

# Attitudes towards Syrians In Turkey



*This document has been prepared to present the summary of the "Attitudes towards Syrians" survey which is a module of the periodic "Human Development Monitor" research study conducted jointly by INGEV and Bilgi University Faculty of Communication.*

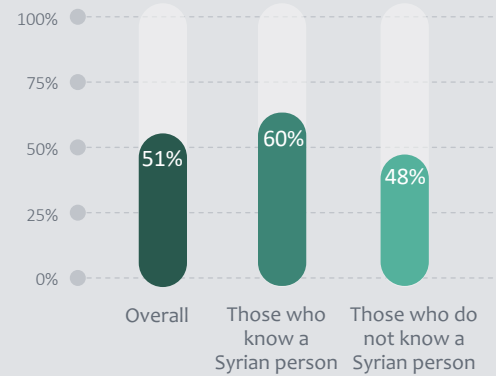
*The research was carried out between February 10-March 5, 2020 in 26 cities chosen in accordance with NUTS2 criteria to ensure representativeness of Turkey. 1555 interviews were conducted via the computer-aided telephone interview method. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.49\%$ .*

## TENSION AMONG SOCIAL GROUPS



The relationship between local community members and Syrian refugees stands out as the tensest relationship in society.

More than half (51%) of the society believe that there is a strong tension between host community and Syrians. While this rate rises to 60% among those who are acquainted with a Syrian refugee, it decreases to 48% among those who have no acquaintance or contact with refugees.

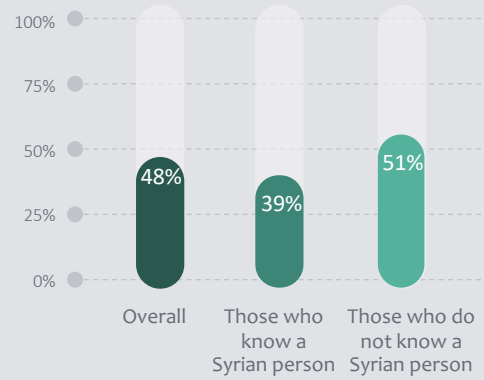


As the level of education increases, the perceived tension between local community members & Syrians goes up. Similarly, as the socio-economic level decreases the perceived social tension between these groups weakens. The young people's tension perception is higher compared to the elderly. In terms of gender, women are more likely to perceive tension.

## SOCIAL GROUP AFFINITY



Nearly half of the society (48%) do not want their children to be friends with refugees. As expected, those who know a Syrian person in Turkey (for any reason) are less likely to oppose the idea of their children having friends from the refugee community, but even among them, 2 out of every 5 people state that they would oppose such friendships.



As the level of education increases, individual affinity toward the Syrian refugees goes up. In parallel with the education level, lower socio-economic levels display relatively higher aversion towards refugees.

On the other hand, younger age groups are relatively milder towards refugees, while 55 and over are more averse.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS SYRIANS



Although society's overall approach to refugees is more positive than the previous year, it can be said that society is still resistant to being in harmony with Syrians and accepting their presence. The changing political discourse and specific issues on national media's agenda during different fieldwork periods may also have influenced public perceptions. The 2019 research period coincided with the run-up to the somewhat politically charged repeat of the Municipal election in Istanbul, which was followed closely on a national level and turned the national spotlight on the mass irregular migration movements taking place in Istanbul. The 2020 research period on the other hand coincided with the timing of the Turkish Military's Operation Spring Shield in northwestern Syria which took place in Feb-March 2020.

### May'19 vs. Mar'20



# Myth vs Truth Regarding Syrians in Turkey



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## In short;

