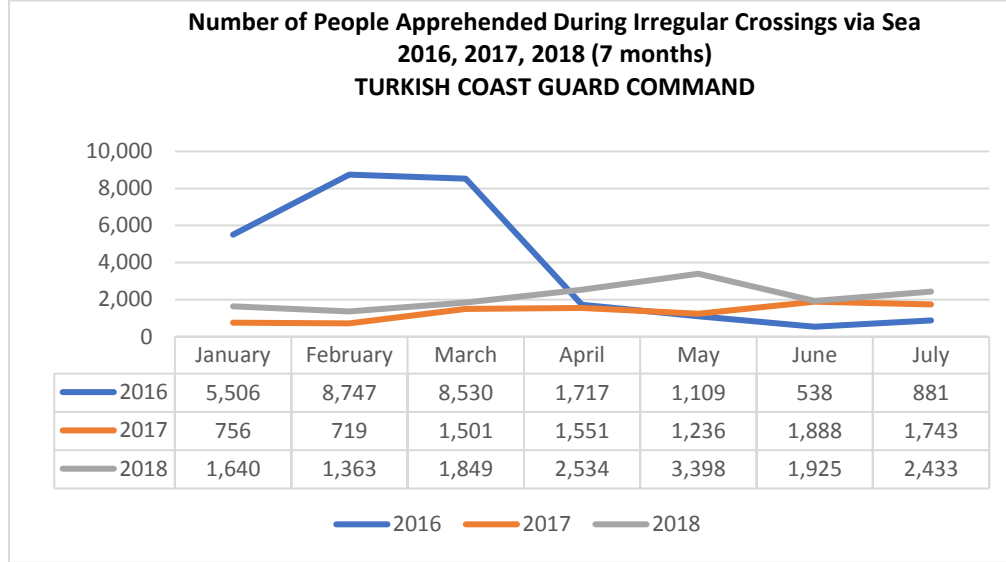


## BULLETIN ON IRREGULAR CROSSINGS 7 - JULY 2018

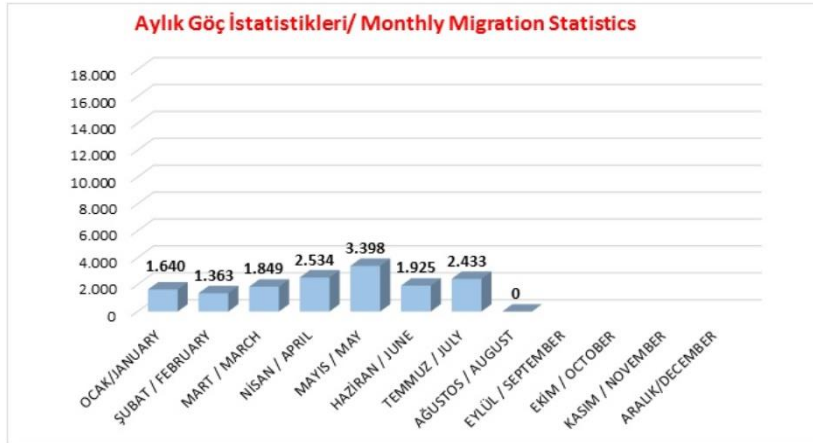
### Summary:

- In an irregular crossing incident, leaving from Mersin Silifke Coast for Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, 19 people lost their lives and 25 people went missing. 103 people were rescued alive by Turkish Coast Guard units.

- Number of the people apprehended during irregular crossings by Turkish Coast Guard in July 2018 is three times higher than the number in July 2016. It is approximately 40% above the number recorded in July 2017.



-Number of the people apprehended during irregular sea crossings by Turkish Coast Guard Command units in July 2018 is 2.433. It is seen that this number is 26% higher than the number recorded in June 2018.



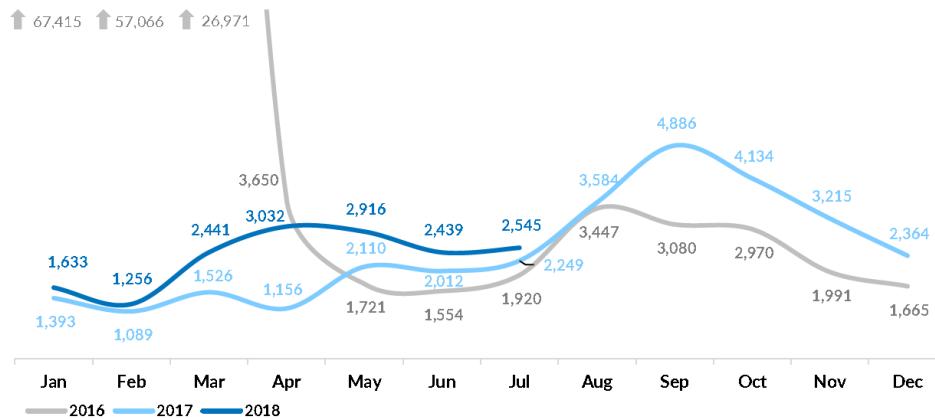
- It is observed that there is an increase in the number of Afghans and Iraqis among the people who were apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard units in July 2018. The highest number of Palestinians in the 7 months period of 2018 is recorded in July 2018. There is an overall decrease in the number of the people who come from African countries.

