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POLICY BRIEF November 2019



Policy Brief 2019: Ankara

Introduction

According to UNHCR, as of July 2019, there are around 4 million refugees in Turkey including Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians and others nationalities (UNHCR Turkey Fact Sheet, July, 2019).

Per the Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM) October 2019 figures, Istanbul has the largest number: 549,903 refugees, representing 3.65% of the province's 2019 population. Ankara hosts around 170,000 refugees from different nationalities, including 94,816 Syrians, around 50,000 Iraqis and approximately 30,000 Afghans, Uzbeks, Somalis and others.

The Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM) Refugee Consultation and Support Hub is working in Keçiören, Altındağ, Mamak and Yenimahalle districts in Ankara, under project of Providing Information and protection assistance to vulnerable refugees in Turkey and enhancing community-based protection, funded by European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid.

Since the last quarter of 2018, it has been observed through IGAM's case management and in numerous focus group discussions and awareness raising sessions that refugees are facing a range of challenges in Ankara. The root causes of some of the main issues the refugee community face - which are outlined in this paper - are the language barrier and inadequate knowledge on rights and obligations under Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Similar problems have also been raised by mukhtars, municipalities, officials from provincial directorates of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, Sub-Governorships and I/NGOs during coordination meetings.

IGAM has identified three main challenges facing refugees in Ankara province:

Issue 1: Refugees who are not willing or able to register with the Turkish authorities to seek protection cannot benefit from education, health, social aid and employment opportunities. The only service they can access is the emergency healthcare.

Issue 2: Afghan citizens - in particular those with Uzbek ethnicity - are particularly likely to be unregistered for reasons that will be outlined in more detail below. As a result of living without registration they cannot benefit from many services, especially education and health. Vulnerable groups (i.e. children, elderly, disabled) are the most affected groups from this situation.

Issue 3: The most common problems encountered when working with children have been child labor and the right to access education. Throughout the project implementation in Ankara, 9% of child beneficiaries were observed to be engaging in some form of child labor. According to the Ministry of Education data, at least 300,000 of 900,000 Syrian children do not attend to school.

This policy brief will explore these three issues in more detail and set out recommendations to improve access to services and protection for refugees in Turkey.



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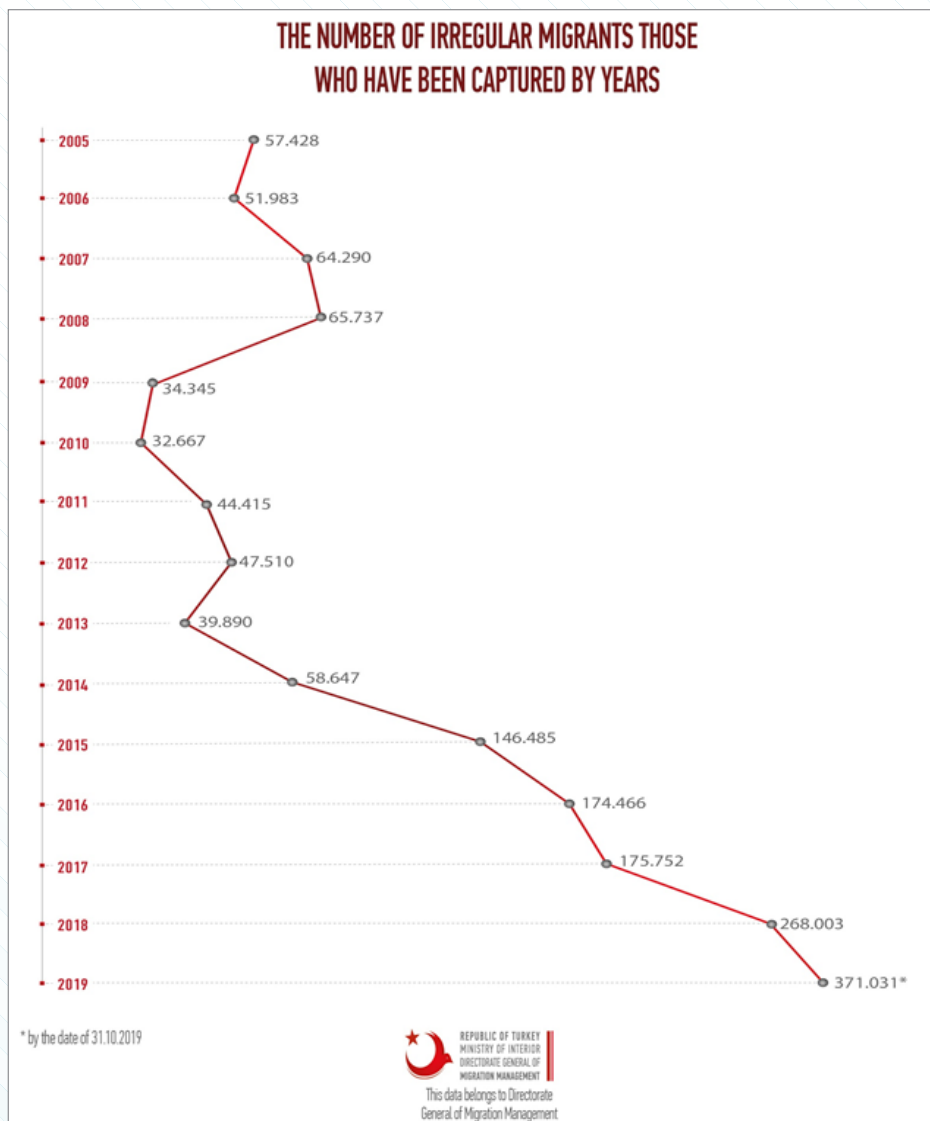
November 2019



