

# VACCINATION STATUS OF REFUGEES IN TURKEY - SURVEY RESULTS II

TURKEY MARCH 2021

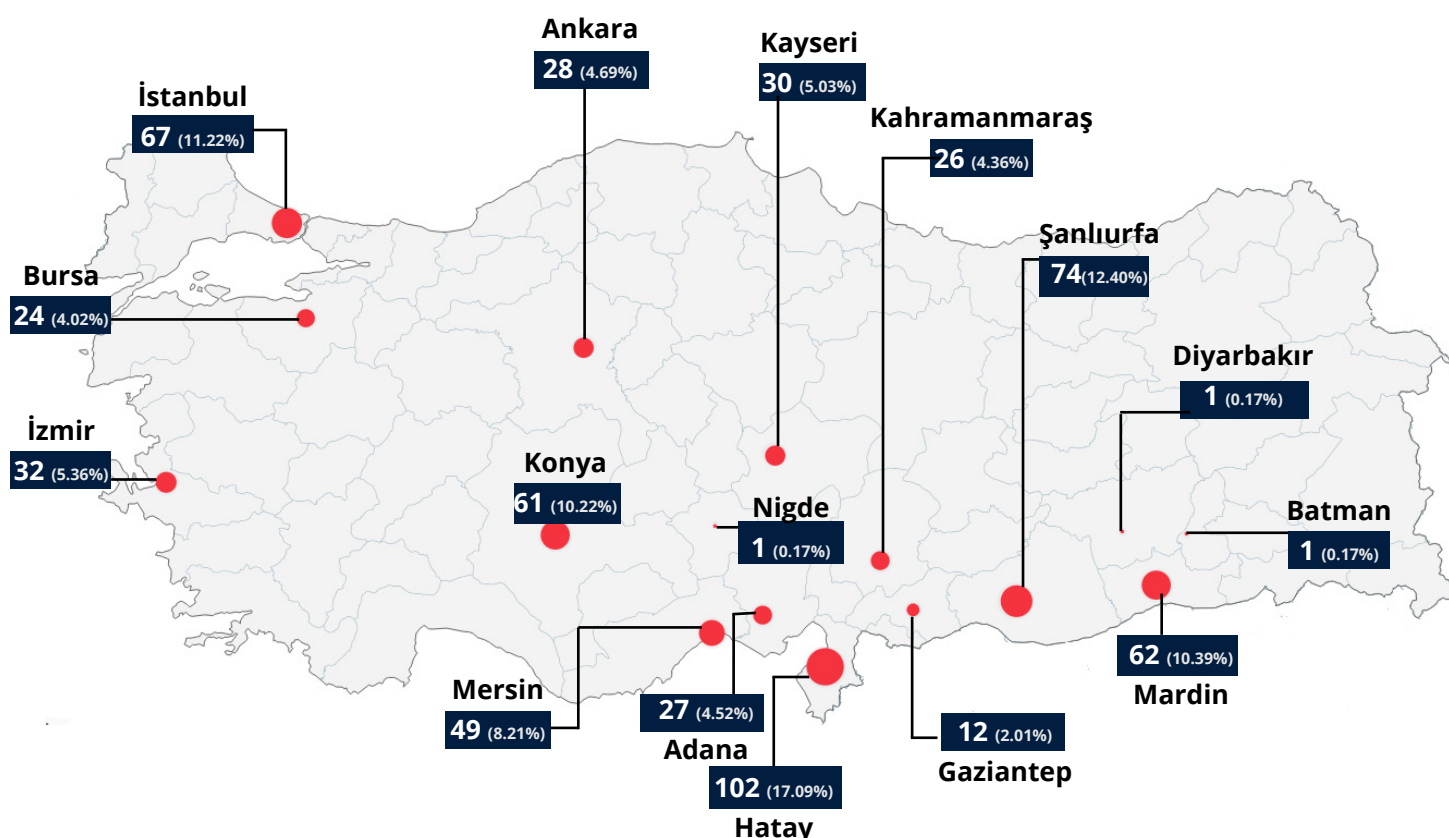


## INTRODUCTION

Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) conducted Vaccination Screening Analysis under the Community Based Migration Programme (CBMP) in February 2021 to find out the vaccination status of the individuals aged 65 and above; assess their knowledge about the vaccination process in Turkey; and identify the challenges they face in accessing to COVID-19 vaccines. This survey is a follow up study on the Vaccination Screening Analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data used in this study were collected via phone interviews with 597 individuals from 13 provinces. The respondents of this survey are refugees\* who have been involved in the activities of TRCS community health centers. Findings show that only 66 of the respondents (11%) got vaccinated.

This suggests that refugees aged 65 and above got vaccinated at a low level, even though they are in the target group of the vaccination program. 61 (94%) of the vaccinated respondents reported that they did not face any difficulties in accessing vaccination services. Among the group of 531 survey respondents (89%) who have not been vaccinated yet, 281 of them (53%) stated that they are not willing to be vaccinated or they are hesitant while 119 respondents (22%) indicated that they are willing to get vaccinated and aware of being in the target group but cannot get vaccination appointment. The findings yield important results about refugee community's level of knowledge about the vaccination process, and the information need around it. The results indicate that some of the survey respondents have lack of knowledge about how to access COVID-19 vaccines, and some believe that they do not need to get vaccinated.

## DISTRIBUTION BY CITIES



\* Protection (SuTP), International Protection and Humanitarian Residence Permit holders as defined in the Law No: 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