- Regarding the distribution of these people apprehended during irregular sea crossing by Turkish Coast Guard in terms of the coast from where the people left the country, Izmir Çeşme is the most frequented unlike the previous

months. It is noted that there is a steady increase in number of the people who left the country from Çanakkale Ayvacik coast throughout the last four months.

-According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data, 2545 people irregularly crossed to Greece via Sea in July 2018. There is a 4% increase compared to the number in June 2018. The largest group among the people who irregularly crossed to Greece via sea is Afghans.

### Monthly Arrivals 2016 to 2018



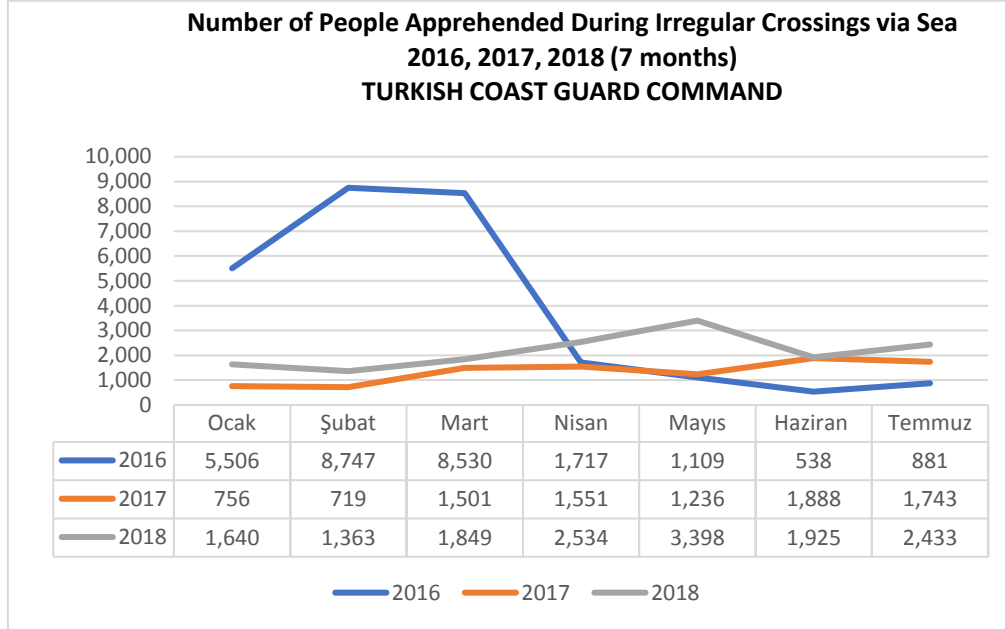
- According to the daily numbers published by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) in July 2018, 5164 people on the western land borders and 33 people on the eastern, southern and northeastern land borders, 5197 people in total, were apprehended by Border Units during irregular exists from Turkey.

-21872 people were apprehended by Border Units on land borders during irregular entrance to Turkey in July 2018. 20702 of these people were apprehended on southern, eastern and Northeastern land borders while remaining 1170 people were apprehended during irregular land crossings from Greece to Turkey.

-According to the news published in the press on various dates, 38 people were pushed back to Turkey by Bulgarian Police after they were beaten up and their belongings were seized by the police.

