

Mülteci  
Hakları  
Merkezi

Refugee  
Rights  
Turkey

Information Booklet on Registration and Status  
for Syrian Refugees and Other Persons under  
**“Temporary Protection”**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

REFUGEE RIGHTS TURKEY: FREE LEGAL COUNSELLING & ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES

Suriye’den Gelen Sığınmacılar İçin Türkiye’de  
**“Geçici Koruma”**

SORULAR & YANITLAR

**İNGİLİZCE**

# What is Temporary Protection?

“Temporary protection” is the protection status established by the “Temporary Protection Regulation” dated 22 October 2014. According to this regulation, the status is applied to foreigners who

- were forced to leave their country
- cannot return to the country that they left
- arrived at or crossed Turkish borders en masse or individually
- will not have their international protection needs adjudicated under an individual procedure.

## To whom does the Temporary Protection Regulation apply?

Syrian nationals as well as refugees and stateless persons from Syria who have arrived to Turkey en masse or individually are granted temporary protection status. Thus, the “Temporary Protection Regulation” covers not only Syrian nationals but also refugees, including Palestinians and other stateless persons coming from Syria.

## What rights are granted by Temporary Protection Status?

The temporary protection regime establishes a safeguard against the return of individuals with temporary protection status to Syria against their will. This regime also grants legal residence to those registered with Turkish authorities. Finally, temporary protection status enables registered individuals to access fundamental rights & entitlements including health care services, education, social assistance and interpretation.

## How can I register?

The Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) is the main body responsible for the registration of all individuals under the temporary protection regime. The DGMM is a specialized government institution with offices throughout Turkey. Their mandate is to adjudicate all procedures related to migration and international protection in the country.

However, the actual locations for registration may differ. For instance, in some provinces, the DGMM cooperates with the Foreigners' Police branches and thus you can approach these bodies for the purpose of registration. You should consult with the local office of the DGMM to learn which registration location is nearest to you.

In some cases, particularly in provinces where there are high concentrations, you may be provided a registration appointment. We strongly recommend that you keep the appointment and finalize your registration at your earliest convenience.

## What happens during registration?

During registration, authorities shall request your basic demographic details, such as your name and surname, and the date and the place of birth. If you have any form of identification document, it is important for you to present this to the competent authorities. Please be advised that this is not a requirement for registration and individuals who do not possess an ID are still entitled to register. In such cases, your statements shall suffice for the completion of the registration. During the registration, competent authorities shall also take your biometric data. All information & data shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

## What happens after registration?

You shall be provided a Temporary Protection Identity Card upon the completion of the registration. This document is free of charge and shall bear your photo and basic identity information. The ID card shall also contain your Foreigners' ID Number starting with 99.

The Temporary Protection Identity Card is not a substitute for a residence permit or any other equivalent documents. This card also does not allow its bearers to obtain long-term residence permits and does not grant Turkish citizenship. However, the Temporary Protection Identity Card legalizes your presence in Turkey and the Foreigners' ID number on this card is necessary to access fundamental rights and services such as health care and education. Moreover, you may enter into contracts, including service contracts for services such as telecommunications (i.e. cellular phone, internet), with your Temporary Protection Identity Card.

## Why is it important to register?

Registering with the Turkish authorities first and foremost enables you to remain legally in Turkey. You will also be able to access public services granted under the temporary protection regime upon being registered. If you have arrived to Turkey irregularly or do not have a valid travel document or residence permit and if you are not able to obtain any of these, you will be required to obtain an exit permit when you leave Turkey based on resettlement or family reunification. Obtaining an exit permit under these circumstances is only possible with registration. Finally, registration is also stipulated as an obligation for those falling under the scope of the temporary protection regulation.

## **Does registration impose any restrictions on me?**

Registration does not impose any restrictions on you. You do not have any obligation to go to a camp after being registered. However, please be informed that as a general rule, you shall be able to benefit from rights and services in provinces where you have completed your temporary protection registration.

## **I have an ID and it has a number starting with 98. Do I have to register again?**

The ID with a number starting with 98 is officially known as a Foreigner's ID Card. This card demonstrates that you have registered with Turkish authorities and therefore legally reside in Turkey. However, in order to avoid any difficulty in accessing rights & entitlements, you are required to obtain a Foreigner's ID number. You may visit the website of the DGMM at [www.goc.gov.tr](http://www.goc.gov.tr) and obtain your Foreigners ID number by entering your number starting with 98.

## **I have lost my ID card. What should I do?**

You should report to the nearest registration office. Your declaration shall be noted and you shall be given a new ID card. You may follow the same procedure for damaged or worn-out ID cards.

