

ISSUE 15: JUNE 2021

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 1.8 million refugees living in Turkey are receiving humanitarian support through monthly cash assistance.

June snapshots



1,846,469 individuals
reached with cash assistance



293,198,095 TRY
transferred to 326,674 households



4,362,629,160 TRY
transferred since April 2020

Highlights

Cash transfers

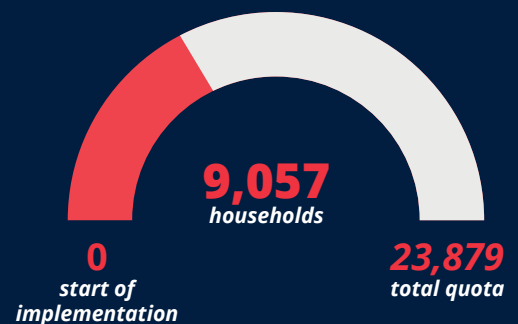
The ESSN continued to provide cash assistance to vulnerable people under temporary and international protection amidst the pandemic. In June 2021, 293,198,095 TRY was transferred to 1,846,469 individuals (326,674 households) in a timely manner.

Vulnerability conditions of refugees living in Turkey

The Intersectoral Vulnerability Survey (IVS) was designed to provide regular analysis of needs and how they evolve over time, across refugee population groups and geographical areas. The analysis provides insight into the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by ESSN applicants in Turkey. According to the findings of the study, COVID-19 increased the vulnerability of refugees. For more information, please refer to page 4.

SASF ALLOWANCE

In June 2021, 9,057 households (36,235 individuals) received ESSN assistance via the SASF allowance across Turkey. The SASF allowance continues to play an integral role in minimizing exclusion errors and including vulnerable households into the ESSN.



Funded by
the European Union



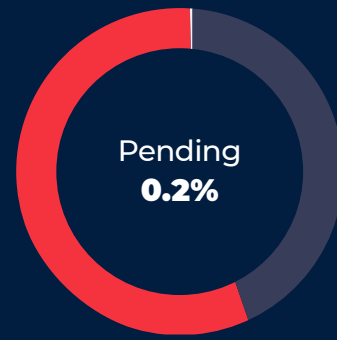
ESSN APPLICATIONS

In June 2021, a total of 3,358 household applications was received by SASF offices and TRC SCs. In general, it has been observed that the application numbers have increased and reached the pre-pandemic average. In addition, the June figures indicate a return to the usual levels after a dramatic decrease resulting from the nationwide full pandemic lockdown in May.

Of the aforementioned number 43 per cent were received by TRC SC and 57 per cent at SASF offices.

The total number of household applications received since the beginning of the ESSN III reached 620,045, with 36.2 per cent of the total applications received by TRC SC.

