeholders. The training, which was held 28-29 September, received positive feedback from the participants and was able to strengthen relations with the police, PDMM and PDoFSS, thus maintaining a positive impact on the case processing work of UNHCR and referral mechanisms between UNHCR and state entities.

A [GBV training for the Istanbul Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centre](#) was held on 15 September following a need expressed by the VPMC. Some 30 participants from ŞÖNİM, nine women shelters in Istanbul as well as representatives from Üsküdar and Kadıköy District Municipalities took part in the training. Participants were provided with information on UNHCR's mandate and international protection; complementary women empowerment services; standardized tools and referral mechanisms; as well as ways of consultation with participants regarding needs emerging from the field. Participants underlined that the sessions would help to alleviate some concerns faced in their day-to-day work.

Access to Protection and Registration



UNHCR Representative and President of the Justice Academy of Turkey, Muhittin Özdemir, sign a protocol of cooperation for joint activities related to Turkey's asylum system.
Photo: ©Justice Academy of Turkey

On 20 September, the [Justice Academy of Turkey and UNHCR concluded a protocol](#) which represents an ongoing reciprocal commitment of cooperation from the perspective of Turkey's asylum system. Under the activities foreseen, UNHCR will be reaching out to judges, public prosecutors and prospective judges and prosecutors who serve in civil and administrative jurisdiction to increase awareness on international refugee law perspective. The framework contains a wide range of activities including training of trainers, developing training modules, conducting regional workshops and roundtable discussions in cities hosting large populations of refugees and international status applicants and holders.

Following five field visits and focus-group discussions in September organized within the scope of the Removal Centres Project, [two regional roundtable meetings](#) were held with around 45 representatives of removal centres (RCs) and bar associations (BAs) across the country, as well as DGMM, the delegation of the European Union (EUD) and IOM staff. During the meetings, UNHCR presented the findings of and feedback received during the field visits covering gaps and challenges in access to legal assistance and legal aid from the removal centres. Participants held discussions relating to four themes: provision of information on the right to legal assistance and legal aid; access to foreigners under administrative detention; legal aid procedures, the quality of legal services and complaint mechanisms; and coordination between RCs and BAs. Suggestions raised by the participants will be taken into consideration while drafting the Standard Operating Procedures on access to legal aid from RCs and lawyers' access to RCs.

The [Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's Assembly endorsed the establishment of a Migration Directorate](#) which is expected to lead to a more comprehensive and systematic engagement with refugees. UNHCR has been providing strategic support, both technical and through human resources, to encourage the development of a specialized unit. The directorate status will now allow for the creation of new posts for experts and personnel as well as give them an increased area of authority within and outside Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Meanwhile, UNHCR facilitated a training on Refugee Protection and Fundamental Rights to 30 personnel of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, including social workers and psychologists from different units.

Situation in Afghanistan

In view of the increasing donor interest on the situation of Afghans in Turkey and the position of Turkey with respect to potential arrivals, UNHCR hosted a [meeting on 2 September with around 20 Ambassadors and representatives of key donor and resettlement countries](#) as well as the UN Officer in Charge for Turkey, Mr. Alvaro Rodriguez, to brief and exchange views on the Afghan situation with a focus on Turkey. The Representative stressed that UNHCR would stay and deliver in Afghanistan, while scaling up humanitarian

assistance, and that UNHCR's second priority was to provide support to Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. The Representative also asserted on the need to provide assistance to the close to 300,000 Afghans already in-country.

In an [Op-Ed](#) to Hürriyet Daily News, UNHCR Turkey Representative, Philippe Leclerc, wrote that despite the fast-paced and dire developments in Afghanistan (in August and September), UNHCR had not observed a significant outflow of refugees from Afghanistan. He wrote that 80 per cent of recently registered internally displaced people were women and children and that solidarity and increased safe pathways of admission was needed for an inability to seek safety could risk innumerable civilian lives. The Representative reiterated UNHCR's call on neighbouring countries to keep their borders open. Though he acknowledged that the situation was resulting in a climate of anxiety and negative rhetoric towards refugees and migrants, he called for compassion towards Afghans living in Turkey who are also going through fear and anxiety. Mr. Leclerc commended Turkish hospitality towards those who have had to flee their countries because of conflict and the social inclusion policies that continue to be an example guiding policies of other countries; and concluded by saying, "We continue to advocate for more responsibility-sharing in supporting Turkey's extraordinary contribution in hosting up to four million refugees for so long".

Considering the growing needs along the Western Border, and in consultation with central and local authorities, [UNHCR established a temporary presence in Edirne](#), bordering Greece and Bulgaria to focus on the needs of refugees and asylum seekers along the borders, and specifically regarding issues and challenges related to onward movements. UNHCR accordingly met with relevant counterparts in September including the Governor of Edirne, local authorities and border officials.

Istanbul Jazz Festival

UNHCR collaborated once again with IKSV Istanbul to support the 28th Istanbul Jazz Festival. Refugee musicians took to the stage at Habitat Park in Şişli alongside notable Turkish and American musicians to perform for some 1,500 people on 3 September. The event was held outdoors and served to proliferate messages of unity, understanding and cooperation. Singer-songwriter Lucy Woodward and Abdulrahman Zaibak Trio and Young Jazz groups gave pre-show interviews to UNHCR.



Performers Lucy Woodward and Abdulrahman Zaibak Trio give pre-show interviews. Photos ©UNHCR/E.Tutar

Thanks to donors for their support to UNHCR Turkey in 2021

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LINKS

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