“YOU CANNOT EXIST IN THIS PLACE”

LACK OF REGISTRATION DENIES AFGHAN REFUGEES PROTECTION IN TURKEY

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Cover Photo: Afghan refugees in Ankara, Turkey. August 2018. (ADEM ALTAN / AFP)
SUMMARY

Turkey currently hosts the largest population of refugees in the world, including a growing number of Afghan refugees fleeing either violence and conflict in Afghanistan or the lack of opportunities and protection for Afghans in Iran. A group that receives less attention than Turkey’s 3.5 million Syrian refugees, Afghan refugees in Turkey face many difficulties, including in accessing housing, education, and employment.

In September 2018, the Turkish authorities fully transferred responsibility for the registration and processing of asylum applications of non-Syrians from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM). Although the transfer had been planned for at least two years, its implementation was sudden and came in the wake of a surge in Afghan arrivals in 2018.

In November 2018, a Refugees International (RI) team visited Turkey to research the effects of transferring registration and processing operations to the Turkish authorities. RI interviewed dozens of single Afghan men who described major obstacles in registering as asylum applicants with the offices of DGMM at the local level, the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM). Some were told that the authorities did not register single men, and others that they should return several months later to register. This means that they were not able to obtain Turkish identity cards (“kimliks,” in Turkish). Being without documentation from the Turkish authorities exposes these men to the risk of arrest, detention, and deportation, and impedes their access to such essential services as health care and education. Families interviewed by RI appeared to face fewer difficulties in registering. However, many described delays in obtaining their kimliks. This delay then prevents them from sending their children to school or receiving health care and humanitarian assistance, such as cash assistance and coal for the winter months.

The Turkish government must urgently make changes to the way this system is being implemented to ensure that all newly arrived asylum seekers are promptly registered and receive kimliks, whether they are single men or members of a family. Prior to the transfer in September 2018, UNHCR in Ankara referred non-Syrians to cities in which they could register with the Turkish authorities. However, under the new system there is no centralized referral mechanism. The government should therefore put in place a system that fills this gap by directing newcomers to places that are open to the registration of international protection applicants, and issuing them with documents that enable them to travel there legally and safely.

The new system is still in its initial phase of implementation. At this time, Turkish officials have an important opportunity to make adjustments that will better safeguard the rights of refugees and avoid their being trapped in an irregular situation on Turkey’s territory.

*Terminology: Unless otherwise specified, the term “refugee” in this report is used to reflect the meaning of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as someone who left their country “due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” anywhere in the world. Where relevant, the terms “conditional refugees” and “international protection applicants” refer to their status under Turkish law.
RECOMMENDATIONS

To Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM):

• Commit to providing prompt registration to all new international protection applicants, including single men.
• Set up a referral system among PDMM offices – for instance at the regional level – to direct people to cities that are open to registering new international protection applicants.
• In cities where it is not possible to register new applicants, PDMM should issue documentation to allow applicants to travel legally to a city that is open for registration.
• In the case of delays between the registration of applicants and the issuance of Turkish identity documents (“kimliks,” in Turkish), PDMM offices should provide applicants with a temporary identification to protect them from detention and deportation.
• Renew the kimliks of international protection applicants for a minimum of six months.
• Ensure that any foreigner who is detained in a removal center has access to legal assistance and to UNHCR and is able to apply for international or temporary protection.

To UNHCR:

• In line with UNHCR’s protection mandate, strengthen protection provided to Afghan asylum seekers and refugees, as well refugees of other nationalities, and ensure those who wish to contact UNHCR about their case can obtain access. This access could be facilitated through outreach activities in the cities in which refugees live.

To the Commission of the European Union (EU) and EU member states:

• Ensure that EU funding under the EU-Turkey statement effectively benefits Afghan refugees and those of other nationalities.
• In progress reports, include information on how EU funds for refugees in Turkey are reaching non-Syrian refugees.
• Increase resettlement of refugees from Turkey, including non-Syrian refugees.