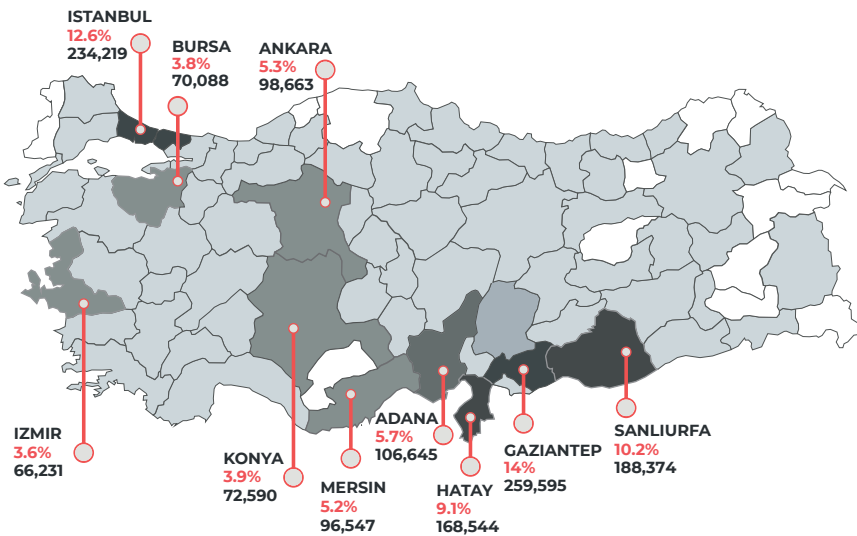
Eligible
53.3%



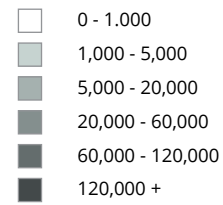
Ineligible
46.6%

Pending
0.2%

Province breakdown of ESSN recipients



Number of individuals



CRITERIA BREAKDOWN ¹



41.3%
households with four or more children



26.3%
households with high dependency ratio (≥1.5)



13.7%
households with single caregiver and children (<18)



9.3%
households with one or more individual with a disability



3.5%
single female



3.1%
elderly people above 60 with no other adults in the household

***2.8%** of households (9,057 HHs) receive ESSN assistance within the scope of the SASF allowance.

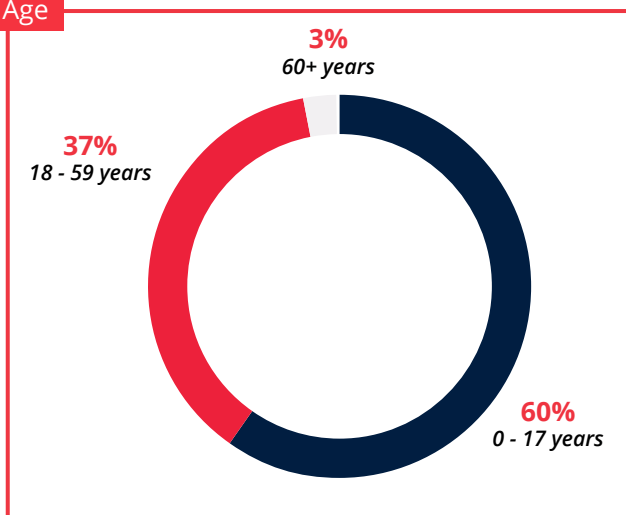
Sweepbacks: In June, a total of 1,415,348.73 TRY was swept back, 457,800 TRY being swept back from 413 uncollected cards and 957,548.73 TRY from 872 dormant accounts). The total amount of funds swept back since April 2020 is 14,718,618.60 TRY.

¹ 134,969 households with four or more children; 86,032 households with a dependency ratio equal to or above 1.5; 44,669 households with a single parent with no other adults and at least one child under 18; 30,544 households with at least one individual with a disability rate of 40%; 11,427 single females; 9,976 households with elderly people above 60 with no other adults in the household. 9,057 households included through the SASF allowance.



IN NUMBERS: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE WE SERVE

Age



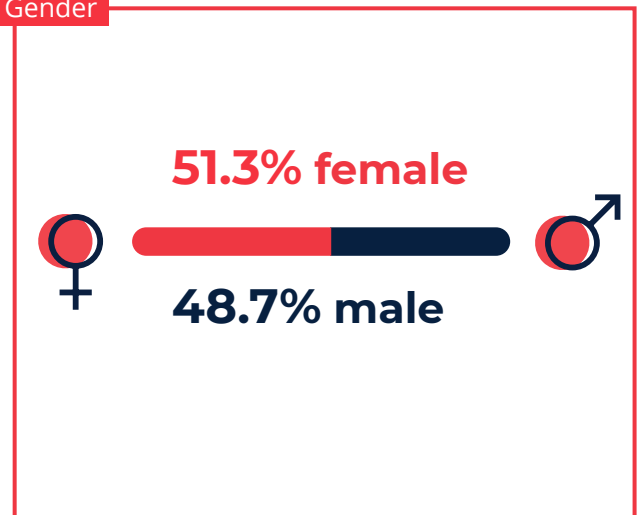
Age breakdown of ESSN recipients:

