

T Ü R K İ Y E  
**HUMANITARIAN  
ACTION**  
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## TÜRKİYE HUMANITARIAN ACTION OVERVIEW 2021

Turkish Red Crescent Academy: 2

Research Series:2

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**The Turkish Red Crescent Academy** is the Turkish Red Crescent's education and research department. In cooperation with universities, think-tanks, and international institutions, the Turkish Red Crescent Academy conducts research on issues such as, but not limited to, disasters, migration, social services, volunteering, and humanitarian law.

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The number of people affected by disasters, conflicts and other crises continues to rapidly increase. As humanitarian organizations, we must fulfill our duty in preventing these crises and reducing the impacts they have on humanity.

The Turkish Red Crescent not only conducts recovery and resilience activities in humanitarian aid but also works in all related fields, working with the notion that helping people is about protecting human dignity, which is a natural right. The 2021-2030 Strategic Plan was launched in this framework in order for all activities to be conducted efficiently and effectively.

Within the context of the 2021-2030 Strategic Plan, 2021 was announced as the ‘Year of Volunteering.’ Many of the Turkish Red Crescent’s activities throughout the year were designed on this theme. In recognition of the natural selflessness and philanthropy of the Turkish people, our motto was ‘Not Without You’ (‘Sensiz Olmaz’). The number of Turkish Red Crescent volunteers has reached 185,000 and this number continues to increase. We responded to 109 disasters throughout 2021 and our volunteers were always by our side. With the number of volunteers increasing, we will continue to see more red vests that read ‘Volunteer.’ 2022 was labelled the ‘Year of Solidarity’ in order to focus concentration on the needs of the poor, vulnerable groups, the unemployed, orphans, and all other people in need of protection. Many activities are being carried out in this respect.

Natural or man-made disasters not only have visible impacts but also have impacts that can be non-visible at first. We continue to conduct post-disaster recovery activities in all fields including psychology, economy, health services, and education. It is a well-known fact that disaster preparedness is not enough, and building fast-recovering systems is a necessity. We need to build a system that is applicable for all fields from architecture, economy, health sciences, education, disaster response, to logistics, and this is only possible if we work in cooperation with each other. We should not forget the efforts of our academics and researchers who constitute a great portion of the nameless heroes who supported the personnel and volunteers of foundations and NGOs, which conduct disaster response and recovery activities.

I would like to express my gratitude to all academics and researchers who contributed to this Overview, which focuses strongly on the humanitarian aid activities in Türkiye in 2021. Prepared with the objective to serve as a summary and overview of humanitarian action in 2021, the Türkiye Humanitarian Action Overview 2021 was put together with the help of authors who work in NGOs, foundations and public bodies.

May this Overview be beneficial for all those in the field.

**Dr. Kerem Kınık**

President, Turkish Red Crescent



# INTRODUCTION

We experienced highly significant advancements in humanitarian action in 2021 when we saw different kinds and scales of disasters- especially floods and forest fires. Public institutions, non-governmental actors, and volunteer initiatives coordinated their efforts to meet the needs of disaster victims, people in need of emergency aid, and to reduce disaster risks.

Responding to multiple disasters alongside the global pandemic, 2021 has provided institutions providing humanitarian aid in Türkiye with immense knowledge and experience. These experiences have diversified institutional approaches with a combination of different perspectives, which will be beneficial for academic studies and for institutions planning their activities in the field.

With this, the ‘Türkiye Humanitarian Action Overview 2021’ has been prepared in order to offer an insight into important advancements made in humanitarian aid in Türkiye in 2021. Matters from disasters, migration, social services, volunteering, public health, and international aid are covered, with discussions on the advancements and implementations in these areas.

Upon preparing this Overview, a call for submissions was made to all related institutions, and assessments, lessons learned and recommendations in their fields were requested from researchers and institutions who wanted to contribute. Making sure that we extended the scope of the Overview, which is published annually, analyses from different researchers, international organizations, public institutions and NGOs were gathered and data was compiled by conducting relevant media and archive scans.

Bringing together the perspectives of different organizations on the humanitarian activities in the last year, being based on the expertise and knowledge of academics and professionals who are active in the field and assessing statistics on humanitarian assistance, the Türkiye Humanitarian Action Overview 2021 aims to be a beneficial resource to researchers and field professionals.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the academics, professionals and institutions who contributed and to the Turkish Red Crescent team who worked in the preparation of this Overview.

**Dr. İbrahim Altan**

Director General, Turkish Red Crescent

## ABOUT THE OVERVIEW

The Turkish Red Crescent Academy proudly presents the Türkiye Humanitarian Action Overview 2021. This Overview is published annually, with the first being published last year. Based on academic and institutional analyses, the Overview offers an insight into significant advancements in humanitarian action.

Feedback that was provided for the 2020 Overview, including it being a reference guide for humanitarian aid literature, motivated us to prepare the 2021 edition, which records institutional experiences and academic perspectives in related fields.

Humanitarian organizations actively operated in the field in 2021 when we experienced different kinds of disasters such as COVID-19, floods, forest fires, and earthquakes. Aside from disaster response activities, we saw different dimensions of risk management through education, awareness raising, and drills that were conducted in order to reach the goal of “resilient individuals and resilient society.” Moreover, activities conducted in humanitarian aid and humanitarian diplomacy were among the major topics on the agendas of our institutions.

Within the frame of this Overview, we aim to introduce and evaluate significant advancements and implementations in Türkiye in 2021 under thematic headings including disasters, migration, social service, public health, and international aid.

In this context, the following questions were asked:

- What were the disasters and humanitarian crises experienced in Türkiye in 2021?
- What were the important issues related to disasters, public health, migration, volunteering, social services, and international aid in Türkiye in 2021?
- How did humanitarian organizations operating in Türkiye continue their activities in 2021 despite COVID-19?
- What lessons have humanitarian organizations operating in Türkiye learned from their experiences in 2021?
- How did institutions with different sectoral, organizational, and legal status respond to humanitarian crises in 2021?

**Turkish Red Crescent Academy**



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# Türkiye Humanitarian Action 2021: A Chronology

## JANUARY

- 10** Kalecik, Ankara: Earthquake (4.5)
- 17** Arsuz, Hatay: Flood and Flooding

## FEBRUARY

- 02** Kırklareli: Flood and Flooding
- 03** İzmir: Flood and Flooding

## MARCH

- 01** 4 provinces enter "Controlled Normalization Process"
- 04** Bingöl-Tatvan Helicopter Accident
- 17** Dereiçi, Yusufeli, Artvin: Village Fire
- 24** Bingöl: Flood and Flooding

## APRIL

- 07** Konya: Military Plane Crash
- 10** Ankara: Flood and Flooding

- 14** Two-week partial lockdown within the scope of COVID-19 measures
- 29** Lockdown within the scope of COVID-19 measures

## MAY

- 07** Adana: Flood and Flooding

## JUNE

- 06** Marmara Sea Protection Action Plan is announced
- 25** Elazığ: Earthquake (5.2)

## JULY

- 03** Sakarya: Flood and Flooding
- 06** Düzce: Flood and Flooding
- 14** Rize: Flood and Flooding
- 22** Arhavi, Artvin: Flood and Landslide
- 28** Manavgat, Antalya: Forest Fire
- 29** Aladağ, Adana: Forest Fire

- 29** Marmaris, Muğla: Forest Fire
- 29** Kozan, Adana: Forest Fire
- 29** Aydıncık-Bozyazı, Mersin: Forest Fire

- 29** Silifke, Mersin: Forest Fire

- 29** Kadirli, Osmaniye: Forest Fire

- 29** Marmaris, Muğla: Forest Fire

- 30** Karacalar, Osmaniye: Forest Fire

- 31** Milas-Bodrum, Muğla: Forest Fire

- 31** Başkale, Van: Flood and Flooding

## AUGUST

- 02** Buldan, Denizli: Forest Fire

- 03** Sütçüler, Isparta: Forest Fire

- 03** Yüncüler Village, Yusufeli, Artvin: Fire

- 03** Sorgun, Uşak: Forest Fire

- 03 Karacasu, Aydın: Forest Fire
- 04 Dört Yol, Hatay: Forest Fire
- 04 Köyceğiz, Muğla: Forest Fire
- 05 Seydikemer, Muğla: Forest Fire
- 05 İspir, Erzurum: Flood and Flooding
- 06 Çine, Aydın: Forest Fire
- 06 Tefenni, Burdur: Forest Fire
- 08 Terme, Samsun: Flood and Flooding
- 11 Kastamonu-Sinop-Bartın: Flood, Flooding and Landslide
- 14 Rescue plane responding to the forest fires crash
- 21 Heybeliada, İstanbul: Forest Fire
- 30 Tunceli: Forest Fire
- 31 Altıntaş, Kütahya: Earthquake (5.0)

### SEPTEMBER

- 30 Urla, İzmir: Forest Fire

### OCTOBER

- 06 Türkiye's parliament ratifies the Paris Climate Agreement
- 12 The name of the "Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation" changes to "Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change"
- 29 "Directorate General of Migration Management" changes to "Presidency of Migration Management"

### NOVEMBER

- 08 Meram, Konya: Earthquake (5.1)
- 09 Malatya: Building collapses
- 17 Çilimli, Düzce: Earthquake (5.2)
- 18 Keçiören, Ankara: Building collapses after blast
- 19 Köprüköy, Erzurum: Earthquake (5.1)

- 22 Köprüköy, Erzurum: Earthquake (4.8)
- 27 İncirliova, Aydın: Whirlwind
- 29 Marmara-Aegean-Western Black Sea Regions: Severe Storms

### DECEMBER

- 05 İçmeler, Marmaris, Muğla: Flood and Flooding
- 08 Narlıdere, İzmir: Landslide
- 18 Kınık, İzmir: Mining Accident
- 22 Türkiye's COVID-19 Vaccine, TURKOVAC receives emergency use authorization
- 29 Kırklareli-Lüleburgaz: Flood and Flooding

# Humanitarian Aid Agenda

## DISASTER

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



## EARTHQUAKE

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



## LANDSLIDE

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



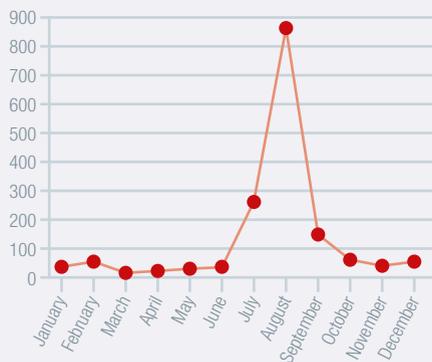
## EXPLOSION/BLAST

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



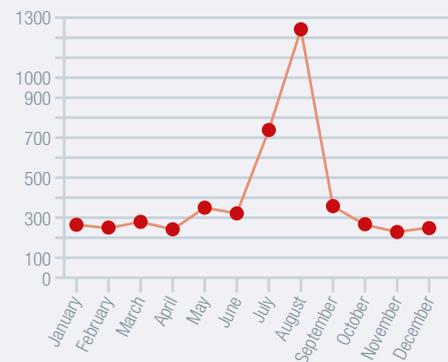
## FLOOD

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



## FIRE

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



These graphs depict how often a certain humanitarian aid topic appeared on the political agenda in 2021. All data was retrieved from Anadolu Agency’s database. Each keyword (disaster, earthquake, flood, blast, explosion, donation, humanitarian aid, blood donation, migration, migrant, asylum-seeker, refugee, volunteer, landslide, fire) were searched on the AA news database. The graphs illustrate how many times each word appeared on a monthly basis.

### DONATION

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



### HUMANITARIAN AID

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



### BLOOD DONATION

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



### VOLUNTEER

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)



### MIGRATION, MIGRANT, ASYLUM-SEEKER, REFUGEE

(NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES)







# **ACADEMIC**

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E V A L U A T I O N S

# The Plague of our Age: Global Climate Change

**Prof. Dr. Mehmet Emin Birpınar**

Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

Thanks to the technological advancements experienced today, we can find information about celestial bodies billions of light years away. This way we know there is no similar world that can host humans. However, we do not fully appreciate our world's uniqueness. Since the industrial revolution, we have poorly used the blessings of the world. In a way, we became a society that produces as much as it consumes. Especially in the last fifty years, there has been a three-fold increase in processing and use of resources and energy, and food production. However, the population growth only doubled during this period. These statistics indicate that individual consumption has increased.

Individual consumption differs within regions, countries, and even within the country's provinces. According to recent statistics, advanced countries have an ecological footprint of 27 metric tons per capita. In low-income countries, this value is only two metric tons. This data indicates unbalanced consumption and pollution levels. Every manufacturing and production causes waste. This increased rate of production, consumption, and waste chain is the cause of more problems such as climate change.

Climate change acts like a plague. Throughout history, the climate changed by cooling down and warming up. However, this natural process occurs in 100-150 thousand years. Today we are experiencing these changes in a short period of 150-200 years. The greenhouse effect is caused by fossil fuels, deforestation, and land degradation which increases the concentration of already existing gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. This changed the global temperatures to 1,2 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial era.

The world's atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere act as living organisms. Climate change disrupts the harmony between these interreacting systems and causes damages that are difficult to repair.

Advanced countries such as the US, Canada, and Germany are helpless against the severity and effects of climate change which are increasing each day. Last summer a flash flood in Western Europe resulted in the displacement of ten thousand people and the loss of thousands. Canada faced heat waves that affected daily lives. Massive forest fires, that

were important in tackling climate change, occurred in California and Siberia. Africa faced drought. All of these disasters are far beyond simple weather events.

It is a painful fact that these situations have consequences that affect food production, yield, and supply. As a result, statistics from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization display that food prices in the last six months have increased up to 50% on a global basis. These circumstances will cause food and water supply security issues and massive security problems such as immigration waves.

According to the World Food Programme, Madagascar, the island located east of Africa and west of the Indian Ocean, has been dealing with drought for the past four years. Drought is a factor in climate change. It is stated that this threat poses a serious risk to the thirty million locals that will be forced to migrate in the face of the threat. The

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) assessed that the melting of glaciers and the warming in the water, accelerating sea level due to expansion, threatens the existence of small islands such as; Tuvalu, Kiribati, Maldives, and the Marshall Islands.

This indicates that the situation will cause loss of cultures and the emergence of massive immigration waves. It seems inevitable that the world, which could not be united during the COVID-19 pandemic, will have difficulties finding a solution to this new threat.

During the NATO Summit in 2021, climate change was discussed comprehensively for the first time. The Summit called for strengthening actions against food, water, and energy supply security which will trigger migration waves. This depicts that climate change is an issue regarding a country's development and national security.



Photograph: AA, Bestami Bodruk

Climate change cause displacement in humans and other living things. Changing weather conditions, especially hot temperatures, led to the creation of new habitats for creatures. An example can be given from the Mediterranean; alien species such as lion and puffer fish consider the Mediterranean as their new environment. There is no doubt that such invasive species will create serious pressure on the balance and population of some species in the food chain. Therefore, this multifaceted issue will cause problems in people's job opportunities regarding maritime activities and the supply of seafood.

Another event related to climate change is heat waves. We know by experience that heat causes thousands of deaths and destroys our forest biodiversity, reduces work efficiency, and welcomes many diseases. The forests that provide oxygen to our world are facing such great destruction that forests in many regions have become a carbon source.

### **Türkiye is Located in a Heavily Affected Region**

Geographically, Türkiye will be heavily affected by climate change. 2021 was a year in which the whole country faced frequent natural disasters caused by climate change. The mucilage blockading the Sea of Marmara, the forest fires that hit our southern coasts entered our records as "the biggest in our history", the devastating floods in the Black Sea, and the droughts in the central and eastern parts of the country have been engraved in our memories as events triggered by climate change. However, none of these disasters were purely ecological or environmental problems.

The mucilage that hit the Marmara Sea interrupted fishermen's work for months and interrupted sea voyages in the region. Drought affected food production, hurting supply chains and causing abnormal increases in food prices.

Floods caused great destruction in the region, hitting residents, businesses, agricultural areas, and infrastructure.

As we have seen in all these disasters, climate change is more than just an environmental problem, it is a development problem that creates a domino effect on many issues such as health, transportation, production, economy, and food.

On the other hand, disasters caused by climate change especially floods and overflows led to great damage almost all around the world. For example, the floods destroyed Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland Palatinate and New York, a tornado almost devastated the region of Kentucky in the US, and the city of Louisiana surrendered to Hurricane Ida only fifteen years after Katrina in 2005. Louisiana experienced four or more major hurricanes for the second time, and most of the infrastructure and superstructures were destroyed. Flood disasters in Türkiye, especially in the Black Sea Region, destroyed the residential areas.

Thus, in addition to battling climate change, adaptation to changing conditions is also required. Our cities manufacturing products of the last two centuries are no longer adequate in today's conditions and they should be reconsidered on the axis of climate change. In other words, considering climate change as a parameter in planning, it is necessary to develop climate-resilient cities.

### **The Solution is Green**

Undoubtedly, these negative outcomes that have been mentioned are the works of humans. The thought of a more comfortable life has transformed humans into beings that consume, use resources recklessly and, instead of complying with the existing order, disrupt it for their

benefit. We process a year of natural resources offered by our world so fast. In fact, we consume so much that our world needs at least twenty months to compensate for this consumption. In other words, humans are exceeding our world's self-renewal capacity for resources. This means we are stealing from the inheritance of the next generation by consuming the resources for this year and the next year. Unless we say "Stop!" to this consumption, we will drive towards mass extinction. Therefore, humans hold the position of both the problem and solution.

All things considered, this has shown us that people need to undergo a multifaceted transformation from their consumption habits to their travel and business models. Therefore, transformation is key!

The world is transforming. Türkiye has begun this transformation. We were party to the Paris Agreement which aimed for a +1,5 degrees Celsius increase compared to the global temperature pre-industrial period. As a party to this agreement and the goal of becoming a "net zero emissions and a carbon neutral country in 2053", set by our President, which proves the need for green transformation from industry to tourism, and from energy to transportation.

Under the leadership of the esteemed Emine Erdoğan, we have set an example for the world with our waste preventive projects: The zero waste movement, environment-friendly bicycle transportation activities, our new electric vehicle TOGG, transition to domestic and renewable energy, cleaner industrial production, environmental label applications in services and products, rainwater harvest, solar panel applications on rooftops, energy efficiency, insulation campaign in buildings, and many more projects are a part of the green transformation.

Applications that come to life within the framework of green transformation all while preventing the formation of harmful emissions for the climate also contribute to cleaner air. This way, it will contribute to both welfare and financial aspects by preventing health problems caused by air pollution. Domestic applications will reduce foreign dependency by preventing emissions due to imported products and services. These applications will contribute to nature.

The green transformation will not only increase welfare with a healthy environment and clean air, but it will open the door for new job opportunities. Charging stations for electrification in transportation, longer-lasting battery technologies, energy storage, increased use of bicycles and electric scooters, and widespread use of environmentally friendly product markets, new employment potential in numerous business branches will contribute to the welfare of our people.

We need an effective roadmap for all this. In the upcoming months, we are going to organize a climate council that will determine a plan with the participation of public businesses, education academia, financiers, and non-governmental organizations. The new roadmap, which is based on the outcomes of the council, will be legalized with the discretion of our national assembly, to create a comprehensive climate law. Together, we will build a carbon-free Türkiye for our people, blue seas, green forests, and thousands of plants and animals they shelter.

# The Leading Role of Türkiye in International Humanitarian Action

## Hatice Karahan

Prof. Dr., Visiting scholar at Columbia University Advisor to the President of Türkiye

The Republic of Türkiye has displayed an upward trend in international development cooperation on which it places special importance since the 2000s, and it has become one of the most prominent actors in the world in this respect. Responsibilities taken within international structures and a wide range of global and local advancements have played an active role in this. It can be stated within this framework that the humanitarian and conscientious identity of Türkiye is the reason behind the country's humanitarian efforts within the bounds of possibility no matter what causes humanitarian cooperation. As a matter of fact, this ever-present characteristic is pretty aligned with the principle of “leaving no one behind” stated in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Shaped by an understanding based on humanitarian diplomacy, Türkiye's official development assistance displayed a significant increase over the years in terms of the total amount and in proportion to national income. Thus, Türkiye managed to become one of the few countries to provide development assistance in the amount of seven per thousand of the gross national income which

is considered a threshold for developed countries. Humanitarian aid certainly has an outstanding share in this success. Data extending to years shows that humanitarian aid has had an important place in Türkiye's official development assistance recently. These activities are shaped by the broad support of multiple institutions including the Turkish Red Crescent, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), and other NGOs.

When the countries cooperating in development are analyzed, it can be seen that Türkiye has been consistently in the top three in providing humanitarian aid since 2013. Türkiye was in the first position between 2017 and 2019 and ranked second in 2020, following the US. If the gross national income is taken into consideration, Türkiye, being the most generous country for years, was one of the five countries that allocated one per thousand of the gross national income to international humanitarian aid. Türkiye alone shouldered 26% of the total global humanitarian aid in the relevant period.

These outstanding efforts verified by 2020 data also included the needs that have risen with the pandemic crisis. The pandemic, which has added a health dimension to the ongoing humanitarian needs worldwide and has been continuing to be a critical problem, has become a new and important channel in Türkiye's aid diplomacy. Accordingly, the Republic of Türkiye cooperated on health within the scope of bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. It should be noted that the Turkish government received large-scale aid requests from both developed and developing countries during this period.

Türkiye managed solid international cooperation by providing medical supplies and equipment to nearly 160 countries during the COVID-19 crisis that profoundly affected many countries since its outbreak. While bilateral ones constitute the majority of these co-operations, pandemic-oriented aid activities continued in 2021 through multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Turkic Council (the Organization of Turkic States).

There is no doubt that Türkiye's humanitarian efforts were shaped by various initiatives aside from the field of health in 2021. The humanitarian disaster triggered by the civil war in Syria is one of the most significant ones when it comes to these efforts. Constituting a considerable portion of the country's humanitarian efforts, the support provided by the Republic of Türkiye to Syrian war victims sets a precedent in humanitarian aid to the Syrians under temporary protection. Türkiye attempts to meet the basic needs of the Syrians who try to maintain their lives across the border with the activities it conducts within this framework. A great deal of support was delivered to the

victims in the north of Syria in 2021 to meet their food, shelter, and heating needs.

The basic needs of people from other regions and countries are equally important for Türkiye. Within this context, countries experiencing humanitarian crises and suffering from war, terror and chaos, as well as the least developed ones, continued to be an essential part of this approach. Palestinian people were among the regions supported by Türkiye in 2021. Related Turkish institutions, especially the Turkish Red Crescent, tried to meet the increasing health and food needs resulting from the attacks of Israel. Moreover, Türkiye continued to support Palestinians not just within the territories of Palestine but also in nearby countries in cooperation with UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East).

Türkiye also continued to provide aid to further regions in 2021. Arakanese refugees who were subjected to oppression were one of the people not left behind by Türkiye in this period. Türkiye continued to support the refugees living in camps in Bangladesh and worked with determination to help those in need, especially after the fire disaster that occurred in the camps in March. Likewise, Afghanistan should be mentioned as one of the regions where Turkish aid teams continued their extensive efforts, especially in the first half of the year. It should also be pointed out that when it comes to the multidimensional humanitarian problems of Afghanistan, those who suffer the most are children and orphans. The aid that has been provided to orphanages in Afghanistan through the medium of the Turkish Coordination and Cooperation Agency (TİKA) is of particular importance in this regard.



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Sinan Demirci



In addition, Türkiye did not remain a bystander to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which will be remembered as an embarrassment to humanity. Türkiye continued to deliver food and medical assistance to the victims in 2021. It should also be mentioned that Africa is among the important regions to which Türkiye directs its foreign aid. Generally speaking, it can be stated that over 80% percent of the Turkish official development aid in Africa is provided to the least developed countries, in other words, to less developed countries. Not only development projects in various countries of the region, from Ethiopia to Mali, but also a great number of humanitarian aid activities were conducted in the previous year.

It should be highlighted that Türkiye's humanitarian aid cooperation quickly responded to disasters in various regions of the world: In this sense, in 2021, Türkiye provided aid to a large number of disaster victims in distant areas in a fast manner through its relief agencies.

There is no doubt that Türkiye's human-centered diplomacy activities will continue in a consistent way as we enter a new year. Though its the agenda of humanitarian aid will be set by global events, Türkiye will continue to support the victims and people under bad conditions. Integrating humanitarian aid with development-oriented projects within the framework of a sustainable approach will also maintain its importance. Türkiye, which puts emphasis on effectiveness and having a humanitarian agenda in foreign aid, will continue to be an inspiring actor in the international development cooperation system.

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1 Devinitt (2021), The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021

# Forest Fires in 2021

## Ertuğrul Bilgili

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2021 witnessed large fire disasters. In recent years, wildfires have led to serious social, economic, and ecological results not only in Türkiye, but also in different parts of the world. 12.6 million hectares (ha) of area was affected by Australia bushfires between August 2019 and March 2020.<sup>1</sup> 4.1 million hectares of area was affected by fires in the US in 2020. In 2021, 370,000 hectares of area was affected by Dixie fires which broke out in California.<sup>2</sup> As of November 2021, 3 million hectares of forestland was affected by fires across Canada.<sup>3</sup> And as of September 2021, 53,800 ha in Italy, 22,800 ha in France, 18,000 ha in Romania, 25,500 ha in Bosnia-Herzegovina were affected by fires.<sup>4</sup>

2021 was a record year for Türkiye not in terms of the numbers of fires but the numbers of wildfires and area per fire 1937. And from 1937 to the end of 2020 a total of 1.8 million ha of area was affected by approximately 115,000 forest fires. The annual average for the areas affected by fires were 20,380 ha and area per fire were around 15 ha (Figure 1).

There were 123 forest fires with 500 ha and above across Türkiye between 1979 and 2020, and nearly 174,790 ha of area was affected. The share of these wildfires among the total fire outbreaks is approximately 0.1% which is a fairly low rate. However, the area that was affected by these fires constitutes 10% of the total burnt forestlands.

