

## **IBC Start Relief Works for Afghan Refugees**

According to UNHCR's data, Afghan people, representing the longest-term displaced persons in the world, have tried to establish a life as an asylum seeker/refugee in different countries, especially neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey, since the 1970s.

Despite all the statistical uncertainties, Turkey, which is the first address where Afghan refugees will settle permanently or wait for a transition to a third country, is the country that hosts the second-largest refugee group after Syrian refugees, with 116,403 Afghan asylum seekers and 980 Afghan refugees.

Faced with the threat of human trafficking and exploitation due to the crisis and migration traffic in the region, Afghan refugees are often considered "irregular migrants" as they cross borders without an official document.

In Turkey; Aksaray, Konya, Nevşehir, Trabzon, Tokat, Çankırı, Kayseri, Erzurum and Van are seen as the main provinces where Afghan refugees have settled. According to the field reports of the Afghan Association (ARSA) in Kayseri, the number of Afghan refugees benefiting from the International Protection Law is 5700 in Kayseri, 8846 in Konya, 8756 in Nevşehir, 5890 in Karaman.

The registration problem caused by irregular migration directly affects Afghan refugees' access to basic services such as health and education. Afghan refugees, especially those over the age of 18, cannot benefit from the state's health and education services without registration documents. In addition, the language barrier is one of the main problems faced by Afghan people in Turkey. The absence of translators in the Afghan language and dialects in public institutions, especially in hospitals, makes communication between Afghan refugees and public officials difficult. It is also known that Afghans are exposed to material and moral abuse and exploitation due to the fragility experienced.

Under the heading of education, the biggest problem Afghan students face in schools is again the language barrier. Turkish lessons are not sufficient due to high demand and this negatively affects their adaptation to the school and national education system in Turkey. In addition, Afghan students cannot easily access higher education due to a lack of documentation and financial resources as part of their limited access to education services. According to field observations and results, Afghan students over the age of 14 leave their education life to earn income. According to the latest information, only 55 Afghan students studying at universities in Turkey also lead to an underage workforce, one of the biggest risks faced by refugee children and youth.

After the language barrier in health services, the biggest problem Afghan refugees face is their inability to benefit from health services covered by public health insurance due to the registration problem and the difficulty of obtaining International Protection Status.

This situation in Turkey brings with it the problems experienced in terms of work permits. Most Afghan refugees (especially young men) are unregistered and therefore reside illegally in Turkey. While this situation pushes them to work illegally, the poverty experienced also brings about the exploitation of labor.

Compared to the humanitarian aid projects implemented for Syrian refugees in Turkey, the number of projects for Afghan refugees is much less.

In this context, Afghan refugees do not know their rights and responsibilities due to language barriers and lack of access to accurate information. At this point, it is very important to raise awareness about

the laws and regulations of the Republic of Turkey through legal consultancy and legal information meetings. In Turkey, where even registered Afghan refugees face many difficulties, cases such as deportation or return of irregular migrants should be told to them by their legal counsel.

Afghans who participated in the official surveys stated that they had difficulties in learning Turkish, being informed about legal rights, finding a job, inadequacy in local integration, psychological problems, and access to health and education services.

According to the current statistics obtained from the official website of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management of Migration Management (Graphic 1), among other refugees from countries other than Syria, those from Afghanistan are the main refugee group regarding irregular migration and international protection status.

The recent political conflicts and economic difficulties in Afghanistan have caused a great crisis for the Afghan people. In all this context, the International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC) took action to initiate emergency aid activities for the Afghan people, especially in Istanbul, Kayseri, Niğde, and Eskişehir.