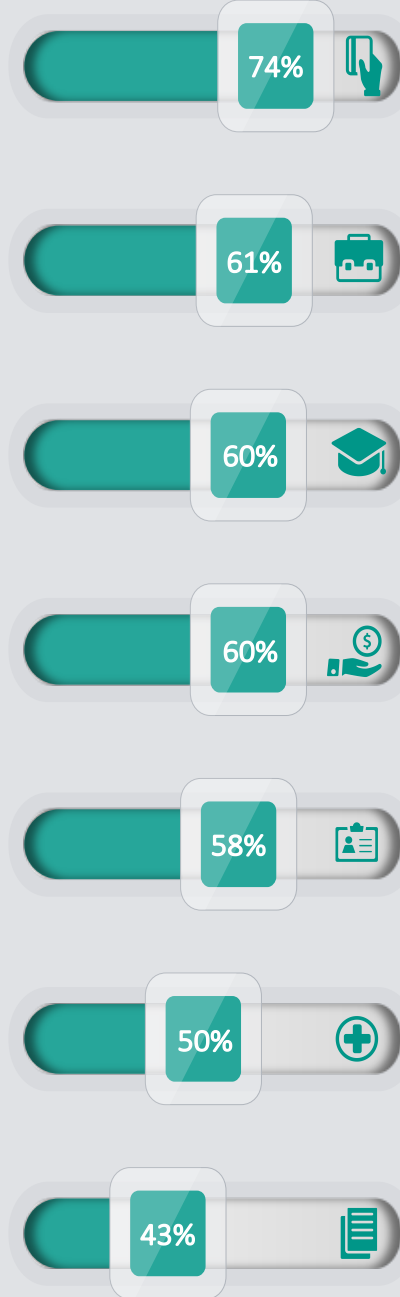
Turkish society, in general, possesses more accurate information regarding refugees on issues related to daily life, such as health care services provided to Syrians and utility (electric, water, etc.) payments. On the other hand, a greater majority of the population is prone to misinformation related to issues such as salary payments, education, and citizenship rights.

Misinformation in society negatively affects social cohesion between the host community and Syrians, who are under temporary protection. As mentioned before:

- 51% of the population believes the most important social tension is between Turkish-Syrian tensions.
- 48% of parents don't want their children to be friends with refugee children.

The adoption of transparency in government policies regarding Syrians and sharing accurate information about humanitarian aid provided to refugees will continue to be important in reducing tensions and eliminating discrimination between the host community and Syrians under temporary protection.

% of those who agree with the given statement:



## "SYRIANS RECEIVE SALARY FROM THE STATE"

The greatest misconception in society about Syrians is that refugees receive periodic payments from the Turkish Government. However, the monthly aid funded by the EU's Social Cohesion Aid fund and provided by the Red Crescent may be fueling this misconception as well as the fact aid is transferred via ATM cards provided by state banks.

## "SYRIAN TRADESPEOPLE DO NOT PAY TAXES"

Tax audits are carried out by personnel affiliated with the tax office. Every business enterprise is obliged to pay taxes. Syrian tradespeople have neither an exemption nor a privilege regarding tax.

## "SYRIANS ADMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITIES OF THEIR CHOICE WITHOUT EXAMINATION"

Foreign students applying to State Universities can only be accepted based on their scores on the "Foreign Students Exam"; private universities apply their own exams for foreign students. Syrian students are evaluated as foreign students.

## "THE STATE AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO EACH SYRIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENT"

Even though the Turkish State provides scholarships to foreign students, it is necessary to comply with the success criteria and be within a certain age range to benefit from these aids. Only eligible Syrian students are provided with these scholarships, just like any other foreign student.

## "SYRIANS GAIN TURKISH NATIONALITY AFTER LIVING 5 YEARS IN TURKEY"

The conditions that a foreign national must fulfill in order to get Turkish citizenship are specified in the Turkish Citizenship Law 5901. Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey can only obtain the right to naturalize after fulfilling these conditions in full and without exception.

## "SYRIANS HAVE PRIORITY FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND OBTAIN TREATMENT WITHOUT WAITING AT HOSPITALS"

50% of the society have the opinion that Syrians receive fast-tracked health services hospitals and don't have to wait in lines. While among those who have a Syrian acquaintance, this rate decreases to 37%, 54% of those who have no acquaintance strongly believe this piece of misinformation. The Ministry of Health determines which patient groups will have priority in hospitals, and these definitions apply to all patients regardless of nationality.

## "SYRIANS DO NOT PAY WATER, ELECTRICITY, AND NATURAL GAS BILLS"

Such invoices are only waived in case of no usage regardless of nationality. 43% of the society believe that Syrians do not pay utility bills. While this rate decreases to 27% among those who are acquainted with a Syrian refugee, it rises to 49% among those who have no acquaintance with refugees.