► Key Challenges Refugees Face in Ankara

Issue 1: Registration

Being registered in the Republic of Turkey is an important responsibility for refugees and other foreigners; because it provides legal basis and access to public services and available social benefits. Therefore, being registered is a safeguard of the rights of refugees and migrants. However, registration is only available in a limited number of provinces, often away from social and economic hubs – meaning not all refugees are willing or able to register. Refugees who are not registered with the Turkish authorities and do not seek protection cannot benefit from education, health, social aid and employment opportunities. The only service they can access is the emergency health service.



Graph, Irregular migrants who have been detained by the authorities by years, Directorate General of Migration Management



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In this context, registration is discussed under three main topics according to IGAM's field experiences.

Registration:

In Turkey, registration is carried out at the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) under the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM). Refugees and other foreigners who come to the PDMM are interviewed upon their request. As a result of the interview, the type of identity (International Protection, Residence Permit...) is determined for the person and / or family members, supported by documents such as a passport or family book from the country of origin. On the other hand, Syrians who have come to Turkey as part of the large influx of refugees from the conflict are given a Temporary Protection Identity card.

IGAM informs the refugees about the registration process of the satellite provinces (satellite provinces are cities that are determined by the Turkish Government for refugees to reside) and the quota of provinces, assisting them to register. IGAM has encountered cases in the field that could not register for various reasons. Ankara PDMM refers people to other provinces because Ankara is not a satellite province.

Identity Verification:

Refugees who seek protection are required to provide correct identification at the time of registration and all relevant documents. If there is no document from the country of origin, the registration shall be made according to the person's declaration. If the declaration is incorrect or needed correction afterwards, refugees need to go to PDMM of their city of registration.

IGAM has encountered beneficiaries who have given false / incomplete information to authorities during the first entry into the country or during the process of leaving camps. In some cases, it is observed that the refugees suffer because they have to spend a long time without registration while they sort out their documents.

Identity Transfer:

Refugees can register to the satellite province that is designated by the Republic of Turkey. Refugees with Temporary and International Protection must apply to the PDMM in order to transfer their city of residence. During the application, they should state the reason for the transfer. After taking into consideration the reasons (education, employment, marriage, protection...), the PDMM may approve the transfer.