While a majority of the survey respondents (564 respondents, 94%) were Syrians, the remaining respondents were Iraqi (22 respondents, 4%), Afghan (6 respondents, 1%), and other nationals (5 respondents, 0.8%). Of these respondents, 296 were females and 301 were males, and 534 of them were 65 years old or older. In regard to medical condition, 360 of the respondents (60%) reported chronic illnesses including cardiovascular disease (50%), diabetes (45%), respiratory conditions (8%), arthritis (5%), cancer (3%), obesity (0.5%), and other (28%). On the other hand, 142 of the respondents (24%) reported at least one disability. More than half of the respondents stated they have physical disability (52%), followed by visual impairment (21%), hearing impairment (11%), mental disability (8%), other (8%), and speech impairment (2%). These results are critical considering that people with specific chronic diseases appear to be at a higher risk of developing complications and are at high risk of death. Additionally, disability status might prevent individuals to have equal access to COVID-19 vaccines.

**Total respondents**

**597**



**296**  
female



**301**  
male

**Temporary Protection**

**566** (94.81%)

**Humanitarian Residence Permit**

**9** (1.51%)

**International Protection**

**22** (3.69%)

### Age, Disability, Nationality and Health Status of the Respondents

**49 below** **22** (3.69%)

**50-64** **41** (6.87%)

**65-79** **467** (78.22%)

**80 above** **67** (11.22%)

**Syria** **564** (94.47%)

**Iraq** **22** (3.69%)

**Afghanistan** **6** (1.01%)

**Other** **5** (0.84%)

**Persons without Disability** **455** (76.21%)

**Persons with Disability** **142** (23.79%)

**Persons with Chronic Disease** **360** (60.30%)

**Persons without Chronic Disease** **237** (39.70%)





# COVID-19 VACCINATION STATUS

Turkey began to administrate nationwide vaccination against COVID-19 as of 14 January 2021. The vaccination program was planned to be carried out in four stages and the priority was given to health professionals and individuals aged 65 or above. While the vaccination of individuals who are 65 or older proceeds within the first stage, this study examines the vaccination status of the refugee community.

