

TURKEY



Working environment

The context

Due to the geographical limitation to the 1951 Refugee Convention maintained by the Government of Turkey, under which it is not obliged to apply the Convention to refugees from outside Europe, UNHCR plays a critical role in addressing the protection needs of all non-European asylum-seekers in the country. The Office intervenes with the Turkish authorities in an effort to ensure that asylum-seekers are not detained or subjected to *refoulement* and are given access to national procedures for “temporary asylum”. For those in need of international protection, UNHCR pursues durable solutions, particularly resettlement.

By virtue of its geography, Turkey is affected by large mixed flows of asylum-seekers and irregular migrants, many of whom are seeking to reach the European Union. Those who enter the country illegally are subject to detention. Their access to UNHCR and asylum procedures is not assured, and many face deportation. Nonetheless, in 2008 13,000 people lodged applications for refugee status with UNHCR; the corresponding figure for the first half of 2009 was 4,200.

A major factor influencing UNHCR’s operational environment in Turkey is its candidature for membership in the European Union. The Government has made a commitment to

harmonize its legislation with that of the European Union on asylum and related areas such as migration, border management, human rights and administrative and judicial reform. Turkey’s National Action Plan of 2005 foresaw a lifting of the geographical limitation in 2012, in parallel with the completion of its EU accession negotiations.

The needs

UNHCR estimates that up to 10,500 people from more than 40 countries will approach its office in Turkey for assistance during 2010. Many will continue to come from Afghanistan, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Somalia. Standards of registration and reception will take into account the age and gender diversity of these groups. Every effort will be made to reduce the waiting period for the review of asylum claims to less than a year.

In the absence of possibilities for local integration, there is a growing need for resettlement opportunities. The difficult living conditions that most refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey face are made even harder by the need to pay an obligatory fee for a residence permit, or *ikamet*.

More than 11,000 refugees from Turkey live in northern Iraq, mainly in the Makhmour Camp near Erbil. The Office will seek to facilitate the voluntary return of those who opt for repatriation, thereby providing a durable solution to people who have been in exile for nearly 20 years.

Main objectives

Favourable protection environment

- Promote access to the territory and to UNHCR's refugee status determination (RSD) procedures for people seeking international protection.
- Prevent *refoulement* by increasing monitoring along Turkey's land borders and coasts, training border guards, and building stronger partnerships among Government officials and civil society at the provincial level.
- Support the authorities to build an asylum system, in line with the best European practices and international standards.
- Build the capacity of both the Government and civil society, including by setting up reception centres.

Fair protection processes

- Conduct RSD under UNHCR's mandate.
- Ensure that asylum-seekers are registered with the Turkish authorities.

Basic needs and services

- Support extremely vulnerable individuals who do not receive sufficient help from the Government or civil society.
- Strengthen the protection environment through public awareness activities.

Durable solutions

- Organize and facilitate resettlement.
- Pursue voluntary repatriation and promote livelihood opportunities for an increasing number of refugees.

Strategy and activities

Turkey's National Action Plan for compliance with the EU *acquis* in the field of migration and asylum, approved in 2005, introduced asylum benchmarks. The Office hopes the plan will be translated into practice and that the Government will increase its engagement in receiving, adjudicating and addressing asylum applications. In particular, UNHCR seeks an improvement in reception conditions, access to public services for asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless people, and the abolition of the obligatory residence fee for those of concern to the Office.

UNHCR plans greater outreach to regions beyond the capital to gain the support of civil society in addressing the assistance and protection needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, including through self-reliance activities.

The Office facilitates the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Turkey to their home countries, as well as the return of Turkish refugees from Iraq, when conditions permit. The voluntary return and successful integration of these refugees from Iraq may convince others to opt for voluntary repatriation to Turkey.