To the United States government:

• Continue and increase support for humanitarian assistance to Afghan and other non-Syrian refugees in Turkey.
• Increase resettlement of refugees from Turkey to the United States, including Afghan and other non-Syrian refugees.
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION APPLICANTS

Since September 2018, the asylum procedure is handled exclusively by the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM). International protection applicants must approach DGMM at the local level, through the offices of the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM), in one of Turkey’s provinces (excluding Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya, among others). Once they register as international protection applicants with PDMM, they are issued a Turkish identity card, or kimlik, with a foreigner’s identity number, which grants them access to services in Turkey. At a later date, they are interviewed by the DGMM office in Ankara regarding their application for international protection.

BACKGROUND

Turkey’s Asylum System

In March 2016, the EU and Turkey concluded a political agreement in response to the arrival of 800,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants on Greece’s shores after they crossed the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey. The commitments included a promise by Turkey to better control its borders to prevent further crossings and a commitment by the EU to provide Turkey with 3 billion Euros to help it provide for refugees, with the possibility of an additional 3 billion Euros in 2018. In March 2018, the European Commission announced that it would issue the second tranche of 3 billion Euros to Turkey.

With close to 4 million refugees on its soil, Turkey is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world. As of October 2018, Turkey hosted some 3.5 million Syrians, 170,000 Afghans, 142,000 Iraqis, 39,000 Iranians, 5,700 Somalis, and 11,700 refugees and asylum seekers from other countries. More than 95 percent of Turkey’s refugee population lives outside of camps, in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.

Although Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it has never lifted a geographic restriction in the original convention that recognizes as refugees only those people who fled from persecution in a European country. Under Turkish law, Syrians are granted “temporary protection” – not

full refugee status\(^6\) – whereas those fleeing from persecution in a non-European country other than Syria are considered “conditional refugees.”\(^7\) Their stay in Turkey is meant to be temporary until they are resettled to another country, as stipulated in Turkey’s current (and first) asylum law, the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP). The law also provides for the category of “subsidiary protection,” which applies to those who do not qualify for refugee or conditional refugee status but who cannot return to their country because they would face a death sentence, torture or other ill-treatment, or indiscriminate violence.\(^8\)

Until recently, non-Syrian refugees confronted two parallel asylum systems in Turkey. Upon arriving in the country, they registered with the Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) – an implementing partner of UNHCR – in Ankara. ASAM referred them to one of some 60 “satellite cities” where they had to register with PDMM and live. Non-Syrian refugees were subsequently interviewed by UNHCR in Ankara, which conducted a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) on their case. In parallel, after registering with PDMM, they awaited an interview with DGMM regarding their application for international protection under Turkish law.

**UNHCR Ends Registration of International Protection Applicants**

In September 2018, UNHCR announced it was ending its registration and processing of applications for international protection, directing applicants instead to PDMM.\(^9\) This change means that international protection applicants now undergo only one process, the one led by DGMM. In November 2018, an RI team traveled to Turkey to investigate the effect of this change on non-Syrian asylum seekers and refugees – particularly Afghans, who constitute the largest group. RI found that newly arrived Afghan asylum seekers face significant obstacles (see Section IV for details) in registering with PDMM and obtaining kimliks which provide refugees with access to essential services, such as health care and education. This is particularly true for single men.

Now that UNHCR no longer registers international protection applicants or conducts RSD, inability to register through the national asylum system deprives these Afghans of the chance to be resettled to another country at a later stage. In at least one case documented by RI, applicants were recognized as refugees by UNHCR and had their case submitted for resettlement, but their claim for international protection was rejected by DGMM. As it stands now, those whose applications for international protection are accepted by DGMM receive conditional refugee status or subsidiary protection.

Afghan refugees interviewed by RI indicated that, having been told by ASAM that UNHCR would no longer register or process their cases, they no longer see any point in approaching UNHCR via ASAM. RI is concerned about how UNHCR will carry out its protection mandate toward Afghan and other non-Syrian refugees now that it no longer comes into contact with them at the registration stage. Faisal, an Afghan man in Kayseri, told RI, “When the UN office was open, things were better. They offered services, you could ask questions. Now that it’s closed, there is no way to get help.”

