

Ruba drawing in the booklet she received as part of UNICEF's Psycho-social kit in Adana. Copyright: UNICEF

UNICEF Turkey COVID-19 Response Monthly Situation Report August 2020

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Reporting Period: 20 July – 24 August

Highlights

- With the resumption of some form of face-to-face learning currently scheduled for 21 September, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to support a **safe school reopening process**. Priority areas for collaboration include safe school operations (provision of hygiene supplies for schools), a comprehensive back to school communication campaign, and teacher trainings.
- Face to face non-formal education has resumed, with UNICEF and partners newly registering **917 children** in face-to-face Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Turkish Language Course (TLC) classes.
- **565 Turkish and Syrian children (310 girls and 255 boys)** were provided with remote homework support and Turkish language courses.
- UNICEF and partners have distributed **59,492 Covid-19 family hygiene kits**, reaching **289,966 people, including 157,683 children**.
- UNICEF and partners have distributed a total of **42,533 PSS kits** across 33 provinces in Turkey, reaching over **90,000 vulnerable Turkish and Syrian refugee children**.
- In August, UNICEF and partners reached **198 families (totalling 929 individuals out of whom 582 are children)** identified with imminent protection concerns with emergency assistance provided through a special needs fund.
- UNICEF and partners reached **19,957 people (including 11,014 children)** with remote counselling and **10,456 individuals (including 6,200 children)** with case management services using alternative communication channels and approaches, including email, text messaging, online chat, or mobile phone.
- As part of **UNICEF's Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)** response, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Health to produce communication materials (posters, vaccination calendar cards and leaflets) in both Turkish and Arabic languages aimed to strengthen demand for the health facility-based routine immunization programme.

Situation in Numbers (Data as of 24 August)