As of November 2021, in around 2,700 fires and 142,000 ha of area was affected. 117,000 ha forest area was burned between 28 July and 10 August as a result of 16 wildfires (500 ha and above). The area that was affected by wildfires constitute 83% of the total area that was affected by 2021 fires. The share of this area among the total forestlands that burned since 1937 is around 8%.

Eight people died; thousands of hectares of agricultural lands, tourism facilities, and residential areas were ruined; and thousands of animals died due to wildfires across the country.

Fire response was carried out with 16 firefighting aircrafts, 65 helicopters, 9 drones, an unmanned helicopter, 850 fire trucks and water tankers, 430 heavy equipment, and 5,250 personnel. Most countries including Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Russia, Spain, Croatia, Qatar, and Iran provided personnel and vehicle support.

The 2021 fire season was very different from past years in terms of both fire behavior and fire response. We had to respond to multiple large fires simultaneously. This situation led to numerous organizational, coordination, and logistics problems or it became the root of the problem itself. Aside from the fire response organization; logistics support, inter-institutional cooperation, coordination

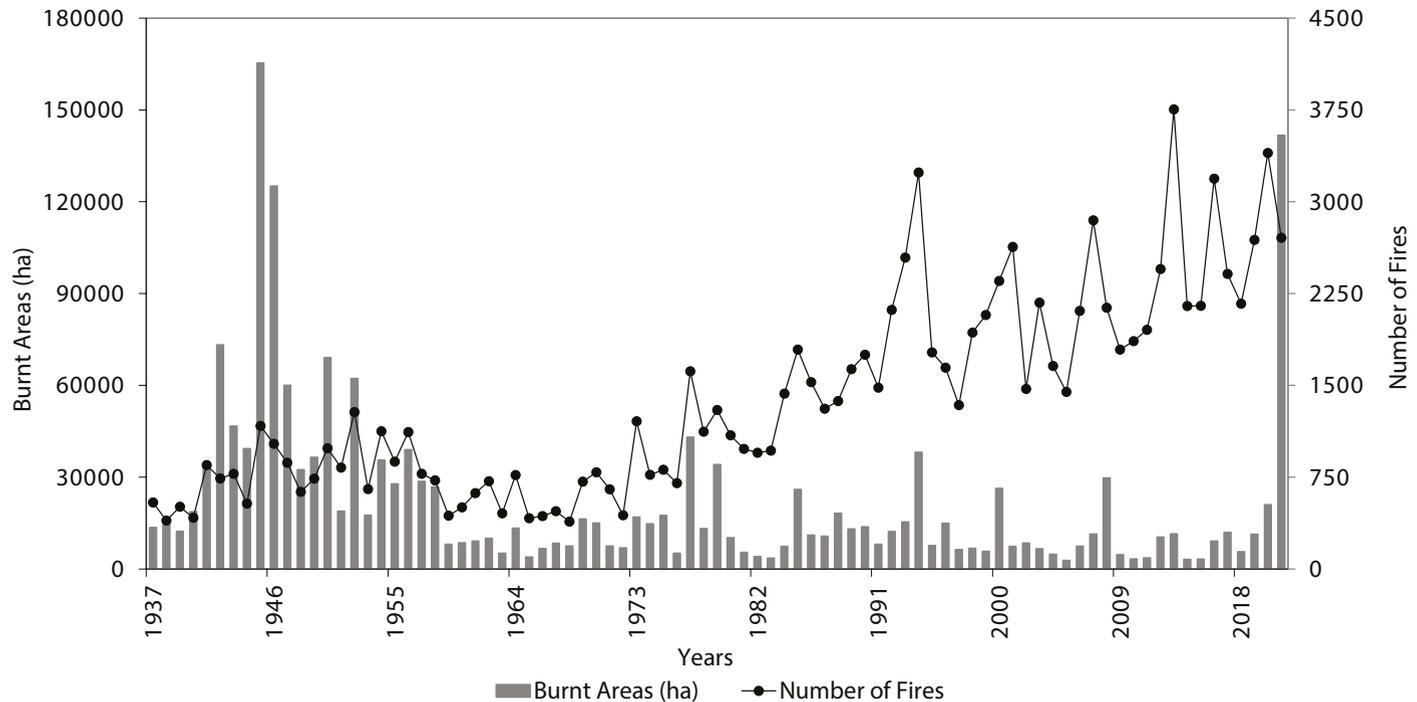


Figure 1. The number of fires and the amount of burnt areas between 1937 and 2021 in Türkiye (General Directorate of Forestry, 2021; 2021 fires as of November).

and disaster management failures were observed. To prevent these problems from happening again, programs on disaster management in fire need to be improved.

### Causes of Fire

There are approximately 22.9 million ha of forestlands in Türkiye.<sup>5</sup> A bit more than half of these forestlands are located in the areas that are vulnerable to fire. Between 1937 when fire statistics were officially started to be recorded and the end of 2020, in almost 115,000 official fires, 1.8 million ha of forestlands were affected by fires. Including 2021, burnt areas reached 1.95 million ha.<sup>6</sup>

Fires in our forests were caused by human activity, and the remaining 3-5% by a natural phenomenon such as lightning<sup>7</sup> 12-15% of fires caused by human activity were arson, and more than half of all fires stemmed from negligence and carelessness. It can be said that 2021 fires were in line with the statistics.

If we analyze fires in Türkiye, we can see that underlying causes of forest fires are social, economic, and cultural.

Traditionally, our people burn stubbles in lands, clean banana, hazelnut and tea fields by burning wastes, and use fire to have a picnic. These actions may result in fire if the fire risk in the area is high.<sup>8</sup>

We can say that these socio-economic and cultural causes of fire are quite important for fire management planning.

In this context, fire management plans related to fire prevention measures, fire preparedness, and fire response should be created with a consideration of social, economic, and cultural needs and expectations of target groups living in areas that are vulnerable to fire. Otherwise the success rate of the implementation of plans would be low.

### **How do Fires Become Disasters?**

Combustible materials, fire weather, and topographic features are the most important factors affecting fire behavior. Assuming that topographic features are stable in the course of time, we can say that the most important elements affecting fire in the course of time are combustible materials and fire weather.

The amount of combustible materials in our forests are increasing day after. The reason behind this is the heavy population movements from rural areas to urban areas for the past 20-30 years, decline in livestock industry, and the fact that the use of natural gas for daily use, causing to reduce social pressure on forests. Large-scale reforestation,, rehabilitation and maintenance activities, and forestation campaigns conducted by the General Directorate of Forestry caused the area of forestlands to increase. As a consequence, build up and continuity of combustible materials in forests significantly increased. This increase in combustible materials lead up to fires to break out, get bigger, expand, and to become dangerous.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from all these, the damage caused by fire increased especially because of people building new residential areas close to forests in holiday destinations, and the fact that fire preparedness is quite inadequate in tourism facilities

in coastal regions and in-forest residential areas. As we can see by analyzing 2021 fires; evacuated residential areas, burnt houses, tourism facilities, and greenhouse areas are the result of that. It would not be wrong to say that if necessary measures are not taken, much larger scale catastrophes are inevitable.

Significant accomplishments on fire response have been made in Türkiye especially in recent years. These accomplishments are a result of the hard-work of all fire staff from firefighters to fire wardens and people's awareness of wildfires and the love of forests. The increasing use of technological advancements also have their share in these accomplishments. However, it should be stated that effective fire response does not remove the fire risk altogether. The resources allocated and care given to fire response activities should also be allocated and given to fire prevention and fire preparedness activities.

Unusual fire weather due to climate change is another reason why fires are occurring more often and becoming disastrous. Fires can break out and spread easily with rising temperatures rising because of the arrival of summer, lowering relative humidity of air, drying out of grasses and combustible materials rapidly losing moisture.<sup>10</sup> It is so much easier for fires to break out and spread especially in windy weathers. There is a strong correlation between pre-fire weather, and 2021 forest fires becoming disasters which affected very wide areas in short notice. Cold and dry winds blowing from north to south gained speed and created storm scale air currents due to big temperature differences between north (inland regions) and south/west (Mediterranean/Aegean) regions after heavy rainfalls affected northern regions of Türkiye, and caused flood disasters before 28 July. Due to heavy north-east wind,



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Cevahir Buğru

relative humidity of air decreased under 10% and dead organic material on the forest floor became even drier. The decrease of moisture content of combustible materials below 10% means that combustible material would ignite easily and fire would spread really fast. Magnitude and damage of the fire reached to an unimaginable extent, due to the fact that the wind was too dry (north-east-wind in Mediterranean/Aegean Region), and too fast, and also the land topography was rugged. The forest fires disaster that occurred in Türkiye between 28 July - 10 August exactly indicates this situation.

Wide areas of forestlands continue to be affected by fires despite the fact that Türkiye has logistics opportunities, resources, infrastructure, and advanced technologies needed for forest fire prevention, detection, and response. The reason behind this is the relationship between climate, vegetation, and fire. Especially short-term disparities in climate parameters (fire weather) can take fire behavior to a very dangerous state. It is estimated that uncertainty in climate parameters and fire weather will take place more often in the future, which shows the seriousness of the situation.

### How to Respond to a Fire?

Fire response begins with “prevention measures,” and then “preparedness measures” to minimize damages in possible fires. Current fire policies created with an understanding that overlooks the impact of fire on the ecosystem and prioritizes fire response.<sup>11</sup> Although forest fires have economically and ecologically destructive impacts; structure, composition, and functions of ecosystems are dependent on fire regimes in fire-dependent ecosystems. Ecosystem services (our expectations from ecosystems) are dependent on structure, composition, and functions of ecosystems.

Fire regime essentially consists of five components; frequency, intensity, fuel consumption, magnitude, and fire season.<sup>12</sup> Current fire policies have been developed with an understanding that overlooks the impact of fire on the ecosystem and prioritizes fire response.<sup>13</sup>

With global climate change; land use and changes in land use may affect fire regime, and lead to significant changes in natural ecosystem structures. In the case that probable climate scenarios become real, it can be estimated that there will be an increase in numbers and frequencies of fire in places where fires are often seen; and there will be an increase in big and destructive fires with the increasing numbers of fires in places where fires are not seen often. However, the numbers and continuity of combustible materials are high.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, plans related to fire should be developed with a consideration of social, economic, and ecological aspects.

Fire response is a technical and administrative issue. Fire response strategies are mostly determined by fire behavior. Within the scope of technical opportunities, fire can

be brought under control when the wind speed is 20-25 km/h. However, when the wind speed is above 30 km/h, the course of fire is controlled only by the wind independently of combustible materials. This was the case for the 28 July - 10 August fires that occurred under the control of high temperature, low relative humidity, and 40-45 km/h wind speeds. These kinds of fires cannot be controlled with any technical opportunity, or response strategies. And it may not be possible even at low wind speeds if decreases below 7%. Fire under these conditions response needs to be regarded as protection from fire and taking measures to protect important places and resources by classifying these fires as fires that cannot be responded until conditions change. Measures related to safety of life and property should be prioritized in such situations.

Especially wildfire response options should be assessed in terms of fire behavior potential, and fire response strategies should be determined accordingly. Current fire intensity classes (very low, low, moderate, high, very high)<sup>15 16</sup> can be reviewed, and the “very high” class can be divided into two categories as “controllable” and “uncontrollable.” It is very important to implement such decision support systems as “Fire Danger Rating System” in order for fire behavior potential to be properly and timely submitted to decision makers.<sup>17</sup>

### What to do in Burnt Areas Following a Fire?

Half of the terrestrial ecosystems in the world are affected by fires one way or the other. Half of these ecosystems consist of fire-dependent ecosystems. Maquis (shrub) ecosystems, some pine (e.g. Turkish red pine) ecosystems of the Mediterranean climate of which Türkiye is a part; Africa, South America, and Australian savanna and shrub ecosystems set an example for fire-dependent ecosystems. In these ecosystems fire is a necessity for the continuity of species, along with the structure, composition, and functions of ecosystems. Suppressing fire and changing fire regime may lead to irrecoverable structural damages (stand, structure, composition, and alteration of species) in these kinds of ecosystems.

In fire-dependent ecosystems, a vast majority of areas return to forest regimes naturally and the ecosystem restores itself in a few years after the fire. There might be short-term problems with rejuvenation in some areas if the fire intensity is too high. As in the case of 2008 Serik-Taşağıl forest fire area, there might be erosion problems in large-scale fires. Turkish red pine and maquis species throughout these areas have considerable fire resistance mechanisms. These species show critical life events that align with the tendency to return to the area after fire and fire regime. These features of these species make it easier for them to return to burnt areas, or even guarantees it. In these kinds of areas, it is quite possible to save burnt areas and bring them back to the forest regime with basic protection measures.

However, fires greatly affect many ecosystems that are not fire-dependent but that witness too many fires. While too intense, early, and large-scale fires might lead to fatal re-

sults for these ecosystems; we know that fires contribute to seed germination and sapling growth and development especially in old stands of some species that constitute even-aged, single layered and pure stand. Even-aged, pure black pine and the scots pine stands in Türkiye, and natural ecosystems -where some pine species are dominant- sets an example for this.

### Conclusion

Even though forest fires are an integral part of fire-dependent ecosystems, changes in fire regime may cause destructions and millions of Turkish liras of response and damage restoration costs, and even losses of lives and properties not only in ecosystems that are vulnerable to fire, but also in fire-dependent ecosystems. Our geographical location is destined to witness forest fires. Aside from being an earthquake prone country, Türkiye is also a forest fire prone country. We should acknowledge the reality of fire and look for ways to live with it. Therefore, it is necessary to reevaluate fire policies. Current fire policies prioritize fire response. Even though fire response is an important part of fire management plans, “fire prevention” plans, and “fire preparedness” plans are as equally important as fire response plans. Fire response activities can be regarded as activities aiming to rescue a vehicle that got into an accident and to rescue casualties inside the vehicle. But the main goal should be to prevent the accident from happening in the first place. In case of accident there should be things to do to minimize the severity of the damage:

- Fire policies and strategies should be revised and pre-fire plans should be prioritized as much as fire response plans.
- Fire plans should be based upon a scientific foundation.

- Planned activities should be supported with special funds.
- Decision support systems such as “Fire Danger Rating System” that will be at the service of decision makers should be implemented as soon as possible.
- The use of fire as a tool in disaster response should be extended, and necessary applied training programs should be created.
- Fire action plans should be created with the participation and contribution of all shareholders in the relevant fields.
- Fire action plans for areas that are located in interface of forest, forest/residential area, forest/agricultural land, forest/tourism regions should be designed on expertise and implementations should be monitored.

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# Trends and Changes in Migration in 2021

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We can analyze the migration case of Türkiye in 2021 within the context of regular migration, irregular migration, international protection, and social harmonization. This article briefly analyses key issues on human mobility in Türkiye between 1 January and 30 December 2021.

Türkiye has been hosting more refugees in comparison to any other country in the world since 2014. This has also remained the case for 2021. With its shortcomings and strengths, Türkiye continues to ensure sustainability in health, education, and work-life services provided to the Syrian population under “Temporary Protection” in cooperation and coordination with international institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations, and municipalities; that is the most significant issue related to advancements on migration in 2021 when the impacts of COVID-19 continue.

Another thing about 2021 is that it was a year in which we witnessed significant institutional change regarding migration governance. Operating with central and provincial organizations since 2014, the T.R. Directorate General of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior was es-

tablished with Law 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection dated 11 April 2013. Its name changed to “T.R. Presidency of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior” with the Presidential Decree on the Amendment of Some Presidential Decrees published in the official gazette dated 11 April, 2013. T.R. Presidency of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior will operate its activities in accordance with the legislation and the policies of the Presidency with central, provincial, and international organizations to develop administrative capacity and legislation on migration management.

Core responsibilities of the Presidency of Migration Management include *combating irregular migration and deportation procedures, international protection, harmonization and communication, foreigners and management services*. The provincial organization consists of “Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, District Directorate of Migration Management, Provincial and District Migration Coordination Board.” Overseas organization consists of “Migration Counsellors and Migration Attaches.” The area of responsibility of the Directorate General of Har-



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Sinan Demirci

monization and Communications includes harmonization activities, communication, cooperation and coordination with public institutions, relations with civil society and foreign communities, migration policies and projects. The area of responsibility of the Directorate General of International Protection is international protection, temporary protection, resettlement and voluntary return, origin research, and protection of victims of human trafficking. The Directorate General of Foreigners deals with residence permits, visa, border gates foreigner transactions, Turks and related communities. The field of work of the

Directorate General of Combating Irregular Migration and Deportation Procedures is deportation procedures, public security and entry bans, monitoring irregular migrant, and management of removal centres.

In regard to public administration, the “Migration board” is one of the most vital institutions managing migration procedures in Türkiye. The Migration Board determines strategies for foreigner migration, ensures coordination, and monitors implementations, and it gathers under the presidency of the Minister of Interior since 21 October 2018.

The Migration Board gathered on 15 September 2021 and it concentrated on activities including deciding on regulations on the creation of the migration strategy document, the adoption of Türkiye's National Harmonization Strategy Document and National Plan of Action, and issues regarding residence permits in various boards, as well as setting forth Türkiye's current situation in the field of migration within the scope of the Migration Action Plan.

Türkiye's objectives regarding migration are listed in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan of Presidency of Migration Management. In this respect; prioritized fields include manageable regular migration, combating irregular migration, active international protection mechanism, combating human trafficking and the protection of victims, mutual harmonization and communication, and strong institutional capacity. Performance assessments on planned activities within the framework of the Strategic Plan indicate that goals and objectives achieved in many fields, along with the advancements on vaccination in the pandemic period.

Data on the importance and scope of activities, strategies, and implementations of migration management becomes more evident when data from 2021 is analyzed. Residence permit statistics released by the Presidency of Migration Management demonstrate that the number of foreigners with a residence permit was 886,653 in 2020. As of 30 December 2021 this number reached 1,311,633 (963,562 short-term residence permits 117,071 student residence permits 89,752 family residence permits 141,248 other). The highest number of foreigners with a residence permit is respectively Istanbul (692,007), Antalya (125,376), and Ankara (101,151). Foreigners living in Türkiye with a short-term residence permit originated from Iraq, Turkmenistan, and Syria. Concerning procedures related to

residence permit procedures, a guide on how residence permit regulations work has been issued.<sup>9</sup>

Irregular migration is another prominent issue on the agenda of human mobility in Türkiye in 2021. In this context, 122,302 irregular migrants were caught in 2020, and this number reached 162,371 as of 30 December 2021. The most common origins of these irregular migrants include Afghanistan, Syria, and Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the activities regarding combating migrant trafficking, the number of cases was 4,282 in 2020, and this number reached 7,762 in 2021. The intense migration wave from Afghanistan caused the current approach to migration in Türkiye to be put under review. Multiple irregular migrant rescue operations were conducted throughout 2021.<sup>11</sup> When assessing the situation of Afghan migration which gained speed in August 2021, as emphasized by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the migration issue is "both a humanitarian and a strategic issue," and Türkiye's policies should be created in a way that "social peace in the country is not disturbed, there are not any additional burdens to the economy, and new security issues do not emerge."<sup>12</sup> The European Union Turkey Report dated 19 October 2021 also demonstrates that Türkiye is a key actor in migration management in the Mediterranean Region.<sup>13</sup>

The number of Syrians under temporary protection was 3,641,370 in 2020. This number reached 3,736,799 as of 30 December 2021. Syrians with temporary protection status mostly live in Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Hatay. The number of Syrians under temporary protection who reside in 7 refuge centers in 5 provinces (Adana, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Osmaniye) is 51,471. As a result of the activities of Syrian settlement to third countries, the highest rate of resettlements is respectively Canada (8,809),

the US (4,096), and the United Kingdom (2,567). Within the scope of the ‘one-for-one’ formula, the number of Syrians who have left the country reached 31,616.<sup>14</sup>

2021 was a year defined by discussions about the renewal of the EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016, which was a turning point for activities related to Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye.<sup>15</sup> In 2021, there was progress in financial resources allocated for the activities conducted within the framework of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT).<sup>16</sup>

Türkiye signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings on 19 March, 2009, and the convention entered into force on 1 September, 2016.<sup>17</sup> Türkiye Combating Human Trafficking Summit was held between 29 and 30 July, 2021 in Türkiye within the scope of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. In 2021 when the number of combating human trafficking activities increased, Strengthening the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking and Migration in Türkiye from a Human Rights Perspective project made progress, which is supported by the European Union and the European Council. The support given to the victims of human trafficking and their access to health services, and some statistics, were analyzed at the Coordination Commission on Combating Human Trafficking meeting on 14 December, 2021. Multiple consultation meetings, and trainings were carried out to ensure dialog and coordination between shareholders to combat against human trafficking.<sup>18</sup>

Harmonization and communication activities for foreigners were actively operated in 2021. Foreigners Communication Center (YİMER) ranked first in the Contact Center World competition within the category of “Best Emergency Services” in March 2021.<sup>19</sup>

The Workshop on Social Adaptation Activities and Plans for the Future was held, which aims to ensure the continuity of social harmonization activities also in the COVID-19 period in cooperation with public institutions and organizations, municipalities, and NGOs. Harmonization Meetings, Harmonization Just Us Conversations, District Harmonization Meetings: Local Authorities Workshop and Consultation Meetings, and Local Women Meetings were held in various provinces. Türkiye has completed the first year of the Harmonization and Social Cohesion Programme across the country as of August 2021. The Workshop on Consultation with Local Bodies within the Field of Migration was held in April 2021 when the crucial role of the local administrations in migration was acknowledged. Upon International Migrants Day on 18 December, activities themed Türkiye as a Bridge between Cultures were carried out in Eskişehir, and other 12 provinces with Migration Information Centres.<sup>20</sup>

The tension between Syrians under temporary protection and the locals escalated, while extensive harmonization activities were conducted. After the incidents that resulted in a young Turkish citizen’s death, administrative boundaries of Ankara were closed to registration of temporary protection as of 2 September.<sup>21</sup> To prevent provocative approaches, which became widespread on social media and posed a threat to social harmonization processes, activities towards necessary judiciary and administrative procedures gained speed by analyzing the source of this behavior since October 2021.<sup>22</sup>

In the One Picture a Thousand Stories competition, nearly ten thousand pictures emphasizing the diversity of the interaction between foreigners and society competed and the results were announced on 11 December, 2021. The

Union of Turkish Bar Associations hosted a Problems Faced in Migration Law and Possible Solutions Workshop in which they tried to come up with suggestions in the light of analyses in terms of judicial assistance and attorney services for resolving issues. Activities were conducted on correct information and awareness, dishing out, support in nursing at home services, mask production, and hygiene. These activities were intended for the most vulnerable groups -especially for refugees under temporary protection, especially during the COVID-19 period.<sup>23</sup>

By establishing the Immigration and Refugee Services Directorate, the Turkish Red Crescent provides migrants with services within the framework of the principles and values of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Throughout 2021, together with the Community-Based Migration Programs Coordinator, it continued its activities on protection, promoting livelihood opportunities, children and youth, social and cultural harmonization, psychosocial support, health, and restoring family links. With the Kızılay Card, project refugees were provided with conditional cash transfer for education, in camp food assistance programme, complementary emergency social safety net, vocational course allowance within the framework of the cash-based assistance programs intended for foreigners under international protection, temporary protection, and humanitarian residence permit in Türkiye.<sup>24</sup>

2021 is defined by activities and institutional transformations on migration, despite the COVID-19 restrictions around public health. Activities related to social harmonization processes continued, and these activities were conducted by public institutions and organizations, international organizations, municipalities, and NGOs in

cooperation with each other or individually. During the COVID-19 period, the needs of the Syrian people under temporary protection and individuals under international protection tried to be met with the help of extensive cash and in-kind support for refugees, who are one of the most socioeconomically vulnerable groups. Within the scope of the EU-Turkey Statement dated 2016, a financial resource was expected to be given to Türkiye, and it was intended for supporting the activities on the education of Syrians under temporary protection in the country and improving border protection. Allocation of this resource to Türkiye became definite in 2021. It is intended for activities to be increased, including teacher wages, transportation expenses, training materials, additional courses, Turkish training, and training of teachers, counseling programs, and early child training, especially within the scope of the Project on Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System (PIKTES). Moreover, it is also intended for activities to be funded within the scope of the Strategy to Combat Irregular Migration, which is to be valid between 2021 and 2025.

When taking into consideration the institutional change and performance of the Migration Management, it can be said that indicators in relation to the activities in migration points out to the sustainability of comprehensive progress in institutional structure and liabilities. If the situation is analyzed in terms of Türkiye and the migration issue, it can be said that the dynamism of structural and individual elements which leads to human mobility, is also seen in the migration governance. All of the global mobility and social harmonization processes of the victims of economic, social, and climatic changes are generally carried out through nati-

onal, and local strategies and implementations. Türkiye seems to continue to be a distinguishable and exemplary case in terms of the importance of the cooperation of international, national and local actors in resolving migration issues and the correspondence of human rights-based principles with current implementations in migration governance.