It is observed that refugees prefer to live in metropolitan areas due to the higher employment and education opportunities. However, because of the density of metropolitan areas, refugees are not always able to transfer their city of residence to these provinces.



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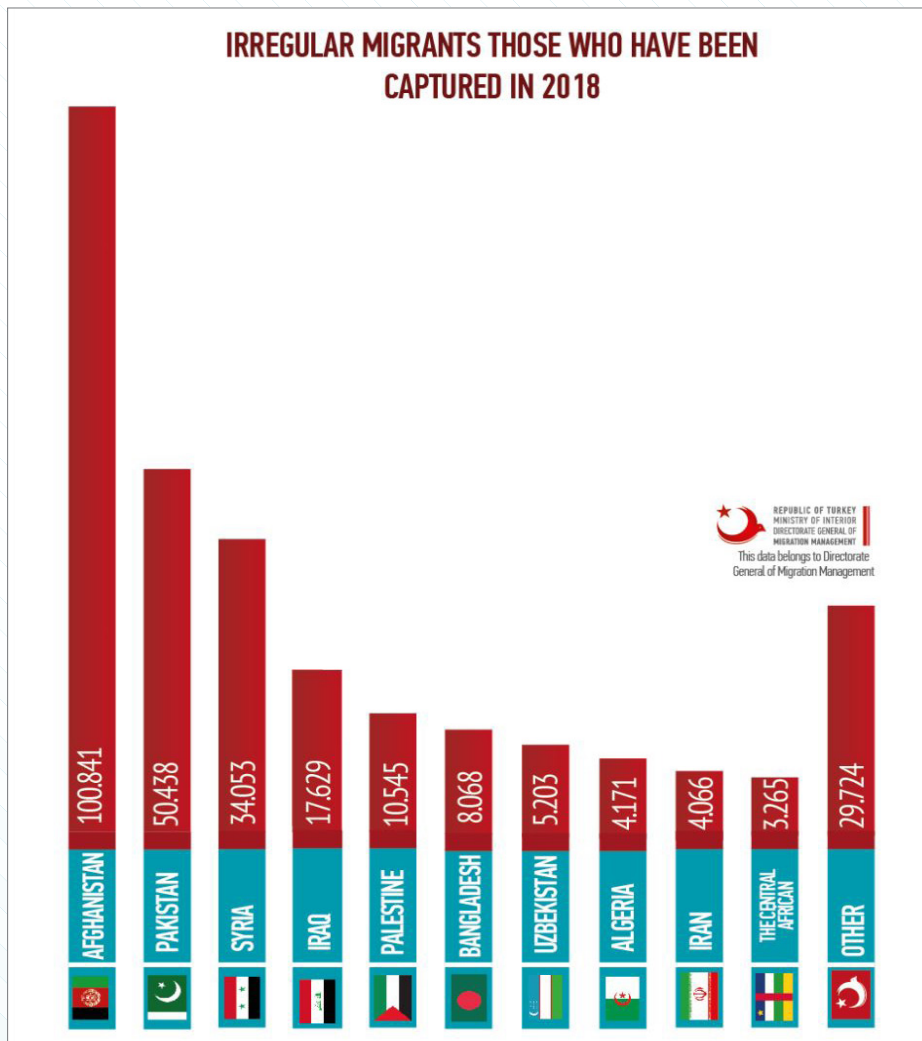
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Issue 2: Unregistered Afghan Refugees

An average of 20,000 to 30,000 refugees from Afghanistan are thought to be living in Ankara. The number of refugees from Afghanistan who are located in Turkey are not fully accounted for because of not being registered. These figures were acquired from the community leaders of refugees from Afghanistan. Within the scope of IGAM's operation field, Afghan citizens with Uzbek ethnicity constitute a significant population.