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8. Article 63, Law on Foreigners and International Protection.  
Afghan Refugees in Turkey

Although Turkey has hosted Afghan refugees for years, the number of Afghans arriving via Iran—either as a place of transit, or because they were living there as refugees—increased significantly in 2018. Nearly 20,000 Afghan nationals entered Turkey between January and March 2018, compared to 6,000 over the same period in 2017. This increase was reportedly driven in part by the fact that the Turkish authorities are building a wall along Turkey’s border with Iran. In early 2018, the construction firm building the wall announced that it would be completed by spring 2019. Because of a lack of opportunities and protection in Iran, many Afghans go to Turkey, either to stay or in on the hope of resettlement to a third country, and the threatened closure of this route reportedly spurred more crossings. Between January and June 2018, Turkey returned 17,000 Afghans to Afghanistan. The Turkish government presented these returns as voluntary. However, RI and others received reports from actors on the ground that returnees in fact were coerced or misled into signing documents they could not understand and returned against their will to a country ridden with violence.

Even for Afghan refugees who are registered and settled in Turkey, many challenges remain. For example, Turkey’s satellite city system has forced many Afghan and other non-Syrian refugees to live in remote cities with few work opportunities and no support networks. Non-Syrian refugees are not allowed to live in Turkey’s large cities, such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Many struggle to make a living in the cities to which they have been assigned, and any work they can find is mostly in the informal sector where they are often victims of exploitation. Further, most humanitarian actors in Turkey focus their efforts on the Syrian refugee population. Refugees from Afghanistan and other nationalities are mostly left to fend for themselves. Resettlement to a third country is available to only a tiny number.

RI first documented these challenges in a 2017 report, “Except God We Have No One”: Lack of Durable Solutions for Non-Syrian Refugees in Turkey. In November 2018, RI found that conditions for Afghan refugees had worsened. For many of those who have recently arrived in Turkey, and as described in the section below, obstacles to registration with the Turkish authorities leave them undocumented and unable to access basic services. Resettlement to the United States, the destination for more than 90 percent of non-Syrians resettled from Turkey in 2016, has been drastically cut. In 2016, 495 Afghans were resettled from Turkey; in 2017, that number decreased to 213. For both years, Afghans were resettled only to the United

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In the first quarter of 2018, only 27 Afghans were resettled – 23 to the United States and four to Canada. With ongoing violence in Afghanistan and with European borders closed, Turkey will be the home of Afghan refugees for the foreseeable future. However, life there is becoming increasingly difficult.

Several Afghans told RI that the challenges they face in Turkey – including limited access to work, decent housing, and documentation – make life much harder than they had anticipated. In some cases, the severity of these conditions is creating a push factor for Afghans to move on to Europe. Kareema, a woman living in Turkey with her husband, children, and adult brother, told RI that the harsh living conditions made them think of attempting the journey to Europe. “We’re thinking of going illegally to another country ... at least to cross the border and go to Greece and then Germany ... We were thinking initially to stay in Turkey, but now the economic situation [for us] is worse than Afghanistan. The only thing that is better is that no one is threatening us.”

**OBSTACLES TO REGISTRATION**

Now that UNHCR and ASAM have ceased registering and processing asylum applications for non-Syrians, the national authorities have become the first and last hope for those seeking refuge in Turkey. However, dozens of Afghan refugees in Istanbul, Kayseri, and Erzurum described to RI an asylum system that made even the initial registration process deeply challenging. Many of those interviewed had arrived in Turkey over the last few months. Although the dates on which they approached PDMM varied, as did the responses they received, the overall result was that they were not able to obtain a kimlik.

**Single Men**

Single Afghan men, in particular, described major obstacles in several cities to registering with PDMM as international protection applicants. Some told RI that when they approached PDMM, an interpreter or a PDMM official told them that the office no longer registered single men.

In two separate cases, single Afghan men said that the PDMM office in Trabzon refused to register them and told them to return later - one of them after seven months and the other after one year. Naseem, who told RI he arrived in Turkey in July 2018, said that upon registering with UNHCR in Ankara, he was referred to the city of Trabzon. He said that when he approached the PDMM office in Trabzon to register, he was told to come back a year later. “They didn’t give any other information. They gave the date of September 3, 2019.”

“Here [in Kayseri], I haven’t approached ASAM, but I did in Aksaray,” Reza, an unaccompanied minor, told RI. “An Iranian interpreter said that ‘the UN is not doing anything with asylum seekers anymore; you must go to Turkish authorities’ ... The police in Aksaray told us the UN is closed and the Turkish government doesn’t have a plan yet for single [men], [and they said to] come back in a year and try again. In Kayseri, [the Turkish officials] didn’t give a date or time to come back [to register].”