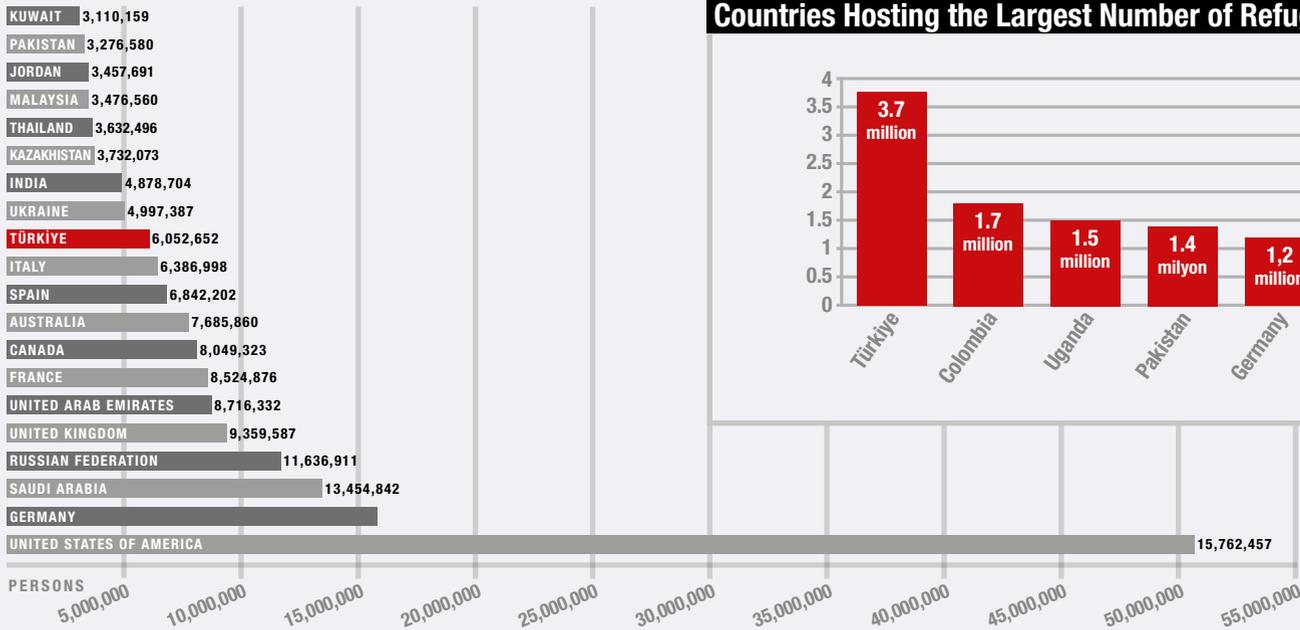
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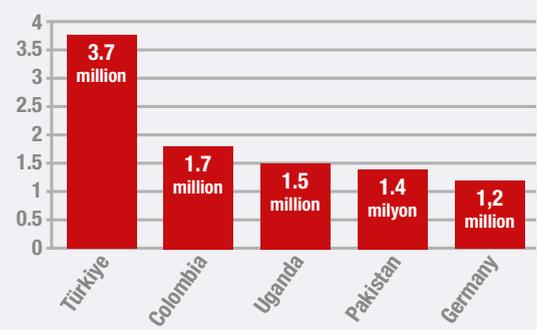
# Türkiye in World Data on Migration

Source: UN DESA, International Migrant Stock 2020

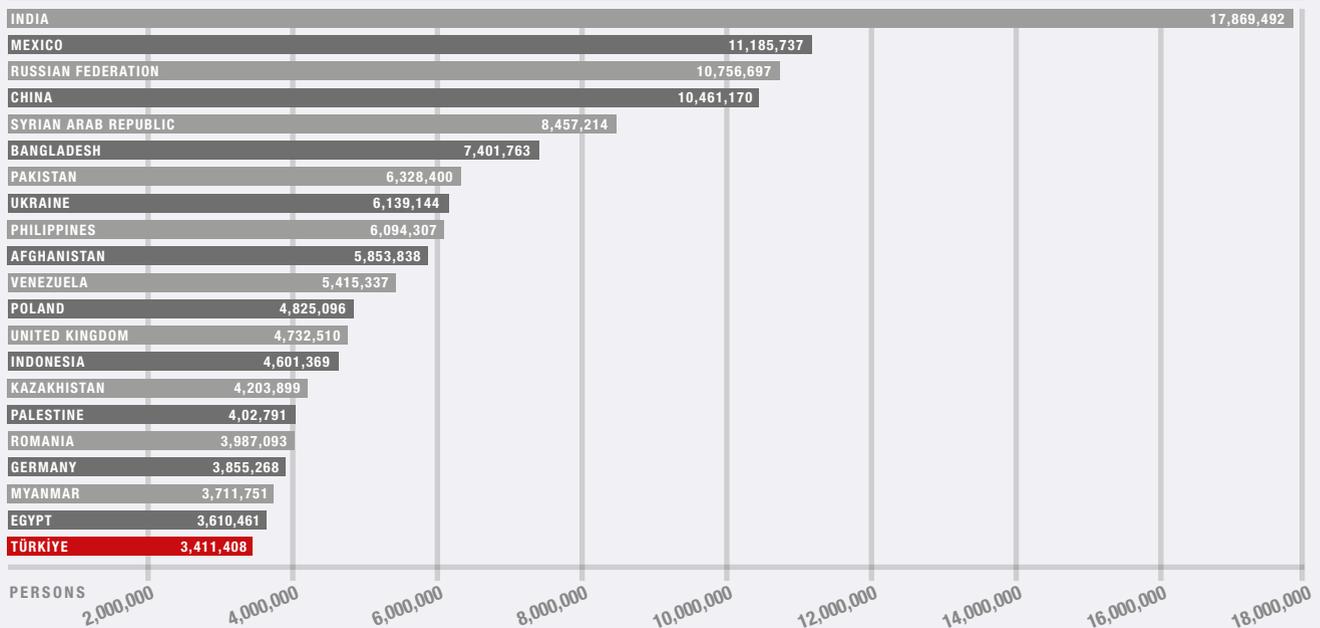
## Number of Migrants Living in the Country



## Countries Hosting the Largest Number of Refugees



## Number of Emigrants



# Geological Disasters in Türkiye in 2021

## Nehir Varol

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Natural disasters occur frequently in Türkiye because of its geological, geographical and climatic characteristics. Unfortunately, we experienced loss of lives and properties to a great extent due to high levels of physical and social fragility in some regions, overpopulation, and unplanned settlement.

Four natural disasters that occurred in Türkiye were listed on the International Disaster Database (EM-DAT) records in 2021. Three of them were geological and meteorological floods and landslides, the other one was the forest fires that occurred in the south and west regions of the country. While not listed on the EM-DAT records, flood and landslide disasters in Rize, Giresun, Tekirdağ, Artvin and Kars, and storms that affected Istanbul and Kocaeli should be on the records too.

Monthly precipitation within eight hours in 2 February, led multiple homes and workplaces to submerge as a result of streams overflowing in Menderes, Izmir. The flood, in which 2 people died, resulted in the evacuation of submerged housings within the 500 square meter area for safety reasons as a result of Balaban Stream overflowing.

People who reside in the evacuated housings were provided with accommodation in hotels and guesthouses until the danger passed.

One person died, and one person was saved as a result of the Aksu Stream in Duroğlu, Giresun overflowing. Two children died, and one child was injured after being caught up in the flood that occurred as a result of the excessive precipitation and drifting into the water channel. Following the excessive downpour in 14 July, 82 village roads were closed due to landslide in Ardeşen, Pazar, Çayeli and Güneysu districts of Rize. 27,000 households could not be supplied with electricity during the flood and landslide disasters in which eight people died and five people were injured. A week after the flood and landslide in Rize, another flood occurred in Murgul, Artvin 21 July due to excessive precipitation, and one person died. Landslides that occurred on village roads resulted in transportation inconveniences. Thousands of animals died and thousands of hectares of agricultural lands were damaged after the flood that occurred as a result of the hail and rainfall in Başkale, Van. Two people, who were stuck on the road due to the landslide in Van-Hakkari Road, were rescued,



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Serkan Özkaptan

some workplaces and housings were damaged, and many stables were destroyed.

One person died in the flood that occurred due to downpours in Sarıkamış, Kars, on 10 August. The flood in which 6 vehicles and 40 housings were damaged resulted in landslides in 10 different regions, and the Yedisu-Karlıova Road was closed to traffic.

Between 10-12 August, rainfall per square meter was recorded as “two thirds of the annual rainfall” in some districts of Kastamonu, Sinop and Bartın which are located in the West Black Sea Region. 82 people died, and 228 were

injured in floods and landslides. Kastamonu, Sinop and Bartın were declared as disaster areas after these incidents.

Air and sea water temperatures being above seasonal normals resulted in precipitation regime alterations and this situation increased the risk of unexpected floods and landslides with the impacts of climate change in various regions of the world in 2021. The West Black Sea Region of Türkiye is especially fragile in terms of floods and landslides due to its geological-geomorphological characteristics, and climatic factors. Short-term and unexpected rainfalls in the spring in the West Black Sea Region caused

floods and landslide disasters to occur, which resulted in loss of lives and properties. The Black Sea Region witnessed its second hottest summer in the last 50 years because of the impacts of climate change. Highest precipitation rates of the last 91 years were recorded in Kastamonu and Sinop. However, climate change is not the only reason why disasters occur. It is a well-known fact that unplanned and disaster vulnerable settlements in stream beds and valley bottoms increase the intensity of disasters.

Humans play an important role in floods and landslides to become disasters that are so intense that they result in loss of lives and properties. Floods and landslides in 2021 reminded us how important disaster resilient settlement planning is. Disaster risks will be eliminated if settlement planning is created with an approach that considers dangers and risks, and aims to prevent disasters and to reduce the damage caused by them.

16 people died, hundreds of thousands of hectares of forestlands and residential areas burned in 299 forest fires -15 of them being wildfires- in 2021 in 54 provinces of the Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara, West Black Sea, South-East Regions. 7 people, and more than two thousand livestock died in Manavgat, Antalya fires that broke out on 29 July. In fires that broke out on 29 July in Marmaris, Milas and Köyceğiz districts of Muğla, 9 people died, and thousands of locals and tourists were evicted via land and sea means due to the fact that the fires spread to residential areas. Being responded to with 18 firefighting planes, 68 helicopters, 9 drones (UAV), an unmanned helicopter, 850 water tenders, 430 heavy equipment, and 5,250 personnel; fires were brought fully under control after 10 days.

The storm that affected Istanbul and Kocaeli on 29 October led to the death of 5 people and 38 injured. The roofs of some buildings were ripped off and trees and posts were overturned due to the south-west wind with a speed reaching 129 km/h.

Eight earthquakes with magnitudes over 5.0 occurred in 2021 where floods, landslides and fires occurred.

Erzurum, its districts, and nearby cities felt the Erzurum earthquake with magnitude MI=5.2 in October. Moderate earthquakes with magnitude MI=5.2 in Düzce, MI=5.2 in Malatya and MI=4.9 in Konya were felt in these cities, and nearby cities. Kütahya and nearby cities felt the moderate earthquake that occurred on 31 August in Kütahya at 14:04 local time. A slightly strong earthquake with magnitude MI=5.3 occurred on 25 July in Kuşbayırı-Karakoçan, Elazığ at 21:28 local time, and Elazığ and nearby cities felt the earthquake. Earthquake with magnitude MI=5.0 occurred on 31 August in Aydınlar-Altıntaş, Kütahya at 14:04 local time, and Kütahya, its districts and nearby cities felt the earthquake. Moderate earthquake with magnitude MI=5.3 occurred on 13 April in Dodecanase (12 Islands)-Mediterranean at 23:28 local time, and Muğla and its districts felt the earthquake.

### **Reducing Disaster Risks and TARAP**

Disasters with different intensities and magnitudes result in loss of lives and properties, and they pose a threat to sustainable development in Türkiye as well as all over the world. While disaster management strategies concentrated on disaster response around the 1970-1980s, the approach shifted in the 1990s and strategies started concentrating on disaster preparedness. As a result of the shift from a reactive approach to proactive planning for

natural disasters, a common understanding emerged that we should learn our lessons from past disasters across the world and concentrate on disaster preparedness. The most apparent example of this is the Sendai Framework, which was adopted at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015. The Sendai Framework will be valid until 2030. Disaster risk reduction requires the long-term efforts of all segments of society. The success resulting from these efforts is dependent on strategic goals being attained, the implementation of set goals and actions in time and in correspondence with the priorities, being adopted by authorized and relevant institutions, all shareholders working in coordination with each other, and proper use and direction of resources. Disaster management strategies started concentrating on pre-disaster activities in Türkiye after the Marmara earthquake in 1999. The most current advancement related to these activities is the Türkiye Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (TARAP) which has been valid since 2017, and was completed as of late 2021. It has become the most significant indicator of Türkiye's disaster policy which prioritizes risk in disaster management.

The Türkiye Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (TARAP) is a sustainable plan which defines activities that should be carried out in order to minimize disaster risks, and defines people in charge and their liabilities within the frame of a certain process.

The aim is to build sustainable, self-sustained, disaster resilient settlements, to ensure maximum risk reduction by using resources efficiently with the help of TARAP. Accordingly, disaster related losses will be minimized through building resilient societies and secure living spaces. Provincial Level Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (IRAP)

launched by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) is a plan involving aims, objectives, and actions to reduce disaster risks. It formed a basis for TARAP aims, objectives, and actions by integrating the actions in completed IRAPs in 81 provinces.

Internationally acknowledged strategic priorities in the Sendai Framework (2015-2030) constitutes the strategic priorities of TARAP. Every strategic priority involves the definitions of aims, objectives, actions, organizations authorized to implement them, and related institutions and organizations that will support the authorized organization. Moreover, short, moderate, and long terms given to related and authorized organizations are specified.

In the light of the TARAP Policy Paper, the implementation of risk reduction actions stated in IRAPs in 81 provinces will contribute to the prevention and reduction of disaster risks in Türkiye. Preventing loss of lives and properties, and preventing natural events to become disasters is only possible with risk reduction activities before disasters.

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# The Agenda of Social Services in 2021

## Emine Özmete

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The most fundamental function of social services is to improve the lives of individuals, families, groups, and society, while the main perspective of it is social development. Social development concentrates on institutions of society, and it deals with the implementation of social programs. The agenda of social services as the implementation tool of social policies is determined by the relationship and cooperation between concepts and implementations. The differences and similarities between the main concerns of social development and applied social services manifest in methods and resources to use. The purpose of social development is to increase economic, social, and cultural alternatives for people to decide without restraint. This approach embraces a holistic perspective that brings together sustainability concepts such as empowerment, equality, justice, rights, and efficiency. For the last several decades, the world has witnessed social and environmental issues such as increasing population across the world, migration, urbanization, uncontrolled industrial waste, insufficient infrastructure, destruction of natural resources (sea, forests, air, etc.), ecological imbalance, and decrease in the number of individuals who have access to safe drinking water.

While the net worth of the 42 wealthiest people in the world is equal to the income of 3.6 billion people, which corresponds to 50% of the world population, the income of the 10 wealthiest countries is exactly 77 times the income of the 10 poorest countries. More than half of the world consists of undernourished poor people, whom are deprived of basic rights. With an approach based on social justice and human rights, social service plays an important role in improving the quality of life of all individuals, families, and vulnerable groups.

In this regard, it can be said that there are two main issues regarding both life quality and sustainability: One of them is “meeting the needs,” and the other is “setting the boundaries for the use of resources.” While the former is specifically about meeting the basic needs of the poor, the latter indicates the protection of resources enough to meet the needs of both today and tomorrow’s generation.

Social services aim to ensure social change, problem-solving in human relations, improvement, engagement, and freedom. It deals with the interaction between an individual and their surroundings by using human behavior and social system theories. Therefore, social service is a

process, and the end goal is to improve people's welfare. Along this process, social service implementations adopt human rights and social justice principles. The social services concentrate on global agendas, local manifestations of global issues, and local agendas.

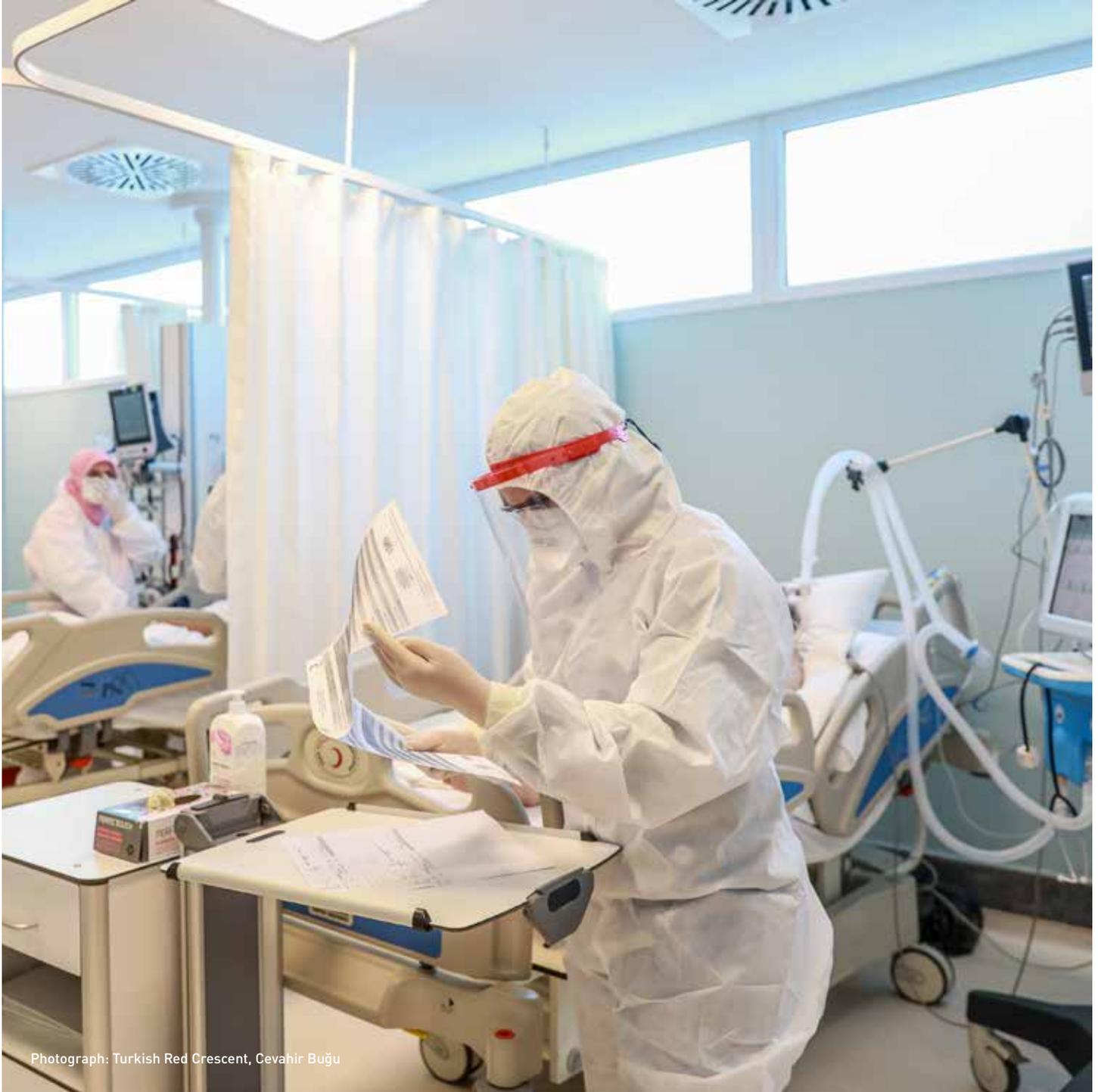
Türkiye acts on a universal sense of obligation in disasters and emergencies in different parts of the world. The philanthropic values of its people demonstrate the warmest side of the centuries-old history of Türkiye, and helping those in need is one of the most basic teachings of the culture. Moreover, it is the most generous country in the world thanks to its solid social service structure as well as the institutionalization and improvement of volunteering with the help of non-governmental organizations such as the Turkish Red Crescent. During the pandemic, Türkiye conducted activities in various regions to meet health needs including vaccines. Türkiye's human rights-based approach to migration and refugees in the field of diplomacy and humanitarian aid has an impact on multiple countries, especially on European countries. Türkiye hosts 5.4 million foreigners as of 2021. Refugees are provided with health, education, and social services in accordance with a rights-based approach. By mobilizing all its resources, Türkiye has been undeniably successful in preventing issues such as xenophobia and discrimination, which are frequently discussed in the international community.

In addition to the global agenda affecting human welfare, Türkiye experienced local-level emergencies requiring social service in 2021. Social services concentrated on natural disasters and emergencies in Türkiye, and the long-term psychosocial and economic impacts of COVID-19 on individuals, families, and communities. In addition, social services were provided to refugees and vulnerable individuals and groups among Turkish citizens, and activities were conducted to improve service quality.

In order to alleviate the negative impacts of COVID-19, the Ministry of Family and Social Services expanded the scope of social protection through additional social aids in phases. Within the scope of the Full Curfew Social Aid Programme, people in need were provided with 1,100 TRY cash assistance since April 2020. People in financially challenging situations due to COVID-19, and who struggled to meet their basic needs were provided with additional support via the "Social Support Program and National Solidarity Campaign" within the scope of the "Social Protection Shield Package." The pandemic period was acknowledged as an "emergency" according to the related provision stated in Article 2 of the Law on Social Assistance and Solidarity 3294, and some households that had not receive social aid before the pandemic were provided with social aid as they were at temporary risk of poverty.<sup>1</sup>

The "Pandemic Social Support Program" was implemented in three phases (Phase I, Phase II, Phase III) within the scope of the "Social Protection Shield Package," which was created to alleviate the impacts of COVID-19. 2.3 billion TRY cash assistance was provided within the scope of Phase III. Citizens in need were provided with additional support via the "We are Self-Sufficient, Türkiye National Solidarity Campaign" carried out by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Within the scope of the campaign, a total of 2,078,252,487 TRY was transferred into the Social Assistance and Solidarity Incentive Fund, and within the scope of the National Solidarity Campaign, a total of 5.3 million TRY was distributed to more than 5,000 households, accounting to 1,000 TRY each.<sup>2</sup>

During the pandemic period, individuals and families were affected economically and psychosocially. Individuals affected by the pandemic had free access to psychosocial support services whenever needed through Social Service Centers of the province in which they reside, and



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Cevahir Buğu

the Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Psychosocial support, face-to-face or by telephone, was provided especially to those who lost their loved ones due to COVID-19 by taking necessary measures within the framework of the rules determined by the Provincial Boards of Public Health.

Training on Psychosocial Support Services throughout the Pandemic in Disasters and Emergencies was provided to 582 personnel mostly consisting of social workers and psychologists in order to reduce stress and burnout experienced by service providers due to busy schedules and long working hours, and to ensure professional development in knowledge and skills regarding working with cases in the pandemic period.<sup>3</sup>

To enable the access of individuals and families in society to social services they need and to ensure support for solving the problems they faced, the number of social service centers reached 370 as of 2021. Social analyzes were performed in a total of 2.8 million households, and the number of personnel working within the scope of the Family Social Support Program (ASDEP) has been conducted supply-oriented for individuals and families to utilize public services effectively. Affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the number of nursing and rehabilitation centers providing boarding services for the disabled reached 104, and the number of daycare centers reached 280 as of September 2021. The number and capacity of nursing homes affiliated with the Ministry increased 2.5 times compared to 2002, and the number of nursing homes reached 162 as of September 2021. 3 million TRY resources were allocated for 2021 within the scope of the Elderly Support Program (YADES), which aims to increase the role and services of local authorities in services provided to the elderly. The 4th National Action Plan on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was issued by the Ministry of Family and Social Services,

and a circular on the “Elimination of Violence Against Women” were sent out to 81 provinces. Women victim to violence with boys above 12 years of age were provided with two-room apartments in one of the women’s guest houses in Ankara and Istanbul. The number of women guest houses across Türkiye reached 149, and the capacity of these guest houses reached 3,624. Based on the average of the last three years, 47% of the women receive services due to violence and 53% for shelter reasons in women’s guest houses. Strategies were developed to help women contribute to production within the scope of the women’s cooperatives.

Services provided to children were thoroughly conducted in 2021 by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. The rate of children who benefit from family-oriented services was 39% in 2021, and this ratio reached 95% by the end of the year. Children’s protection services are provided in a broad sense from the protection of children’s rights, addition, cyberbullying, social media, and obscene publications, to mobile children’s services. The families of martyrs and veterans are also supported.

The Ministry of Family and Social Services continued its activities in 2021 by adopting goals to improve service capacity and to provide psychosocial services intended for individuals, families, and society in a coordinated and effective manner in migration, disasters, and emergencies.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it was intended for psychosocial support training to be provided to 1,000 personnel, and the Psychosocial Support Training Manual regarding psychosocial support services in disasters/emergencies to be issued.<sup>5</sup>

“Local Harmonization Meetings” to improve social harmonization between the host community and foreigners in Türkiye were held in various provinces in cooperation with the Presidency of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior and the International Organization

of Migration (IOM). These meetings concentrated on improving the capacity of information services provided to foreigners, developing information tools to raise awareness of foreigners and Turkish society, and local-level social harmonization activities. Within the scope of the Support to Harmonization in Türkiye Project initiated by the Presidency of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the World Bank and the Turkish Red Crescent to promote social harmonization processes of foreigners living in Türkiye; technology workshops, sports activities, and mobile theatre activities were conducted especially in provinces close to borders where the migrant population is high.<sup>6</sup>

The intensity and frequency of natural disasters in Türkiye increased due to worsening climate and environmental parameters in 2021. Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Services responded directly to disasters with support services by psychosocial teams and social assistance. As of 28 July 2021, within the scope of these activities 859 personnel responded to Antalya, Muğla, Adana, Artvin, Aydın, Isparta, Kayseri, Mersin ve Osmaniye forest fires, and 17,488 people were provided with psychosocial support training. 586 personnel lent a helping hand to 5,310 people in Kastamonu, Bartın, and Sinop flood disasters that occurred on 11 August 2021, and a total of 22,798 people were provided with psychosocial support offered by 1,445 personnel.<sup>7</sup>

Psychological first aid, needs and resources assessments, psychoeducation sessions, and individual meetings intended for disaster victims in the affected area were conducted especially following the flood and fire disasters that occurred in 2021. Psychosocial support teams organized support programs for groups with special needs such as the elderly, disabled, infants, and children. Moreover, psychosocial services were provided to relatives of the injured and the deceased after a disaster. Personnel who work

in the disaster field were provided with support services concentrating on psychological information, improving self-care skills, and emotionally focused therapy. Children support centers were created, and some activities were conducted, such as psychoeducation sessions for different age groups, psychological information for parents, privacy training, and the grief process of children, and emotion regulation with the help of thematic games. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, food and clothing needs, the need for safe shelter, and psychosocial support needs are met in disasters and emergencies, respectively. With consideration for human dignity, these services are designed and provided simultaneously.