## **Do I have to register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)?**

Due to the temporary protection regime, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) does not register and adjudicate the asylum claims of individuals under temporary protection. Thus you are not required to register with UNHCR.

## **I have family members who joined me. How can I register them?**

Your family members can register with the competent authorities in the same manner. As registration is carried out individually, it is important for your family members to be present at the time of your registration appointment.

## **I am registered. Can I reunite with my family members who are still in Syria?**

Individuals who have registered with competent authorities under the temporary protection regime have the right to bring a claim for family reunification. As per the Temporary Protection Regulation, these claims can only be made by a spouse, minor children or dependent children of any age. Applications for family reunification should be made to the DGMM as it is the main body responsible for receiving and assessing the claim. Where necessary, the DGMM shall cooperate with other relevant institutions.

## How can I register my newborn?

It is the duty of the mother, father or legal guardian of the child to register the birth of the newborn within 30 days of the birth to the Population Bureau where you are registered. It is important to present the original birth report provided by the hospital or the health center and other relevant documents in your possession. However, if you do not have any of these documents or if the birth has not taken place in a hospital or health center, you are still entitled to register your newborn.

Following your application, the Population Department shall issue a birth certificate in two copies. This certificate shall bear the identity details of the parents, the birth place and the birthdate of the child. The certificate shall also include information on the citizenship status of the child. Please demand a copy of this certificate and make sure to verify the accuracy of the information stated in the document before signing it.

Please also be informed that registering your newborn shall not directly confer Turkish citizenship to your child nor to you.

## Can I become a Turkish citizen?

The Citizenship Law of Turkey recognizes the possibility of obtaining citizenship. However, five years of uninterrupted legal residency is stipulated among the requirements for applying to citizenship. Yet, Article 25 of the Temporary Protection Regulation states that Temporary Protection ID Cards shall only grant legal stay in Turkey and the duration of stay with these documents shall not be taken into account in the calculation of uninterrupted legal residency. Please consult us for a detailed information on this issue.

## **I have a special condition. What should I do?**

According to the Temporary Protection Regulation, unaccompanied minors, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, pregnant women, a single mother or a single father with an accompanying child and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious psychological, physical or sexual violence are recognized as persons with special needs. The Regulation specifically states that these persons shall be given priority in accessing rights and procedures, including the right to access health care services. The Regulation further states that these persons shall be given priority in access to the camps. Thus, if you or any individual in your family have a condition matching with the above-provided list, please make sure to mention this condition during registration. In case you have failed to do so or these conditions have arisen after your registration, you may also approach the registration authorities and demand your registration status to be revised accordingly.

## **I am a minor and alone in Turkey. What should I do?**

Unaccompanied minors are recognized as persons with special needs. All protection measures and services provided to these persons are regulated under the Child Protection Law. Unaccompanied or separated minors can be accommodated either in shelters run by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy or in camps in coordination with AFAD. According to legislation in Turkey, it is essential to uphold the best interest of the child in every procedure. Therefore if you are an unaccompanied minor or know any person in this situation, please approach our office to receive more detailed information and assistance.

## **I want to go to a camp. Is there a requirement for this?**

Currently, there are 25 camps- which are officially known as temporary accommodation centers- across 10 provinces in Turkey. However, these camps fall behind in meeting the current volume of demand. Thus, the final decision in admitting an individual to a camp shall be made by the Directorate General of Migration Management, working in coordination with governorates. According to the Temporary Protection Regulation, the responsible authorities are under obligation to take your family situation and your special conditions into account while making the final decision for admissions. You may apply either to AFAD, which is responsible for the management of camps, or to governorates in these provinces for such demands.

## **I want to leave the camp. Is it possible?**

There is no barrier to your wish to leave the camps. However, you should be aware that there is currently no rent subsidy, social housing or any other form of state-sponsored accommodation, so you shall be required to rely on your own resources for your accommodation. You should approach the camp management and communicate your decision to leave the camp. Please also be aware that you are legally required to provide the relevant authorities with your new address within 20 days of leaving the camp.

## Can I get a residence permit?

If you have entered Turkey with a valid passport and in regular ways, it is possible to apply to obtain a residence permit. However, there are certain requirements for obtaining a residence permit. Please apply to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management office to inquire about these requirements and to apply for a residence permit.