**WHO GOT  
VACCINATED** **66 (11.06%)**







**WHO DID NOT  
GET VACCINATED** **531 (88.94%)**

**Table 1: Did you get COVID-19 vaccine?**  
(597 respondents)

	Male	Female
No	 258 (43.22%)	 273 (45.73%)
Yes	 43 (7.20%)	 23 (3.85%)

Out of 597 survey respondents, 66 (11%) got vaccinated while 531 (89%) remaining respondents did not get the jabs. In the first vaccination survey results conducted in February, 11 (5%) of 506 respondents who were 65 years old or older stated that they got vaccinated. The figures also show that 60 (10%) of the 597 respondents who got vaccinated are Syrians under Temporary Protection followed by 4 (0.6%) International Protection and 2 (0.3%) Humanitarian Residence Permit holders.





**Table 2: Did you get COVID-19 vaccine?**  
(597 respondents)

	Temporary Protection	Humanitarian Residence Permit	International Protection
No	 506 (84.76%)	 7 (1.17%)	 18 (3.02%)
Yes	 60 (10.05%)	 2 (0.34%)	 4 (0.67%)

## HOW DID YOU GET THE APPOINTMENT FOR THE VACCINATION?

When respondents were asked about the channels that they used when making their vaccine appointments, 16 (25%) stated that they did not know as their friends or relatives made the appointment for them; 14 (22%) used Centralized Doctor Appointment System (CDAS) while 13 (20%) got their appointments through 182 Call Center. 21 (33%) respondents indicated some other channels for making vaccine appointments.



**Table 3: How did you get the appointment for the vaccination?**  
(64 respondents)

Other	 21 (32.81%)
Somebody else got it for me, I don't know	 16 (25.00%)
Centralized doctor appointment system (CDAS)	 14 (21.88%)
182 Call Center	 13 (20.31%)

## VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED

Of the 66 respondents who stated that they got vaccinated, 44 (67%) received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine whereas 22 (33%) reported having received two doses of the vaccine series.




**Table 4: How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine did you get?**  
(66 respondents)

First Doses		44 (66.67%)
Second Doses		22 (33.33%)

## WHERE DID YOU GET THE VACCINE?

The vaccination process was further investigated to understand where those vaccinated got the jabs. Of 66 respondents vaccinated, more than half of them got the jabs at the hospitals (35 respondents, 53%), followed by family health centres (21 respondents, 32%), migrant health centres (6 respondents, 9%) and at home (4 respondents, 6%). It is noteworthy that general hospitals ranked the first for COVID-19 vaccination among the respondents, considering that Syrians under temporary protection as well as other migrants usually refer to migrant health centres for any health-related issues.






**Table 5: Where did you get the vaccine?**  
(66 respondents)

Hospital		35 (53.03%)
Family Health Center		21 (31.82%)
Migrant Health Center		6 (9.09%)
At Home (by Health Care Team)		4 (6.06%)

## DID YOU FACE ANY DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING THE COVID-19 VACCINATION SERVICE?

Among the difficulties stated by the respondents in relation to accessing the COVID-19 vaccine are long waiting time before being able to get a vaccination appointment (1 respondents, 1,54%); difficulty in accessing information about how to get vaccinated (1 respondents, 1,54%); and challenges in getting the appointments due to language barrier (1 respondents, 1,54%). Most of the respondents (61 respondents, 94%) did not experience any difficulties in accessing the vaccine.

**Table 6 : Did you face any of the following difficulties in accessing the COVID-19 vaccination service?**  
(65 respondents / more than one answer possible)





I did not face any difficulty		61 (93.85%)
Other		2 (3.08%)
It took a lot of time before it is my turn to make an appointment		1 (1.54%)
Difficulty in accessing information about how I can get vaccinated		1 (1.54%)
Difficulty in making an appointment due to language barrier		1 (1.54%)

## WHAT ARE THE REASONS YOU ARE NOT GETTING VACCINATED?

The findings show that vast majority of respondents have not been vaccinated yet, with a rate of 89%. As for the reasons for not getting vaccinated, while 281 (52%) of the respondents do not want to get vaccinated or are hesitant, 119 (22%) of them couldn't get an appointment although they are aware that they are in the target group and they want to get vaccinated, and 117 respondents (22%) are not aware that they are in the target group, and they can get vaccinated. 14 (3%) of the respondents got an appointment and are waiting for their turn.