“We initially got papers from the UN in Ankara,” Hasan, who said he tried to register with PDMM in October 2018 in Kayseri, told RI.

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17. Some interviewees described the officials with whom they interacted regarding their registration as police, (“emniyet”). PDMM offices are often located on the premises of civilian police offices.
“Then we went to the police [in Kayseri] every day for a week, showed our UN papers, and they said we won’t give kimlik or register single men. They didn’t tell us to go try in other places, they just said we don’t give kimlik in all of Turkey to single men asylum seekers.”

Ahmed traveled from Afghanistan to Turkey with his pregnant sister, her husband, and their two children in March 2018. He told RI that when they approached the PDMM office in Kayseri, his sister and her family were able to register and obtain kimliks within two days. However, at the time of RI’s interview with Ahmed and his sister, he still did not have a kimlik.

“We all went together to ASAM [the local office in Kayseri], got the UN papers, and together we went to PDMM. They gave kimliks to my sister’s family but they said, ‘At this time, we cannot give kimliks to single men.’ ... When they told me they don’t give kimliks to single men, I was very disappointed. Why, aren’t we human beings?” Ahmed said he tried three times. “I go, I beg, I ask. My family even vouched for me. They just say, ‘We don’t have the order to register single men.’"

In Erzurum, Khaled described to RI his attempt to register: “At PDMM they said, ‘We don’t register single men.’ The Iranian interpreter said, ‘It’s impossible that you get a kimlik here in Erzurum; it’s better to go to Ankara.’ But I said, ‘How am I supposed to go to? I have no papers, no permission.’ He said, ‘Go illegally.'"

Murtaza told RI that he received a referral from UNHCR in Ankara to go to Erzurum. He approached PDMM there in April 2018 and was told to return four months later. When he did, in August 2018, “[PDMM] said, ‘Kimliks have been stopped by the Turkish government; we won’t give you one.’ Single [men], as I see it, cannot get a kimlik at all. We are not being told where we should go. We have a real chance of getting arrested, taken to a deportation center, and getting deported.”

In Istanbul, one of the provinces in which international protection applicants are not allowed to live, RI interviewed several Afghan single men who said they had not traveled to other cities because they had heard from other Afghans that registration was not possible there.

Families

RI also interviewed members of Afghan families who had faced delays in obtaining their kimliks. Saber arrived in Turkey with his family, including a son born with a life-threatening heart disease, a month before meeting with RI. When he approached the Turkish authorities in Kayseri, they told him they had no capacity to register his family and to go to one of four other cities, including Nevsehir, to which they decided to go. “In Nevsehir, PDMM initially told us we would get kimliks after six months. I said, ‘My son is sick.’ We brought him to the hospital and the doctor examined our son. He gave us a report saying our son needs treatment. We took the report back to PDMM and then they registered us and said our kimlik will come soon.”

Even those Afghan families who obtained their kimliks before the transfer of registration from UNHCR to DGMM still faced challenges. Some showed RI kimliks that had a validity period of only one month. Although it is unclear whether this reflects a new policy at the national level or a practice in certain PDMM offices, several interviewees explained that although the kimliks had previously been valid for six months, they now had to be renewed monthly. Ali, an Afghan man living in Erzurum, told RI that since July 2018, “Every month I have to renew ... We go, we give the old kimliks and it takes a week to get our new one. After three weeks we go back and do it again ... During the week without a kimlik, we don’t have anything. We are in constant fear, we can’t go to the doctor.”
Consequences of Being Unregistered

Undocumented Status

Lacking a kimlik has major consequences for refugees in every aspect of their life in Turkey. Even for those able to register, a period of time elapses before they receive their kimliks; the time can vary from a few days to a few months. Kimliks are required for accessing public health care, education, work permits, and humanitarian assistance from the government and international organizations. Kimliks are also a protection against forced return to an individual’s country. Landlords often require a kimlik to rent accommodations. At the same time, to register for a kimlik, an applicant must provide an address. Many refugees thus find themselves in a Catch-22 situation, dependent on others to find housing. Most of the Afghans interviewed by RI who did not have kimliks were sharing housing with or subletting from other Afghans who did have kimliks.