Mobile social service centers through mobile coordination were actively utilized in the field since villages and districts away from the provincial center were affected by fires and floods. Social improvement activities were planned for regions affected by the disaster to go back to normal and to improve the self-help skills of disaster victims. "Social Market" and "Mobile Social Market" services were initiated to meet various needs of disaster victims and to provide them with aid in-kind as soon as possible. Public institutions and organizations, and also volunteers worked together to provide relief in the disaster field.<sup>8</sup> Disasters that occurred during the pandemic period in 2021 resulted in the development of innovative social service models and adoption of a flexible, quick, and resilient attitude for institutions. The activities conducted by the "Vefa Social Support Groups," which were established in 2021 due to the pandemic, transformed into the National Social Service Program.

Social service implementations in disasters in Türkiye began to be regulated to determine the scope of activities. Disaster prevention consciousness training programs were provided to various target groups such as occupational groups, citizens, students, non-governmental orga-

nizations to raise social awareness of disasters and emergencies in the development plan, develop the capacity of local-level disaster management units. Aiming to improve the quality of psychosocial support services, the Ministry of Family and Social Services provides training programs to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of the personnel working in disaster and emergency fields, along with the train the trainer programs to ensure the sustainability of psychosocial support training programs.<sup>8</sup>

The contribution of volunteers in emergencies, especially in social services is acknowledged and activities have been initiated for the organization and efficiency of volunteer activities with the participation and support of volunteers. It is planned to hold briefings and provide training programs via Gençlik Radyosu (Youth Radio run by the Ministry of Youth and Sports) to raise awareness of volunteering in social services. The organizational capacity of the Damla Volunteering Movement by the Genç Gönüllüler Platformu (Young Volunteers Platform) was increased and NGOs were promoted to register into the platform.

It is aimed to increase the active participation of young people in social life, strengthen their sense of social belonging, and develop awareness and culture of social responsibility and volunteering among young people through the services, mobility programs, and socio-cultural activities carried out in youth centers and camps.<sup>9</sup>

Within the scope of the “2019 Volunteering Year,” “Blue room-volunteer offices” were established in youth centers and young offices to encourage young people to participate in volunteering activities, and to concentrate on volunteering actions. The number of these rooms reached 190 as of October 2021. Since 2019 Türkiye has participated in the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), which supports volunteering, solidarity, employment, and internship activities, along with the current EU education and youth

programs intended for improving mobility and volunteering activities across Europe. Progress has been made in capacity building, volunteering and social entrepreneurship, and cooperation with central and local public institutions. Extensive activities have been conducted by the Directorate General of Civil Society Relations (STİGM) which was established to strengthen civil society, capacity building for NGOs, and ensure the wholesome coordination of policies and implementations in civil society. Civil society activities play an integral role in meeting social needs arisen due to COVID-19. Activities concerning cooperation with NGOs regarding the social and environmental impacts of the pandemic, will continue in the forthcoming period.<sup>9</sup>

### **Lessons and Suggestions**

The Ministry of Family and Social Policies merged with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in 2018, and the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services was established. It was restructured and renamed the “Ministry of Family and Social Services” in 2021. The main concern of 2021 was the pandemic and natural disasters, along with the protection of women, children, and families, services provided to the disabled, elderly, and veterans, identifying social policies and strategies, and capacity building in some fields such as social assistance. Social services made progress as training programs for service providers and prospective trainers were developed, service quality standards were improved, innovative social service implementations were created, and national social programs were conducted in cooperation and coordination. During this period, we showed that we have potential to quickly find solutions in social services against both global problems and local disasters and emergencies.

The services provided to vulnerable groups such as the disabled and the elderly continued in the most effective way during the pandemic. The elderly were successfully

protected as a result of the innovative care models created in this period, especially measurements taken in institutional care and rehabilitation services and lockdown institutions.

Vaccination rates are still not enough, and the pandemic period continues even though vaccines were developed. New variants trigger anxiety in society. Humankind should be ready for new viruses in the upcoming period, as in the last 10 years. In this sense, we may experience one pandemic after another. The continuation of the pandemic increases the need for mental health services. During this period, Türkiye will continue to protect vulnerable groups and provide social services as part of its solid welfare state structure.

In 2021, the concept of “solidarity” gained so much importance during the pandemic and disasters. The bond between institutions and individuals and families became stronger as part of the solidarity culture. The state and the nation worked towards the same goal.

Extensive services were provided in an attempt to empower individuals, families, and society, and to meet the primary needs of the vulnerable groups in 2021 when we experienced emergencies and crises. It should be stated that individuals and groups who were negatively affected by this period and became vulnerable will continue to be supported in many aspects including economic, social, and psychological. There is a need for developing sustainable solution programs designed for supporting workers in the fields of care, social services, and health in order to help them cope with stress and burnout caused by their hard work and vigorous efforts during the pandemic period.

Distances were eliminated thanks to technological advancements. Due to the lockdown and social distancing measures, the elderly had to use smartphones they were not familiar with before. It would be a great idea to con-

duct programs for the elderly to improve their knowledge and skills in using digital communication devices such as smartphones and online applications.

As a concluding remark, I would like to emphasize that the end goal of all these efforts and social services is “to leave no one behind.”

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# Data on Social Protection

Source: Social Protection Statistics, 2020, Turkish Statistical Institute

In 2020, official social protection expenditures increased by 20,9% compared to the previous year and reached 655 billion 599 million TRY. Social protection benefits constituted 98.5% of these expenditures. The distribution of social protection expenditures by years is presented in the table.

Types of Social Protection Benefits	(₺)		
	2018	2019	2020
Sickness/health care	121,755	146,036	170,993
Disabled	14,840	18,200	20,906
Retired / elderly	219,939	263,079	300,902
Widow / orphan	52,262	63,616	73,194
Family / children	16,986	23,177	31,071
Unemployment	10,358	15,732	44,393
Social exclusion	5,887	3,529	4,544

## Official Social Protection Benefits

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Cash (₺)</b>	92,065	106,828	123,790	140,876	158,868	182,413	223,192	253,150	299,079	361,478	450,723
<b>In-kind (₺)</b>	54,180	62,254	68,897	75,570	84,044	92,498	107,584	122,407	142,948	171,821	195,279
<b>Total (₺)</b>	146,245	169,082	192,687	216,446	242,912	274,912	330,776	375,557	442,027	533,368	646,002

## Number of Pension Beneficiaries Within the Scope of Social Protection, 2018 - 2020

	2018			2019			2020		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Women	Kadın
Total number of "disabled" pension beneficiaries	856	503	353	864	504	360	853	497	356
Total number of retired / elderly pension beneficiaries	9,514	7,144	2,370	9,849	7,313	2,536	10,035	7,415	2,620
Total number of widow / orphan pension beneficiaries	3,758	264	3,494	3,759	267	3,492	3,758	267	3,539

# Disasters, Migration and Public Health

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### Disasters and Public Health

Disasters caused by a natural phenomenon or human activity have been increasing across the world every passing year. According to the World Disasters Report, the most substantial increase has been observed in climate and weather-related disasters (floods, extreme weather events, storms, etc.), followed by geophysical and biological disasters.<sup>1</sup> The same goes for the disasters that occurred in Türkiye in 2021. Storms and precipitation events that affected Istanbul and nearby areas in the first months of the year were followed by extreme precipitations that affected Artvin, Düzce, Rize, and nearby areas.<sup>2</sup> Wildfires that started in the Manavgat region in July were followed by wildfires in Adana, Marmaris, Mersin, and Osmaniye; 299 wildfires occurred between 28 July and 12 August 2021 in 54 cities located in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and South-East Regions.<sup>2,3</sup> It is estimated that 160 thousand hectares of areas were affected by fires in 2021 where the greatest wildfires occurred in the history of Türkiye.<sup>4</sup> Ri-

ght after the wildfires, extreme precipitations occurred in Bartın, Kastamonu, and Sinop, and accordingly flood and landslide disasters led to many losses of lives and properties. In the last months of the year, unfavorable weather conditions, and heavy winds affected the whole country, especially the Marmara Region. When analyzing earthquake statistics for 2021, it can be observed that moderate earthquakes (5.0-5.9) occurred in Bingöl, Düzce, Elazığ, Erzurum, Konya, Kütahya, Malatya and Van.<sup>2,5</sup>

It would not do justice if we just look at the numbers of people who lost their lives or were injured, or the buildings damaged or destructed, as disasters have direct and indirect negative effects on society and public health services. The physical, psychological, and social health of individuals may worsen and many difficulties may arise, such as the loss of opportunities related to nutrition, shelter, and access to safe drinking water; failure in controlling outbreaks, chemical pollution, and wastes; infrastructure damages on water, electricity, sewage, transportation, and

communications; and service infrastructure damages- especially on health services.<sup>6,7</sup> Although these problems might be encountered in most disasters, each disaster might lead to different kinds of problems depending on its dynamics. The flood disasters that occurred in 2021 have the potential to cause all these problems, wildfires may cause the numbers of PM10 and PM2.5 pollutants to increase, and the pollution of air, earth, and underground water resources may lead to burns and heat-strokes.<sup>6,8</sup> These problems faced in the acute stage are followed by much more severe and irrevocable problems related to the destruction of habitats and ecosystems, and the loss of cultural and social heritage, and production resources.

When we take into consideration that disasters occur due to the combination of dangers and vulnerabilities, we can say that there is a direct correlation between the current state in the pre-disaster period, preparedness, and risk reduction activities.<sup>9</sup> This entails global and individual level action. Aimed to be achieved by the United Nations Member States by 2030, 17 Sustainable Development Goals, directly or indirectly related to disasters, address what needs to be done to build disaster resilient societies and to prevent the losses caused by disasters. It is aimed to reduce disaster risks and the ratio of losses of lives and properties in the GDP, develop good agricultural practices, create urban and residential area planning that prioritizes disaster resilience, improves disaster resilience activities intended for disadvantaged groups, and climate change responses with the help of national level activities such as the Disaster and Emergency Presidency's (AFAD) National Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) and Guidelines for Climate Change and Disasters.<sup>10</sup> Reducing disaster risks and improving resilience is only possible if

this matter is prioritized in all policies and institutional goals, and if community engagement is ensured.

### **Migration and Public Health**

Still affected by the pandemic, 2021 was a year in which migrations continued to increase across the world. Wars, crises, and conflicts (Sudan, Syria, Yemen), serious economic and political uncertainty (Afghanistan, Venezuela), and climate and weather-related disasters (China, Philippines, India) caused millions of people to leave their homes. Migrations increased despite restrictions to prevent in-country or intercountry border mobility, the number of international migrants increased from 272 million to 281 million according to data from the World Migration Report (2022), which was published in the last month of the year. 26.4 million of the 89.4 million displaced people were refugees and 4.1 million were asylum seekers, and the number of internally displaced people reached 55 million. While the great majority of internally displaced people left their homes due to conflicts and violence, 7 million people were displaced due to disasters. Wildfires in France, Spain, and Greece led to the displacement of 23,000 people.<sup>11</sup>

On the 10th anniversary of the uncertainty in Syria, Türkiye continues to host the most refugees in the world. The Türkiye-Syria migration corridor is the second biggest intercountry corridor (following the US-Mexico corridor).<sup>11</sup> 3,735,701 Syrian citizens with temporary protection status are in Türkiye as of December 2021. 51,559 people are in temporary refuge centers, while the remaining 3.6 million people are settled mostly in big cities especially Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, Istanbul, and Şanlıurfa. As of 2021, the number of irregular migrants was recorded

as 154,766. The highest number of the origins of irregular migrants are respectively Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, Somali, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Bangladesh, Iran, and Palestine.<sup>12</sup>

Migration is a field of study for public health with its impacts on individual and community health. Migrant communities mostly come from places where the health infrastructure is damaged and preventive health services like vaccinations are interrupted due to long-lasting crises, and they experience poor sanitation on the route and face chal-

lenges to access health services in the country they arrive. Worsened health indicators have multiple causes such as changes in lifestyle and malnutrition, having difficulties in accessing essential services and necessary services for monitoring and treatment of current chronic diseases. Psychological issues related to traumas and the adaptation process, working in less secure jobs, frequent accidents and injuries, poor housing, and working conditions cause migrants' state of health to worsen. All these problems faced before, during, and after migration, left migrants vulnerable to health issues in the country they arrive.<sup>13</sup> According to the right to



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Cevahir Buğu

health and principles of universal health coverage, migrants need to be provided with essential health services regardless of their status to maintain and improve the health of both migrants and society.

When studies on migrants in Türkiye are analyzed, it can be observed that psychological issues, prenatal care and other reproductive health services, and mother-infant health problems are among the most highlighted topics. One study highlighted that depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder are prevalent among Syrians under temporary protection, and the life conditions after displacement play a role in this.<sup>14</sup> Syrian women are at risk in terms of inadequate prenatal care, adolescent pregnancy, and adverse pregnancy outcomes, and early labor and prematurity are frequently seen in newborns.<sup>15,16</sup> In 2021, when the pandemic still has an impact on our lives, studies on the problems faced by migrants during the pandemic period have also been published. According to a study, economic problems resulting from COVID-19 measures disproportionately affected Syrians under temporary protection.<sup>17</sup> According to a study published by the Turkish Red Crescent and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Federation on migrant access to vaccinations, 72.1% of 624 migrants receiving service from one of the 16 community centers in 15 provinces got the first dose. It is highlighted that 68.2% of all the vaccinated (307 people, 49.2% of the total participants) got the second dose, and 1.3% of them got the third dose. Hospitals, primary care clinics, and migrant health centers are the first three places where vaccinations are administered.<sup>18</sup>

Taking action against the causes of migration and preventing irregular migration are the initial steps towards combatting health issues caused by migration. Migration

should be managed by all parties and in coordination with each other, also with an approach that considers human dignity. Many internationally acknowledged texts such as the Geneva Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals were significant steps to eliminate risk factors and regulate legal processes regarding migrations. Within the framework of the “Target 3.8 Universal Health Coverage Principles” under the Sustainable Development Goals, the goal is to ensure access for everyone, regardless of their legal status, to quality essential health services, essential medicines, and vaccines.<sup>19</sup> Within the scope of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, UN Member States, including Türkiye, adopted goals to increase their efforts to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all migrants, to eliminate discrimination, to provide migrants with fair employment opportunities, to prevent migrant trafficking, to ensure migrant access to essential services and to promote their social adaptation process.<sup>20</sup> Migration processes should be managed in global cooperation, to prevent climate-related problems, disasters, economic, social, political uncertainties on which migrations are based, adverse health impacts and social outcomes related to migrations with an approach prioritizing actions to prevent crisis and conflicts.

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# Our Environment and Health as 2021 Comes to an End

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Environmental issues became the main agenda of all aspects of life. We need more solidarity, relief, and protection, and we continue to need them at this time period we live in where multiple disasters, crises, and social issues are increasing. Old issues intensify, and new and complex issues emerge in this century- of which we have already completed one fifth.

### İklim Krizi

Climate change is defined as the “crisis of our time,” and significant advancements were made regarding this crisis in 2021.<sup>1</sup> Triggering the impacts of climate change, this crisis became “a race we are losing” as the United Nations Secretary-General stated. Significant reports on this matter were published, an important summit was held, yet no positive change in climate parameters have been observed. Climate change is defined by the World Meteorology Organization (WMO) as “a statistically significant variation in the mean state of the climate and in its variability, persisting for a long period- decades or longer.” The current situation in the climate crisis is stated on this organization’s reports. The last report was published in 2021

and it became one of the most significant advancements of the year.<sup>2,3,4</sup> It contains the following information about the current situation:

- The Earth’s average temperature rose to 1.2°C compared to the 1850-1900 period, and it continued to warm.
- Main greenhouse gas concentrations including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) continued to increase despite a temporary decrease.
- Previous year was recorded as one of the three hottest years of all time, even though 2021 data is not complete yet. The last six years were the hottest six years recorded. Highest temperature recorded in the north of the Arctic Circle (20°C) was recorded in Verhoyansk, Russian Federation, and the temperature reached 38.0°C.
- Sea level rise trends accelerated. Heat accumulation and acidification increase in oceans, and this decreases the capacity of oceans to mitigate climate change.

- Approximately 9.8 million people were displaced due to large-scale hydro meteorological dangers and disasters.
- Extreme weather events continued to occur frequently.

Another important report was the one published in 2021 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which is a United Nations board consisting of independent experts. This year's report was titled as Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. The impact of human activity in rising temperatures and some

impacts related to climate change being irrevocable were emphasized. Analyzing temperature changes in different scenarios, the report involves significant warnings stating that warming will be 1.5°C even when the emissions were drastically reduced, and especially methane gas emissions were concerning.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is certain that the world will warm by 1.5°C even in the best-case scenario. Warming by 1.5°C is considered as a safety threshold, and it is important in this respect. So, where are we now? According to data released by NASA, the world has warmed by 1.18°C since 1880.<sup>6</sup>



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Cevahir Buğu

That being the case, the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) which is held annually, was held in Glasgow, Scotland. The summit was among the important events in terms of climate and environment issues in 2021. It could not meet the expectations, although it was important in terms of the topics related to the use of coal being gradually decreased, and providing more economic support to developing countries.

### **Deforestation and Forest Fires**

2021 was also important in that it revealed the information about the environment in 2020. One of these pieces of information about the environment was that we continued to destroy the world's forests. We saw that deforestation in tropic regions increased by 12%, and more than 12 million hectares of tropic forests (nearly the size of Switzerland) were destroyed.<sup>7</sup> Deforestation is an important environmental issue especially in terms of pandemics becoming frequent aside from its many negative impacts.

Deforestation, which became frequent as a result of the climate crisis, also had serious impacts on Türkiye. According to data released by the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), lost forestlands due to fires in Türkiye is 178,000 hectares. Antalya and Muğla fires are responsible for 70% of this loss.<sup>8</sup> It is estimated that forest fires will occur more frequently, and they will be bigger, and more intense due to the impacts of the climate crisis. Wildfires in different parts of the world, especially in recent years, brings up the question, "Are forest fires the new normal?"<sup>9</sup>

### **Mucilage**

Another important environmental issue of 2021 was mucilage, also known as sea snout or marine snow, and which most of us heard about for the first time. We witnessed the collapse of an ecosystem in the Marmara Sea. We saw that waste management is the key factor for this issue, even though different factors were at play along with climate change, urban infrastructure, environmental policy, and urbanization dynamics. We acknowledged the importance of waste water treatment facilities that perform water treatment in order to eliminate nitrogen and phosphorus which is an important factor for mucilage to occur in cities located in coastal regions, especially in Marmara, and that water treatment activities were not enough.<sup>10</sup>

### **Air Pollution**

Another significant event of 2021 was the updated limit values in WHO Air Quality Guidelines. According to the WHO, there are 7 million premature deaths due to air pollution which is defined as one of the biggest threats to human health as well as climate change. WHO updated, and leveled down the guideline levels on the six pollutants (particulate matter 10 and 2.5, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide).<sup>11</sup>

An important report which is published annually, the Dark Report, and the data on this report demonstrated the extent of the air pollution problem in Türkiye. It showed that carcinogen fine particles (PM2.5) were not measured adequately in 42 cities, that particulate matter (PM10) levels are above the national limit values in 45 of the 72 cities that hold enough data, that only 2 cities have proper air quality compared to WHO limit values.<sup>12</sup>

## Problems Concerning Mine Tailings Impoundment

Two consecutive significant events that led to environmental problems occurred in 2021. Tailings impoundments belong to a lead, zinc, copper mine in Şebinkarahisar, Giresun exploded and sludges which involve chemicals and are used in ore enrichment were discharged into a stream and affected the nearby city, and then the sludge with the chemical content reached the Kılıçkaya Dam on Kelkit Creek. The waste landfill of an iron mine operating in a village of Ayvalık, Balıkesir collapsed for the second time in the same year, and wastes reached the Madra Dam nearby. Analyses and assessments continue in the region on both issues. However, these situations pose a serious public health threat.<sup>13</sup>

The impacts of COVID-19 continued, and new problems emerged including plastic wastes and social environmental issues related especially to poverty and nutrition in 2021, and it was a difficult year which is also the case for previous years. In 2021, there were more visible impacts of the climate crisis, and the impacts of problems that pose a threat to the future of the planet such as the destruction of ecosystems, biodiversity loss, deforestation and public health issues such as air pollution, wastes, and water crises. Inequalities grew; we do not have enough time to take action to live in a better environment.

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# COVID-19 and Potential Infectious Disease Risks in Türkiye in 2021

## Levent Akın

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With the adoption of a settled life, irrigation systems were developed, and people started living together as a society. Large-scale outbreaks emerged after society became agriculture-dependent, and people were affected by animal-borne diseases after coming into close contact with animals. Moreover, there were other reasons why outbreaks occurred, such as difficulties accessing healthy water, increasing dialog between people in different locations for economic, cultural, social, and military purposes, and living together after the construction of cities. Mass death numbers increased following the construction of cities in which hundreds of thousands of people live. Due to new social lifestyles, some infectious diseases started to spread rapidly.

Garbage, wastes, and dirty waters in crowded cities lead to infectious diseases and outbreaks. The other factors include seasonal characteristics, climate change, agricultural production techniques, and increasing contact with natural life fol-

lowing the construction of new settlements. Moreover, famines and wars have triggered outbreaks throughout history.

In particular, smallpox and measles, which caused epidemics or pandemics, were prevented by vaccines. Plague, typhus, and cholera pandemics were prevented by improving the infrastructures of living spaces. Although, favorable results were achieved with treatments and contact tracing for syphilis, tuberculosis, and malaria, an effective solution like a vaccine was not the case. The advancements in a healthy diet, vaccine, and treatment services reduced, prevented, or eliminated many diseases that led to great pains throughout history. SARS and MERS pandemics caused by coronaviruses and influenza pandemics in the 20th and 21st centuries resulted in the deaths of many people.

Health events of concern, such as outbreaks or pandemics are regularly announced by the World Health Organization.

See Table 1 for disease outbreaks of concern announced by the WHO in 2021.

Health Events of Concern	Region-Country	Report Date (2021)
H1N2	Brazil	January 4
Vibrio cholerae O1 serotype Ogawa	Togo	January 4
MERS-CoV virus disease	Saudi Arabia	February 1
Ebola virus disease	Democratic Republic of the Congo	February 10
Rift valley fever	Kenya	February 12
Ebola virus disease	Guinea	February 17
MERS-CoV virus disease	United Arab Emirates	March 17
Human infection with avian influenza A(H10N3)	China	June 10
Monkeypox	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	June 11
Monkeypox	Texas, United States of America	July 27
Marburg virus disease	Guinea	August 9
Human infection with avian influenza A(H5N1)	India (Haryana state)	August 16
MERS-CoV virus disease	Saudi Arabia	August 17
Meningococcal meningitis	Democratic Republic of the Congo	September 20
Nipah virus disease	India (Kerala state)	September 24
Plague	Madagascar	October 1
Yellow Fever	Nigeria	October 1
Ebola virus disease	Democratic Republic of the Congo	October 10
Yellow Fever	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	October 13
Zika virus disease	India	October 14
Monkeypox	United States of America (Washington D.C)	November 25
Yellow Fever	Ghana	December 1
MERS-CoV virus disease	United Arab Emirates	December 13
Dengue Fever	Pakistan	December 14
Cholera	Cameroon	December 16
Ebola virus disease	Democratic Republic of the Congo	December 16

Diseases in Table 1 are not epidemics, but they have the potential to spread across the world, especially following wars, internal disturbances, earthquakes, floods, and even due to urbanization and climate change. Infectious diseases might spread to more countries as a result of human mobility and migration movements due to commercial activities and tourism.

Control, elimination, and eradication programs continue regarding diseases of concern and potential outbreaks. There are vaccine-preventable disease control programs, such as poliomyelitis eradication programs, measles and rubella, maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination programs, hepatitis A and hepatitis B control programs, and diphtheria and tuberculosis control programs. Moreover,

there are vector-borne disease control programs, such as malaria, oriental sore, and Crimean-congo hemorrhagic fever control programs. The most important programs to fight infectious diseases include monitoring bird flu which might lead to epidemics, zika, and global threats like hand-foot-and-mouth disease, and control activities for HIV/AIDS.

Despite all these efforts, international solidarity against epidemics that might lead to pandemics is not quite enough. The last example is the still active COVID-19 pandemic, which started in Wuhan, China on December 2019. All countries of the world experienced a pandemic with the outbreak and spread of a virus called SARS-CoV-2 and tried to prevent its spread by non-medical protection measures including personal measures (mask, distancing and hygiene rules, avoiding crowded places), and measures taken by governments to reduce social activities (curfews, closing of workplaces, interruption of education, flexible work models).

Governments have started immunizing their people with vaccines after receiving emergency use authorization with the results from research studies of some vaccines until the end of 2020. The number of COVID-19-related cases has reached 274,633,041, and the reported number of deaths has reached 5,368,732. It is estimated that 70-85 million people died during World War II in the 20th century, which makes the COVID-19 pandemic the second biggest tragedy after the Second World War.

When SARS-CoV-2 is analyzed in terms of its viral load and recovery process, it can be seen that the virus stays in the upper respiratory tract for 17 days, in the lower respiratory tract for 14.6 days, in the stool for 17.2 days, and

in serum samples for 16.6 days on average. However, it is highlighted that generally, virus release stops as of the ninth day except for immunosuppressive patients.

Case numbers increasing with the arrival of winter in the northern hemisphere demonstrates that SARS-CoV-2 is linked with seasonal conditions. The stability of viruses increases, and the natural immune response of people decreases in dry and cold winter weather. Gathering indoors on autumn and winter days and mutations pave the way for viruses to spread rapidly. As the Coronavirus is an RNA virus, multiple mutations emerged and some of which have spread around the world like a new pandemic. UK-based Alpha, India-based Delta-Delta plus, and lastly South Africa-based Omicron variants were dominant variants of the virus. Compared to the virus seen in Wuhan, these variants are respectively 2-3 times more contagious. It is highlighted that the Alpha variant is 3-5 times more contagious than the Wuhan virus, the Delta variant is 3-6 times more contagious than the Alpha variant, and the Omicron variant is 3-5 more contagious than the Delta variant.

