



ISSUE 3: JUNE 2020

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SAFETY NET (ESSN)

Thanks to European Union funding and a partnership between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRC), over 1.7 million refugees living in Turkey are receiving humanitarian support through cash assistance.

June snapshot



1,712,030 people
received cash assistance
(301,136 households)



361,957,600 TRY
was transferred, including
COVID-19 and disability
top-ups



150,568,000 TRY
additional (reallocated)
cash was transferred
dedicated to respond to
COVID-19

Highlights

Cash assistance to respond to COVID-19 socio-economic impacts

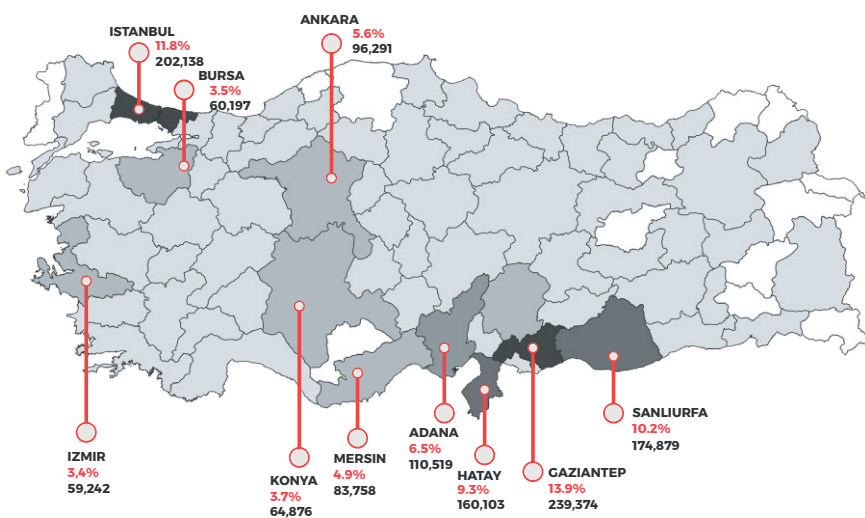
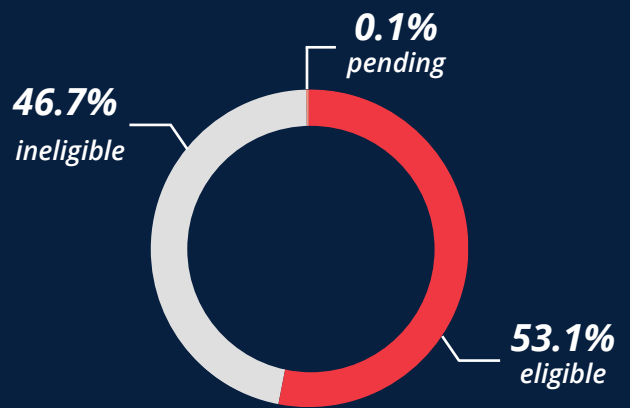
In order to address the COVID socio-economic impacts, the ESSN programme has reallocated its resources to provide additional cash assistance to 1.7 million vulnerable refugees in Turkey. On 30 June, households received the first of two instalments which will be given over two months, totaling 1,000 TRY (approximately EUR 133) in addition to the regular monthly assistance. This is not an added grant, rather reallocated funds from the existing ESSN budget funded by the EU. The largest single cash transfer of 362 million TRY was made, which included the COVID-19 top-up of 150 million TRY and the monthly disability top-up of 5.9 million TRY.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT: EASING RESTRICTIONS IN TURKEY

As of 01 June, Turkey began easing restrictions by lifting curfews and reopening businesses, government offices and other services which had been shut during the lockdown. Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASF) offices have resumed their work from their offices and applications for the ESSN are being taken under strict measures of physical distancing. Additionally, IFRC and TRC teams have begun joint visits to the offices of local authorities, Halkbank branches and (I)NGOs to gather information on the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the ESSN as well as on the lives of the affected populations. Though household visits to assess the vulnerability of the applicants have been put on hold until further notice from the Ministry of Family Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), SASFs continue to take applications and households who fit the demographic criteria are receiving the ESSN.

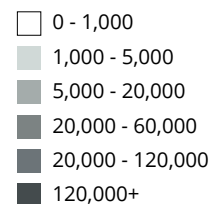
APPLICATIONS IN JUNE

June applications indicate an increase of 242 per cent compared to May. A total of 2,885 new applications were received in June by SASFs and TRC service centers. This increasing trend is in line with the normalization process and easing of restrictions announced by the Government of Turkey following which most public institutions, including SASFs, have reopened and movement restrictions have been lifted. TRC service centers, which remained operational throughout the lockdown, are now operating at full capacity.