259,692 confirmed cases of COVID-19



6,139 reported deaths, **173,111** people recovered



17 million learners affected, including **680,000+** refugees

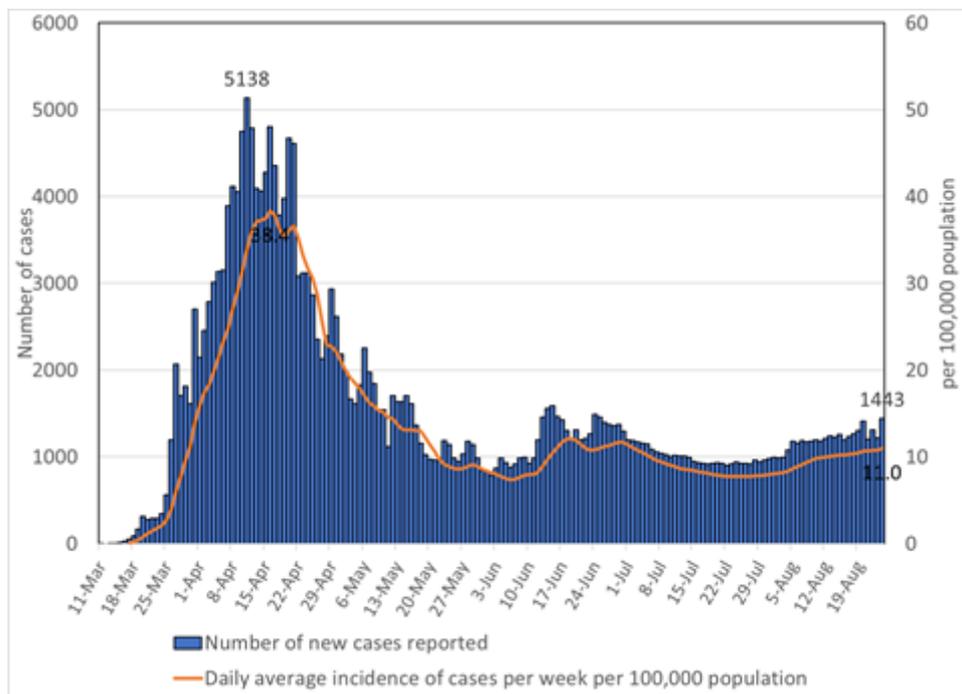


US \$25 million required for UNICEF Turkey response

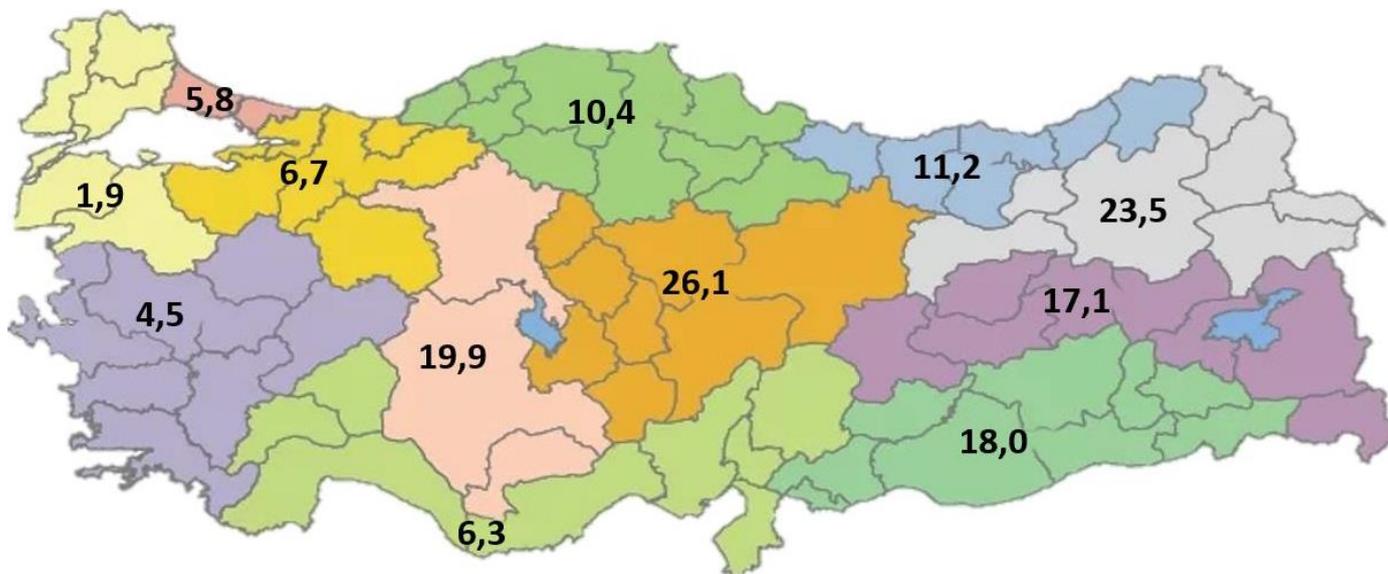
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Turkey on 11 March. According to the Ministry of Health (MoH), as of 24 August 6,423,409 people have been tested nationwide, 259,692 cases have been confirmed, 6,139 people have died and 237,908 have recovered.

According to the latest report published by the Turkish Ministry of Health (MoH) the recovery rate and death rate of all confirmed cases in Turkey were 89.3% and 2.4% respectively. Of note is a positive trend of growing rate of recovery and decreasing mortality rate recorded in the month of August. At the same time, reports from the MoH indicate a moderate increase in number of newly registered cases in the second half of August (currently standing at 11 cases/week/100,000 population on 24 August).



According to the MoH, since the start of the outbreak in Turkey the highest Covid-19 incidence rates have been recorded in the Istanbul, Eastern Marmara region, South-eastern Anatolia and Western Anatolia. However, in the last week of August, the incidence rates were highest in Central and South Eastern Anatolia (Map 1).



Map 1 - Incidence of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in Turkey between 17 and 23 August 2020 (Ministry of Health in Turkey)

The Government of Turkey continues with the full mobilization of national capacities to address the crisis, with more than 1,200 public and private hospitals across the country providing treatment and services to Covid-19 patients and deploying 137 laboratories certified to test suspected cases. During the second half of August the MoH is making efforts to increase the number of tests performed within 24 hours, aiming to reach 100,000 tests performed daily.

