



A Syrian refugee girl plays in the late afternoon with a young child in the Akçakale Refugee Camp in Southern Turkey

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The UNHCR presence in Turkey was established in 1960 to liaise with the government on asylum and refugee matters. In March 1962 the Turkish government ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Republic of Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, but maintains the geographical limitation which restricts its obligations to refugees originating from Europe. Despite this limitation, Turkey provides non-European refugees with a form of temporary asylum, pending UNHCR's search for durable solutions elsewhere. UNHCR Turkey continues to register and conduct Refugee Status Determination (RSD) for non-European asylum-seekers under the High Commissioner's Mandate, while also advising the Government on temporary asylum and identifying refugees for resettlement.

UNHCR closely monitors the protection situation of refugees and ensures their physical and legal safety through its staff, implementing partners, other partner

NGOs and contracted lawyers. The organization also provides basic assistance to extremely vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers, including material support, healthcare, and education. Through implementing partners, UNHCR provides social and psychosocial counseling services in 23 cities. The office also promoted and encouraged local initiatives to strengthen self-reliance of persons of concern and to provide them with dignified life conditions in Turkey in accordance with human rights standards, including the principle of non-discrimination.

Resettlement is an important durable solution for non-European refugees in Turkey when there are limited local integration prospects, or possibilities for voluntary repatriation. In 2012, close to 8,000 refugees were submitted for resettlement and 6,000 departed for resettlement. In 2012 UNHCR lobbied with all resettlement countries for an increased quota for refugees in Turkey. For 2013, UNHCR is planning to submit 8,000 persons for resettlement.

On 11 April 2013 Turkey adopted a new “Law on Foreigners and International Protection”. In 2012, UNHCR Turkey provided extensive support to the legislative process, advising on international standards and best practices at both the preparatory stage of the Draft Law on Foreigners and International Protection and also participated in parliamentary discussions at later stages. UNHCR considers this an important advancement for international protection, and for Turkey itself, which has a long history of offering protection for people in need. UNHCR Turkey supports and contributes to institutional and legislative capacity building activities for the establishment of a national asylum system in Turkey in line with international standards and best country practices through legal and technical support, seminars, workshops, roundtable meetings as well as through the preparation of opinion papers, and the establishment of platforms for the mobilization of civil society-state dialogue on legal and social aspects of asylum.

*Refugees from Syria;* Turkey hosts over 500,000 refugees from Syria. Since April 2011 when the first arrivals came to Turkey more than 600.000 Syrians have sought protection in Turkey, while as of mid-June 2013, more than 123.000 Syrian refugees have voluntarily returned. Currently there are over 200.000 persons accommodated in the camps. The Government of Turkey started registering the non-camp Syrian refugees and there are over 157,000 Syrian refugees who have been registered in urban areas and some 25,000 with registration appointments. The Government of Turkey has established a Temporary Protection regime for all Syrians seeking international protection, and offers

shelter and assistance in 21 refugee camps in 10 provinces. The government has started a large scale registration exercise in the urban areas where the majority of the refugees are now living and offers assistance to the most vulnerable refugees amongst them.

UNHCR has been supporting the Turkish authorities to cope with the crisis and is present on a regular basis in all refugee camps, to provide technical assistance to the Turkish authorities on all protection related concerns. UNHCR also supports the authorities to address the needs of the non-camp refugees who are currently hosted in urban areas. Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, as a sign of cooperation, solidarity and responsibility sharing UNHCR has donated more than USD 52 million to Turkey in the form of core relief items, including shelter material, cooking facilities in support of food assistance programs, and coordination centers. UNHCR is planning to pre-position additional core relief items in Turkey to support the Turkish authorities to cope with the increase in arrivals.

UNHCR also launched and coordinates the Syrian Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for support to neighboring countries hosting refugees, including Turkey, to help ensure that the protection and assistance needs of Syrian refugees are met. Under the leadership of UNHCR, over 60 international and national agencies participate in the plan. The 5th revision of the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP5) launched on the 7th of June 2013 appeals for some US\$ 2.9 billion on behalf of 126 humanitarian organizations, including 84 partners, to assist an anticipated 3.45 million Syrian refugees in the region, by the end of 2013.



A group of Syrian refugee children are curiously observing a UNHCR tent at Ceylanpınar Camp in Gaziantep, Turkey