See Diagram 1 for the impact of new variants seen in Türkiye on the number of cases. 60,000 daily cases for the Alpha variant in April 2021, and 6,000 daily cases for Delta-Delta Plus reached 20-30 thousand despite vaccination, and the number of deaths reached 180-280. Omicron is still active in Türkiye and causes the number of cases to increase.

Non-medical measures were taken to prevent the spread of the virus and reduce the disease burden in Türkiye in 2021. It was an unstable year with decreases in the number of cases when restrictions were imposed and increases



Photograph: Anadolu Agency

when restrictions were lifted. There were many opinions stating that these restrictions led to increases in mental health problems in society and domestic violence against women and children, setbacks in monitoring individuals with chronic diseases, and problems in the economy.

Türkiye turned to inactive vaccinations as of January 2021, and mRNA vaccinations began as of May 2021. 123,625,349 doses of vaccines were administered as of 19 December 2021, 56,649,405 of those being the first dose, and 51,142,896 of them the second dose. The third

dose, also called the booster dose, was administered to 13,912,051 people. The speed of vaccinations for two doses is estimated to be 82.39% for adults aged 18 and over.

Significant studies were carried out on virologic, immunologic, epidemiologic, clinic properties, treatments, non-medical protection measures, newly developed vaccines, and pharmaceuticals. According to Pubmed, Google Scholar and Google search engine results on 18 December 2021, the number of scientific publications was 205,511 on Pubmed, and 221,000 on Google Scholar, and



when the keyword “COVID-19” was searched on Google search engine, there were 4,710,000 titles.

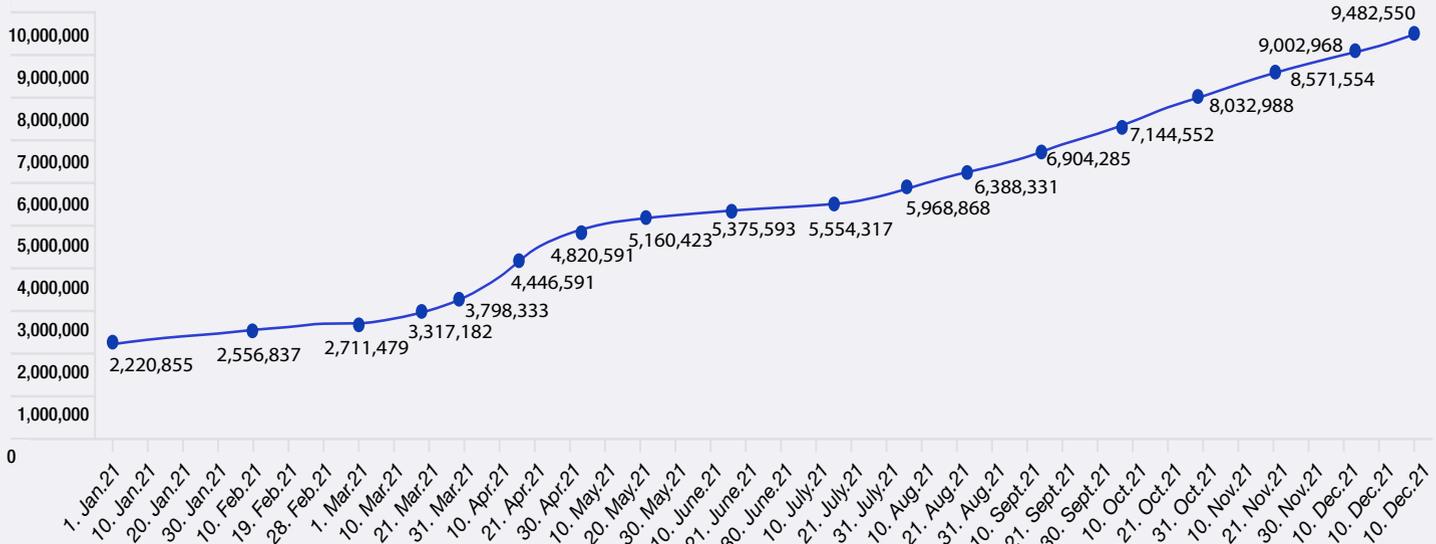
It is still so important to take measures and increase vaccination rates all over the world. Governments know that it is impossible to eliminate the pandemic by just taking measures within their territories. Therefore, we have to support the immunization processes of countries with a supply shortage in vaccination.

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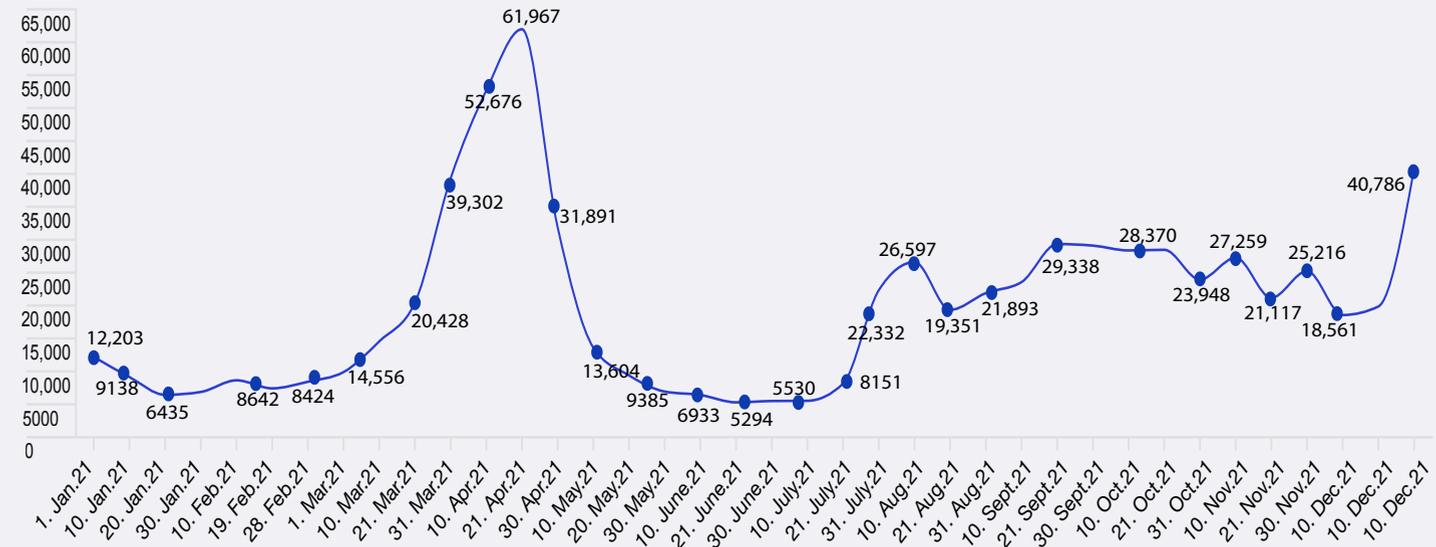
# Data on COVID-19

References: Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Health

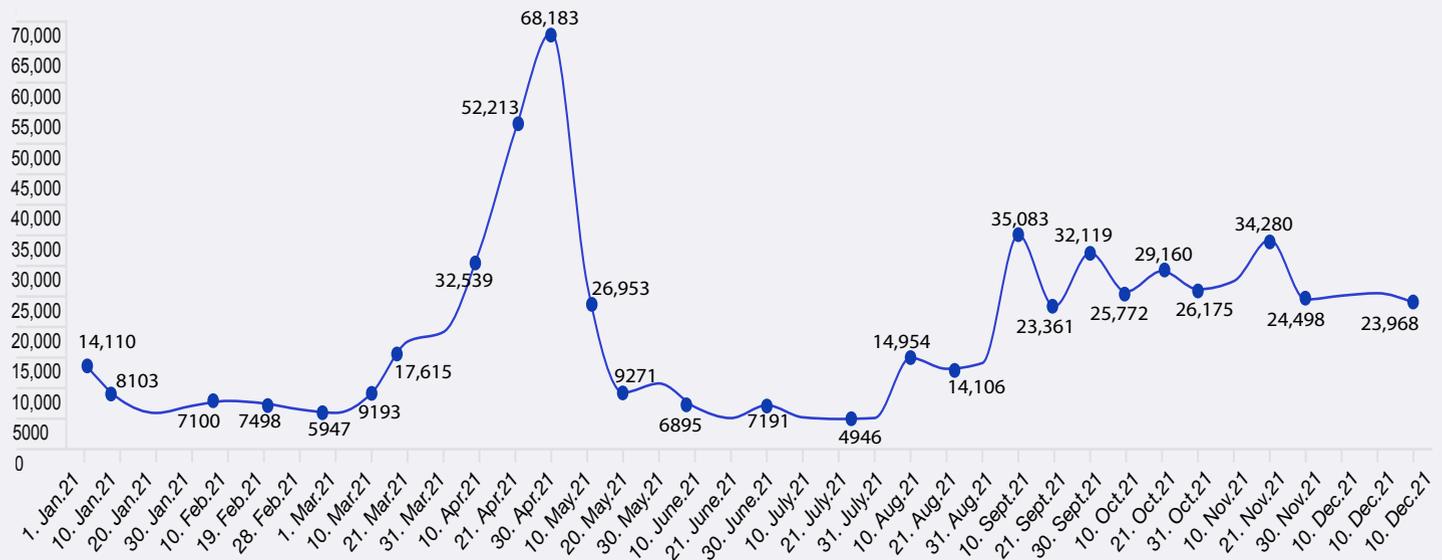
## Total Number of Cases



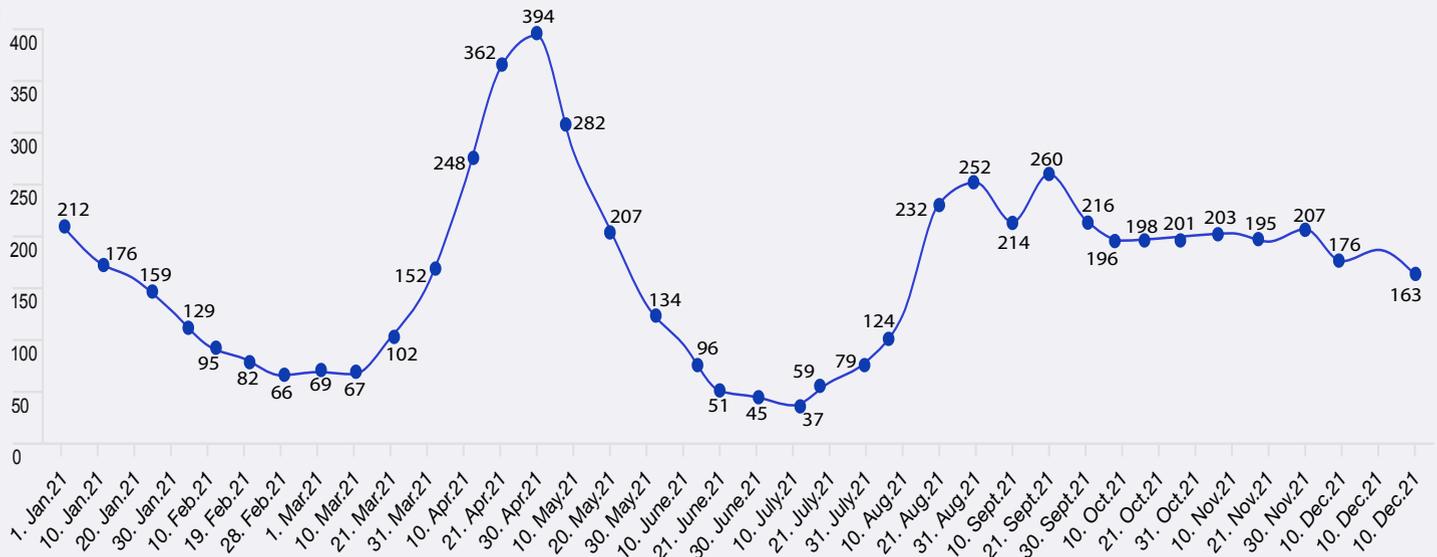
## Daily Number of Cases



### Daily Number of Recovered Patients



### Daily Number of Deaths







# INSTITUTIONAL

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EVALUATIONS

# We are at a Crossroad in the Face of Increasing Global Crises

## Serkan Kayalar

President, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA)

It would not be wrong to say that humanity entered the new century quite uneasy after witnessing tragic wars in the twentieth century. At the beginning of the millennium, many concepts such as global governance, the ideal of international society, and global sustainable development were put forward with great hopes for the sake of solving humanity's problems. However, today, constantly increasing humanitarian crises manifest themselves in different forms across the world. The spillover effect of humanitarian crises went beyond its scope, and they started causing various social, psychological, political, and economic crises mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic that led to a period in which the current national and international welfare gains are in danger. For example, drought and famine anywhere can turn into a national conflict, terrorism, a regional migration crisis, and a global food security problem. Therefore, it might be stated that the humanitarian crises experienced today have resulted in a global system crisis.

While humanitarian crises have become multi-dimensional and more complex, responses to crises tend to continue in the traditional way. Although many programs, especially followed by international organizations, seem to have a perfect design on paper, they have critical inadequacies in terms of effectiveness and durable solutions in practice. For example, when there is a humanitarian crisis, the funding remains inadequate in global aid calls made after long meetings, and at times, it can be too late until the promised funds are delivered to the places in need. Therefore, an inefficient cycle becomes the case, and the problems continue to get deeper by re-running similar processes for new crises. In this context, the President of Türkiye's statement highlighting that "The United Nations must be restructured!" can be considered a practical approach that prioritizes humanitarian goals rather than political goals.

The world's overall humanitarian state does not look that pleasant in 2021. It can be seen that absolute poverty

around the world, which was on the decrease for the last 20 years, has started to increase. It is also known that hunger and food insecurity have reached critical levels. Accordingly, it is estimated that the number of people who will need humanitarian aid will increase and reach 274 million in 2022. Regarding humanitarian aid, not only the needs but the complexity of issues is increasing, and the time limit for events decrease. According to the ILO Social Protection Report (2021), the gap between high-income and low-income countries has widened, and the uncertainties around the fight against the pandemic have made it difficult for people to access social protection and basic needs.

The global humanitarian crises mentioned above can only be solved if we change the way we operate. Within the scope of its enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy, Türkiye aims to promote a different approach with its global humanitarian aid and development cooperation activities. In cooperation with all its institutions and organizations, Türkiye's humanitarian aid activities continued in 2021 in many countries such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Bangladesh, and Iraq.

As the official technical cooperation agency of Türkiye, TİKA carried out various humanitarian aid projects along with development projects in 2021. It conducted fast and concrete projects aiming to meet the humanitarian needs of the people affected by flood disasters in Yemen and Albania, earthquakes in Haiti and Croatia, and crises in Afghanistan and Ethiopia. TİKA also provided shelter to refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, dished out for refugees affected by the fire that broke out in March in the camps, and conducted projects encouraging people who were displaced due to terrorism in Nigeria to return to their villages. It delivered food packages to nearly 1 mil-

lion people in 82 countries from the Balkans, Middle Asia, and Africa to America within the scope of the 2021 Year of Yunus Emre and Turkish Language. It implemented capacity-building programs for countries to use sustainable methods in combating the pandemic and enabled them to produce the products needed with their own experiences through medical production centers established in many countries.

In short, the purpose of TİKA in all these projects is not to go into a vicious circle in humanitarian aid, to promote temporary solutions at the time of a crisis with permanent development projects after the crisis, and to develop projects that increase resilience by improving local capacities against natural and man-made crises. As TİKA we act sincerely and quickly, and we try to take action with projects creating "country-specific" solutions as we believe that actions speak louder than words.

Crises will always exist. The important thing is to act with an understanding that prioritizes "human" and environmentally friendly sustainable development by reducing the impact of these crises on humanity. TİKA will continue to help the regions in need of help in accordance with the active and principled foreign policy pursued by Türkiye, and its human-centered development approach.

# The Activities of UN Türkiye in 2021

## Alvaro Rodriguez

(on behalf of the UN Türkiye Team)  
UN Türkiye Resident Coordinator

Since 2014, Türkiye has hosted the largest population of persons under temporary and international protection in the world. In 2021, the number of Syrians under temporary protection passed 3.7 million, while Türkiye also hosts approximately 320,000 international protection applicants and status holders from other countries, principally Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) Türkiye chapter for 2021-2022 supports the Government's efforts to address the needs of persons under temporary and international protection, host communities, and relevant institutions in line with Türkiye's inclusive legal and policy framework.

The 3RP, co-led by UNHCR and UNDP, has three strategic objectives: 1) Contribute to the protection of Syrians under temporary protection and persons under international protection; 2) Promote inclusion and access to services, including health, education, social services, as well as municipal services and local solutions; and 3) Promote harmonization, self-reliance and solutions.

3RP programmes are implemented largely through public systems and services that have been stretched by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the Government's robust response to the pandemic, some of the adverse effects of COVID-19 are still prevalent, with high unemployment and poverty rates among Syrian refugees and the host community creating new and additional vulnerabilities and a dramatic increase in basic needs. These challenges have been exacerbated by disruptions to in-person services necessitated by public health measures, while many households have faced difficulties in accessing digital services.

At-risk groups including women, children, older persons and people with special needs have been amongst the hardest hit by COVID-19. Impact assessments carried out in 2021 by 3RP partners reinforced the Government assessment of needs related to COVID-19 coordinated by the Office of the Vice-Presidency, highlighting the severe ongoing impacts, including socio-economic shocks, of the pandemic on vulnerable groups including refugees and migrants.

Turkish public institutions supported by UN agencies and 3RP partners have continued to provide refugees access to basic and social services, with a gradual return to in-person appointments in the second half of 2021.

### **Action Undertaken**

The 3RP partners in Türkiye embedded the COVID-19 response in all sector activities for 2021/22. Where feasible, the service and assistance delivery were adapted with a focus on identifying priority needs of women and men, girls and boys, communities and institutions impacted by the pandemic and developing new activities to respond to additional needs while adapted learning and home school support have been vital in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic.

Priority interventions included information dissemination; support for the continuation of education through remote learning and blended programmes; phone and on-line support services to at-risk groups; and emergency cash assistance to help the most vulnerable households with basic needs following the loss of livelihoods. Considering the increased protection risks due to COVID-19, the need for timely and accessible information on support services became even more critical.

Disaggregated gender, age and child-sensitive data collection and targeted programmes are needed to ensure that assistance reaches the most vulnerable individuals and households. Ongoing health support to migrant health centres was provided including mental health and psychosocial activities. Immunisation coverage and access to COVID-19 treatment and vaccination were prioritized in close coordination with the Ministry of Health thanks to the Government's inclusive policy towards refugees.

Social protection plays a vital role in supporting disadvantaged groups while helping to promote social cohesion, as well as contributing to human and economic development. Therefore, the UN and its partners continue working with the Ministry of Family, and Social Services through multiple cash-based assistance modalities and the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education programme,

Employability (e.g. through vocational and language training) and job retention were enhanced through close collaboration between the UN, the private sector, and national and local institutions. Enterprises received support in accessing the digitalised market, which helped them mitigating the negative economic impacts of COVID-19.

# UNHCR Türkiye Activities in 2021

## Philippe Leclerc

UNHCR Türkiye Representative

Oppression, conflicts, violence, human rights violations and disorderly conducts for nine consecutive years have led to an increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons. According to the UNHCR's *Mid-Year Trends Report*<sup>1</sup> published in November, while a great number of people fled their homes due to violence, insecure situations and the effects of climate change, this alarming trend continued in 2021 too. Now this number exceeds 84 million globally. In the first half of 2021 the number of refugees continued to increase and reached approximately 21 million, and solutions to forcibly displaced persons remain inadequate.

As the conflict in Syria still continues after 10 years, the situation in Afghanistan led to new displacements and created a worrisome environment. Considering the challenges faced in humanitarian aid, UNHCR continues to call for international solidarity and the support of neighboring countries in humanitarian aid activities and points to the need of protection of Afghan people with the highest number of protection applications to Türkiye.

Hosting over 4 million individuals in need of international protection, 3.7 million of them being Syrians with

temporary protection status, Türkiye hosts the largest number of individuals in need of international protection. While a small portion of this population (51,677 people) live in the seven temporary refugee centers, a large number of them live in cities, suburbs and rural areas of the 81 cities in Türkiye.

While the Republic of Türkiye leads the refugee response in the country, within the frame of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), the United Nations coordinates humanitarian aid and development partners and provides effective and complementary support to the refugee response. The UNHCR leads protection and basic needs sectors by coordinating the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Along with 3RP partners, UNHCR Türkiye's activities aims to increase access to national systems such as health (including during the pandemic), education, employment and social services, and to promote social compliance through programs that benefit individuals in need of international protection, host community and national institutions. The new presidential decree which regulates the Directorate General of Migration Manage-

ment's (DGMM) institutional structure as Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) in order to increase the capacity of DGMM is received well by UNHCR, in the sense that it is a concrete step towards improving the state's refugee response.

The biggest public health crisis that the world has faced in over a century –the COVID-19 pandemic- will only be brought under control if everyone has equal access to vaccination regardless of their status. Türkiye's vaccination campaign which began in January 2021, encompasses all the people in the country regardless of their origin and residential status. UNHCR conducted a two-round survey in July and September 2021 in order to perform more advocacy activities with the purpose of monitoring access to vaccination for individuals in need of international protection in Türkiye. According to the survey, more than 72% of the participants were vaccinated at least once as of the end of September, which shows that vaccination trends for individuals in need of international protection, with the geographical variables in mind, are similar with the general vaccination trends in Türkiye. At the current phase of the vaccination campaign, access and information activities continue to be a priority to encourage individuals in need of international protection who have not been vaccinated.

While Türkiye is an example of good practice in terms of providing access to individuals in need of international protection with public services including health, the COVID-19 crisis led to new and unexpected difficulties. The UNHCR continues to provide public institutions and organizations with technical, personnel and supply support, and revised its programs to directly support individuals in vulnerable states and in need of international protection. UNHCR also coordinated its efforts with municipalities

and local authorities in order to improve community engagement and social compliance and prioritize matters regarding communication with communities, emergency cash assistance, and the distribution of hygiene products, and other supplies needed.

Apart from being the first destination with respect to the support provided to individuals in need of international protection and the host community; municipalities across Türkiye, which are the key actors in finding local solutions, provides support in many fields including social compliance which has become much more important after living together for 10 years. Municipalities -especially during the COVID-19 pandemic- increased their efforts to meet the most urgent needs of the individuals in need of international protection, and individuals in most vulnerable states. UNHCR Türkiye acknowledges the importance of these efforts in terms of finding local solutions, therefore it funds the activities of municipalities to support individuals in need of international protection, and members of the host community, and activities to increase the social compliance between these groups.

In 2021, UNHCR continued to provide regular and fast information in various languages about COVID-19; and diversified its communication strategies in compliance with the different needs of individuals of its concern/individuals in the scope of its authority, and remote work conditions; and adopted various digital communication tools; and strengthened its access with call centers, social media platforms, a HELP site, services advisory, sessions with communities, and phone calls. As a response to difficulties experienced by individuals who are exposed to gender-based violence to access ordinary reporting and support mechanisms, UNHCR continued to operate the call centers

-which were founded in September 2020- allocated for gender-based violence calls. This channel enables callers at risk and callers exposed to gender-based violence to listen to the relevant recorded message with the help of reporting and support mechanisms, to get live consultation by connecting to an operator, and to leave their contact information to be called back at a certain time.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously and negatively affected the opportunities of individuals in need of international protection to meet their basic needs. In March 2021, UNHCR completed the first round of the one-time “COVID-19 Emergency Cash Assistance” provided to 88,779 household who were affected by the pandemic and did not get any other social assistance. In collaboration with the Presidency of Migration Management and mediation of service provider Post and Telegraph Organization (PTT), 1,000 one-time cash assistance helped individuals in need of international protection to meet their most urgent needs. In November 2021, UNHCR launched another one-time cash assistance within the scope of 1,100 assistance aiming to support approximately 85,000 households according to the state’s social assistance plan intended for Turkish citizens and in coordination with the Social Compliance Assistance Program for Foreigners (SUY)/Complementary SUY Program of the Turkish Red Crescent/IFRC.

The pandemic also affected education processes. The closing of schools, universities, technical and vocational educational institutions impacted trainers, students, and teachers; UNHCR supported the Ministry of National Education in regards to the establishment of “Education Information Network (EBA)” points which are in 16 cities across the country, in 114 schools and which hold 15-

20 student capacity each. UNHCR provided over 2,000 computers distributed to the centers, along with laptop assistance for teachers, and teacher assistance.

The closure of borders due to the pandemic and travel restrictions entailed the temporary halting of settlements to third countries. Accordingly, the number of settlements to third countries witnessed a historic decrease. Turkish authorities, settlement countries, and UNHCR continues to adapt to the new working conditions; all of the settlement actors struggles to gain their old capacity. Despite these conditions, the UNHCR continued to help 4,050 individuals in need of international protection in 2020, and 6,200 in 2021 with settling to third countries and leaving the country. The limited placement openings of third countries continue to be the essential difficulty in third country settlements.

Türkiye’s policies regarding a wide range of individuals in need of international protection continue to be a great example for other countries policies. In a period where the country hosts four million individuals in need of international protection, and in a difficult condition due to the pandemic, UNHCR continues to advocate for more division of responsibility including financial assistance, more placements for settlements to third countries, and complementary roads.

<sup>1</sup> Mid-Year Trends 2021, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021, Kopenhagen, accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/618ae4694/mid-ye-ar-trends-2021.html>

# 2021 for the IFRC

## Ruben Cano

Head of Delegation, IFRC Türkiye

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, reaching 150 million people in 192 National Societies through the work of 13.7 million volunteers worldwide. Together we act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people.

In Türkiye, IFRC works with Turkish Red Crescent to support more than 2.1 million people including refugees, Turkish communities, those impacted by disasters and other groups in need of humanitarian assistance. One of the most prominent programs we are working on together is the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), which is funded by the European Union and provides monthly cash assistance via debit cards to more than 1.5 million of the most vulnerable refugees in Türkiye.