“They [PDMM] don’t register or give a kimlik if you’re not renting a flat,” Ismail, a single man, told RI. “But if you’re new here and don’t have papers, how can you rent a flat? I slept in the park for six days.”

Farhad, a man living in Erzurum, described the feeling of living without Turkish identity documents: “If you do not have a kimlik you cannot exist in this place.”

Not having a kimlik exposes undocumented refugees to the risk of detention in a removal center for foreigners and possible deportation. Interviewees without kimliks, particularly single men, described a constant fear of being arrested by police and deported to Afghanistan. They were extremely hesitant to travel to other cities and risk facing police checks on the road. Many interviewees told RI that they had friends or relatives who had been deported to Afghanistan in previous months as they entered Turkey from the land border with Iran or while traveling between cities in Turkey.

“There is always constant fear, day and night, that they [the police] will come and arrest us and deport us,” Sohrab, a single man, told RI.

Interviewees who arrived before the transfer of the registration process from UNHCR to DGMM and succeeded in registering at the ASAM office in Ankara had a letter from UNHCR stating that they were applying for international protection. Although the paper does not have legal value in itself, it provides them with a document they can show the Turkish authorities when requested. Since the change in September 2018, new asylum applicants have no documentation from Turkey until they register with PDMM. Many interviewees told RI that the lack of any documentation (other than their Afghan identity documents, in some cases) is a source of fear for them and restricts their movements.

Transportation

To travel outside of the city in which they are registered, Afghan refugees are required to have a travel permit issued by PDMM in that city. However, Afghans who are refused registration cannot access these travel permits. Many Afghans interviewed by RI said that bus companies refused to sell them tickets if they did not have a kimlik or demanded an additional fee. These outcomes made it risky or expensive to travel in the hope of registering in another city. Interviewees said that they had had to pay a private driver at a higher cost. Even so, they risked being stopped by police on the road. Without a kimlik, they are unable to travel legally, leaving them with no way to register or access asylum.

Saber, after registering his family in Nevsehir, as discussed above, was unable to find accommodations there. He and his family
therefore returned to Kayseri. While he awaits kimliks for him and his family, Saber must travel to Nevsehir regularly to sign in with the authorities.\textsuperscript{18} “We don’t have kimliks so we can’t go by bus,” he said. “We go by taxi, we pay 160 TRY. We were stopped once by the police who told us ‘Next time if we find you without a kimlik, we’ll deport you.’”

Badih and his family arrived in Turkey the day after UNHCR stopped registration activities in September 2018. They told RI that they tried to get a ticket to Ankara but were unsuccessful. “We went to the bus station, but we couldn’t buy tickets to Ankara because we didn’t have kimliks. That’s what the person in the bus terminal told us. If we wanted to go, we’d have to pay a penalty.”

\textbf{Lack of Access to Health Care}

One of the main concerns for Afghan refugees without Turkish identity cards was their inability to access public health care. Turkey has a generous health care system that is open to refugees and asylum seekers. However, a kimlik and its associated identification number are required to access these services. Interviewees without a kimlik told RI that they were left with the choice of paying high costs for private health care and medication or, if they could not afford it, going without treatment.

Mustafa, a single young man from Afghanistan, told RI that he had been unable to register and obtain a kimlik before being injured in a traffic accident. He had traveled alone to Turkey in late February 2018, registered with UNHCR in Ankara, and had been referred to Kayseri. A few months after his arrival there, he was badly injured in a traffic accident and went to a hospital for treatment. Describing how he waited for several hours before receiving stitches, he told RI, “Because I didn’t have a kimlik, they didn’t give me proper treatment, just a temporary fix ... Then I went to the police, bleeding. I told them I need an operation, I need a kimlik.” Mustafa told RI that the police officer saw he was injured and bleeding, and issued his kimlik on the spot. Mustafa’s roommate Hafiz – also a single man from Afghanistan – told RI that “Sometimes we joke, ‘If you want a kimlik, you should have an accident.’”

