



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Frequently Asked Questions Syrian Refugees in Turkey

What is the Temporary Protection regime and to whom does it apply?

The Temporary Protection (TP) regime established by the Government of Turkey (GoT) is in line with international standards for dealing with sudden and large increases of numbers of refugees crossing the border. Under the TP regime, Syrians are to be provided with protection and assistance in Turkey, which includes unlimited stay, protection against forcible returns and access to reception arrangements where immediate needs are addressed. To date, assistance has been systematically provided in the camps. For the non-camp refugees, the assistance is being provided on an adhoc basis with the notable exception of access to public medical health care which has been open to all Syrian nationals in Turkey.

All Syrian refugees are covered by the TP regime, including those without identification documents. The TP regime also covers Palestinians from Syria and stateless persons from Syria.

Does the TP regime guarantee access to Turkey?

Access for Syrian refugees to Turkey is managed by the Turkish authorities.

Syrian passport holders may legally access Turkey without visas and there are no restrictions to entry. They may obtain legal residence permits (ikamets) anywhere in the country, with the exception of the Hatay and Sirnak provinces.

The admission of Syrians without passports at official border crossings is controlled by the Turkish Passport Control Police and is generally linked to the availability of places within the camps, with exceptions, e.g., for those requiring emergency medical treatment.

At the border points controlled by the Gendarmerie or the Turkish Land Forces, entry of Syrians is generally restricted to wounded people. Given the restrictions at the border, many Syrians without valid passports seek irregular entry into Turkey, some with the assistance of smugglers. Those who enter irregularly are later able to regularize their stay through registration at one of the AFAD Coordination Centres in southeastern Turkey. UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government for unrestricted access to territory, and also to draw the attention of authorities to the protection risks that Syrians face when forced to resort to irregular entry.

Can Palestinians ex-Syria also enter Turkey without a visa?

In principle, Palestinians who seek to enter Turkey from Syria are allowed to enter the country without a visa. The temporary protection regime specifically ensures that Palestinians from Syria are granted the same protection envisaged for Syrian nationals. For Palestinians who arrive to Turkey via a third country, practice to date indicates that, in the absence of a visa, they may be returned to the third country. However, there are no reports of Palestinians being returned to Syria.



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Does UNHCR Turkey register Syrians?

UNHCR Turkey is not carrying out registration or refugee status determination of Syrians, as their protection is ensured by the TP regime. Syrian refugees are therefore registered by the Turkish authorities.

Syrian refugees residing in camps are registered by camp authorities, which are under the responsibility of the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD).

The Foreigners Police (FP) in satellite cities are registering Syrians who entered Turkey legally with their valid passports and providing them with residence permits (ikamets). The FP registers and provides ikamets in all provinces of Turkey with the exception of Sirnak and Hatay provinces. The FP are not registering and providing residence permits to Syrians who entered irregularly/informally and without passports.

For those Syrian refugees residing in urban areas and unable to obtain ikamets, registration is carried out by AFAD. The registration of this caseload only began in January 2013 in Gaziantep city, and has since begun in Nizip (Gaziantep province) and Sanliurfa province. In other locations, such as Adana, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, and Hatay, authorities are carrying out enumeration exercises, which are recording the presence of Syrian refugees, but documentation is not being issued to Syrian refugees in these locations.

Where can Syrian refugees register?

Registration in camps

In each of the 21 refugee camps, the management of the camp is responsible for carrying out the registration of the refugees prior to their placement in the camp. Registration facilities are located within each camp. Upon registration, camp residents receive registration cards from the camp authorities which can be used as identification documents, and which secure access to a number of services, including medical care. Despite recent openings of new camps, the demand for camps has surpassed the available spaces in the camps. Whether or not a Syrian refugee is placed and registered in a camp, as well as which camp, is at the discretion of the Government of Turkey. The general policy of AFAD is that there will be an orderly admission of Syrians to Turkey for camp placement, and thus, the authorities have been prioritizing the admission and placement of vulnerable IDPs who have been waiting on the Syrian side of the border. The authorities have also identified vulnerable Syrian families living in urban areas for transfer to the newly opened camps.

Syrians who are already in Turkey and wish to be placed in a camp can approach the AFAD Provincial offices and Governorate Offices to inquire about this possibility.

Registration outside of camps

Syrians who officially entered Turkey with passports are able to receive a residence permit by approaching the Foreigner's Department of the Ministry of Interior. While the residence fee is waived for Syrians, they are required to pay an administrative fee for the residence permit booklet. For all Syrians with a passport, the Government provides a one-year residence



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

permit and waves the residency fee. Foreigner's Departments can be found in each city and the easiest way to locate them is to approach the nearest police station which can guide an applicant to the right department.