0 - 17 years: 1,105,091

18 - 59 years: 687,350

60+ years: 54,028

Gender

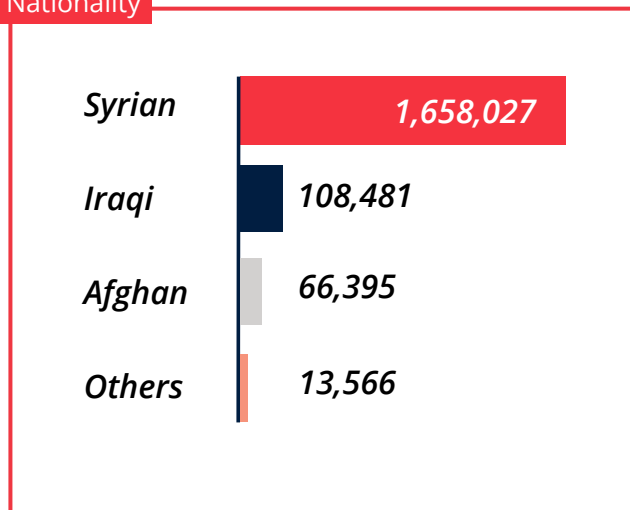


Gender breakdown of ESSN recipients:

Female: 947,969

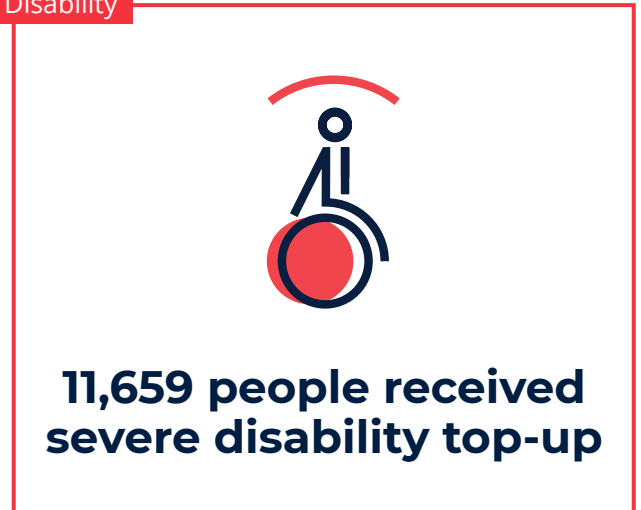
Male: 898,500

Nationality



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

Disability



Individuals with a valid severe disability health report received an additional top-up of 600 TRY per individual, totalling 6,995,400 TRY for May.

INSIGHT INTO THE VULNERABILITIES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ESSN APPLICANTS

A large-scale remote survey was conducted by the TRC and IFRC to understand the severity conditions of ESSN households as well their capacities to cope. IVS is based on a comprehensive analytical framework specifically designed for the context of Turkey and informed by an in-depth review of international and regional analytical frameworks aimed at measuring the severity of humanitarian conditions. 4,522 households were surveyed via phone in seven regions between August 2020 and February 2021. In total, IVS identified humanitarian conditions for 25,918 people.



The research has found that the socio-economic situation brought on by COVID-19 has significantly eroded the ability of refugees to meet their basic needs. ESSN cash assistance provides an important financial buffer for recipients compared to those who do not receive the assistance; however, the economic pressures have affected everyone significantly. Their resources and coping strategies have been exhausted, debt levels have risen as income sources from informal (unskilled and semi-skilled) work have been severely impacted. Although the ESSN supports the most vulnerable households, the needs among refugees not receiving the ESSN is growing and could soon equal the proportion of those ESSN targets.

Households are struggling to afford essential items, like food, housing and energy. Food, housing and energy are considered the top priority needs by those surveyed and account for 74 per cent of the total monthly expenses.

To cover these costs, families sacrifice other important expenses, including education, communication and health-related costs. Common health issues such as dental problems are reported by half the households interviewed, suggesting that they are delaying visits to the doctor for economic reasons or fear of COVID-19 infections; 16 per cent said their general physical and mental well-being conditions have seriously deteriorated and require immediate medical attention. 32 per cent of the households reported signs of psychological distress.

While ESSN monthly cash assistance is providing a critical financial buffer to cover the things they need most, the current economic situation in Turkey coupled with a global pandemic puts a massive burden on refugees' shoulders. Households are sacrificing other important expenses, mainly education, communication and health-related costs to cover their most basic needs.



