

# External Update on influx of Syrian refugees

UNHCR Representation in Turkey

01 October 2014

## Operational context

There have been some reports in the media that the estimated total number of refugees in the recent influx may be lower than currently estimated by the government. The authorities estimate that over 160,000 have fled Kobani and surroundings in northern Syria to Turkey since 19 Friday September. UNHCR holds this estimated total as plausible.

As of 1 October 2014 over 35,000 refugees have been pre-registered by the authorities, most of whom have been pre-registered in the past days. Pre-registration by the Turkish authorities is ongoing and it will take time before all the newly arrived refugees will be pre-registered. As is to be expected in situations of mass influx there is still a significant gap between the number of registered refugees and the estimated total numbers of arrivals. In the first days large groups of Syrians were fleeing to Turkey through nine informal border points observed by UNHCR as from the first day of the influx. The fleeing Syrians rushed to cross the border and most went to join relatives or host families living in various places in the region, without taking the time to pre-register with the authorities. UNHCR has been contacted by local officials in some of these locations asking for assistance given significant arrivals.



Syrian Kurdish refugees wait in a holding area before boarding buses after crossing the border from Syria into Turkey after fleeing fighting between Kurdish forces and ISIS around the city of Kobani in North Syria/ UNHCR/ I. Prickett / September 2014

There are multiple statements made by refugees that virtually nobody is left in the villages around Kobani and that the city of Kobani is virtually empty. Given the circumstances there was no option but to flee they reported.

## Arrivals and Returns

The Turkish authorities have reported that admissions at Yumurtalik are on-going despite clashes on the Syrian close to the border with Turkey. AFAD personnel working at the Yumurtalik crossing border reported that 4,192 Syrians were admitted on 30 September and on 01 October, until noon, another 359 Syrians were admitted. The AFAD Information Note of 1 October states that the total number of admissions is now 163,208.

Vehicles belonging to Syrian refugees are now reportedly also being admitted into Turkey. So far, AFAD reports that 368 cars were allowed to park in an area near the border.

### **Coordination of assistance**

UNHCR has hosted another Inter-Agency meeting on 30 September in Gaziantep. UNHCR briefed the participants on the current situation/ influx and invited all to share/ update findings of rapid need assessments already conducted, on-going distribution of humanitarian assistance, geographical coverage, and discuss coordination with GoT on the ground.

The Crisis Desk set up by the authorities' works under Sub Governorate and is staffed by both Sub-Governorate and AFAD personnel that receive information on the location and needs of refugees. The Crisis desk coordinates how the needs of the refugees are addressed with items from the warehouses. UNHCR is in close contact with the Crisis desk and AFAD to coordinate UN support.

### **Protection**

UNHCR visited families staying in and around Suruc to identify their situation and needs and also to advise them to pre-register at the registration desks. During these visits and while speaking with the authorities UNHCR was told that the most urgent needs are baby formulas, blankets and mattresses.

UNICEF is re-printing some 600,000 leaflets on breast-feeding (in Arabic) that should be ready to distribution in the coming days. UNHCR has advised on areas for distribution.

### **Shelter**

The AFAD Coordinator for Suruç region reported on 30 September that the 830 Syrian refugees staying at the Park were not yet evacuated by noon 01 October. UNHCR visited the new transit shelter at the Gendarmerie post where AFAD continued preparations.

UNHCR visited families staying around the Culture Centre in Suruc and advised them to pre-register at the registration desks in the centre. UNHCR also visited Ahmedi Bican Mosque in Suruç town centre. 280 Syrians are staying at the mosque and their most urgent needs are blankets and mattresses. The Mukhtar of the area submitted an assistance request to the Sub Governorate Crisis Desk and also reported that around 4,500 Syrians are staying in the Cumhuriyet area including at the locals' houses.

### **Distribution of Assistance**

UNHCR began collecting data of Syrian families at YIBO who already received UNHCR donated items distributed by AFAD.

The AFAD Coordinator for YIBO mentioned that there is an urgent need for baby formula for babies between 0-4 months, as many women are not able to breastfeed their babies due to trauma and stress.

### **Protection**

UNHCR continues to visit families in official and non-official shelters in Suruc to assess assistance and protection needs and to advise them to pre-register at the registration desks in the centre.

UNICEF is re-printing some 600,000 leaflets on breast feeding (in Arabic) that should be ready to distribution in the coming days. UNHCR has advised on areas for distribution.

#### **Donor Countries of UNHCR's Regional Syrian Refugee Programme for Turkey:**



#### **Other Donor Countries contributing to UNHCR's Regional Syrian Refugee Programme in alphabetical order including un-earmarked funding:**



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