Field studies conducted by IGAM point out that attitudes towards registration of the Uzbeks who come from Afghanistan are different than other refugees. The Uzbeks expect a collective registration rather than individual registration, due to previous examples of this community have received a group amnesty or recognition. For example, a group of Afghans who settled in Hatay province in the 1980s were granted Turkish citizenship in 2017. In addition, again in 2017 in Istanbul, with the decision of the Ministry of Interior, a group of Uzbeks were granted collective humanitarian residence permit. Based on these incidents, the Uzbeks do not in general take the steps to apply to register individually.



Graph, Irregular migrants who have been detained by the authorities in 2018, Directorate General of Migration Management



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There are Afghan refugees who want to apply for registration individually, as well. One of the difficulties faced in this situation is that Ankara isn't a satellite city. For this reason, refugees who want to register in Ankara are referred to nearby provinces. However, since their relatives and jobs are in Ankara, they are not willing to do so. Through the facilitation of IGAM, there have been refugees who agreed to go to nearby cities for registration. It is observed that there have been refugees who followed these steps, have received international protection or residence permits.

As a result of living without registration, Afghan refugees cannot benefit from many services, especially education and health. Vulnerable groups (children, elderly, disabled) are the most affected groups from this situation. Children are not able to attend formal education. Unregistered refugees cannot benefit from health services except in emergency cases. Women cannot receive the necessary medical support before and after childbirth. When they give birth in the hospital, they face a very high bill of expenses, because they do not have any health insurance. In addition, men are in the labour market as unregistered workforce. Hence, they tend to work without any type of insurance. These processes also constitute a challenge for the vulnerable groups to participate in social life.

Issue 3: Child Labor and the Right to Access Education

The most common problems encountered when working with children have been child labor and the right to access education in IGAM's project field. Throughout the project implementation in Ankara, participation in some form of child labor was observed in 9% of the child beneficiaries.

Some child labor cases are forced by the family or guardian for a number of reasons, including poverty, lack of head of household (loss of able members of family to work), difficulty in finding jobs for adult members in the family and tendency of employers to hire children due to lower costs.

Some children also willingly want to work. In female-headed households or where an adult family member is not able to work for health or other reasons, boys especially may feel a financial responsibility to provide for the family and voluntarily move away from education. During psychosocial interviews with some children, IGAM often encounters sentiments such as: 'What will my mother do if I do not work?'; 'I have to take care of my family'; 'I have grown up and I have to work instead of going to school.'; 'I have a lot of siblings and I am the oldest. I have to take care of them.' Such discourses indicate that these children are facing a serious role complexity.

*"I have a lot of siblings and I am the oldest.
I have to take care of them." - Ahmed, 14*

Both conditions (forced child labor and voluntary child labor) indicate that serious measures should be taken to encourage children to access education. When the current practices are considered, referring refugee children to vocational education schools by the Ministry of National Education is an important step in reducing child labor. However, this practice raises the concern that children might move away from formal education in the future.



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► Recommendations

Suggestion 1: Registration Problems

The studies conducted in the field indicate that there is insufficient information about laws and regulations applied to refugees in Turkey. In this context, refugees can be better informed through activities carried out with governmental and non-governmental institutions cooperation.

Refugees who have insufficient information on available cities for registration need a travel permit to go to these provinces. Unregistered refugees have difficulties in obtaining travel permit from the PDMM as they are not registered. These refugees cannot go to the relevant province to register because there are no travel permits. Since they cannot go to the registration, they remain unregistered. As a solution to this situation, it is suggested that a special permit can be created for the refugees who want to go to other provinces to register.

Suggestion 2: Unregistered Afghan Refugees

Extensive field research is recommended in districts where Afghan refugees live in crowded groups. This study will provide comprehensive information on the living conditions and difficulties faced by unregistered refugees.

It is observed that an action plan is needed for the problems of unregistered refugees. Since this problem affects a community rather than just a small group of people, a broader action needs to be taken.

Because children are unregistered, staying away from education means being exposed to many risks for them. The school is the first place to identify neglect and abuse, some of the risks which children are exposed. Therefore, cooperation should be established between Ankara Provincial Directorate of Migration Management and schools, also measures should be taken to prevent children from being mistreated in this process. During the meetings with Ankara PDMM, it has been observed that facilitatory services are being provided for the enrollment of unregistered children to school. However, school management and refugees need to be more informed about available services.