Key targets for 2010

- The protection needs of an estimated 10,500 applicants for asylum are assessed and addressed.
- An increasing number of asylum-seekers have access to territory and procedures to adjudicate their protection needs.
- National efforts to establish reception conditions in accordance with international standards are supported. UNHCR has unimpeded access to those in detention who may be of concern.
- Durable solutions through resettlement are found for at least 5,000 people and an increasing number of refugees are integrated locally.
- Some 200 extremely vulnerable individuals are given direct financial support.
- Travel, medical or accommodation assistance is provided to some 1,300 people who receive insufficient help from the Government or civil society.
- The protection environment for refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey is improved, especially through efforts to help them get free residence permits.

In 2010-2011, UNHCR will strengthen advocacy for Turkey's accession to the international instruments on statelessness. It will encourage research on statelessness and gather baseline data to increase the understanding of the scope of the problem and assess the situation in greater detail. The identification of potential situations of statelessness and their causes will be completed.

Planning figures

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2010		DEC 2010 - JAN 2011		DEC 2011	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Islamic Republic of Iran	2,230	2,230	3,860	3,860	5,550	5,550
	Iraq	7,930	7,930	6,760	6,760	6,440	6,440
	Afghanistan	370	370	2,910	2,910	5,420	5,420
	Various	1,240	1,240	2,040	2,040	3,650	3,650
Asylum-seekers	Islamic Republic of Iran	2,860	2,860	3,010	3,010	3,160	3,160
	Iraq	1,010	1,010	1,210	1,210	1,450	1,450
	Afghanistan	3,480	3,480	3,790	3,790	4,140	4,140
	Various	1,460	1,460	2,530	2,530	4,210	4,210
Returnees (refugees)		10	10	2,000	2,000	3,000	3,000
Internally displaced		964,000	-	964,000	-	964,000	-
Stateless		5,000	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
TOTAL		989,580	20,580	997,120	28,120	1,006,010	37,010

UNHCR's presence in 2010

□ Number of offices	4
□ Total staff	90
International	5
National	56
JPOs	3
UNVs	26

PARTNERS

Implementing partners

NGOs:

Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants
Human Resources Development Foundation

Operational partners

Government agencies:

Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior
Gendarmerie General Command
Coast Guard General Command
Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundation
Social Services and Child Protection Agency
Diyanet
Human Rights Presiden-cy
Secretariat General for EU Affairs
Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency

NGOs:

Bar Associations
Association for Support with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants
Helsinki Citizens Assembly
Caritas
Turkish Red Crescent Society
Turkish Human Rights Foundation
Cansuyu
Kimse yok mu
Amnesty International
Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
Multeci Der, Mazlum Der
Human Rights Association

Others:

United Nations Country Team
IOM
Universities



Chechen refugee children in Istanbul receive school supplies from UNHCR.

Constraints

Mixed migration will continue to pose complex challenges for Turkey. The Government and UNHCR will seek to ensure that people in need of protection are able to access asylum procedures, while also facilitating the humane return of irregular migrants who do not have protection needs. At the same time, EU policy and procedures have an impact on the flows of people to and from Turkey.

The limited number of NGOs and academics working on statelessness issues and the absence of official data make it difficult to identify the root causes and the magnitude of the phenomenon in Turkey.

Organization and implementation

Coordination

UNHCR's main counterparts include the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs as well as civil society.

Through the UN Development Assistance Framework process, the UN Country Team has identified several cross-cutting themes that have links to UNHCR's activities in Turkey. UN agencies in Turkey will pursue good governance and respect for human rights through their Government partners. UNHCR will continue to work with the International Organization for Migration on resettlement, family reunification and voluntary repatriation.



