



Situation Room - Horizon Series

**** BALKAN MIGRATION HORIZON: TURKEY ****

Period under review: from January 2021 to 5 April 2021.

[This report is based on publicly available sources to describe a changing situation. Information subject to change.]

Situation analysis recap:

- According to the latest available figures from the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management, there are more than 4.6 million foreign nationals present in Turkish territory, 3.6 million of whom are seeking international protection. Most of those seeking international protection are Syrians, who have been granted temporary protection status in Turkey. Other large groups of international protection applicants are nationals of Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.
- Turkey's temporary protection regime grants 3,659,449 Syrian nationals the right to legally stay in Turkey as well as obtain some level of access to basic services. The vast majority, 3,601,411 individuals, live outside of formal camps and are spread across many of the Turkish provinces. As such, only 58,038 Syrians live in seven formal camps, the majority of which are located close to the Syrian border.
- According to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) sources, in February 2021, a total number of 5,661 individuals were intercepted and handed over to law enforcement officials. Out of this number, 5,621 individuals were recorded as attempting to enter Turkey from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Greece. TAF also registered 40 individuals attempting to enter from Turkey into the Syria, Greece, and Iraq. In March 2021, a total number of intercepted individuals may be even higher, but to this day, no report has yet been published. Turkish state run news agency Anadolu weekly reports about the number of intercepted illegal migrants.
- According to Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) reports, the TCG apprehended 723 irregular migrants and no fatalities were recorded in February 2021. The top ten nationalities of apprehended/rescued migrants are Afghan, Somali, Congolese, Syrian, Ivorian, Eritrean, Palestinian, Central African, Guinean and Sierra Leonean.
- Currently all populations are included in the national COVID-19 prevention and response plans, including for treatment and vaccination. The Turkish government said it had pulled out of a convention protecting women from violence, sparking furious criticism from human rights activists.
- EU officials told the Turkish government on Monday, 29 March, that it must urgently resume accepting migrants from Greece, where thousands are being held in camps. Greece's Migration Minister is urging Ankara to accept 1,450 migrants whose asylum applications have been rejected.
- Greece has accused Turkey of trying to help migrant boats in the Aegean Sea to reach Europe. The Greek coast guard claimed that in one incident, two Turkish patrol vessels tried to push a migrant dinghy into Greek territory. The Cypriot government has lashed out at Turkey, saying it was indirectly involved in helping create a new migration route that disproportionately burdened Cyprus.
- EU leaders have agreed to extend a 2016 agreement with Turkey aimed at preventing irregular migrants from reaching Europe. German Chancellor Angela Merkel says the deal has proven its worth.
- The head of the European border and coast guard agency, Fabrice Leggeri, said Tuesday 23 March, that after the COVID-19 pandemic many more migrants and refugees will try to reach Europe. He also said Frontex stands ready to resume migrant returns to Turkey.

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