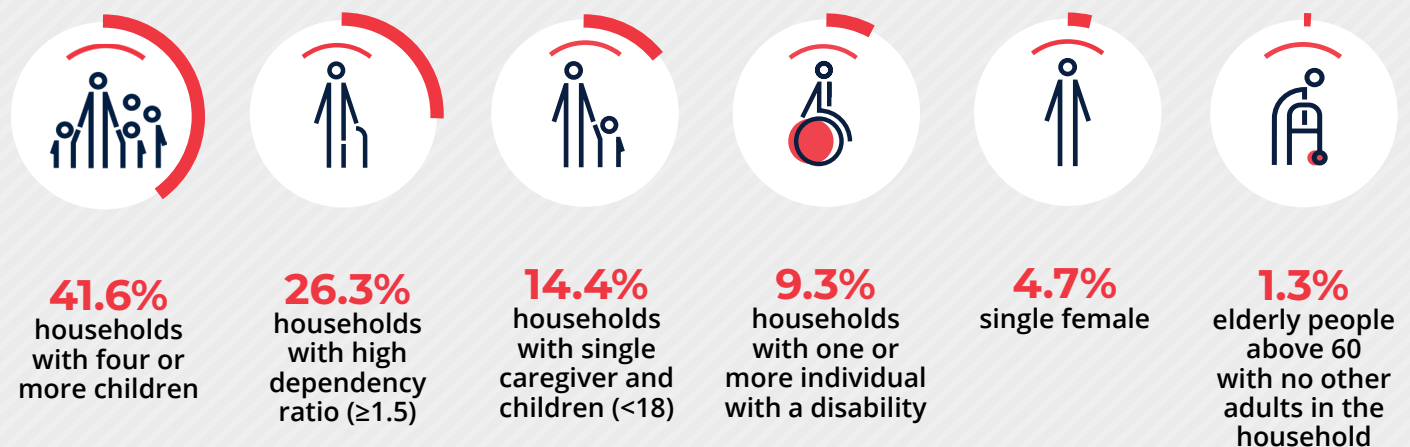


Province breakdown of ESN recipients

Number of people



CRITERIA BREAKDOWN ¹



***2.4%** of households (7,366 HHs) receive assistance within the scope of SASF discretionary allowance.

¹ 125,161 households with four or more children, 70,073 households with a high dependency ratio, 43,342 households with single caregiver and children below 18 years of age, 27,932 households with one or more individual with a disability, 14,298 single females, 3,964 households with elderly people above 60 with no other adults in the household. Note: these numbers now reflect the criteria percentage based on households, and not on individuals. This change was done to acknowledge that targeting criteria are household-based.



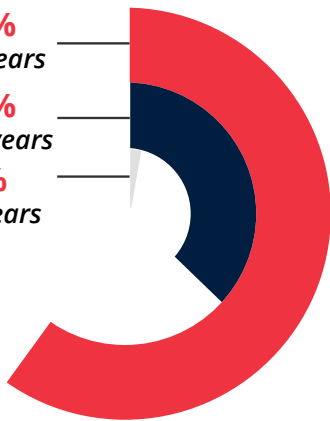
IN NUMBERS: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE WE SERVE

Age

60%
0-17 years

37%
18-59 years

3%
60+ years



Age breakdown of ESSN recipients for June:

0-17 years: 1,027,093

18-59 years: 634,945

60+ years: 49,992

Gender

51.3% female



48.7% male

Gender breakdown of ESSN recipients for June:

Female: 879,451

Male: 832,579

Nationality

Syrian

1,524,100

Iraqi

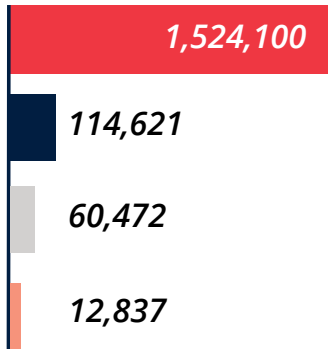
114,621

Afghan

60,472

Others

12,837



Among the 'others' category are Iranian, Somali, Pakistani, Chinese and Palestinian nationals.

Disability



9,910 received severe disability top-up

9,910 individuals with a valid severe disability health report received the additional top-up of 600 TRY per individual.