The Government of Turkey continues with gradual easing of restrictive measures related to the Covid-19 pandemic to facilitate 'normalization' of public services and the economy in the country. Gradual relaxation of strict confinement measures includes resumption of public and private transportation, increasing number of domestic and international flights, opening of social amenities and services such as restaurants, cafes and bars. At the same time the Government is retaining a set of infection prevention and control measures, including mandatory usage of masks in closed and outdoor public spaces frequented by large number of people, in an attempt to prevent significant surge in the spread of the virus following the end of the summer holidays season and the beginning of new school year.

Funding Overview

Following a comprehensive needs assessment conducted in July 2020 and taking into account the upcoming start of the 2020-2021 school year and needs for continued support to infection prevention and control efforts, the UNICEF Turkey funding requirement for the COVID-19 response has increased to US **\$25 million until 31 December 2020**. During the reporting period, UNICEF Turkey received a contribution from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany of \$1,250,000 for the COVID-19 response in the country. Together with previous contributions from the UN Central Emergency Respond Fund (CERF), UNICEF Thematic Pool for Humanitarian Response, UNICEF Thematic Education, Germany (KfW/BMZ), Canada and Denmark, **UNICEF Turkey currently still faces a 77% funding gap**. Additional funding is required to meet the needs on the ground and UNICEF continues engaging with key donors—including the EU, the Nordic states, the United States, Germany, the UK and UNICEF National Committees—to mobilise additional resources.

Partnerships and Coordination

UNICEF is closely coordinating with government, civil society and private sector partners to support national efforts to address the COVID-19 outbreak in Turkey. UNICEF's response plan is aligned with the Government's Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan, WHO's global Strategic Response Plan (SRP), the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, and UNICEF's COVID-19 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal.

UNICEF also continues to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), implemented by the UN and NGO partners and led by the inter-agency Syria Response Group. UNICEF and 3RP partners have completed a revision of planned activities within the 3RP framework in order to reflect the additional needs of affected populations in the context of Covid-19 outbreak and impact it has on refugee and migrant populations, as well as host communities.

Summary of UNICEF's Preparedness and Response Actions

Supplies

Since the start of the outbreak, UNICEF Turkey is working with the Government and NGO partners on the provision of essential supplies to support infection prevention and control efforts in vulnerable households in Turkey, as well as for UN staff and UNICEF partners' front-line workers.

During the reporting period:

- **Hygiene Kits:** By the end of August UNICEF in partnership with MoNE, MoYS, Kilis Municipality, Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and ASAM (NGO partner) distributed a total of **59,492 Covid-19 family hygiene kits**, reaching **289,966 people**, including **157,683 children (84,177 girls and 73,506 boys)**. UNICEF and partners are preparing for a second round of distribution of Covid-19 family hygiene kits, including PPE supplies, targeting 30,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugee and Turkish households in provinces with highest Covid-19 prevalence.
- **Psychosocial Support (PSS) Kits:** By the end of August UNICEF and partners have distributed a total of **42,255 PSS kits**, reaching more than **90,000 children** across 33 provinces in Turkey. In August only, UNICEF reached **16,380 vulnerable Turkish and Syrian refugee children (9,363 boys, 9,284 girls)** with distribution of PSS kits. The PSS kits target children who were formerly accessing community-based psycho-social support services and aim to help parents continue supporting their children during the confinement period.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

UNICEF **COVID-19 RCCE response plans** include a wide range of activities that target both Turkish and refugees and migrant children and families and is implemented closely with government and civil society partners. This month's key RCCE highlights include:

- The **UNICEF Turkey Facebook page** has reached over **78 million people** with COVID-19 related information and engaged more than **650,000** people. The high numbers of people reached and engaged through the UNICEF's social media is largely owing to the ongoing partnership between UNICEF and Facebook, which places relevant content on their dedicated COVID-19 Info Centre.
- Following the completion of UNICEF-supported "**Community Participation and Volunteerism**" course implemented in collaboration with the Izmir University of Economics, youth participants and volunteers from the Youth Centers of Ministry of Youth produced videos and vlogs explaining how they coped with Covid-19 during confinement. Videos were shared via UNICEF Turkey social media channels, **reaching at least 5,000 people**.
- In partnership with Ministry of Health (MoH) UNICEF produced posters, vaccination calendar cards and leaflets, targeting key age groups of children¹ and their families, to provide key information on changes in the vaccination schedule and approach in Turkey, which aims to promote and strengthen the implementation of health-facility based routine immunization program. The materials, prepared in Arabic and Turkish languages, will be disseminated via the MoH health centers, including migrant health centers, throughout Turkey as well as through the MoH and UNICEF social media channels.
- With an increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Turkey, UNICEF Turkey has developed an **accelerated Southeast Turkey RCCE plan** to strengthen information dissemination and encourage the adoption of preventive behaviours and measures in the targeted provinces of Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Kilis, Hatay, and Adana. UNICEF and partners will carry out RCCE activities through phone-based messaging and billboards as well as engagement of youth volunteers, influencers and community leaders.

Continued Access to Essential Services for Children

Education

- **Safe reopening of schools:** With the school semester officially starting with online catch-up classes on August 31, schools are expected to gradually re-open starting from 21st September 2020 using a blended approach of online and face-to-face teaching with a reduced number of students in each classroom. UNICEF is working with MoNE to adapt existing national guidelines and ensure a safe school reopening process. Priority areas identified for UNICEF's support include safe school operations (provision of hygiene items in schools), a comprehensive back to school communication campaign, and teacher trainings.
- **Remote learning:** The school semester ended on June 19, with children engaged in remote learning for 16 of a total of 180 academic weeks. However, the online EBA system continues to broadcast summer distance learning programmes. UNICEF continued supporting the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) both financially and technically to ensure that national distance learning programmes can better meet the needs of all 17 million learners in Turkey, including over 650,000 Syrian and other refugee children, from grade 1 to grade 12.
- Together with the Kilis Municipality UNICEF has been providing support to distance learning services to children and youth. During the reporting period **565 Turkish and Syrian children (310 girls and 255 boys)** were provided with remote homework support and Turkish language courses.
- **Non-Formal Education:** In partnership with MoNE and MoYS, out-of-school Syrian children were invited to restart non-formal learning with **917 children (496 girls, 421 boys) newly registered** in face-to-face Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Turkish Language Course (TLC) classes. The number of students per class was reduced, new hygiene measures were implemented in centers, and transportation services were provided in line with MoH guidelines.
- **Early Childhood Education:** Syrian and vulnerable Turkish families across Southeast Turkey continued to receive daily phone calls or WhatsApp messages from a network of more than 200 teachers containing tips, instructions and guidance for parents and caregivers on key early learning activities. These interventions benefitted almost

¹ Posters are targeting families with children in 4- and 13-years old age cohorts.

5,400 young children in July and August.²

- **Launch of Back to School campaign:** In preparation for the start of the new school year, jointly with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and in close coordination with the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) members, UNICEF is supporting the launch of a Back to School (BTS) campaign which focuses on scaling up access to safe and quality education for all children and youth.
- **Learn at Home Kits:** To ensure the continuity of learning of vulnerable Turkish and refugee children who have limited access to education, more than **75,000 'Learn at Home' kits** are being distributed in 61 provinces to support children in their learning while at home. Kits include an environmentally friendly bag, basic stationary supplies, Turkish language books and story series.