## I have a residence permit. Do I have to register under the temporary protection regime?

According to the applicable legislation, all foreigners who wish to remain in Turkey beyond the duration of a visa or a visa exemption or in any case longer than 90 days should obtain a residence permit. If you have already obtained a residence permit, this shall allow you to legally reside in Turkey within the period of validity. Thus, if you have a valid residence permit, you are not under the obligation to register with temporary protection regime.

## I have temporary protection status. Can I return to Syria?

Yes, you may voluntarily return to Syria. The Temporary Protection Regulation states that the government of Turkey may provide support for voluntary returns to Syria. However, please be informed that a voluntary departure from Turkey is considered a grounds for cessation of “temporary protection.” Thus, should you later decide to return to Turkey and re-apply for “temporary protection,” the Directorate General for Migration Management has discretion regarding this request. For information on leaving Turkey to other locations, see below information concerning exit permits.

## Do I have the right to seek asylum in another country?

Persons benefiting from temporary protection in Turkey may benefit from resettlement, humanitarian admission and other forms of resettlement. These options are only available for the most vulnerable individuals and even the available places for these individuals are limited. UNHCR Turkey cooperates with Turkish authorities and other countries to facilitate this process. Please be informed that the final decision is not taken by UNHCR, but by the admitting countries.

Please also be informed that all UNHCR procedures including resettlement are free of charge. We therefore strongly advise you not to believe persons who promise resettlement in return for money or any other financial benefit. These practices are clearly fraudulent.

Another possibility for going to a third country is through family reunification. Demands for family reunification should be made directly to consular representations of these countries in Turkey. Procedures for family reunification differ. Many countries require that the family member in the third country initiate the process, and most of them only accept nuclear family members- e.g. spouse and children below the age of 18.

Finally, if you have a valid travel document and a valid visa, you may also travel to a third country. Being registered under temporary protection is not a barrier provided that you fulfil these requirements. However, if you do not have a valid travel document, or if you have entered Turkey through irregular channels, you shall be required to obtain an exit permit from Turkish authorities before you depart from Turkey for the purpose of resettlement, family reunification, or any other similar channel.

## What is an exit permit?

According to the Temporary Protection Regulation, all persons under temporary protection are required to obtain an exit permit from the Directorate General of Migration Management should they wish to leave Turkey either permanently or on a temporary basis. All individuals who do not have a valid travel document and valid visa and who wish to travel to a third country should obtain exit permit. You may approach the Provincial Directorate for Migration Management, together with your documents demonstrating your resettlement or other forms of resettlement, to apply for and to obtain an exit permit.

## I was apprehended during my attempt to cross to another country and I am currently in detention. What are my rights?

Attempting to leave Turkey in an irregular manner is one of the grounds for deportation. You may also be detained for this reason. Applicable legislation as well as international agreements of which Turkey is a State Party require Turkish authorities to not deport persons in need of international protection. This is known as the principle of non-refoulement and it is prohibited to send persons to any place where he/she shall be at risk of serious human rights violations. If you are detained for an irregular attempt to enter to or exit from Turkey, you may reach us and benefit from our information, counselling and assistance services.

## How can Refugee Rights Turkey help me?

Refugee Rights Turkey provides free information, counselling and assistance to persons seeking international protection and under temporary protection in Turkey. You may approach our office to receive legal counselling and legal assistance services for problems that you might have encountered trying to access protection mechanisms in Turkey and fundamental rights and freedoms.

## Is Refugee Rights Turkey related to the Turkish government or to UNHCR?

No. Refugee Rights Turkey is an independent civil society organization. It is not an implementing partner of the Turkish government or UNHCR. However, Refugee Rights Turkey cooperates with relevant Turkish authorities and UNHCR to ensure the legal protection of persons seeking international protection and under temporary protection in Turkey.

## Do I need to pay for Refugee Rights Turkey's services?

All information, counselling and assistance services provided by Refugee Rights Turkey are free of charge. Should you become aware of any person or entity claiming to be acting in our name who requests any money or other financial benefit, please report them immediately to our organization. Such claims are fraud and constitute a criminal act under Turkish law. We will maintain your confidentiality.

# Will Refugee Rights Turkey keep my information confidential?

Refugee Rights Turkey operates under a principle of strict confidentiality and respects the confidentiality of individuals. Thus, we do not, under any circumstances, share your information or documents with any third parties without your open and informed consent.

## Refugee Rights Turkey- Contact:

Wherever you may be in Turkey, you are welcome to visit our office or get in touch with us by telephone, fax or email all weekdays from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

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# Mülteci Hakları Merkezi

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Refugee Rights Turkey



Refugee Solidarity Network



**US Department of State**  
Bureau of Population,  
Refugees, and Migration