COVID-19: TOP-UP CASH ASSISTANCE TO HELP MITIGATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

As life in Turkey slowly returns to normal, refugees are left with many challenges, including finding jobs to make a living. In April, the COVID-19 impact assessment [survey](#) showed that most ESSN recipients lost their livelihoods as businesses closed, which had left them with the option of borrowing money to meet their basic needs. Highlights from the most recent remote focus group discussions show that they have continued to borrow money and, after three months of unemployment, can no longer pay their rent and bills. To help them to cope during these challenging times, ECHO has reallocated a top-up of 1,000 TRY to be transferred along with the monthly ESSN cash transfer to 301,136 households. The total amount for each household has been divided into two with the first 500 TRY transferred on 30 June. The second 500 TRY top-up will be made on 31 July. These COVID-19 top-ups are independent of the quarterly top-ups, which are set to take place in August. This means that vulnerable refugee families are receiving top-ups for four consecutive months including the quarterly top-ups in May and August, which should bring some financial relief and support to help them overcome the constraints imposed by COVID-19 during this transition period. Cash assistance is a powerful and cost-effective way to address the needs of communities impacted by COVID-19. It increases investments in local markets, supports host communities and gives freedom and flexibility to families to meet their own individual needs. Using technology and financial banking methods allows us to respect current social distancing measures, ensuring we can continue to support those most in need, without putting them at unnecessary risk. Read more about how critical cash assistance can be for a pandemic like COVID-19 through an opinion piece published by Devex, highlighting ESSN [here](#).

CASH ASSISTANCE PROVIDES VITAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES DURING COVID-19: HANAN'S STORY



“I want to summarize life in Turkey with one word: freedom.”

Hanan is one of the millions of refugees who have fled war and sought safety in Turkey. COVID-19 has had a major impact on her and her family. “Because of the coronavirus, our expenses have increased for water, electricity and cleaning products. My son needed surgery but because of coronavirus they delayed the surgery and our expenses increased,” Hanan said.

Hanan receives cash assistance from ESSN which helps to offset some of her rising expenses. “The Kizilaykart helps me with house expenses, such as food, cleaning materials and other expenses.”

Click here to watch the video. ([Facebook](#) / [Youtube](#) / [Twitter](#))



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

Referral and outreach:

Referral and outreach teams continued to deliver cards to the elderly (above 65) and individuals with disabilities throughout the first two weeks of June, delivering 56 cards to eligible households. Referral and outreach teams resumed their regular field visits to local authorities to gather information about how institutions are operating. While some local authorities have fully resumed their work, others such as SASFs and DGPC offices are working with some limitations. The majority of these offices are providing services via face-to-face communication but with a daily quota to avoid large crowds. The most common outreach cases are related to suggestions for SASF allowance, card delivery and SASF applications.

Monitoring and evaluation:

TRC and IFRC M&E teams conducted on-site monitoring activities at SASF offices, PDMMS, DGPC, Halkbank branches and other local authorities and stakeholders in various provinces across the different regions. SASFs in the Marmara region stated that the discretionary allowance has been put on hold until household visits can be conducted again. SASFs in Şanlıurfa (the Southeastern region) stated that they were able to implement the discretionary allowance during lockdown as they had made a list of ineligible vulnerable households prior to the pandemic.

Accountability to affected populations:

TRC and IFRC teams ensure the transparent and timely provision of information on the programme to the targeted population through various communication channels. By the end of June, TRC call center reached a milestone in term of communication with the affected populations: 1.5

million calls have been answered since the beginning of the programme. The call center received thank-you calls from ESSN recipients who expressed gratitude for the support. A total of 13,729 calls and 695 online questions were answered in June.

Remote focus group discussions start to better understand needs of refugees:

IFRC and TRC are conducting a first-ever remote focus group discussion format to adapt to the current COVID-19 context. The focus group discussions are aimed at gathering deeper insights from ESSN recipients and non-recipients on the impacts of COVID-19. This includes changes to their life, their ability to meet basic needs and earn an income, their coping strategies and their main concerns.

The focus group discussions are conducted with four to six participants, separated by male and female. Devices were delivered to families in their homes for the focus group discussions, which allowed for the best participation and representation. Around 15 focus group discussions are planned to take place. Data collection is ongoing and a report with comprehensive findings will be produced in July.

Coordination:

Under the 3RP coordination structure, the ESSN taskforce meetings will take place as a regular agenda item under the basic needs working group (BNWG) in Turkey. The first ESSN taskforce under the new partnership between TRC and IFRC took place in June where updates were provided to the ESSN taskforce and BNWG members about the ESSN, the operational structure of IFRC and significant programmatic developments. The meetings were organized in four different regions with the participation of 34 different organizations and 104 members from the humanitarian sector.