Child Protection

- **Child protection services:** UNICEF continues to support government and NGO partners to adapt outreach and service delivery to meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. State child protection services are currently being provided by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) through a network of 332 Social Services Centres, which are operating with reduced capacity and a strict prioritization of activities to mitigate the risk of infection.
- The **73 UNICEF-supported child protection centres** throughout the country were reopened with adapted services in line with national guidelines for safe operations which aim to maintain the necessary social distance by restricting the number of children served at a given time, and with professional teams in Child Friendly Spaces working on a rotational basis.
- The **Community-Based Child Protection** program partners continued using alternative communication channels and approaches, including email, text messaging, online chat, or mobile phone—reaching **19,957 people (including 11,014 children) with remote counselling and 10,456 individuals (including 6,200 children) with case management services**. In addition, a total of 198 families (totalling 929 individuals out of whom 582 are children) who were identified with imminent protection concerns, received emergency assistance while awaiting longer-term specialized support.
- To complement small group PSS activities and the case management services that are provided by Child protection teams in 32 Youth Centres in 25 provinces, UNICEF and its partners **MOYS and Youth Sports Foundation** launched informative sessions on mental health and short films on the secondary impact of COVID-19. The short films series target an extensive group of people from age 6 to 50, including young people and parents who frequent the Ministry's Sport Centers.
- UNICEF has continued to provide technical support to the Ministry of Justice, including through online seminars on “case management”, “psychosocial support”, “positive parenting”, “violence against children” which reached 107 (49 female, 58 male) staff members of the Department for Prisons and Detention Houses. Staff trained included social workers, psychologists and correction officers working with children.
- Given the increasing incidence of COVID-19 in Southeast Turkey, Kilis Municipality and national NGO partner ACPU's Women Committee started regular virtual meetings to discuss community-based sensitization activities on COVID-19 and the improvement of the identification of new child protection risks and concerns, including through outreach.
- As the co-chair of the Southeast Turkey Child Protection Sub-Working Group, UNICEF led technical sessions on improving case management service provision during COVID-19 to increase the awareness of frontline workers on child protection risks and concerns while they conduct virtual outreach.

Social Protection

- The **Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CTE)** Programme for Refugee Children continued, with 494,899 children (246,571 boys, 248,328 girls) benefited from the July 2020 payment, with 624,553 (310,355 girls, 314,198 boys) cumulative beneficiaries overall. The CTE call centre system, managed by TRC, continued providing services during the pandemic and is accessible in Turkish, English, Arabic, Farsi and Pashto. An automatic message on Covid-19 was integrated to the 168 Call Center waiting line and informs callers on recommended hygiene and social distancing measures, potential symptoms and access to health facilities.
- UNICEF and partners continued to provide services to **children and families at risk of child labour**. Since the

² 2,671 girls, 2,662 boys.

beginning of the pandemic, **980** individuals have been supported with remote case management, awareness raising, and counselling services through phone calls and messaging platforms delivered in multiple languages.

- In Şanlıurfa, a newly launched cash transfer programme provided social assistance to **472** (148 Syrian, 324 Turkish) seasonal agricultural worker families who lost their income due to COVID-19, thus preventing child labour for 1,206 (370 Syrian, 836 Turkish) children.

Adolescent and Youth Engagement

- **Youth volunteerism:** As part of the COVID-19 “Mahalle Support Mechanism” (MSM) initiative, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), 151 youth volunteers continued to work with the most disadvantaged adolescents and their families across 25 provinces in Turkey. Nearly 10,000 adolescents (4,632 girls and 5,345 boys) benefitted from online trainings and social activities such as sports, quiz, arts challenges, engagement on YouTube and other online platforms.

Youth-centered communications: UNICEF also continued to support the MoYS to broadcast youth-centred COVID -19 communication programming. During the reporting period, with UNICEF support, Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) conducted 17 live You Tube broadcasts mobilizing various public figures, including health specialists, artists and sports figures, to influence positive behaviours among young people. The live MoYS sessions reached over **40,000** people in July-August 2020.

Internal and External Media

During the reporting period, UNICEF Turkey produced a wide range of media content to support efforts to combat the pandemic in Turkey and highlight the situation of vulnerable Turkish, refugee and migrant families.

- A **video was produced** highlighting how young people are coping with COVID19 and providing tips to their peers. The video reached at least **5,000** people.
- A **video was produced** highlighting positive parenting techniques and the role of parents in Early Childhood development (ECD), especially during COVID19. The video reached **4,000** people.
- A **video was adapted to Turkish** thanking all health workers around the world on their efforts during COVID-19. This video reached **1,000,000** people.

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