### **More than 10 Years on... 3 Challenges Ahead**

In March 2021, Türkiye marked the 10-year anniversary of the Syrian crisis and recognized the 13.4 million Syrians still in need of humanitarian aid. Türkiye has played a leading role in responding to their basic needs, hosting 3.7 million Syrians while advocating for a more permanent political solution to the conflict.

But they are now entering the 12th year of their displacement and – as is the case in most protracted crises, complex emergencies and situations of chronic vulnerability – the prospects of a permanent solution remain far from reach. The focus, therefore, must be on building long-term resilience. This is when we turn our attention to the “nexus,” which refers to the long-running efforts to link humanitarian and development actions; when we focus not just on addressing needs but on reducing them.

This year, the IFRC released new research, entitled *Drowning just below the surface*,<sup>1</sup> which reveals the magnitude of socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic globally. The research found that the groups most disproportionately affected by the devastating socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 are women, people in urban areas and people on the move. The latter category (migrants and refugees) were more likely to lose jobs during the pandemic and have been widely neglected by formal protection and safeguarding measures.

This particular finding is backed up by our own research in Türkiye: *Our Post Distribution Monitoring reports*,<sup>2</sup> *Focus Group Discussions* (including one focusing specifically on debt), and our *Inter-sector Vulnerability Study*,<sup>3</sup> all of which have been conducted with people under temporary and international protection, many of whom are part of the ESSN.



What the research revealed is that many refugees and host communities in Türkiye have lost work (income) due to the pandemic. This, coupled with the increase in cost of living and limited capacity to pay for food, utilities and rent, have contributed to refugees borrowing and falling deeper into debt. Debt levels for people under temporary and international protection in Türkiye have more than doubled since the pandemic began. Subsequently, families are denying themselves basic necessities including food, and sacrificing other important expenses including their children's education, communications, and health-related care.

Cash assistance is helping prevent many from going further into debt and resorting to negative coping mechanisms (1 in 2 people receiving assistance has said ESSN helped them manage their debt) and continues to be vital in meeting the intensifying humanitarian needs of people under temporary and international protection.

But while cash remains critical – especially for the vulnerable majority – longer-term solutions are needed. Supporting the transition of refugees into jobs that provide more predictable financial security, with rights that are protected by law, will help to reduce the dependence on basic needs support. Of course, given the current labour market conditions, this also needs to be done without negatively impacting employment opportunities for Turkish citizens to ensure social cohesion and to avoid increased tensions.

We see three major challenges we need to tackle in 2022 and beyond:

First, we believe that Türkiye as a host country with its diversified economy presents unique opportunities for refugees. However, current investments in livelihoods opportunities and social cohesion in Türkiye are not enough. The cumulative interventions from 3RP members,<sup>4</sup> international financial institutions and other actors have resulted in around 30,000 new jobs created between 2017-2021, which makes it clear that efforts need to be scaled up.<sup>5</sup>

Second, notwithstanding the political sensitivities, we must take bolder steps to mitigate some of the existing barriers, particularly those impacting refugee access to

the labour market.<sup>6</sup> The Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection (2016) was an important legal development giving them the right to work formally. However, it has not yielded the desired outcome as Syrians continue to face obstacles in accessing formal employment opportunities such as the reluctance of employers to submit work permit applications (despite the reduction in cost); the quota system demanding that for each Syrian employed, a company must have 10 Turkish employees; or the geographical restrictions making it more difficult to tap into job opportunities where they arise.<sup>7</sup>

Lastly, we believe there needs to be greater synergy between funding streams for humanitarian assistance and development aid – this has become a protracted displacement situation, which means we need to integrate our humanitarian assistance with longer-term programming efforts to be more effective. As long as the alternatives to basic needs assistance remain limited, the cycle of dependence will persist, and transition will be illusory.

Humanitarian actors, including the Turkish Red Crescent and IFRC, authorities, donors and development partners (including the private sector) must engage in continuous dialogue to enable better linkages between their interventions, for example through the 3RP Task Team on Transition<sup>8</sup> of which the Turkish Red Crescent is currently the co-chair together with UNDP.

It is in this spirit that the IFRC Türkiye delegation is approaching the new year, focusing on the challenge of socio-economic inclusion and empowerment for refugees in Türkiye, particularly those who are currently benefiting from the ESSN. This shift will require courageous and

collaborative leadership, which believes in sustainable change over political expediency and is ready to make short-term sacrifices for a longer-term gain for the most vulnerable people in Türkiye.

To conclude, we invite humanitarian and development actors, donors, the private sector, Turkish authorities, academia and civil society to contribute to addressing this triple challenge: increasing investment in socio-economic empowerment; contributing to mitigate barriers to employment; and joining forces to create greater synergies between humanitarian and development interventions.

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- 1 <https://www.ifrc.org/document/drowning-just-below-surface-socioeconomic-consequences-covid-19-pandemic>
  - 2 <https://www.ifrc.org/document/socioeconomic-impacts-refugees-turkey-one-year-covid-19>
  - 3 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IVS-report-210616.pdf>
  - 4 The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP): Turkey Country Chapter is a strategic, coordination, planning, advocacy, fundraising, and programming platform for UN agencies and other humanitarian and development partners to respond to the Syria crisis
  - 5 Task Team on Referral and Transition to Livelihoods Opportunities, December 2021, draft Output Paper
  - 6 These include structural issues particularly related to the low participation of women in the labour force and drivers of informality in the labour market, which call for more flexible criteria and standards.
  - 7 People under temporary and international protection are required to remain in the province where they are registered with DGMM and NUFUS. While applications to move are possible, many provinces including Istanbul have suspended new registrations.
  - 8 People under temporary and international protection are required to remain in the province where they are registered with DGMM and NUFUS. While applications to move are possible, many provinces including Istanbul have suspended new registrations.

# Migration Activities in Türkiye in 2021

## Gerard Karl Waite

IOM Türkiye, Chief of Mission

As a member of the humanitarian aid community in Türkiye, the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Turkish Red Crescent to improve the cooperation in humanitarian aid. We are proud of the cooperation between IOM and the Turkish Red Crescent, and consider this an indicator of the capacity to work better together.

IOM has been working with Türkiye for more than 30 years to support the current migration management and strategy, and it has been providing humanitarian aid to migrants, refugees and the host communities by conducting activities and projects to meet the needs of the migrants. IOM also continued its activities in various fields in 2021.

Being a crucial element of the humanitarian aid activities of IOM, the Migrant and Refugee Support Program provided aid to more than 500 thousand beneficiaries, especially migrants, refugees, host communities and their families in vulnerable states who experienced the negative impacts of the pandemic. IOM also supported local institutions with its multi-dimensional aid activities including cash assistance, delivery of hygiene and non-food materials, protection and psychosocial support. Moreover, IOM

continued to implement different livelihood projects including cash assistance for winter, quick and effective grants, entrepreneurship and innovation training, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and agricultural support as well as projects on school transportation, social stability, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene.

IOM opened FabLab to support digital production processes at Gaziantep University campus. The center provides an accessible workspace for everyone by sharing information and exchanging experiences in digital technologies. In addition, IOM's Municipal Migrant and Community Centers in Adana, Ankara, Gaziantep, Mersin and Şanlıurfa continued to operate online and face-to-face services to provide beneficiaries with accurate information, legal and medical referral and consultation.

IOM's activities in the Mediterranean are important as Türkiye is both a country of transit and destination for migrants. The IOM Türkiye Mediterranean Response Program continued to work with the Turkish Coast Guard Command on the Aegean coast and Turkish gendarmerie and police in certain locations in 2021 to provide humanitarian aid to the rescued migrants. IOM Türkiye mobile teams provided basic aid materials such as food parcels, hygiene kits, and phone cards, and they provided



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Fatih İsci

information about psychological first aid, translation services, immigrant rights in Türkiye, the dangers of irregular sea crossings, and so on.

In 2021, the Mediterranean Response Program provided humanitarian aid to nearly 12,000 migrants rescued by the Coast Guard and 600 migrants caught on land by Turkish law enforcement. With the cooperation of the Coast Guard, IOM observed the needs and increased the number of mobile teams in the field. Faced with some difficulties due to the ongoing restrictions within the scope of the fight against the pandemic, the mobile teams continued to deliver humanitarian aid with the support of Türkiye. IOM also distributed masks, gloves, disinfectants, hygiene kits and protective clothing to migrants and coast

guard teams, and carried out rehabilitation works in the migrant waiting area in Dikili.

Within the scope of ongoing aid activities on the northwest border, the IOM mobile team in Edirne continued its activities such as translation services, consultancy, awareness raising, psychological first aid and distribution of humanitarian supplies to law enforcement units. Between January and November 2021, the IOM Edirne Office reached 25,254 migrants and refugees and identified the special needs of these beneficiaries. The team in Edirne detected and referred 51 cases in 2021, 5 of which were family reunification cases referred to the Turkish Red Crescent. IOM also distributed 80,130 food and non-food items to beneficiaries in 2021 in Edirne.

# Migration, Refugees, the Pandemic and Climate Crisis

## Hakan Bilgin

President, Doctors of the World Türkiye

The Syrian Crisis, which began in 2011, is still a stain on our collective conscience. Although many years have passed, the crisis is now moving towards a point where it becomes deeper, unpredictable and unfavorable let alone improving. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic, which first broke out in China and then spread worldwide, took millions of lives as of 2019. Even if there were significant advances in vaccine and treatment processes, the world failed to deliver vaccines to least developed countries due to unequal distribution and issues surrounding patents.

In addition, climate change that has been going on for decades and whose impacts have been felt even stronger in recent years, caused extreme flood disasters in the north of Türkiye and forest fires in the south in 2021, bringing serious threat of drought. 82 people lost their lives in the flood disasters that occurred in Kastamonu, Sinop and Bartın in August. The forest fires that occurred in the Aegean and Mediterranean Regions in the same period continued for two weeks and destroyed the life resources of all living things. That being the case, climate change has also negatively affected life all over the world, and the population affected by the climate have joined in with the

rest in migration. In addition, there were some governments acting against the fundamental rights adopted with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With their pro-violence and oppression approach, which does not allow people to choose a free and humane life, and which subjects women and children to fear and concern about their safety, they have left their people no choice but to migrate. This situation has not drawn the attention it deserves, like many other problems we need to solve today.

With the Taliban's seizure of power, the Afghan people, who have been trying to live their lives in pain and misery for years, dreamt of migrating to Türkiye and then to Europe via Pakistan and Iran, and finally maintaining a peaceful life. Thus, they left their home, young and old alike. While Türkiye has been having a hard time dealing with the refugees coming from Afghanistan, there is also a risk of another migration wave of three million, following a potential disturbance in Syria's Idlib region.

All of the above are just the tip of the iceberg. Harmonization activities, carried out for the host community to accept refugees still creates a problem, let alone the

needs of migrants such as health, protection and education. What makes it more difficult is the language barrier, cultural differences, and the inadequate capacity to provide psychosocial support to people who have been going through a deep mental and psychological destruction due to their tragic experiences resulting from war and migration. In addition, the tendency to use substances among the affected groups necessitates a deep and detailed research on this subject.

According to official data, the cooperation and coordination of local governments, public and non-governmental organizations that provide services to 3,738,032 Syrians under temporary protection registered in Türkiye play a crucial role in using resources more efficiently and being present in the right place at the right time. There is no doubt that we need to be more organized and we also need higher capacity, estimating that the current number of refugees will increase and the adverse impacts of climate change will continue for centuries in the best-case scenario. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Report, approximately 21.5 million people have had to migrate every year since 2008 due to weather conditions such as floods, storms, hurricanes and extreme droughts. The World Disaster Report, released in 2020, pointed out that the number of climate and weather-related disasters has been increasing since the 1960s, and has increased nearly 35% since the 1990s. Since Türkiye is on the migration routes, it is one of the countries that is at risk of having numerous people who have to migrate due to the climate crisis. In this context, the international community needs to begin to take the necessary steps with the utmost urgency to make the preparations and investments to avoid climate migration.

In addition, the manufacturing slowdown, supply chain disruptions and setbacks, countries dealing with economic crises and other political issues due to the pandemic makes things extremely difficult for the humanitarian aid community.

Unfortunately, these people, who have been experiencing the cruel impacts of the humanitarian crises, have become a subject matter for the domestic and foreign policies of some countries. This approach results in wars and conflicts, both interstate and also between states and armed separatist groups in the world, causing millions of people to be internally displaced or sometimes to be forced to leave their countries.

Humanitarian crises in recent years have diverted all the attention away from the struggles of African countries, such as hunger, lack of clean water access, and poverty. Aid delivered to these regions has decreased. On the other hand, the adverse impacts of the pandemic and poverty have caused the migration flow to increase in these regions. Taking drastic measures against immigration to wealthy and developed countries, preventing the admission of refugees to these countries and pushing back those who try to cross the European border is a disgrace to humanity. World opinion on this is still and there is no solution on the horizon. While wealthy and developed countries are hoarding more vaccines and food than they need, people living in countries with no economic power are left alone in this struggle, and these countries have become the epicenter for the emergence of new COVID-19 variants.

Being a small part of the humanitarian aid community, DDD operates with its 12 primary healthcare centers and 146 personnel consisting of 77 medical, and 69 administrative and auxiliary personnel in Türkiye as well as the Idlib region in Syria.



Photograph: AA, Muhammed Enes Yıldırım

In Northwest Syria, there has been 92,532 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of December 2021, and 2,266 deaths due to COVID-19 have been recorded so far. While a total of 321,048 PCR tests were done in this region, the country experienced the most serious wave of the pandemic between August and October 2021 and the test positivity rate increased to 61%. Fighting against the pandemic in Syria, which has been in a state of war for more than 10 years, DDD continues to try hard by performing 300-600 tests per day in its PCR laboratories in Afrin and Idlib.

We provided health services to 89,195 people with 141,580 consultation services between September 2020 and September 2021 through primary health care, psychosocial support and protection services and awareness activities provided by our clinics and mobile teams. We provided 82,306,884.80 TL worth of medicine and medical supplies, and services to 1,367,000 people between 2017 and the end of 2020 in Syria and Türkiye. Only these figures are enough to show the extent of the crisis, and they are a clear indication that the crisis is still continuing and that more resources are needed. It is beyond doubt that what has been done is not enough in the face of the current situation.

As non-governmental organizations, we can say that predicting a crisis before it happens and taking precautions is much more effective than responding during the crisis. Communication channels, coordination, information and advocacy activities for both natural disasters and other humanitarian crises mentioned above are efficient before and after the crisis. The activities that might be beneficial include improving migration literature nationally and internationally by conducting academic field research with

harmonization and rehabilitation activities to minimize the negative consequences that may occur, and increasing the capacity to respond immediately in case of crisis.

I wish I could describe a more promising future, but as it stands, it is likely that the current situation will become more challenging due to ongoing wars in different parts of the world, increasing poverty, infectious diseases and the serious impacts of climate change.

We work hard and will work harder as we believe that the hope, effort and love of humanitarian aid workers will make things better for the whole world.

# From Local to International Humanitarian Aid

## Ahmet Emin Dağ

Dr., IHH Executive Board Member

Forest fires in the Mediterranean Region and floods in Western Karadeniz Caused severe human suffering on a national scale in 2021. The successful management of disasters by public institutions and civil society playing an active part in these activities made us hopeful in terms of the role of NGOs and especially aid organizations. In this sense, IHH participated in fighting the simultaneous fires that broke out during the summer in Antalya, Muğla, Aydın, Denizli, Adana, Isparta, Kayseri, Hatay, Uşak, and Karabük with 37 different teams consisting of 430 people. Moreover, IHH delivered hot meals through mobile soup kitchens. In addition, their psychosocial support teams made visits to the families of victims.

It is ironic that while one half of the country was dealing with forest fires, the other was facing huge flood disasters in the province of Western Karadeniz such as Bartın, Kastamonu, and Sinop. IHH sent 35 coordination officers, 30 divers, 195 evacuation workers and search and rescue teams, a mobile soup kitchen, and 55 vehicle rescuers to the disaster areas where many people lost their lives and thousands of others suffered.

After these relief works, catering supplies for 20 thousand people, hot meals for 6,400 people, and 8 trucks full of drinkable water were distributed. Such disasters have once again confirmed that natural disasters caused by climate change should be the main areas the government and non-governmental organizations need to pay attention to. In this respect, more professional and excessive preparation is important against forest fires and unbalanced heavy rain that causes other disasters.

However, climate change, which affects the whole globe, cannot be managed with the measures taken by some local officials and civil agents. This necessitates new cooperation areas on a global scale. In that matter, there is an increase in natural events triggered by climate change which has made us rethink the importance of international solidarity as well as local opportunities.

Our involvement in Türkiye as well as the different crisis areas around the world has inspired us, as IHH, to attach more importance to international solidarity among civil aid organizations. During this year's OCHA Partnership Week, ICVA sessions on decentralization and more ex-



Photograph: AA, Muhammed Enes Yıldırım

tensive cooperation were held by IHH to produce solutions to local problems in the sense of global experiences and to work together from the local to the international arena. Topics such as how international aid organizations in non-European countries deliver aid to crisis areas, how they interact with local communities, and methods of developing relations with international humanitarian aid factors constitute areas on which a strategy must be developed in the new period.

IHH, a member of ICVA since 2018, continues to aim to be a member of important platforms to strengthen humanitarian principles and increase cooperation with international non-governmental organizations. In this context, it is continuing to express its ideas on every local and international platform on key problems such as civic space and local leadership, capacity development, financing, participation in international partnerships, advocacy, and

visibility. In this way, one of these platforms, the AidEX 2021 event, has been an important meeting spot for international civil aid organizations. As IHH, our pavilion at this event has turned into an opportunity, for we not only gained attention for international players but also helped to find new areas of cooperation.

As IHH, our mission of being an organization reaching out from local to global, both in the last year and in the upcoming period. We are excited about new expansions that will carry us forward. Turning this excitement into concrete projects, the contribution international aid organizations have on the mission of promoting core humanitarian standards as well as helping to ease the lives of victims will play an influential role in the circulation of global humanitarian funds.

# 2021 Worldwide

## Ozan Mutlu

Doctors Worldwide Türkiye, CEO

We have come to the end of a year in which the need for humanitarian aid increased on a global scale due to deepening humanitarian crises and threats resulting from the pandemic and climate change in various parts of the world. The ongoing Syrian crisis completed its 10th year. The places experiencing humanitarian crises more severely were Afghanistan, Yemen, and Gaza. Afghanistan struggles with political, social, and economic issues caused by the war that lasted for nearly 45 years. The famine, outbreak, and civil war continues in Yemen. Violent attacks take place in Gaza. Humanity went through tough times in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the natural disasters that occurred in Türkiye and different parts of the world. In this context, as humanitarian aid actors, we once again realized the great extent of our responsibilities.

Though estimating that the needs are to increase on a global scale in the upcoming year, the resources allocated to humanitarian aid do not increase enough. Accordingly, strengthening coordination between actors, specialization in humanitarian aid models, using resources efficiently, and sustainability becomes more crucial.

As Doctors Worldwide, we provided services in our health centers located in different crisis regions of the world this year, with an understanding that concentrates on

“sustainable humanitarian aid and social impact-oriented service,” which we created with the experience we gained in the field over the years. We worked hard to ensure that those in need, who try to maintain their life under poor conditions caused by war, famine, and natural disasters, have access to health services. In addition, we added new ones to our existing centers. Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, we supported local employment, specialization, and capacity building in the regions we provide services with the help of the efforts of our Turkish volunteer doctors and health workers. In parallel with the same understanding, we are determined to increase our operational efficiency, expand our knowledge in health and be more focused on sustainability in humanitarian aid in the years to come.

In the previous year, we, unfortunately, witnessed various natural disasters both in Türkiye and many parts of the world. Our citizens affected by the disasters were provided with substantial support, thanks to the efforts of the general public and NGOs. We see that aid is delivered to those in need much more effectively in such disasters if the coordination between state institutions, humanitarian aid organizations, and local authorities is strong. However, considering the coordination between actors, we



Fotoğraf: Türk Kızılay, Cevahir Buğü

think that preventing logistical problems caused by humanitarian aid activities conducted in a short period is an issue open for improvement.

We will remember 2021 as a challenging year in which we witnessed humanitarian crises due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, conflicts, famine, natural disasters, and climate change. However, humanity's collective fight against disasters and crises, and the unprecedented efforts of

our people, raise our hopes for the future. We believe that if we walk down the same road that leads to brighter days, the pain and suffering will be history soon.

# To Healthier Generations

## Mücahit Öztürk

Prof. Dr., President of the Turkish Green Crescent

The Turkish Green Crescent fights addiction on so many levels and creates permanent solutions thanks to its years of experience and vast knowledge accumulated over a century. Turkish Green Crescent Headquarters continues to operate through Green Crescent Consulting Centers, branches, and volunteers in every province of Türkiye and continues its activities with the determination for a good and healthy future. The Green Crescent Movement also leads the fight against addiction all over the world, together with 95 national Green Crescents.

Action to fight against addiction happens on national and international levels in Türkiye. We pursue strategies and policies to ensure the highest level of cooperation and coordination between relevant institutions. In this context, the *High Council of Fighting against Addiction* was established in 2019 with the Presidential circular. The Council gathers under the presidency of the Vice President of Türkiye, Fuat Oktay, and 13 relevant ministries are represented on the ministerial level. The President of the Green Crescent represents the Green Crescent on the Council.

The Green Crescent is a member of the High Council of the Fight against Addiction, Technical Board, and Provincial Boards of the Fight against Addiction within the sco-

pe of action plans. It actively participates in the working groups of stakeholder institutions, national workshops, and regional assessment meetings.

Established in 2015 to provide psychosocial support services for those who struggle with addictions, Green Crescent Counseling Centers provide services in 104 points in all provinces across Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as of the end of 2021. The Green Crescent Counseling Centers aim to provide free psychological and social support to people with alcohol, tobacco, substance, gambling, and technology addictions, reintegrate them into life, and restore their disrupted lifestyles. Between 2016 and 2021, Green Crescent Counseling Centers received 500,000 calls via the Counseling Line (115) and provided more than 110,000 individual therapy and counseling services. In cooperation with the Turkish Employment Agency, 135 clients we helped overcome their addictions were employed.

### Training Programs

The goal is to raise awareness of alcohol, tobacco, substance, and technology addictions among society, especially children and young people, and to prevent addiction by informing the target group about living a healthy life.

We implemented the *Türkiye Addiction Prevention Training Program* led by the Ministry of National Education with the support of many institutions and organizations, such as the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of National Defence, Presidency of Religious Affairs, and Turkish Red Crescent. We reached 10 million students and 3 million adults each year through 42,029 practitioner school counselors who were provided with train the trainer course within the scope of the Türkiye Addiction Prevention Training Program.

*The Green Crescent Life Skills Training Program* aims to improve the ability of students to say “no” to addictions

through activities that will enable them to maintain a life away from the risk of addiction, acquire positive habits, and protect themselves from risky environments and situations. After the train the trainer course carried out in 2021 with the participation of 160 counselors from 81 provinces, the *Green Crescent Life Skills Training Program* will be extended throughout Türkiye as of 2021.

The School-Based Addiction Intervention Program is Türkiye’s first and only school-based intervention program created with a secondary prevention approach for smoking, alcohol, addictive substance, and risky internet use among students. Within the scope of the School-Ba-



sed Addiction Intervention Program, between 2019 and 2021, practitioner training was provided to 465 school counselors/psychological counselors working in Counselling and Research Centers and schools in 81 provinces.

We carried out awareness activities and reached millions of people through our communication campaigns with the messages “It’s Time to Quit Smoking” (*Sigarayı Bırakmanın Tam Zamanı*), “You Will Need That Breath” (*O Nefes Sana Lazım Olacak*), “Coronavirus Loves Smokers” (*Koronavirüs Sigara İçeni Sever*).

In 2021, there were 421,000 applications across Türkiye to the *Healthy Generation Healthy Future Contest*, which is held annually to encourage primary, secondary, and high school students to show their talents and raise awareness among students. In 2021, 1,088 cartoonists from 69 countries submitted 2,034 works to the *International Green Crescent Cartoon Contest*, which has been held since 2016 to raise public awareness of addictions using the universal language of cartoons. University students submitted 224 short films to the *Healthy Ideas Short Film Contest*.

The Green Crescent attaches great importance to prevention activities in the fight against addictions and continues to bring its university student volunteers together in the Young Green Crescent Camps. In some camps throughout 2021, young people were provided with training on general addiction, technology addiction, and personal development, as well as information about the projects of Green Crescent and its fields of activity.

### **Academic Studies**

We carry out activities, such as scientific events and academic publications, intended for academics and students

working in the field of addiction. We support studies on this matter and encourage new ones with our postgraduate and doctorate scholarship programs.

In addition to the *5th International Congress of Technology Addiction* held on 2-3 June 2021 and the *International Congress of Addiction* on 2-3 November 2021, nearly 16,000 people attended the online panels of *Women and the Fight against Addictions*, and *Internet-Based Behavioral Addictions*.

Global strategy and cooperation models were discussed towards a common goal of fighting addictions at the *2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly of Istanbul Initiative*, held on 12-13 October 2021, with the participation of representatives of 28 different institutions from 21 countries. More than 100 young people aged 18-22 from 35 countries met online on 17-18 August 2021 at the second meeting of the *Youth Advocacy Forum*, which is the new global youth project of the Green Crescent.

The 19 member countries of the International Federation of Green Crescent have gained “Special Consultative Status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).” In the second century of its fight against addictions, Green Crescent continues to work towards a generation free of addictions in line with its goal of a good and healthy future, together with its employees, volunteers, and stakeholders at national and international platforms.

# From Crisis to Risk Management in Disasters

## Recep Şalçı

Chairman of the Board of Directors, AKUT Search and Rescue Association

Established in 1996, known for its activities during the 1999 Marmara Earthquake, and active for over a quarter century, the AKUT Search and Rescue Association's search, rescue, and humanitarian aid activities can be analyzed under four main topics: "Mediterranean Fires," "The Black Sea Flood Disasters," "EU ModEx Search and Rescue Drill" hosted by AKUT, and "Istanbul Earthquake Response and National Evacuation Plan Preparations" in coordination with the Ministry of Interior.