50%
increase in debt compared to pre-pandemic period of COVID-19



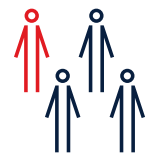
59%
said they can rarely afford basic needs, like food, shelter, water and sanitation.



38%
have at least one child not attending the online school curriculum



79% said they are reducing their number of meals and portion sizes as well as buying cheaper less-desired food



1 IN 4 said they have exhausted nearly all their resources. Most of people cope by buying food on credit, borrowing money and reducing other essential items.

Read our reports here:



FULL REPORT



SUMMARY



PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring and evaluation:

Following significant efforts to design, conduct and analyse the Intersectoral Vulnerability Survey (IVS), the M&E teams supported the launch to the public on 18 June (refer to page 4) through the preparation of several related products including an extensive report, a summary version, and presentations to be used at different working group meetings. Regular M&E activities are ongoing, including the PDM 12 data collection process, on-site monitoring and card distribution monitoring.

As part of the third-party monitoring (TPM) activities, the first phase of field level data collection started with the participation of Tandans Data Science Consulting team. During this phase, remote focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are conducted in five main provinces: Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. The core areas of focus that the TPM is assessing are effectiveness, accountability and cross-cutting questions, which focus on a contextual analysis of ESSN III operational model including its shock responsiveness, and the impact of COVID-19 on the programme.

Referral and Outreach:

In June, Referral and Outreach (R&O) field teams have conducted 423 visits in 40 cities for sensitization and advocacy activities, which aims to solve the access issues of individuals successfully and to raise awareness and provide information exchange regarding ESSN. For the enhancement of socioeconomic empowerment component of ESSN, the TRC R&O unit continued to make outbound calls to better identify the individuals who could be referred to TRC Community Centres (CC) for the livelihood opportunities. Moreover, some TRC SCs and TRC CCs were visited by R&O HQ staff to observe how current internal referral mechanism operates in the field and to provide updated information regarding recent central activities. It was noted that there were not many applications, the proceedings have run smoothly, and usage of the SASF allowance varies in regions. While some SASFs used their quota of SASF allowance and state that they could use more for households in need if they had the quota, some are more cautious in using their SASF allowance.

Accountability to affected populations:

The 168 Call Center responded and recorded 13,982 calls in five languages (Arabic, Turkish, English, Farsi and Pashto) within the scope of the ESSN in June 2021. The total number of Facebook followers is 95,978, with the total number of replied questions on Facebook is 42,787. ESSN recipients and programme applicants have been informed about their programme status through 440,393 SMSs. The total number of messages received on the website is 81, all messages were responded to accordingly in a timely manner.

According to ESSN Satisfaction and Feedback Survey results, some people continue to face issues with ATMs. Even though the number of individuals who experience problems with ATMs is low, the ATM manuals previously prepared will be redistributed at the TRC SCs.

Communication:

A media visit in Gaziantep successfully took place in early June with four European journalists (RFI, Les Echos, El Mundo and Europe 1) who met with people benefiting from ESSN and ECHO, IFRC and TRC spokespeople. A global press release was issued on World Refugee Day that included findings from the IVS. Voices of America covered a story on the findings in Turkey and CNN Turk filmed a special episode on the ESSN which will be aired soon.

Coordination:

The Regional Director for IFRC Europe, Ms. Birgitte Bischoff Ebbesen, made a visit to Turkey from 14-16 June. She was able to observe the Turkey operations and have high level meetings with various officials in Turkey, including the EU Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Family and Social Services and President of the Turkish Red Crescent.

The periodic ESSN updates for seven provinces were delivered to 129 participants during four meetings, namely the Basic Needs Working Group's field (Gaziantep-Istanbul) and national (Ankara) meetings chaired by UNHCR, quarterly ESSN Task Force (TF) meeting for Hatay, Mardin and Şanlıurfa and bimonthly ESSN TF meeting for İstanbul and İzmir. TRC AAP and IFRC CEA units presented the findings and main takeaways from the first ESSN Satisfaction Survey in İstanbul and Southeast ESSN Task Force meetings.