

## PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE MIGRANTS IN TÜRKIYE (PALS II)

### Project Summary

Foundation Caritas Luxembourg (FCL) and Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) are addressing protection needs and facilitating access to available services for vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants, including unregistered and undocumented migrants through the PALS project.



Map 1: Implementation provinces: **Ankara, Antalya, Balıkesir, İstanbul, İzmir, Van.** Project coordination in **Ankara.**

## NEWSLETTER

### General Situation (June-August 2023)

During the summer, there was an increase in arrests and deportations of migrants for minor reasons, even in the absence of an official announcement or changes to the law on foreigners and international protection.

### Update Sea crossings and apprehensions

Thanks to favorable weather conditions, many migrants chose to leave Türkiye irregularly across the Aegean Sea. In 2023, by 1<sup>st</sup> October, the number of sea crossings from Türkiye to Greece exceeded 25,000, which is more than double the total for the last year (Source: UNHCR).

On Turkish soil, between June and August 2023, PALS Western Border (WB) teams provided information to more than 4,000 apprehended individuals and distributed more than 7,000 emergency relief items.

Local Removal Centers (RC) lacked capacity to accommodate new arrivals. This led to many apprehended migrants being transferred to unofficial reception centers, such as the Gömeç Center in Ayvalık, where the WB Teams were still able to offer assistance and legal information. Many apprehended migrants were quickly deported.

### Fear of Deportation – Challenge of moving around in cities

In the cities in İzmir and İstanbul, ID checks and arrests of migrants took place on a large scale during the summer.

The absence of a work permit, an expired visa or residence permit, or even being out of the province of residence without a travel permit, etc. became sufficient justifications for arrest and deportation.

Many families and migrants reported that their family unity and vulnerabilities were not taken into consideration prior to detention and deportation decisions.

### Update from field offices

**Legal counseling:** The PALS teams received many phone calls directly from people in RCs or from their relatives requesting legal assistance. In many cases, detainees were not even informed about their whereabouts.

More than 100 detainees sought legal information from PALS lawyers in Van, İzmir, and İstanbul, and some of the cases were referred to bar associations. “Even applying to the administrative court does not suspend deportation”, explains a legal aid lawyer.

**In İstanbul,** following the February Earthquakes, many Syrian refugees from affected areas moved to İstanbul. On 28<sup>th</sup> July, the Office of İstanbul’s Governor issued a warning to Syrian nationals residing in İstanbul and registered in other provinces, instructing them to return to their designated registration places by 27<sup>th</sup> September.

**In Van,** intensified city-center patrols and security checks deterred beneficiaries from leaving their homes. The project supported migrants in RCs and border areas.

**In İstanbul district,** the PALS team favored outreach activities in locations where migrants reside to minimize their journey to meeting and consequent risk of arrest. The team conducted information-sharing sessions on rights and responsibilities at district level.

The team also engaged with the Refugee Women’s Community and provided training on rights and obligations.



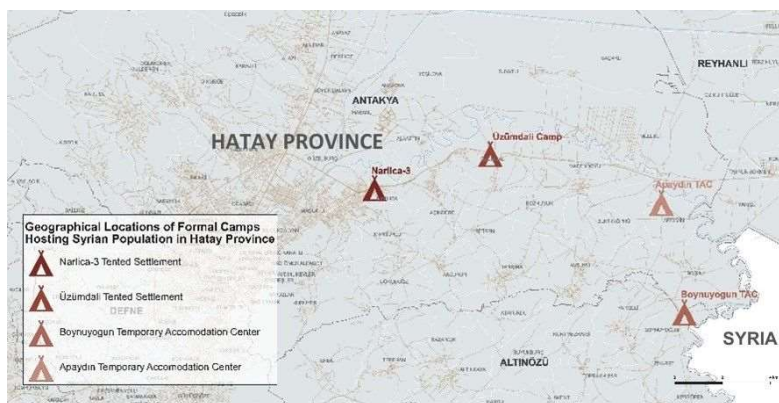
## EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE (EQR) IN TÜRKİYE

### Projects Summary

Fondation Caritas Luxembourg (FCL) and Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) are pursuing their response to the February 2023 earthquakes with two ongoing projects for the most vulnerable survivors in Hatay province:

**Earthquake Response (EQR):** providing emergency relief and protection assistance with the support of ECHO and the MAEE Luxembourg.

**Assistance and Early Recovery** providing WASH, shelter and livelihoods assistance with the support of Caritas Germany, Caritas Austria, NIN Austria and the MAEE Luxembourg.



Location of formal camps hosting Syrian refugees in Hatay Province (Uzumdalı, Apaydin, Boynuyogun, Narlica)

## NEWSLETTER

### Status of container cities

Hatay province was particularly affected by the February earthquakes with over 50% of buildings severely damaged. The demolition of thousands of buildings is ongoing and over 160,000 people are living in 161 container cities and 16 formal tented settlements. AFAD plans to establish a total of 210 container cities by December for 300,000 people or 77,000 families.