It is a well-known fact that June to September is the flood season for the Black Sea Region, which is a great opportunity for preparing for flood disasters in the region. Homes and workplaces should be built away from dangerous places like river beds to mitigate damages caused by floods and overflows. The biggest reason why floods occur is the overflow of river beds. In the aftermath of the flood disaster in August, we all have learned what it means to build a district on a riverbed. Therefore, unusual weather events started increasing due to the impacts of climate

change. Flood disasters in the Black Sea Region are the first example that comes to mind.

Search and rescue operations in floods are conducted to a limited degree, or even not at all. Everything happens too quickly. What we do would not be beyond search and evacuation activities if the necessary measures were not taken –in other words, if there is no "risk planning." For this very reason, the following matters are crucial: "disaster culture," "disaster resilient settlements," "the awareness of meteorological changes" especially in risky geographies and seasons, and "evacuation on time."

The lack of disaster culture also manifested in people's behavior during the Black Sea flood disasters. The fact that some of the families we tried to rescue left their homes after emptying their refrigerators showed that we still did not have enough awareness of the emergency kit and what it should contain. It also revealed that the accreditation process of search and rescue teams should be maintained



in flood and fire disasters. The most significant issue in this regard is that all institutions, especially related governmental units should direct their efforts away from crisis management and towards risk management which consists of mitigation, preparedness, forecasting, and early warning.

Not only floods but also forest fires increased in number in 2021 due to climate change. However, search and rescue operations are least needed in fire disasters since the end goal is to put out the fire as soon as possible. We, as AKUT, actively operate in the field within the scope of evacuation and forest fire extinguishing activities as we are familiar with nature and can respond quickly. We are proud to say that we rescued 225 people and hundreds of people in the last Mediterranean fires with the coordinated efforts of our 12 teams and 121 volunteers.

We rescued more than 500 people in the Aegean and Mediterranean fires and the Black Sea flood disasters and contributed to the rescue of more than a thousand people in joint operations. We receive feedbacks on how beneficial our posts are, which we share on our social media accounts and on [afet.akut.org.tr](https://afet.akut.org.tr) to raise awareness and provide information. With search and res-

cue teams, such as the Governorship of Istanbul, the Provincial Gendarmerie Command, AFAD, and AKUT, and in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, the Istanbul Earthquake Response Plan and National Evacuation Plan were drafted. All related institutions took an active part in the preparation processes of the plans. It is impossible to prevent mass panic during an earthquake if a country does not have a solid action and evacuation plan. This process can be managed properly only if Istanbul's residents learn how to behave in different phases following an earthquake and be sure that all related institutions of the state will be there for them. If people act on panic and behave unconsciously, the result might be all kinds of unfavorable situations, especially traffic jams. That was precisely the case for the Izmir earthquake.

We were in a training in Bodrum with our volunteers when the Izmir earthquake occurred. Though we arrived in Izmir in 2 hours, it took 2.5 hours to get to the disaster field due to traffic jams. In the first hours of the earthquake, many people left their homes in panic even if there was no damage and they tied up traffic. The first hours of a disaster, also called the "Golden Hour," are crucial not only for search and rescue operations but also for ambulances and firefighting vehicles to arrive on the field. The situation would be so much more tragic for the potential Istanbul earthquake.

AKUT holds the record to be the first Turkish search and rescue team to join "INSARAG" affiliated with the United Nations and "ECPP-European Civil Protection Pool" within the scope of the "European Civil Protection Mechanism," and it also became one of the partners of a consortium performing provincial search and rescue drills and medical rescue drills. As AKUT, we achieved another in-

ternational success this year. In cooperation with AFAD, we hosted the biggest drill within the scope of ModEx and European Union states search and rescue teams and medical rescue teams took part in the drill. We participated in the drill performed between 11 and 14 November 2021 in Tekirdağ with our 100 volunteers and 13 teams (Bursa, Denizli, Manisa, Kuşadası, İzmir, Marmaris, Yarımada, Ankara, Afyon, Istanbul, Eskişehir, Kocaeli, Tekirdağ). With the help of our experienced volunteers, we played a role in both field management and drill management.

# Response to National and International Disasters and Coordination Between Organizations

## İhsan Açıık

Türkiye Diyanet Foundation Board of Trustees II. President

There are many different man-made and natural disasters that occur around the world, including earthquakes, landslides, extreme snow conditions, fires, explosions, civil war, and hunger, which result in different vulnerabilities. Whether it be financial or psychological, the catastrophe caused by these disasters require a quick response by relevant parties to ensure aid reaches the affected populations.

Türkiye has taken on the mission and responsibility of healing the wounds of those in need and who have been affected by disasters both within its own borders and those in other countries by ensuring a quick response as soon as a disaster strikes. This mission is one of the most important legacies inherited by our ancestors. In fact, what makes us as a country, and what differentiates us from others is that our sense of helping and solidarity is always at a high level. This is emphasized by the fact that Türkiye constantly makes it as the top country in statistics provided by inter-

national organizations that display the amount of money countries spend on humanitarian assistance in relation to their GNP. Türkiye has always led in this regard and will continue to do so. In addition to the generosity of the Turkish people, this, without a doubt, is a result of the trust the general public have in their government and NGOs.

The Türkiye Diyanet Foundation is one of the most important actors in Türkiye's humanitarian aid chain. The in-kind and cash aid donated by the Turkish people to the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation is delivered to those in need in line with the criteria determined. Currently, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation provides various assistance ranging from social activities to food and shelter. The Foundation works in coordination with non-governmental organizations and public institutions in order to respond quickly and accurately to disasters both in Türkiye and in other countries.

When a disaster erupts, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation deploys personnel from its headquarters and local offices to the disaster zone. The needs of the people affected are assessed and aid is delivered accordingly. As was seen in the wildfires that occurred in Türkiye, coordination and communication are as important as delivering aid in the disaster zones. It can be observed that the coordination between the different organizations responding to the crisis is increasingly important in order to ensure that aid is delivered effectively and accurately to those in need.

The Türkiye Diyanet Foundation places great importance on coordinating with national and international organizations and is open to any form of partnership that will result in alleviating the suffering of people in need. In coordination with the Turkish Red Crescent, which is the main solution partner for Nutrition in Türkiye's Disaster Response Plan (TAMP), the Diyanet Foundation provides hot meals with its mobile kitchen during disasters. We place great importance on such coordination in the field.

With the ambition to reach to all those who have been affected by disasters, just like in the past when the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation responded to the earthquakes and floods in Elazığ, Bingöl, İzmir and Giresün, the Foundation also responded to the forest fires in Muğla and Antalya, and the floods in Artvin, Sinop, Rize, Kastamonu and Bartın. Within this scope, the mobile kitchen that was directed to Manavgat provided hot meals for 20,000 people, including those affected by the disasters and responders from different organizations. In addition, support was provided for the distribution of other humanitarian goods in order for life to return to normal as soon as possible.

In addition to supporting the fire fighting and cooling efforts with its personnel and volunteers in Muğla, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation did not leave the local people alone in terms of humanitarian assistance. Food, clothes, gloves, fire extinguishers, and other non-food items were distributed to the local people and financial assistance was provided to 3,500 people.

Following the floods that occurred in Artvin, Sinop, Rize, Kastamonu and Bartın, personnel were deployed from the headquarters to the areas and along with the support of volunteers, financial aid was delivered to 3,000 people. Working in cooperation with other organizations on the field, including AFAD, the Turkish Red Crescent and security forces, hot meals were prepared for 60,000 people with the use of the mobile kitchen for 36 days.

In addition to the humanitarian assistance activities responding to disaster and crisis areas, assistance was also delivered to people in need during Ramadan and Eid-al-Adha during the COVID-19 pandemic that shook the world. Water wells, Ramadan and Qurban assistance, and shelter have been some of the projects that are still continuing abroad to help the very needy. Specifically, during the pandemic, religious officials were assisted, any specific gardening requirements were met, elderly people were supported by ensuring they were able to withdraw their retirement pensions, medication was provided for people with health conditions, and food needs were met. Assistance was provided in any field where it was required and these activities are still continuing today in some scope.

With the 'One Drop Life' (*Bir Damla Hayat*) project, the Foundation has opened water wells ranging from 50-500 metres in depth that can be used for both agricultural

purposes and individual needs, providing clean water for people in need. In 2021 alone, 320 water wells across 21 countries and in total since 2015, 760 water wells across 35 countries have been provided for people in disaster and crisis areas, giving them access to clean water.

With its ‘Don’t Forget Your Brother’ (*Kardeşini Unutma Beklenen Sensin*) qurban theme, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation provided over 25 million people, in all provinces across Türkiye and in 339 regions in 77 countries, with qurban assistance.

The Türkiye Diyanet Foundation has stood alongside Syrian people affected from the crisis in the country and has provided assistance during their migration journey. This assistance ranges from non-food items to shelter, and providing assistance for orphans and educational needs. With its 1,003 local branches, the Foundation has provided assistance with 2,780 lorries, carrying all types of aid ranging from non-food items to shelter needs, food, home furniture and hygiene packets. All this aid has been delivered to families affected by the war. In addition to this, continuous educational support is provided to the students in the area. Trying to maintain a life in tents and living in mud, with the objective of providing families a warm home, within the ‘Goodness Homes Project’ (*İyilik Konutları Projesi*) 5,214 homes were built for families in the Idlib and Euphrates Shield zones.

Hot meals were provided to 4.7 million people, 42 million packets of bread, 215,529 clothing assistance, 4,760 students were provided with educational opportunities, in the last four years 2,731 religious authorities were provided with financial assistance and 15,900 majlis students were provided with financial assistance in the Idlib, Euph-

rates Shield, Olive Branch and Peace Spring Areas. 7 water wells with a depth of 500 meters have been opened in the area in the last 7 years and with a tank of 40 tons, clean water is provided to the families in need.

The Türkiye Diyanet Foundation has always stood in solidarity with the Rohingya people who fled to Bangladesh. In 2021, the Foundation built 2,750 bamboo homes for Rohingya refugees in the Cox’s Bazar camps, providing people in need with better shelter facilities. Up until now, the Foundation has provided 41 million TL worth of humanitarian aid to this crisis.

In addition to the Ramadan and Qurban aid provided in Palestine, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation has provided 70,000USD worth of financial aid to families who lost loved ones after attacks by the Israeli forces. With the latest attacks on the people in Gaza, the Foundation has provided home packages for people whose houses were ruined, home furniture, support in restoring damaged houses, an ambulance to be used in times of medical assistance, patient beds, wheelchairs and medical assistance. In 2021, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation provided humanitarian aid worth 422,000 USD to Palestine.

In addition to the information provided above, following the disasters and crises that erupted, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation has been operating in Yemen, Indonesia, Sudan and Lebanon. Humanitarian assistance continues to be provided to people in need in these areas.

In relation to education, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation provides 27 education projects in 12 countries, and provides thousands of scholarships for students at home and abroad. Within the framework of our international scholarships and education programs, 2,826 students from

Photograph: AA, Ali Atmaca



111 countries are brought to Türkiye, where they receive scholarships and support within the ‘International Imam Hatip, International Student, International Theology and International Other Educational Support and Scholarship Programs.’

With the aim of conveying the helping hand of the Turkish people to people in need in all these fields of activities that have been discussed, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation strives to continue its humanitarian work with the theme ‘Until Goodness Dominates the World.’

In conclusion, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundations operations in coordination with national and international non-governmental organizations and public organizations during its activities in Türkiye and abroad. With disasters, crises regions, civil war, poverty, hunger and famine increasing across the globe, organizational coordination and communication is gaining increasing importance. The more we increase coordination and cooperation between organizations, the more organized and effective our humanitarian assistance activities will be.

# 2021 and the New Normal

## Cemal Merdan

President of the Turkish Federation of Persons with Orthopedic Disabilities

The COVID-19 pandemic has been Türkiye's main agenda item for the last two years. Despite all the problems that it created, the pandemic has had a positive impact on the way in which people with disabilities are perceived. Perhaps it can be said that this global troublemaker has had some benefits too. The COVID-19 pandemic that affected people deeply and left negative traces on the world reminded us the importance of appreciating life. As we were not allowed to leave our houses during times when curfews were imposed, some people learned to empathize with individuals who have disabilities and who have been alienated from society. These people are locked in their homes as cities and other places are not accessible for them. The general public were locked up in their homes, could not engage in soci-

al activities, see their loved ones or touch them. While their loved ones laid unconsciously in hospitals, the world began to realize that there are some people who experience this situation throughout their entire lives.



Photograph: AA, İzmir İtfaiyesi

This awareness became the starting point for acts of kindness, and contributed to people and institutions increasingly playing their roles in eliminating problems that occurred in the past and which may occur in the future. Society went beyond understanding each other, and the walls between people with disabilities and those without were eliminated thanks to social media. Everyone had to see and communicate with each other behind a screen and disabilities were not visible. Social media was considered as a savior in the new normal, and indeed it was for a while.

We (the Turkish Federation of Persons with Orthopedic Disabilities) represent 53 member foundations and 400 thousand disabled members registered on these foundations. We create solutions for accessibility, awareness, and social problems of persons with disabilities in terms of architecture, education, health, and legal aspects. We offer consulting services to local authorities and government executives, and we continue our efforts to reach the following goals:

- To ensure the proper organization of individuals with disabilities
- To be able to fight for the target audience within the conscious civil society movement
- To have technological and medical equipment adequate enough to participate in social life
- To ensure social rehabilitation
- To arrange organizations that ensure social integration, bring people together, and aim to ensure an equal right to life
- To act on the principle of equal citizenship and constantly improving the rights of persons with disabilities
- To expand the culture of living together with persons with disabilities
- To represent health, education, accessibility, legal, social, and cultural issues of disabled individuals based on the principle of equality

As a Federation, we directed our efforts to increase awareness resulting from the new normal in 2021. We made sure that cultural, artistic, and scientific works of disabled persons had a larger appearance on social media. We held online talks. We prioritized social movements of kindness. We conducted joint activities with all NGOs, especially the Turkish Red Crescent, to show that people with disabilities are not just demanders but also individuals who give and produce. We conducted humanitarian aid actions for people in need. We increased our culture of living together by integrating all individuals of society into our activities.

We believe that a happy and peaceful society is possible if we do not attach meanings to appearances, develop a human-centered perspective, and overcome negative paradigms. Don't you think so? Then, let's shout together: **There's no Barrier to Sharing Life!**"

# Forced Migration in the Context of Disasters and Crises

## Nazlı Ayhan Algan

Executive Director, Association of Assistance Solidarity and Support for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers (ASRA)

A concept that has been around for some time and expanding in terms of scope is the protection of the rights of people who are forced to leave their homes due to disasters and crises. It can be argued that the scope of *protection* should be expanded, both in theory and practice, to include forced migration that has occurred as a result of the impact of climate change.

As in Syria and Afghanistan, the number of people migrating due to instability and conflicts in their home countries is constantly increasing. In addition, another concept, climate migration, has emerged following the global climate crisis and its direct impact on the agriculture and livestock sectors. The sociological and economic effects of climate migration have become more visible as well. As a vital element of migration processes, from past to present, Türkiye has become a receiving country rather than a sending and transit country, especially in recent years. Türkiye is also facing the climate crisis and the risks of internal migration that comes with it.

According to the *Fifth Assessment Report* published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2014, the Mediterranean Basin, including Türkiye, is among the regions that will suffer the most from the adverse impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures will likely reduce precipitation rates, crop yields, biodiversity, and groundwater resources and lead to drought and wildfires. Along with desertification and a decrease in agricultural diversity, climate change will negatively affect the economy and the livelihoods of people. If the demand for agricultural products is not met by the domestic market, products will be brought in from other countries. Unavoidably, people working in agriculture and livestock will be in quest of something else, which will lead to internal migration.

Established in 2015 and active since then, the Association of Assistance Solidarity and Support for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers (ASRA) highlights the importance of an integrated approach to disaster governance that will include civic engagement along with central and local gover-

nments in order to minimize economic and social losses and the destruction resulting from the events faced by today's risk society.

“Integrated disaster management,” also defined as contemporary disaster management, aims to integrate advanced disaster recovery implementation and social implementation. Aside from being principally defined in *Türkiye's Disaster Management Strategy Document and Action Plan (TAYSB)* in terms of direction and method, disaster management also requires collective action. In this sense, briefly stated: disaster and emergency management that has immediate and long-term effects requires the active and significant participation of all actors in the social structure.

ASRA carries out its activities within the framework of emergency action plans to meet the urgent and primary needs of the target groups immediately after the emergence of a crisis. Then, it creates projects to meet special and specific needs within the framework of its reconstruction and rehabilitation works. From this perspective, as a civil initiative, ASRA provides individuals affected by disasters and emergencies with support in various matters, including humanitarian aid, cash assistance, protection, livelihood development, agriculture and sustainability, health and psychological resilience.

When we analyze the case of 2021, which was an important year for humanitarian action, two main concepts stand out: the pandemic and relief activities. COVID-19 cannot be considered a phenomenon that only belongs to 2020 as it continued to be effective the following year with new variants. The fact remains that, in 2021, uneven economic development led to greater inequality, the ten-

sion between different social segments was more visible, and nature was pushed beyond its limits. We think that the basic fact concluded from multiple experiences in the field is that all organized structures (public institutions, civil society, etc.) within the humanitarian aid community are connected in some way in the face of natural disasters happening unexpectedly and simultaneously. For this very reason, it is necessary to establish an integrated and coordinated disaster recovery system. In the face of predictable and unpredictable incidents, public institutions and civil society should mobilize their resources and shape and restructure themselves and their relations with each other by considering the necessities. The main institutional and inter-institutional context awaiting humanitarian aid actors in the coming period is to add depth and continuity to the potential arising from coordinated cooperation and solidarity in the field.

# Global Issues, Solutions and Achievements in 2021

## Alper Küçük

Director-General for International Affairs and Migration Services, Turkish Red Crescent

2021 was a challenging year for humanity. While conflicts, climate change, and diseases continue increasing humanitarian needs, the Turkish Red Crescent selflessly directed its efforts to meet those needs in large areas.

Unfortunately, the future does not seem bright. According to the United Nations Global Humanitarian Overview, the number of individuals in need of humanitarian aid and protection was 235 million in 2021 and 274 million in 2022. Hunger and food insecurity reached an unprecedented extent due to the impacts of the pandemic. There are over 80 million displaced people in the world. Climate change, which affects all geographies, signals a depressive future and a more challenging one for low-income countries.

While the need for humanitarian aid constantly increases, international funds allocated to humanitarian aid do not increase equally, hence resulting in the growing fund deficit in humanitarian aid and actions.

Despite all these difficulties, the Turkish Red Crescent continued its activities on the international level with 17 active delegations from Indonesia, Senegal, Bosna Herzegovina,

to Somalia. In 2021, with a 1 million increase compared to last year, the Turkish Red Crescent provided 8.5 million people in need with food, shelter, and non-food assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene, and education.

The Afghanistan crisis was one of the biggest humanitarian crises on the international agenda in 2021. The humanitarian crisis resulting from conflicts and years of instability left nearly 20 million people in need of help. The Turkish Red Crescent has provided humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in cooperation with the Afghanistan Delegation without discriminating, and continues to provide assistance to hundreds of thousands of people in need. It has also met the needs of the migrants who failed to cross the Belarus-Poland-Lithuania border.

We provided assistance to over three million migrants with humanitarian aid in the most critical phase of the pandemic, within the scope of our activities within and outside our borders. We performed multiple actions to contribute to social resilience and the culture of living together in peace by empowering the host community

and migrants; improving psychological, social, and economic welfare. We received many awards thanks to our humanitarian efforts despite the difficulties we faced due to the pandemic.

One of the significant advancements on migration was the “National Assisted Voluntary Return Mechanism,” which was developed as a result of the need of a national mechanism in joint actions of the Presidency of Migration Management, Ministry of Exterior and Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA). The Turkish Red Crescent took part in the mechanism as an implementing

partner, and signed a cooperation agreement with the Afghanistan and Pakistan Red Crescents.

The biggest cash-based assistance program in terms of the number of benefactors, the scope, and regular and long-term assistance planning, the Social Compliance Program and its intermediary Kızılay Food Card Cash-Based Assistance Model maintained their positions as leaders. Thanks to this model and implementation, the Turkish Red Crescent will host the Global Leadership Forum on Humanitarian Cash in 2022.



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Özgür Altınay

Another important step taken by Türkiye and the Turkish Red Crescent in 2021 was holding the 1st Meeting of the Heads of the Organization of Turkic States Red Crescent Societies, which aims to operate to improve mutual cooperation between Red Crescents, conduct joint projects and adopt joint attitudes regarding humanitarian policies, and that the assistance provided to the establishment of the Organization of Turkic States Red Crescents Union declared on the Summit Declaration at the Summit of Heads of States, which was held on November 2021.

There have been significant advancements in the establishment of a logistics center in Istanbul Airport led by the Turkish Red Crescent to ensure quick response to disasters and emergencies occurring outside Türkiye. The Istanbul Logistics Center, which is to be established in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), will be the fourth logistics center in the world affiliated with the Federation, following Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, and Panama, but the first in Europe. The Center will strengthen Türkiye's position in humanitarian aid, and turn Istanbul into a center of attraction for humanitarian organizations thanks to its advantageous location, logistics capacity, infrastructure, and market opportunities. The Humanitarian Aid Logistics Center will contribute to our global humanitarian actions by improving our national and local disaster response capacity and international operational capabilities.

Another advancement on the international level was that the Turkish Red Crescent was elected as the “vice president” of the “Sphere” organization, which defines global humanitarian aid standards and principles. Consequently, the Turkish Red Crescent will have the opportunity to strengthen its position in the humanitarian sector, and implement and share years of experience on a larger scale.

A better understanding of the potential and purpose of technological developments contributes to the institutional structure in terms of innovation mentality in humanitarian aid. Therefore, following new trends in the sector gains more importance. Humanitarian aid shareholders have so much to learn from each other and other sectors in risk evaluation and management. Experience sharing is particularly significant in risk evaluation. Creative and innovative approaches of humanitarian aid actors towards risks positively affect the sector's growth.

Being prepared for crises alleviates the initial shock, reduces human needs, and helps improve resource efficiency. It is now a well-known fact that it is important to be prepared for ongoing and possible crises with the help of experiences in humanitarian aid and empower field workers in humanitarian diplomacy to improve coordination with each other to meet humanitarian needs. For humanitarian aid workers to actively operate across the globe, the devotion of the humanitarian aid system and its advocates should be appreciated. For that reason, working in cooperation with shareholders allows for more activities and access to vulnerable people.

The humanitarian aid system should take firm steps to prioritize equality, engagement, and access to information for victims of disasters and crises. We should put more effort into protecting the most vulnerable in today's world. By acting on this principle, the Turkish Red Crescent strengthens its position within the system and continues to be a source of hope for people in need in all countries.

# The Turkish Red Crescent Model in Real Estate Development Projects

## Nurettin Hafizoğlu

General Director of Finance and Administration,  
Turkish Red Crescent

Throughout its 153-year history, the Turkish Red Crescent has managed its real estate, mainly acquired through donations, with an effective system. The real estate management system, whose rental income is a source for humanitarian aid activities of the TRC, was completely revised and restructured in 2021 by adopting a sustainable resource management approach. In this context, TRC initiated a process of organizational structure and digitalization, aiming to improve the system, and include effectiveness in real estate management processes in line with the goals stated in the Turkish Red Crescent 2030 Strategic Plan. A consultancy protocol was signed with the Department of Real Estate Development and Management of the Ankara University Faculty of Applied Sciences, and primary goals were set. Process improvements were made traceable through key indicators.

Newly incorporated into the organizational structure, the Directorate of Real Estate Development concentrated on

transferring funds to humanitarian aid activities by generating more rental income while adding more value to the valuable real estate in the inventory. Real estate development is a process that spans a long period of time, and its effects may not be visible in the short term. It is necessary to monitor the goal and the actual trend by observing the short-term effects of the improvements by planning the development activities and carrying out a detailed development plan. The project should be designed to include all aspects from the beginning to the very end. Many factors play a role in the planning process, such as demand forecasting, current market sentiment, previous sales/rental rates, location, anticipated timeline, and project type.

The development project is prepared with these factors in mind and by deciding on the design and number of units of the real estate and dividing the inventory management into levels. The effectiveness of real estate activities is ensured by the interactive management of all processes.

## 2021: The Restructuring Year

We focused on restructuring in 2021. We reviewed and categorized our real estate and planned the project steps. The course of action adopted within the scope of these activities is as follows:

1. To develop models in which our qualified real estate can be used more effectively, such as tendering for build-operate-transfer, revenue sharing, or long-term partnerships.
2. To turn residences aged 20+ into new high-yield projects by modeling them to create sustainable resources for humanitarian aid processes
3. Consolidation of agricultural lands and to switch to a partnership system that can generate high-yield potential rather than a rental low-yield one
4. To carry out management processes of joint-owned real estate that prevents income generation by considering the organization's rights

To increase the technical capacity within the organizational structure and to utilize international models in the processes, we ensured that all our personnel attended the postgraduate program provided by the Department of Real Estate Development and Management, Ankara University, Faculty of Applied Sciences.

We will continue to carry out these activities in a better way in 2022 and operate within the scope of the Sustai-



Photograph: AA, Onur Çoban

nable Model for Real Estate Development and Management. We have set goals for 2022 to make our activities traceable. We will make sales that will allow us to launch 12 high-yielding projects, and we also will obtain resources through investments in agriculture, logistics management, nursing homes, etc. That will help the Turkish Red Crescent to become a critical stakeholder in achieving the strategic goals within the scope of the 2030 Strategic Plan.

As a result of these investments, we aim to meet a significant portion of the resources needed for the humanitarian aid activities of the TRC from real estate management revenues in the next five years.