Unregistered refugees from Afghanistan cannot benefit from health services except in emergencies. It is recommended that facilitation services should be put forth especially for children and pregnant women in need of health support.

Suggestion 3: Child Labor and the Right to Access Education

Collaboration with relevant institutions and families is crucial when dealing with child labor. Being aware of all types of child labor, following up the process, intervening and advocating when necessary, and cooperating with Social Service Centers in the process have utmost importance. On the other hand, it would be beneficial to receive psychosocial support and to cooperate with the families when dealing with children who are resilient to start or continue their education. It should be kept in mind that continuing education is very important for children's cognitive, physiological and emotional development as they are growing fast during these ages.



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> About the Project

Project: Providing information and protection assistance to vulnerable refugees in Turkey and enhancing community-based protection

Project Goal: Ensure that vulnerable refugees in Turkey are protected from harm, until lasting solutions are modeled and integrated into government systems — resulting in sustainable and equitable access to services for refugees.

Donors and Partners: The project is being financed by European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). The project has two implementing partners: The Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM) and International Blue Crescent (IBC).

Project Scope and Activities: Although the project has started in April 2018, the inception date of the operations was August 2018. IGAM Refugee Consultation and Support Hub provides consultation, support and referral services to refugees. Apart from 1-1 interviews with social workers, PSS counsels and legal expert, awareness raising sessions and group activities are also being organized. IGAM's services cover education, health, occupation, psychosocial wellbeing and legal fields. Information, consultation, support and referral mechanisms are in place in order to cover these areas. The topics of awareness raising sessions include but are not limited to child labor, early forced marriage, social aids, accessing services (education, health, occupation etc.), health insurance, information on IDs, work permits, rights and obligations, importance of psychosocial support, gender-based violence, peer bullying, good parenting, importance of healthy nutrition, İş-Kur (Turkish Labor Agency), Foreign Students Examination, and current updates on laws and regulations.



(IGAM Refugee Consultation and Support Hub, Berna Köse)



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> Acknowledgements

As IGAM, we would like to thank European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid for funding this project and giving us the opportunity to assist and serve refugees. We are delighted to dedicate our efforts and sources to continue to serve our beneficiaries. We also would like to thank our partners and all stakeholders that assisted us in implementing our activities and performing our tasks.

> References / More Information

1. Ministry of Interior General of Migration Management, <https://www.goc.gov.tr/>.
2. The UN Refugee Agency, <https://www.unhcr.org/>.
3. Ministry of Education, <http://www.meb.gov.tr/bakan-yilmaz-608-bin-suriyeli-cocugun-egitime-erisi-saglanmistir/haber/15549/tr>.
4. Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Province, DGMM:

DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE SCOPE OF TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY PROVINCE

DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE SCOPE OF TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY PROVINCE 31.10.2019 (ALPHABETICAL)									
PROVINCE NO	PROVINCE	REGISTRETED	POPULATION	COMPARASION PERCENTAGE WITH PROVINCE POPULATION	PROVINCE NO	PROVINCE	REGISTRETED	POPULATION	COMPARASION PERCENTAGE WITH PROVINCE POPULATION
TOTAL		3.680.603	82.003.882	4,49%	TOTAL		3.680.603	82.003.882	4,49%
1	ADANA	248.178	2.220.125	10,82%	42	KAHRAMANMARAŞ	93.812	1.144.851	8,12%
2	ADIYAMAN	26.041	624.513	4,17%	43	KARABÜK	900	248.014	0,36%
3	AFYON	8.332	725.568	1,15%	44	KARAMAN	813	251.913	0,32%
4	AĞRI	1.107	539.457	0,21%	45	KARS	173	288.878	0,06%
5	AKSARAY	3.148	412.172	0,76%	46	KASTAMONU	2.923	383.373	0,76%
6	AMASYA	788	337.508	0,23%	47	KAYSERİ	80.541	1.389.680	5,80%
7	ANKARA	94.816	5.503.985	1,72%	48	KIRIKKALE	1.699	286.602	0,59%
8	ANTALYA	1.863	2.426.356	0,08%	49	KIRKLARELİ	2.694	368.860	0,75%
9	ARDAHAN	125	98.907	0,13%	50	KIRŞEHİR	1.406	241.868	0,58%
10	ARTVIN	37	174.010	0,02%	51	KİLİS	116.492	142.541	81,73%
11	AYDIN	7.979	1.097.744	0,73%	52	KOCAELİ	56.382	1.906.391	2,96%
12	BALIKESİR	4.717	1.226.575	0,38%	53	KONYA	109.800	2.205.609	4,98%
13	BARTIN	197	198.999	0,10%	54	KÜTAHYA	985	577.941	0,17%
14	BATMAN	22.392	599.103	3,74%	55	MALATYA	28.172	797.036	3,53%
15	BAYBURT	22	82.274	0,03%	56	MANİSA	14.673	1.429.643	1,03%
16	BİLECİK	687	223.448	0,27%	57	MARDİN	88.005	829.195	10,61%
17	BİNGÖL	1.094	281.205	0,39%	58	MERSİN	204.770	1.814.468	11,29%
18	BİTLİS	1.077	369.396	0,31%	59	MUĞLA	15.560	967.487	1,61%
19	BOLU	2.795	311.810	0,90%	60	MUŞ	1.503	407.992	0,37%
20	BURDUR	8.904	249.926	3,30%	61	NEVŞEHİR	10.163	298.339	3,41%
21	BURSA	177.875	2.994.521	5,91%	62	NİĞDE	4.928	344.707	1,35%
22	ÇANAKKALE	5.833	568.662	1,08%	63	ORDU	856	771.932	0,11%
23	ÇANKIRI	560	216.362	0,26%	64	OSMANIYE	50.928	534.415	9,53%
24	ÇORUM	2.672	536.483	0,50%	65	RİZE	1.035	368.608	0,30%
25	DENİZLİ	12.678	1.827.782	1,23%	66	SAKARYA	16.451	1.810.700	1,63%
26	DIYARBAKIR	33.026	1.732.396	1,91%	67	SAMSUN	6.313	1.335.716	0,47%
27	DÜZCE	1.860	387.844	0,48%	68	SİİRT	4.154	331.470	1,25%
28	EDİRNE	1.082	411.528	0,26%	69	SINOP	164	219.733	0,07%
29	ELAZIĞ	14.160	595.638	2,38%	70	SİVAS	4.049	646.688	0,63%
30	ERZİNCAN	97	236.034	0,04%	71	ŞANLIURFA	429.717	2.035.809	21,11%
31	ERZURUM	1.135	767.848	0,15%	72	ŞİRİNAK	15.817	524.190	2,86%
32	ESKİŞEHİR	5.070	871.187	0,58%	73	TEKİRDAĞ	14.502	1.029.927	1,41%
33	GAZİANTEP	452.101	2.028.563	22,29%	74	TOKAT	1.028	612.646	0,17%
34	GİRESUN	182	453.912	0,04%	75	TRABZON	3.295	807.903	0,41%
35	GÜMÜŞHANE	108	142.748	0,07%	76	TUNCELİ	57	88.198	0,06%
36	HAKKARİ	5.235	286.470	1,83%	77	UŞAK	2.443	367.514	0,66%
37	HATAY	440.920	1.609.856	27,39%	78	VAN	2.167	1.123.784	0,19%
38	İĞDIR	89	197.456	0,05%	79	YALOVA	3.899	242.234	1,69%
39	İSPARTA	6.760	441.412	1,53%	80	YOZGAT	4.671	424.981	1,10%
40	İSTANBUL	549.903	15.067.724	3,65%	81	ZONGULDAK	613	599.698	0,10%
41	İZMİR	146.885	4.320.519	3,40%					

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