Refugees who entered Turkey through an informal border crossing and without a passport are currently able to register in Government operated Coordination Centres located in Gaziantep and Nizip, in Gaziantep province, as well as in the coordination center in Sanliurfa, and its branches, which are currently operating in Akcakale, Birecik, Bozova, Siverek, Suric, and Viransehir in Sanliurfa province. The coordination centers are managed jointly by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and governorate authorities.

In these centres and upon registration, Syrians are issued ID cards which facilitate access to medical assistance and other assistance provided through the sub-governorates. UNHCR is supporting the government to register the non-camp population in the southeast through the procurement of mobile registration units which will be deployed over the fall 2013 (September to December 2013). In other provinces in the southeast, the local authorities are carrying out enumeration exercises to identify where Syrians are living and, in some cases, to provide them with assistance.

It should additionally be noted that a new circular on the registration of urban refugees was sent by the Ministry of Interior on 17 September to Provincial Security Directorates in 20 provinces, including 10 provinces where the camps are located, as well as Istanbul, Ankara, Konya, Mersin, Izmir, Bursa, Balikesir, Eskisehir, Kayseri, and Antalya. The circular informs that further coordination centres will be established in these 20 provinces, and that their staffing of Foreigners Police will be reinforced to ensure that the registration and fingerprinting of the urban Syrians can be carried out. UNHCR is following up with the authorities regarding their intentions to begin implementing the plans set forth in this circular.

Coordination centre contact information

Gaziantep Coordination Centre:

Degirmicem Mahallesi
Ozgurluk Cad.
Erseter Apt n. 38/A
Sehitkamil, Gaziantep
Hotline: 444 5027

Urfa Coordination Centre:

Veysel Karani
Mahallesi 462 Sokak
No:17 Sanliurfa Merkez
Landline (not hotline): 0414 313 7290 & 0414 314 0852

What support is available to Syrian refugees with medical needs?

Free access to medical treatment is facilitated for all Syrian refugees residing in camps. Furthermore, on 18 January 2013, AFAD issued *circular 2013/1* informing that Syrian nationals who are not residing in camps can approach health centers or hospitals and receive



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

medical attention free of charge. To receive medical care, non-camp refugees must approach the health centers or hospitals which are located in one of the 10 provinces that are hosting the Syrian refugee camps. These currently include: Adana, Adiyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Malatya, Mardin, Osmaniye, and Sanliurfa. The cost of the medical treatment, which includes preventive or primary healthcare, is borne by AFAD. If a Syrian has not yet been registered by AFAD, they can still approach the State Hospitals in these 10 provinces for medical treatment, at which point in time, a designated person at the Hospital will conduct a preliminary registration so that health services can be provided.

AFAD issued an additional circular on 9 September instructing that Syrians nationals be granted access to health services in all 81 provinces in Turkey. It is envisaged that registration will be undertaken by the medical centres and the Foreigners Police staff in all 81 provinces of Turkey. This circular expands, in principle, the previous health circular, and also appears to be a reflection of efforts to scale up registration of urban Syrians throughout the country. UNHCR is following up with the authorities to receive clarification on how and when the circular will begin to be implemented.

In select pharmacies throughout Gaziantep and Urfa provinces, AFAD, in coordination with the Chamber of Pharmacists, have arranged to cover 80% of prescription costs for medication required by Syrian refugees. Costs for the medication is borne by the respective AFAD Provincial Directorate.

Can Syrian children access education in Turkey?

According to Turkish national law, all children in Turkey, including foreigners, have the right to primary and secondary school education. Refugees of school age residing in camps throughout southeast Turkey have access to camp schools which follow the Syrian educational curriculum and provide instruction in the Arabic language. At the end of the education year the children are issued a document indicating their attendance and successful completion of the school year in the camp.

Outside of the refugee camps, Syrians of school age who have been issued residence permits can enroll in public schools. Those who are living outside of camps and without residence permits can attend schools as guests, without formal enrolment, or attend informal schools run by volunteer Syrian teachers which in some areas are supported by the local authorities or NGOs.

What support mechanisms are available for unaccompanied Syrian refugee children?

Protection for all children, regardless of nationality, is ensured by the legal framework of Turkey's Child Protection Law No. 5395. Thus, in principle, the national legal system has the capacity to address the protection needs of Syrian children, including unaccompanied minors (UAMs). Unaccompanied and separated refugee children who are in need of protection can be hosted in state institutions and be provided with assistance on par with that received by Turkish citizens. Thus, within the existing framework, contingent upon the Syrian child's registration with the authorities, and availability of resources and the capacity of the state, primary education, including language training, as well as medical care, are provided.