# OIC Red Network Activities in 2021

## Mehmet Çakmak

OIC Red Network

The past two decades have been challenging due to natural and human-related crises affecting vulnerable populations and the international community in a broad sense. The Organization of Islamic Coordination (OIC) region was the region that was most affected by large-scale humanitarian crises and disasters, especially throughout the years following World War II, and unfortunately, this situation continues to be the case.

Given the great pressure to respond to large-scale disasters and emergencies, many Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the Organization of Islamic Coordination (OIC) region had to push their limits to assist in the long-running and devastating crises in Yemen, Bangladesh, Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia. National societies in the OIC region are local organizations that respond first to all kinds of disasters and emergencies, providing a wide range of services, from alleviating human suffering to protecting the dignity and well-being of vulnerable people and communities in need.

However, considering the extent, complexity, frequency, and prolongation of crises in the OIC region, it is beyond

the capabilities of any organization to respond effectively to humanitarian needs. These factors have put pressure on national societies and led to the depletion of their resources. This situation has created the need for national societies to interact with each other with a more regional approach and to join forces to achieve common goals through coordination mechanisms to be created.

The goal of establishing a network of national societies operating in the OIC member countries was first expressed and added to the *OIC- 2025 Program of Action (Implementation Plan 2016-2025)* by the President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, during his term as the OIC term president. Works have begun to establish a national network of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of OIC member countries, with the initiatives of the President of the Turkish Red Crescent, Kerem Kınık. As a result of the conference held in Istanbul on 28-29 January 2019 with the participation of 49 national societies, the OIC Red Network (of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in the OIC Member States) was established to carry out its activities within the framework of the basic principles of the international movement.

The Istanbul Declaration and the *Terms of Reference* were adopted by the participating national societies at the end of the conference. It was decided that the duty of the network secretariat would be carried out under the responsibility of the Turkish Red Crescent, and its headquarters would be in Istanbul. At this point, we should mention the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC), which has been strongly promoting the idea of a coordination and cooperation mechanism between the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in the OIC region. ICIC is affiliated with the OIC in the status of a specialized institution and established by an intergovernmental agreement. It carries out intergovernmental activities in international humanitarian law and humanitarian aid in the Islamic geography and operates on solid legal ground. ICIC's support and diplomacy throughout the process are invaluable.

The OIC Red Network (Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in the OIC Member States) was established due to regional humanitarian crises increasing in number and severity. It ensures integrity and coordination between national societies in terms of improving life in the OIC region, eliminating vulnerabilities, and increasing the resilience of both communities and humanitarian organizations. The OIC Red Network offers a more systematic and structural cooperation opportunity between Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and contributes directly to the development of humanitarian policies in the OIC region by carrying out joint humanitarian diplomacy activities together with regional and global humanitarian organizations.

OIC Red Network, whose main fields of study are “advocacy, humanitarian policies, capacity building, and resource mobilization,” aims to empower member national

societies in related fields and topics to ensure that they become one of the leading actors in the region, and to enable actors sharing the same geography to have a common perspective on humanitarian issues.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued affecting and transforming humanitarian aid activities as in all areas of life in 2021. We recognized that the successful vaccine development activities across the world and the resulting sigh of relief do not last forever due to the variants announced each day. The idea that no one can be safe unless everyone is safe, became widespread. We also recognized that equitable access to vaccines and health services is not a blessing provided by the powerful and wealthy, but a humanitarian and actual necessity. It became essential to add vaccine-related activities to humanitarian aid services, especially for those with the status of a “displaced person (IDP)” or “refugee.” In this context, OIC Red Network participated in the *initiative for vaccine equity for refugees and displaced persons*, by the Qatar Red Crescent, aimed at raising global awareness of equitable access to vaccines.

In 2021, the OIC Red Network tried to report violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in the OIC region, and occasionally inform the international public and publish notices with the joint initiative of the members.

OIC Red Network members released a joint statement on stopping oppression and violence in Jerusalem, the Gaza strip, and the Palestinian territories occupied by the State of Israel, and they made a call for an end to violations of international humanitarian law, such as civilian deaths and injuries, and targeting the offices and vehicles of humanitarian organizations.

The OIC Red Network was established with the belief that regional development from a humanitarian perspective is possible if all actors operating in the region are strong. For this purpose, it supports the activities of different humanitarian organizations. In this context, Türkiye, which has the status of “signatory state” in the founding treaty of the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC), must ratify this treaty in the Turkish parliament. As stated, an organization operating in the OIC region, like ICIC, is quite rare; in the sense that it was established by an intergovernmental agreement, on solid diplomatic and legal grounds and also carries out humanitarian aid activities. In this respect, advocacy activities were carried out by the relevant authorities, and a comprehensive report on the issue was prepared, with the thought that strengthening ICIC in the eyes of the governments, as an organization affiliated with the OIC, the second largest political organization in the world, would benefit the region and the vulnerable individuals.

Updating the OIC Red Network website was put on the agenda in 2021 to carry out the secretariat activities in a better way and to ensure stronger interaction between the member societies. The analysis and design phases were complete, and the testing phase began. The website was designed as a comprehensive system where member national societies can interact with each other, apply for projects and funds, access capacity-building activities and various training programs, and share their work. The website is intended to be the modern and up-to-date face of the OIC Red Network, rather than just an online page.

In 2021, the OIC Red Network continued its webinars and activities regarding sharing experience and knowledge on different humanitarian issues among member socie-

ties. Experts from different national societies contributed to the webinars on topics such as “Volunteering,” “The Assisting Role of National Societies to the States in the Time of COVID-19,” “Cash-Based Assistance,” and “Volunteer Management Models.”

Drafted by the OIC Red Network Secretariat under the leadership of the Permanent Representation of Türkiye in the presence of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the *COVID-19 Emergency Action: Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, Sudan, and Somalia* project, aims to create an infrastructure in fighting against COVID-19 in five OIC countries, was submitted to the relevant authorities of financially strong OIC countries.

We hope that the year 2022 will be a more prosperous and healthier one for our region and humanity. As the OIC Red Network, we hope that the number of humanitarian crises will decrease and our cooperation will lead to a better future.

# The Importance of Volunteers as a Human Resource in NGOs

## Süleyman İslamoğlu

Deputy Director General, Turkish Red Crescent

In addition to the Turkish Red Crescent's social aid and social empowerment activities, as a national society we responded to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and fires with our professional personnel and volunteers.

Volunteers as a line of human resource has become part of the volunteer management process of NGOs, which follow the public and private sectors and operating with the principles of volunteerism.

The most significant part of the volunteer management processes that manifests in the field is that volunteer teams operate according to the institutional perspective and philosophy of NGOs. Therefore, the success of the volunteer teams and the volunteering process is interpreted as the success of the NGO.

National and international NGOs have professional personnel as they conduct different activities in various places. However, the managing bodies of many institutions, including the Turkish Red Crescent, almost entirely consists of volunteers, and volunteer support is the driving factor in conducting their activities. Therefore, we can say that non-governmental organizations draw their stren-

gth from volunteers. Non-profit NGOs certainly cannot succeed without volunteers, no matter how large-scale they are. We should remember that NGOs are volunteer organizations established by people coming together to achieve a particular goal. Working with volunteers has some benefits, such as expanding the NGO shareholder network and field of activity, developing new networks, and extending the scope of the skills of the personnel. We, as the Turkish Red Crescent, try to achieve our goals by concentrating on working with volunteers and expanding our volunteer network. We announced 2021 as the "Volunteering Year" and set a 2 million volunteer goal. Apart from other human resources activities, this situation entailed additional activities to volunteer workforce, and the potential created by this workforce.

It can be stated that NGOs have a workforce variety consisting of wage workers and volunteers. Institutions should understand "variety management" and integrate it into their work process.

Due to the wide variety of processes and fields of activities, our professional workforce needs support especially



in disasters and emergencies. In such cases, having a solid volunteer workforce can make our actions effective and sustainable.

As a result of this variety, volunteers gain some skills and competence such as self-actualization, sharing information, and gaining experience, while our personnel gains skills such as leadership, joint action, and effective communication together with sharing information. Mutual interaction between two groups creates a common synergy, and the Turkish Red Crescent gains dynamism and agi-

lity. The diversity and size of human resources is crucial for NGOs with the support of the volunteer workforce, and volunteers contribute to upward growth.

# New Normal and Civil Society

## Mustafa Tutkun

Deputy Director General, Turkish Red Crescent

The COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainties around it have become the agenda of the world for the last two years, which increases the burden on NGOs and makes things harder for them. NGOs had to learn their lessons to minimize the unfavorable impacts of the pandemic.

The health sector and health institutions had to develop new methods and tools by adopting a much more agile approach and setting aside what they have known until now. While trying to prevent the spread of the virus, attempts to develop vaccines and medicines were the case, and brand-new methods were employed to help the infected survive. States had to develop more flexible and faster methods to avoid disrupting essential services while trying to manage all these issues. Countries in panic started confiscating each other's goods, and most of them became in need of help.

In this period of uncertainty and challenges, people had to change the way they work, adopt a new and convenient model, and try to cope with uncertainties.

This period caused supply chain disruptions and paradigm shifts in the world's economy and left many people unemployed. People needed social support more than ever. The burden on NGOs was heavier, but donations and funding opportunities were not enough. Previous plans, programs, and budgets went for nothing, and many institutions have had a hard time adjusting to the situation

since the new reality necessitated a new approach. Institutions that made a difference in the field were the ones that make their decision processes agile with the help of integrated digital solutions and improve their skills in coping with multiple problems simultaneously.

Exceptional circumstances like COVID-19 require bravery, honesty, and modesty. What makes it difficult to make the right decision is neither uncertainty nor ambiguity, but rather overconfidence, procrastination, and missing or partial data. If we concentrate on the right scenario, we can reduce hesitation or completely eliminate it. We can avoid the pitfalls of overconfidence, and eliminate the risk of missing or partial data with the help of future technological systems by combining our predictions with qualitative data.

Civil leaders have recognized the importance of drastically reforming civil agendas, and many institutions have begun setting new economic, political and international agendas. So, where do we think we are in the grand scheme of things while all this is happening?

# 2021 as a Turning Point for Social Impact Investment

## İlyas Haşim Çakmak

Member of the Board of Directors, CEO Kızılay Investment Inc.

The business world is a part of the transformation process the world goes through. Designing the future by solely analyzing spreadsheets is now history. We need to predict the future with what we have learned from the past. Social and economic systems interact with each other more than ever before, and that signals a new era. 2021 indicates this new era with the global pandemic, global inflation, fluctuations in commodity prices and freight rates, and advantages and disadvantages in business lines. Social impact has importance not only in sustainability but also in recognizing new opportunities.

Providing financial support and resources to the Turkish Red Crescent's relief activities, our different business lines within the Kızılay Investment ecosystem have acknowledged the advantages of this new era. In this context, the Turkish Red Crescent invests by focusing on activities with a social impact value. It has always been the leader in social impact activities in related fields; it has helped develop Türkiye's industry. For instance, the Turkish Red Crescent has been on the frontline with initiatives, inclu-

ding a gas mask factory, tent production workshops, and the production and import of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies. In terms of the activities and benefits of the elements of the "Kızılay Investment" ecosystem, the following matters stand out:

### **Kızılay Beverage**

Being the flagship brand of the "Kızılay Investment," "Kızılay Beverage" continued rising in the market in terms of production volume and brand equity. The volume of 1 billion bottles of production volume before 2021 reached 1.5 billion at the end of 2021. As a result of R&D activities on disaster foods and beverages, Kızılay Beverage patented "a food product to be used as a nutrient during a disaster and nutrition management," "a powder composition to be used as disaster nutrition and its management" and "a disaster beverage." These advancements demonstrate how it deserves to be labelled as a "flagship brand," which also means providing more resources and more sustainable resources for the Turkish Red Crescent's relief activities.

### Kızılay Health

Another element of the “Kızılay Investment” ecosystem is “Kızılay Health,” which belongs neither to the public nor the private sector. “Kızılay Health” increased its efforts for sustainable health services. It maintains the Turkish Red Crescent’s commitment to helping society by providing home and workplace health services. It continues to fulfil its public service responsibilities while contributing to the relief activities of the institution by adopting a sustainable model. It serves as a reliable alternative not only in health services but also in high-quality elderly care services. In addition, “Kızılay Health” creates and provides training programs on home care service skills, as well as pre-service and in-service training programs to contribute to the development of its personnel.

### Kızılay Logistics

Another element of the Investment ecosystem is “Kızılay Logistics,” which gained popularity on a national and international level and shared its experience with the humanitarian sector and the entire world. Thanks to its cooperation with the private sector, Kızılay Logistics improved its disaster response capacity and took firm steps towards green logistics through more effective work procedures. It took meaningful steps to find solutions to the problems of the sector and to contribute to it with the International Disaster and Humanitarian Aid Congress, which was planned out in 2021 and held between 9-11 February 2022. Following the convention with the IFRC, Kızılay Logistics declared its intention to be a reliable logistics partner for Türkiye and other countries. As a result of this



Photograph: Turkish Red Crescent, Cevahir Buğu

convention, we will see “Kızılay Logistics” as a critical logistics solution generator for humanitarian aid products and services for the world. This convention was one of the most significant advancements in 2021, as it would create sustainable and continuous resources for humanitarian aid through the Turkish Red Crescent’s activities regarding disasters and emergencies, and would help Türkiye become a hub for disaster and humanitarian aid logistics.

### **Kızılay Tent and Textile, Kızılay System Building**

Two members of the Kızılay Investment ecosystem, Kızılay Tent and Textile and Kızılay System Building took firm steps towards becoming global suppliers with the conventions they signed with the UN and IFRC. Kızılay Tent and Kızılay System Building became definite members of the partners of the sector with these conventions, which are about shelter systems for disasters and humanitarian aid. Other Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, along with the UN and IFRC, will be a service field of Kızılay Investment.

### **Kızılay Asset Management and Kızılay Impact Investment**

2021 was a year in which social impact influenced outside Türkiye. “Kızılay Asset Management” and “Kızılay Impact Management” developed medium-term projects in their fields to turn “Kızılay Yatırım” into the humanitarian aid center of the world. “Kızılay Impact Management” projects on developing value chain elements to create livelihood are especially significant regarding the activities to eliminate poverty.

### **Kızılay Culture & Arts**

“Kızılay Culture & Arts” (KKS) continued the preparation processes of nearly a hundred publications in cooperation with the Turkish Red Crescent Academy. Consisting of publications that will support the Turkish Red Crescent’s activities intended for creating more resilient individuals and society, KKS Yayınları (KKS Publishing) will make all the difference in the publishing industry. Renda Köşkü (Renda Mansion), which belongs to the Turkish Red Crescent Society, has been transformed into a social impact center by KKS in cooperation with the IFRC. KKS continues its activities as a starting point for socially transforming ideas.

Within one year, Kızılay Investment has achieved tremendous milestones and is allowing us to take new responsibilities. We will continue to contribute to the sustainable future of the Turkish Red Crescent movement. Through our innovative and effective work processes, we will set an example for the world in social impact investment, which is our commitment to the compassion we have had since 1868. As we believe that accountability entails proceeding, reaching goals and objectives in unity, and with a spirit of sharing, we call all Kızılay sympathizers to acknowledge and support our activities that show our commitment.

# Large Organizations, Big Moves

## Kamile Canbay

Turkish Red Crescent Governance Office President

The Turkish Red Crescent is both a member of an international movement and is an organization that has the largest network of volunteers in Türkiye, an organization with a special place in society, and one which enriches itself with societal dynamics. It is only natural that the expectations from large organizations are big in terms of numbers and the scope they reach. A good strategy and governance model is required to fulfill these expectations. In 2021, the Turkish Red Crescent has implemented important structural changes in order to ensure social empowerment over the next 10 years.

The 2021-2030 Strategic Plan was completed and defined with two main cornerstones: ‘Social Resilience and Strong Governance.’ Many events have occurred in line with these cornerstones. The Turkish Red Crescent announced 2021 as the ‘Year of Volunteering’ and established a communication and competency system to be able to conduct efficient volunteering activities. With this, volunteers in Türkiye are now allocated within a system to be utilized during disasters, emergencies and other projects. As of February 2022, the number of active volunteers working for the Turkish Red Crescent is 96,001 and the number of registered volunteers on [gonulluol.org.tr](http://gonulluol.org.tr) is 183,807.

In addition to its professional workers and volunteers, the Turkish Red Crescent has also embodied volunteering structures within its own institutional establishment. It can be stated that the Turkish Red Crescent fully established its volunteering structures as of 2021. Within this, the number of branches that have volunteer management and representatives were 556 in 2021. In nearly almost all Turkish Red Crescent branches, ‘Kızılay Kadın’ (Women), ‘Kızılay Genç’ (Youth) and ‘Engelsiz Kızılay’ (People with Disabilities) volunteering structures are present. These structures allow for volunteers to specialize in specific areas and allow for their services to be sustainable within the TRC overall structure. Volunteers are a part of a wide network across the country and there is no doubt that only large organizations are able to establish networks and enlarge them with voluntary structures that include these networks. Within ‘Kızılay Kadın’, ‘Kızılay Genç’ and ‘Engelsiz Kızılay’, there are a total of 183,807 women, young people and disabled people who volunteer for the Turkish Red Crescent.

It is important to be able to speak a common language within volunteer structures. This common language should be to the extent that the total movement of the relevant

structure should be able to work for the same purposes. A strategic plan alone is not enough to be able to do this. All structures should, with their own members, decide on their own specialties by forming a common language that is going to be understood and be accepted by all. With this understanding, the Turkish Red Crescent switched its branches and representatives to target-based management. TRC branches across the country are all special in different ways and by adopting the same strategic approach are all sailing to the same horizon. In this context, each branch and representative office have identified ‘sustainability, accessibility, social empowerment, successful operations management, process management, capacity and efficiency’ as categories of competency taking into account realities in their local areas. Branch representatives often got together with each other and TRC management and shared best practices, ensuring an environment where they can learn from each other and expand on their services.

Having updated its coordination and communication systems, the Turkish Red Crescent conducted 160 meetings, trainings and other activities with its branches on digital platforms. The size of these varied from 80 to 1,000 participants. TRC President Kerem Kınık also visited all branches across the country on multiple occasions. In addition to this, the ‘2021 Branch Performances Award Program’ brought all branches together to adopt the institutional strategy and vision. More, bringing the branches and headquarters together on [biz.kizilay.org.tr](http://biz.kizilay.org.tr), this space allows for branches to share their news, projects, announcements, good practices and any other ideas they have, allowing for a holistic communications approach.

The monthly, digital and printed, Kızılay Posta has strengthened communications between our professional per-

sonnel, volunteers and beneficiaries. Being prepared with utmost sensitivity, the Kızılay Posta’s monthly issue takes into concern events that have occurred during that month, articles from branch representatives and issues briefings on continuing works. Kızılay Posta is delivered to all branches and is available for TRC members both digitally and in publication.

By integrating all TRC branch capacities on SAP (Enterprise Resource Planning/ ERP) Platform, with the aim of transparency and information driven management principles, allowing for the management of such a wide network online, the Turkish Red Crescent has accomplished a milestone. In order to ensure that all members can use the platform effectively and efficiently, with the coordination of the Turkish Red Crescent Academy, a total of 19.350 hours of education has been given to 258 people. This number keeps increasing day-by-day.

As a result of all the efforts discussed above, in comparison to 2020, with its 566 branches, representatives and volunteering structures, the Turkish Red Crescent accelerated its services and with its Şenlendirme Projects and as a result of the trust displayed by the public, the amount of funds raised has increased. With this, the belief in accomplishing bigger objectives has deepened.

With all its branches, representatives, workers, and volunteers, the Turkish Red Crescent announced 2022 as the ‘Year of Solidarity.’ The focus here will be on public resilience and solidarity.

# 2021: A Year in Disaster Areas

## İbrahim Özer

Director General for Disaster Management,  
Turkish Red Crescent

Society has established many different types of organizations over the years in order to deal with disasters. Lessons learned from previous disasters have played roles as contributing factors to progress in the development of these models. Lessons learned from the disasters and the great destructions that follow has made it essential to transition from an intervention-focused approach, to a model that is focused on preparation, planning and risk reduction. Communities must be prepared for disasters before they occur and it has become essential to move to a ‘community-based and holistic’ approach – a modern approach that aims to create resilient societies. With our many years of experience and abilities, as the Turkish Red Crescent, we have now entered the phase of constructing a modern disaster management system.

According to Türkiye’s Disaster Response Plan, the Turkish Red Crescent is the main partner to the Nutrition working group. In 2021, many developments occurred regarding this issue. The ‘Nutrition Platform’ was established to ensure that there is a standard for the nutrition needs of disaster victims, that these needs are prepared for in advance, to

increase cooperation between relevant organizations and bodies. This body is now more actively operated in a coordinated manner. Thus, there is now a standard for which nutritional needs of disaster victims will be met and a more effective strategy in actually meeting those needs.

Important progress was also made in the Nutrition Strategic Plan, which was developed to detect the local resources and abilities in terms of nutrition and to coordinate these local abilities with the aim of a more effective approach to the issue. Within this, a nutrition model was constructed; catering companies, soup kitchens in provinces and districts, hot food production areas, logistics warehouse and transfer centers, bakeries, radio communication capacities and food safety standards were included in the plan. 48 provincial nutrition strategies were completed in 2021 and it is aimed to complete them all by 2022.

### **Command Coordination**

In an attempt to ensure that disaster response works are conducted in a systematic and coordinated manner, a special unit was designed under the ‘Command Coordinati-

on' in 2021. This organizes the whole of the Turkish Red Crescent on the ground when responding to a disaster, and has been designed to ensure full coordination from the very moment teams enter the disaster areas and leave and to ensure a rapid, timely and effective response.

### **Disaster Coordination Teams**

Disaster Coordination Teams (AKT) that began in 2020, provide preparedness and training, and were formed in all disaster response centers in 2021. 10 AKTs were formed consisting of 33 people. Their sole responsibility is to provide effective information and directives to disaster response units to ensure they rapidly enter disaster zones, how they can conduct needs assessments and in which capacity teams need to make preparations. Upon receiving core training, in addition to their prevalent roles, these teams have the capacity to act as AKTs during disasters.

Benefiting from the Turkish Red Crescent's branches, and with the aim of actively using them, Branch Response Teams (ŞAT) were also established in order to ensure that the local branches prepare the disaster areas for central response teams to effectively organize. At the moment, 107 Branch Response Teams, with 769 volunteers who have completed their training, are ready for any disaster.

### **Monitoring/Reviewing and Reporting**

Monitoring/Reviewing and Reporting teams were established in order to ensure that any areas where there are setbacks in the response to disasters can be identified and improved. While response centers across all provinces approach disasters in a common approach, the 'Disaster Command System' ensures that these teams follow and analyze all developments.

### **Packaged Foods**

Research and Development studies are being conducted to find packaged foods that are long lasting and can be served rapidly to people in need after disasters and response teams before nutrition teams enter the field and coordinate effectively. With this, it is aimed to have ready prepared hot food to distribute in the first minutes the disaster occurs.

### **Turkish Red Crescent Search and Rescue**

In addition to nutrition services, search and rescue teams have been established to support these efforts on a local and municipality level. These search and rescue teams have completed all the relevant training in this field provided by AFAD. Trainings are continuing with the cooperation of AFAD to establish medium-level and environmental search and rescue teams.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

With restrictions put in place by the Ministry of Interior, people visiting Türkiye from abroad, those who were put into quarantine and staff who worked in the halls where these people were guests were provided with food with the coordination of the 81 Disaster Response Centers and Turkish Red Crescent branches.

### **A General Overview of Disasters in 2021**

Having left us with permanent scars in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021. This pandemic has led us to take overall lessons from life, and to work towards reducing risks with community-based approaches. It became clear that preparing society for disasters required all societal elements to be included.

In 2021, the Turkish Red Crescent responded to 112 natural and man-made emergencies and disasters. In addition to the nutrition responsibilities assigned by TAMP, the Turkish Red Crescent also conducted services in psychosocial support and in-kind support, reaching out to a total of 4,160,024 people.

The following table displays the number of people reached according to the type of disaster:

Disaster Type	Number of Disasters	People Reached
Search and Rescue Facilities	6	4,850
Extreme Snow	29	15,810
Earthquake	5	7,928
Storm/Hurricane	2	200
Landslide	3	2,300
Urban/Forest Fires	39	665,814
Mining Accidents	1	480
Epidemic Diseases	1	1,817,496
Floods	22	1,641,739
Transportation Accidents	4	3,407
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>4,160,024</b>

A total of 39 urban/forest fires occurred including those that broke out in Antalya Manavgat, Mersin Aydınçık, Osmaniye, Adana, Muğla, and Marmaris. 10,992 Turkish Red Crescent personnel and volunteers responded to these fires. Humanitarian assistance and food was delivered to people affected from these disasters.

Without overcoming the devastation caused by the fires listed above, 5 big (Kastamonu Bozkurt, Artvin Arhavi, Rize Güneysu, Bartın, Sinop Ayancık) and 17 small floods occurred, resulting in 22 floods in the country in 2021. A total of 1,185 Turkish Red Crescent personnel and volunteers responded to these floods. Humanitarian assistance and food was delivered to people affected from these disasters.

Due to heavy snowfall across the country, in 29 different areas, 227 personnel and volunteers provided hot food to people stuck on the streets and helped with efforts to re-open closed off roads.

The table below lists the number of personnel and volunteers according to disaster types:

Disaster Type	Number of Personnel	Number of Volunteers
Search and Rescue Facilities	15	47
Extreme Snow	125	102
Earthquake	25	38
Storm/Hurricane	3	2
Landslide	17	4
Urban/Forest Fires	550	10,442
Mining Accidents	17	9
Epidemic Diseases	15,961	
Floods	351	834
Transportation Accidents	9	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,073</b>	<b>11,487</b>

With a holistic disaster management system, the Turkish Red Crescent is ensuring to reach all segments of society. Our efforts will continue, from ensuring children are taught about disaster preparedness at school and that those living in the far ends of the country are reached too. We must never forget that the geography we live in is a disaster-prone one and that we can ensure minimal disaster casualties by ensuring that the necessary steps are taken.