



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
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LIVES

WFP Turkey Country Brief May 2020

Operational Context

Turkey hosts the highest number of refugees in the world, 4 million people, of which close to 3.58 million are from Syria. Around 63,300 refugees reside in 7 camps located in the south-east, while the majority live in cities and villages throughout the country. The Government of Turkey has demonstrated leadership and generosity in providing for the needs of these populations. Since June 2011, a temporary protection regime has granted Syrians access to basic services such as healthcare and education. Refugees of other nationalities benefit from International Protection status.

WFP re-established a presence in Turkey in 2012, in response to the Syria crisis. WFP Turkey's [Interim Country Strategic Plan](#) (ICSP 2020-2021) builds on WFP's partnership with the Government of Turkey and other stakeholders to contribute to refugee households' ability to meet their basic needs, ensuring no vulnerable refugee is left behind. Considering the protracted refugee presence in Turkey, the ICSP adds longer-term activities by increasing direct engagement in resilience programming that creates opportunities for refugees and host communities alike.



Population of Turkey:
83.2 million

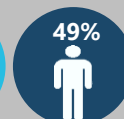
2019 Human Development Index:
59 out of 189 (0.806)

Income Level: **Upper middle**

Poverty Rate: **28.7 percent** living below the national poverty line (TUIK)

In Numbers

55,968 people assisted
In May 2020



US\$ 20,190 distributed in multi-purpose cash

US\$ 0.8 m distributed through value vouchers

15,000 hygiene kits delivered to in-camp households

US\$ 38.2 million six-month net funding requirements
(July – December 2020)

Operational Updates

- As of 31 May, 163,942 COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Turkey, with 4,540 deaths. Government measures in response to the pandemic continued in May. To protect assisted people from the virus and mitigate its effects, WFP has introduced several adjustments to its activities and distribution modalities.
- WFP continues to support 55,858 refugees in six camps, through a monthly e-voucher payment of TRY 100 (USD 15) per person. In May, WFP distributed 110 additional vouchers to support the food and non-food needs of new arrivals from Turkey's Western border with Greece and Northern Cyprus. They were placed in a 14-day quarantine as a precaution. These refugees arrived at the camps with support from the Directorate-General for Migration Management and UNHCR. They were given a choice to remain in the camps, however chose to return to their previous area of residence. No COVID-19 positive cases have been confirmed among refugees in the camps, as of 31 May.
- WFP conducted an assessment of COVID-19 Pandemic readiness and impact on Refugees living in camps. Key findings showed that 70 percent of refugees have a low level of knowledge of COVID-19 symptoms. While half felt safe, others reported anxiety and stress because of the pandemic. Almost 72 percent thought markets/shops seemed more crowded than usual after the outbreak, while in fact access to the supermarkets was strongly controlled. Most food and hygiene items remained available. The purchase of hygiene items increased from an average of TRY 122 (USD 21) per month in late 2019 to TRY 185 (USD 27) by April 2020. One-third of refugees reacted to the pandemic by stocking up on commodities. Sixty-nine per cent of employed camp residents reported that they either lost their jobs or had to accept reduced salaries as a result of restrictions introduced after the outbreak of the pandemic.
- In May, 177 vocational training participants for the Kitchen of Hope project received their April entitlement of TRY 750 (USD 115). WFP revised the project to ensure these graduates could complete their vocational training on line and is now adjusting the on-the-job training component of the programme. Rather than restaurants, the graduates will now support municipal soup kitchens, thereby applying their newfound skills while contributing to feeding the most vulnerable and building social cohesion. Online applications for the second cohort were activated in mid-May and will remain open until 08 June.

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**Interim Country Strategic Plan
(2020-2021)**

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
225 m	167 m
2020 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (July– December 2020)
189 m	38.2 m

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs

Strategic Outcome #1: Enhance partnerships to support refugees and vulnerable populations, affected by prolonged refugee presence in Turkey to equitably access basic needs assistance and labour market opportunities.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Strengthen partnerships with national institutions and partners to improve programme implementation.
- Provide technical support to Government and partners in assisting refugees living in Turkish communities.
- Provide technical support to Government and partners in assisting refugees living in camps in Turkey.
- Provide technical support to Government and partners in assisting refugees and vulnerable populations to equitably access labour market opportunities.
- Support Turkey to exchange knowledge, experience and technology with other countries through facilitation of South–South and triangular cooperation

Monitoring

- The in-camp Price Market Monitoring (PMM) and On-Site Monitoring (OSM) report for the first quarter (Q1) of 2020 was finalized in May. WFP field teams visited the markets regularly in January and February, but the majority of field activities had to be adapted from mid-March because of the Covid-19 outbreak. Close collaboration with the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) enabled the collection of market price data from the contracted markets. Findings indicate that there were no food availability issues in the markets in Q1 2020.
- Monitoring data showed that the purchasing power of refugees in the camps deteriorated significantly. In January and February, winter conditions limited income opportunities, negatively affecting camp residents who stated they had to resort to borrowing money and buying food on credit in non-contracted markets.
- The pandemic has exacerbated the general economic downturn, resulting in a spike in unemployment among refugees. Many have lost access to livelihood opportunities outside the camps – mostly casual, seasonal, or unskilled labor – as such work was halted under Government-mandated COVID-19 precautionary restrictions.
- By March, the monthly food basket cost in the contracted markets was TRY 148/USD21, 48 percent more than the assistance provided per person (TRY100/USD15), exacerbated by the fact that refugees also use their cash for non-food items. Though high, this is less than the cost in both contracted and noncontracted shops, which reached TRY 157 (USD23) by March.
- As for conditions in contracted shops, more cashiers were recruited in Kahramanmaraş camp to minimise queues for payment. In Kilis camp, market staff noted that refugees started buying more fresh products since the shops started to sell these items loose rather

than packed. In May, WFP was able to advocate directly with the contracted markets for improved fresh produce with the stores responding immediately which was highly appreciated by the refugees. This long-standing issue is now resolved for the foreseeable future.

- In March, the Adana camp management re-admitted around 1,000 people who had previously been dropped from the system as ‘non-returnees’, having exceeded the period allowed to camp residents for staying off-camp. The readmission was explained by the loss of jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- To measure economic and the pandemic impact on communities and affected population, WFP continues to monitor the state of the market nationwide. The Turkish Statistical Institute ([Turkstat](#)) statistics released in April showed a minimum expenditure basket (MEB) cost of living of TRY 498 (USD 73) per person per month in a Turkish household. From March to April food prices in the MEB increased by two percent. The rise was largely driven by the increase in bread prices, which has the highest consumption share in the basket. Hygiene item prices increased by one percent in the same period. The overall inflation rate was at 10.9 percent in April, down from 11.9 percent in March, the lowest in the five months from November.
- The closure of all non-essential businesses, especially the industrial and service sectors, added to the pressure on the Turkish lira. It steadily depreciated in the first five months of 2020, falling to 7.08 TRY to the US dollar on 8 May before strengthening to 6.78 TRY to the US dollar on 29 May.

WFP Mitigates Coronavirus Risks

- Read about WFP’s risk mitigation helping refugee families in camps during COVID-19 outbreak, [here](#).

**Donors**

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, USAID/FFP