Consequences of a 20-40 per cent funding shortfall

- Advocacy for improved reception conditions in the context of mixed migration will not be undertaken, including seven workshops on cross-border issues and a study with the Ministry of Interior and NGOs on cross-border issues with Greece and Bulgaria.
- Legal counselling services will not be established in the Edirne region bordering Greece and Bulgaria, which is needed for counselling and representing apprehended irregular migrants who may have international protection needs.
- 66 per cent of needed interpretation services will not be available, reducing the level of registration and lengthening the waiting period between application and RSD decision.
- UNHCR will have implementing partners in only two of 16 cities to help refugees and asylum-seekers access public services and legal rights, improve coordination and mobilize civil society.
- Less than 1,500 people of concern to UNHCR will benefit from a nominal assistance allowance. Medical assistance and access to health care services will also be curtailed.
- The number of children assisted to access education and vocational training will be limited to 500.
- The promotion of refugee law will be limited to two NGOs rather than to a much wider group, hindering UNHCR's strategy of building advocates for international asylum standards.
- The Office will not undertake a participatory process to quantify the magnitude and causes of statelessness in Turkey.

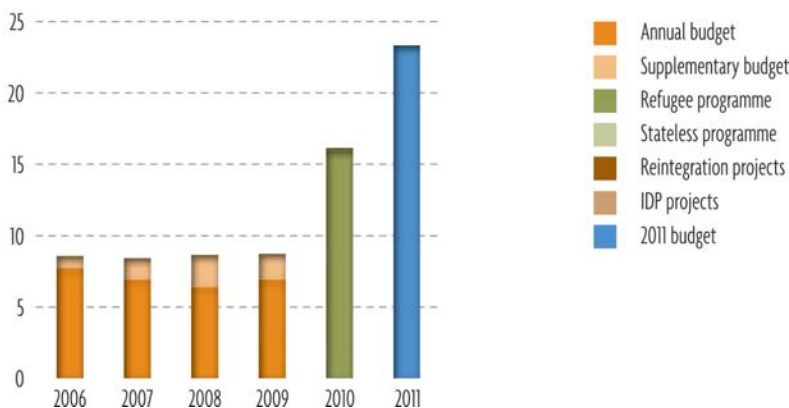
Financial information

The 2010 budget of USD 16.1 million mainly covers UNHCR programmes for refugees

(98 per cent). The large increase compared to the budget of 2009 relates to expanded services through partners outside of Ankara and strengthened UNHCR presence in the border regions.

UNHCR's budget in Turkey 2006 - 2011

Millions (USD)



2010 UNHCR Budget for Turkey (USD)

RIGHTS GROUPS AND OBJECTIVES	REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL
Favourable protection environment					
National legal framework	156,906	0	0	0	156,906
National and regional migration policy	418,864	0	0	0	418,864
Prevention of statelessness		66,438	0	0	66,438
Cooperation with partners	3,837,680	0	0	19,104	3,856,784
Access to territory	168,678	0	0	0	168,678
Non-refoulement	371,478	0	0	0	371,478
Subtotal	4,953,607	66,438	0	19,104	5,039,149
Fair protection processes and documentation					
Fair and efficient status determination	2,706,091	0	0	0	2,706,091
Subtotal	2,706,091	0	0	0	2,706,091
Basic needs and essential services					
Basic domestic and hygiene items	344,219	0	38,956	0	383,175
Primary health care	1,021,226	0	0	0	1,021,226
HIV and AIDS	80,796	0	0	0	80,796
Education	461,756	0	0	0	461,756
Services for groups with specific needs	1,875,796	0	0	0	1,875,796
Subtotal	3,783,793	0	38,956	0	3,822,749
Durable solutions					
Voluntary return	2,436,634	0	23,905	0	2,460,539
Rehabilitation and reintegration support		0	23,905	0	23,905
Resettlement	285,964	0	0	0	285,964
Local integration support	326,622	0	0	0	326,622
Subtotal	3,049,220	0	47,810	0	3,097,030
External relations					
Resource mobilization	117,233	0	0	0	117,233
Public information	279,441	0	0	0	279,441
Subtotal	396,674	0	0	0	396,674
Logistics and operations support					
Programme management, coordination and support	1,055,771	0	0	0	1,055,771
Subtotal	1,055,771	0	0	0	1,055,771
Total	15,945,156	66,438	86,766	19,104	16,117,464

2011 Budget	23,349,600
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2009 Revised budget	
Annual budget	6,952,560
Supplementary budget	1,794,650
TOTAL	8,747,210