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Any Syrian UAMs identified by UNHCR or the local authorities were, until recently, referred immediately to the Turkish Child Protection Agency for placement in existing child protection centres. However, given the increasing number of arrivals, which has had an impact on the capacity of state institutions to continue to meet the growing needs of identified unaccompanied children, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy is seeking alternative arrangements to address the needs of these children under the legal framework.

UNHCR continues to provide guidance to the authorities on identification of the most suitable care arrangement that serving the specific circumstances of the child. Syrian UAMs should be referred to UNHCR, which will follow up with the authorities on the appropriate response and support.

What recourse to assistance do Syrian refugees have if they are victims of a crime in Turkey?

In the context of the temporary protection regime, all Syrian refugees may avail themselves of the protection of the Government of Turkey. In practice this means that they may approach the authorities, including the police, and report and seek assistance for any crime that they may experience while in Turkey. It should be noted that while the absence of registration with the authorities would not prevent any Syrian from approaching a police station and seeking assistance, registration is the only way to ensure full access to protection and assistance offered by Turkey.

What is the role of UNHCR Turkey in ensuring the protection of Syrian refugees?

UNHCR has been requested by the authorities to support the temporary protection regime through the provision of technical advice, voluntary repatriation monitoring and related activities, and to be present in all provinces where Syrian refugees are hosted.

In southeast Turkey, UNHCR has a presence in Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Hatay. UNHCR Staff members visit refugee camps on a daily basis, speaking with appropriate camp management, AFAD, Kizilay, registration officials, managers and staff of various Ministries' technical units. Whenever possible, and with the consent of all parties concerned, UNHCR visits the residential areas of the refugee camps. During the visits, UNHCR seeks to gain an understanding for the challenges and achievements of the situation of Syrian refugees. UNHCR also documents and disseminates good practices observed in the camps in order to advance protection standards and to find practical solutions.

What assistance does UNHCR Turkey provide?

UNHCR provides policy and technical advice to the Government of Turkey, including in the areas of protection such as registration, access to territory, documentation and legal counseling and management of urban refugee caseloads. UNHCR Turkey seeks to assist the camp authorities in finding practical solutions to issues coming up in the camps.

In relation to material assistance, UNHCR Turkey has and will continue to provide non-food items, such as tents, blankets, tarpaulins, kitchen sets and kitchen equipment. Most recently UNHCR has supported the Turkish authorities to expand its registration activities for the non-



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

camp caseload with the procurement of mobile registration units, which will be deployed to parts of the country where Syrian refugees are residing, has procured wheelchairs for disabled refugees, and has supported a number of vocational training centres.

Does UNHCR Turkey resettle Syrian refugees?

With the Government of Turkey holding the lead role in responding to the international protection needs of Syrian nationals through the implementation of the TP regime, UNHCR Turkey does not carry out registration, refugee status determination, or resettlement activities for Syrian refugees.

Certain governments have informed UNHCR of their interest in resettling Syrians from the region. However, these governments have not yet confirmed any resettlement programs for Syrian refugees in Turkey. All Syrian refugees in Turkey continue to be covered by the Temporary Protection regime and should register with the authorities.

Currently there are no large scale resettlement programs available for Syrian refugees.

Are registered Syrian refugees and asylum seekers free to move within Turkey?

Camp managers grant Syrian refugees temporary leaves from the camps during daylight hours on a regular basis. For Syrian refugees living outside of the camps, a specific permission to go to another city/province is not required.

Can UNHCR Turkey assist refugees with family reunification procedures?

Anyone who wishes to lodge an application for family reunification should be in direct contact with the relevant embassy. According to the laws of most countries, family reunification procedures require that the family member in the third country approaches the immigration authorities there first, in order to initiate the process. Most countries only accept family reunification requests of nuclear family members (spouses and children below the age of 18).

While UNHCR can assist with providing information, the most efficient way for a person with a nuclear family member in another country is for this person to approach the relevant embassy.

For exceptionally vulnerable cases brought to UNHCR Turkey's attention, such as, for example, unaccompanied children who may have parents residing in a third country, UNHCR Turkey has used its good offices to facilitate a speedy family reunification by liaising with relevant embassies, and has ensured appropriate care arrangements while the children are in Turkey.

I have an urgent protection problem and need the assistance of UNHCR Turkey.

Within the context of the temporary protection regime, the Government of Turkey is responsible for ensuring the protection of all Syrian refugees. UNHCR can be contacted to provide counseling on the temporary protection regime.



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

The hotline numbers for UNHCR Turkey

(+90312) 405 80 66

(+90312) 405 81 27

Queries can also be sent by e-mail to TURAN@unhcr.org.

UNHCR Turkey

October 2013