\textbf{Obstacles in Accessing Education}

Although refugee children can, in theory, be admitted to schools if the family has not yet completed the registration procedure, Afghan refugees interviewed by RI said that without a kimlik, they were not able to access Turkish schools - a key concern for families with children. RI also interviewed several unaccompanied minors who faced the same challenges as single men when trying to register with the relevant PDMM office, leaving them without kimliks and, in practice, without access to education.

Marzia, who arrived in Turkey in August with her husband Kareem and their children, described her attempts to get their children into school without a kimlik. “I have tried a lot. I have been to PDMM, ASAM, some schools, and the education department [in Kayseri], but I haven’t succeeded so far. For the schools, without kimliks they don’t register kids at all.”

Ahmad, a 17-year-old unaccompanied Afghan minor, had been in Istanbul for three months and had been unable to obtain a kimlik. He told RI, “I should have a kimlik. At this age, why should I work? I should be in school. There is nothing I can save for my future.”

\textsuperscript{18} Typically, refugees are required to sign in every two weeks at PDMM.
Lack of Access to Humanitarian Assistance

The foreigner’s identification number featured on kimliks is also required for refugees to be eligible for humanitarian assistance funded by the EU in the form of cash assistance via debit cards. This assistance includes the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), which consists of monthly cash payments of 20 USD per family member for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees and is aimed at the most vulnerable, as well as the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE), monthly cash payments designed to encourage families with limited financial means to send their children to school. For refugees, being unable to register for and delays in obtaining a kimlik means being deprived of the possibility of obtaining such assistance.

Lack of Access to Legal Work

“I have tried to work in restaurants as a waiter, tried as a cleaner,” Mohammad, an Afghan man, told RI in Erzurum. “Wherever I go, first, they ask about a kimlik, second, they require I speak the language. When I tell them I don’t have a kimlik they tell me, ‘You’re illegal. Just leave.’”

Under Turkish law, applicants for and beneficiaries of conditional refugee status can apply for a work permit no less than six months after they apply for international protection. Barring refugees from registering with PDMM deprives them of the possibility of ever applying for a work permit, leaving them with no choice but to work in the informal sector.

RI has previously reported on the difficulties Syrian, Afghan, and other refugees face in accessing legal employment in Turkey, and the conditions they face in the informal sector, where exploitation is common in a report titled, “I Am Only Looking for My Rights:” Legal Employment Still Inaccessible to Refugees in Turkey.

CONCLUSION

The challenges Turkey faces in hosting close to 4 million refugees are undeniable. Refugees International welcomes Turkey’s willingness to accept so many millions of refugees and acknowledges that there is no easy solution to the pressure this influx represents for Turkey’s infrastructure and services, including its health and education systems, and economy. However, under international and domestic law, Turkey must provide protection for refugees who have fled war, violence, and persecution. The ways in which the recent changes in the registration and processing of asylum claims for Afghans and other non-Syrians are being conducted have led to devastating consequences on the lives of individuals who took great risks and incurred high costs in the hope of finding safety and shelter in Turkey. Certain measures are key, such as ensuring that PDMM offices are adequately staffed, including with enough interpreters.

Better coordination between cities and a referral mechanism – for instance at the regional level – would go a long way toward providing better assistance to international protection applicants, and improved administration and management of the asylum caseload. For the system to work, however, applicants must have a form of documentation that enables them to travel legally and safely between cities in order to register.

Turkey cannot face these challenges alone,
however. Other countries, including EU member states and the United States, should resettle a far greater share of Syrian, Afghan, and other refugees from Turkey. Third country resettlement is a limited solution as it only benefits a tiny number of refugees, but it is important. Indeed, this safe and legal route is a valuable expression of solidarity with the Turkish government and the Turkish people, and an alternative to human smugglers, whose business thrives when people have no hope. At the UN level, UNHCR must ensure that in this new system, it effectively carries out its role of providing protection for refugees, regardless of their status, nationality, and whether they are single or members of a family.

The response to the challenges Turkey faces in hosting so many refugees is complex and involves many actors at various levels. Now that the registration and processing of international protection cases lies solely with the Turkish authorities, however, certain gaps have become apparent. Thus, it is time for the Turkish authorities to make the changes needed to ensure that refugees in Turkey have access to their most basic rights.

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