### Syrian refugee camps

Due to social tensions with the Turkish host community, Syrian refugees are accommodated in four specific container camps with a planned capacity of over 30,000 people.

### Informal Tented Settlements (ITS)

Informal Tented Settlements are undergoing a gradual evacuation process in urban centers, but ITS remain the only available accommodation for tens of thousands of families in rural areas.

### Status of demolishing and reconstruction

Approximately 55% of demolitions have been completed to date. Regarding reconstruction, authorities have launched a renovation initiative offering loans at low interest for housing owners.

### EQR Assistance and Protection

The project remains focused on providing assistance and protection to families living in ITS and Syrian camps, outside official container cities, which receive more aid.

### EQR assistance up to the end of August

41,721 people received relief assistance.

9,165 people received protection services.



14.431

Hygiene Kits



6.358

Bedding Kits



7.437

Kitchen Sets



4.163

Mosquito Nets and Shading Kits

### Summer and winterization assistance:

With the advent of the summer, the teams distributed shading kits and mosquito nets. Winterization assistance is planned with the shelter sector's advice.

The PDMM is planning to set up over 4,000 Chinese-type containers, which will need additional insulation against winter rain and cold.

Emergency responses: In July, the EQR teams responded immediately to the needs of individuals after a fire occurred in an ITS in Kırıkhan.

### Protection needs of EQR survivors

Syrian refugees who lost their homes, face difficulties in registering a new address with PDMM. Many lost their official documents and are struggling to access financial and other social assistance. The project team has assisted 446 families in the recovery of their rights.

GBV cases: The project team identified 89 GBV survivors who needed an immediate response. The main challenge is the provision of secure and alternative housing to the survivors.

Reconstruction, land and property rights are complex, and families are in need of legal counselling and information on governmental financial assistance.

Throughout the summer months, 397 information sessions were conducted by the project lawyer and a briefing package was produced and distributed.

### WASH and Shelter Updates

Since September, an ASAM WASH and Shelter team has been formed and is operational with the guidance of a Caritas advisor.



The team started to address poor water and sanitation issues in ITS and the Apaydin camp. Permission to work in the Uzumdalı container camp for Syrian refugees is pending.

Housing repairs: Selection of applications are ongoing for repairs to lightly damaged houses. Eligible beneficiaries will receive conditional grants.

## ZOOM IN – Human-interest Stories from Hatay



Meet Şükran Akoglu, a 38-year-old GBV survivor, who is just like many other women affected by the earthquake in Hatay.

A single parent with nine children, she used to live in Guzelburc village in Antakya district that was one of the hardest-hit neighborhoods. Her home suffered severe damage, but no-one was injured. They were evacuated and are all living in a container that she now calls “her home”.

Şükran’s challenges did not just start with the earthquake, she had already faced a tough life. She was forced into marriage at a young age, enduring years of psychological abuse in her marriage. Not long before the earthquake, she divorced her husband and now single-handedly cares for her nine children. In addition, she underwent surgery to remove a kidney after it failed and requires regular hospital check-ups. A legal battle for her daughter, who was a survivor of sexual violence, further drained her emotionally. Being from the Alevi minority, Şükran also faces discrimination in the container camp.

Şükran's situation has been closely monitored from legal, medical, and psychological perspectives, with necessary actions taken to support her.

***"When I see ASAM teams, I feel safe. I never expected this level of support. They assisted with my daughter's case, even accompanying me to the courthouse. Necessary measures were taken. Whenever I needed to go to the hospital, they were there to support me. Thanks to them, I don't feel alone."***



Born in 1966 in Antakya, Şefika Aşkar now resides with her family in a cramped container in the Cekmece neighborhood in Defne district, that was devastated by the earthquake.

Her 30-year-old son, Mehmet Ali, has cerebral palsy and is 99% disabled. Even before the earthquake, their family faced economic hardships, making it difficult to access proper medical care. Somehow, before the earthquake, they were able to find ways to get the treatment they needed, however, since the earthquake, going to the hospital became impossible due to both financial struggles and transport issues.

Şefika has been provided with detailed information regarding the treatment of her child's disability and care, and ASAM actively monitors the medical processes.

The family described their life after the earthquake as incredibly challenging:

***"These are tough days for us, we don't have a home anymore; I feel like we've been abandoned by fate. Even our family bonds have been strained. As a woman, I would like to work, but finding a job is nearly impossible now. I don't even have a friend left with whom I can spend time and chat."***

Şefika, shared that after the earthquake, she experienced separation anxiety, she is afraid to enter their home, and carried serious concerns about another earthquake occurring. She is receiving regular psychological support.