**Table 7: What are the reasons you are not getting vaccinated?**

(531 respondents )

I do not want to get vaccinated, or I am hesitant		281 (52.92%)
I am aware that I am in the target group, I want to get vaccinated but I cannot get an appointment		119 (22.41%)
I am not aware that I am in the target group and I can get vaccinated		117 (22.03%)
I got an appointment, and I am waiting for my turn		14 (2.64%)







## WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR BEING UNWILLING OR HESITANT TO GET VACCINATED?

Those who were not vaccinated were asked why they do not want to get vaccinated or are hesitant. The results indicate that respondents consider themselves healthy and they do not find the vaccine necessary (106, 37%); they have hesitancy due to its side effects and do not trust the vaccine (80, 28%); they isolated themselves at home and they do not find the vaccine necessary 46 (16%); they are worried about its interaction with their other medicines (27, 10%); they recovered from COVID-19 and they do not find the vaccine necessary (15, 5%); and they stated other reasons (51, 18%).

While "I am healthy, and I do not find the vaccine necessary" option was not among the top responses in the first-round data which was collected in February 2021, it comes in the first place for the second round of the survey.

**Table 8: What are the reasons for being unwilling or hesitant to get vaccinated?**

(283 respondents / more than one answer possible)

I am healthy and I do not find the vaccine necessary		106 (37.46%)
I have hesitancy due to its side effects and I do not trust the vaccine		80 (28.27%)
Other		51 (18.02%)
I isolated myself at home, so I do not find the vaccine necessary		46 (16.25%)
I am worried about its interaction with other medicines		27 (9.54%)
I recovered from COVID-19, I do not find the vaccine necessary		15 (5.30%)





## WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY YOU CANNOT GET AN APPOINTMENT?

The second most common reason for not getting vaccinated is that people are not able to get an appointment although they are aware that they are in the target group, and they want to get vaccinated. When asked what are the reasons why they cannot get an appointment, majority of the respondents stated that they do not know where to apply (78 respondents, 64%). 21 (17%) of the respondents stated that they cannot leave the house (due to their illnesses etc.) while 16 (13%) of them mentioned that they called to get an appointment, but they were not able to reach. Language barrier (15 respondents, 12%) was another reason why people could not get an appointment. These findings indicate that people are in need of information regarding the vaccination processes such as how to get an appointment and from where.

**Table 9: What are the reasons why you cannot get an appointment?**

(121 respondents / more than one answer possible)

I do not know where to apply	■	78 (64.46%)
I cannot leave the house (due to other illnesses etc.)	■	21 (17.36%)
I called to get an appointment, but I couldn't reach	■	16 (13.22%)
Language barrier	■	15 (12.40%)
Other	■	12 (9.92%)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of the assessment, there is a need to disseminate key and factual information to the communities regarding COVID-19 vaccine. The need for all authorities and non-governmental institutions/organizations to act together is crucial in this regard. Based on the results of the first and second studies, IEC materials (brochures and posters) of MoH on vaccination have been printed out and distributed by TRCS' community centers. Continuing to produce different information materials, disseminating them through different channels in different languages in coordination with different departments and conducting community engagement activities will help to raise awareness and enable people to receive the correct information in a timely manner. Furthermore, it is necessary to actively combat misinformation about vaccination obtained from various channels. In addition to increasing the availability of services, increasing the willingness to access services within the community should be the goal. Therefore, TRCS plans to organize online seminars on the safety and importance of vaccination to disseminate lifesaving information among refugee communities. Information on where and how to make vaccination appointments will be also shared with refugee communities through online information sessions and one-to-one phone calls. In addition, community centers will provide the necessary assistance in making vaccination appointments and accessing health services to community members who cannot leave their homes due to COVID-19 restrictions or existing vulnerabilities.



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