## ACCORDING TO THE DATA PROVIDED BY TURKISH COAST GUARD COMMAND;

Number of people apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard Command units in the relevant period (January-July) in 2016, 2017 and 2018 and their distribution in terms of months are as follows:

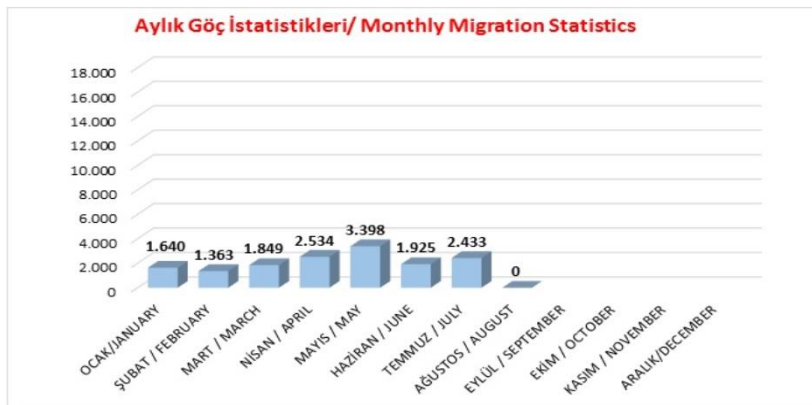


**Graph1:** According to Turkish Coast Guard data distribution of people apprehended while irregularly crossing via sea in terms of the seven-month period of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018

[http://www.sahilguvenlik.gov.tr/baskanliklar/harekat/faaliyet\\_istatistikleri/duzensiz\\_goc\\_istatistikleri.html](http://www.sahilguvenlik.gov.tr/baskanliklar/harekat/faaliyet_istatistikleri/duzensiz_goc_istatistikleri.html)

It is seen from the numbers in the graph that number of people apprehended during irregular sea crossings in July 2018 is three times higher than the number in July 2016 and it is approximately 40% above the number in July 2017.

Distribution of the people apprehended in January-July period in 2018 in terms of months is separately shown in the graph below:

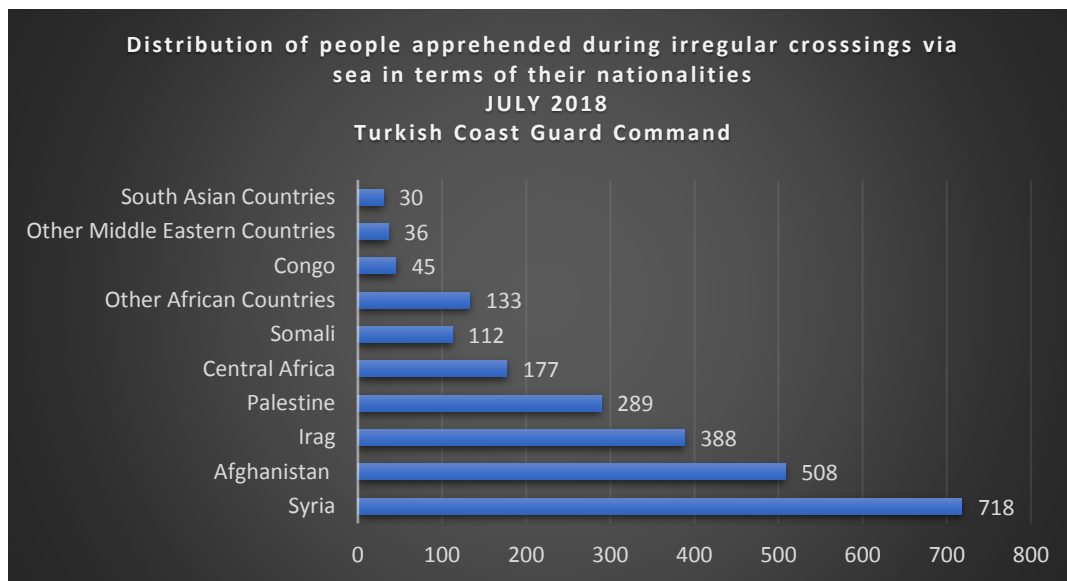


**Figure 1:** Data distribution of the number of people apprehended during irregular sea crossings in seven-month period (January-July) of 2018 according to Turkish Coast Guard Command data

[http://www.sahilguvenlik.gov.tr/baskanliklar/harekat/faaliyet\\_istatistikleri/duzensiz\\_goc\\_istatistikleri.html](http://www.sahilguvenlik.gov.tr/baskanliklar/harekat/faaliyet_istatistikleri/duzensiz_goc_istatistikleri.html)

**Number of the people apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard Command units during irregular sea crossings in July 2018 is 2433.** There is a 26% increase in this number compared to June 2018. The upward trend seen in this number since February 2018 was turned into a downward trend in June and there is a rise again in July 2018.

Distribution of these people apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard units in July 2018 in terms of their nationalities is as follows:



**Graph 2:** Distribution of the people apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard Command units during irregular crossings via sea in terms of their declared nationalities

\* The number provided by Turkish Coast Guard Command for July 2018 is 2433, however this graph is prepared by relying on the number given daily published irregular crossing incident tables, and this number is 2436.

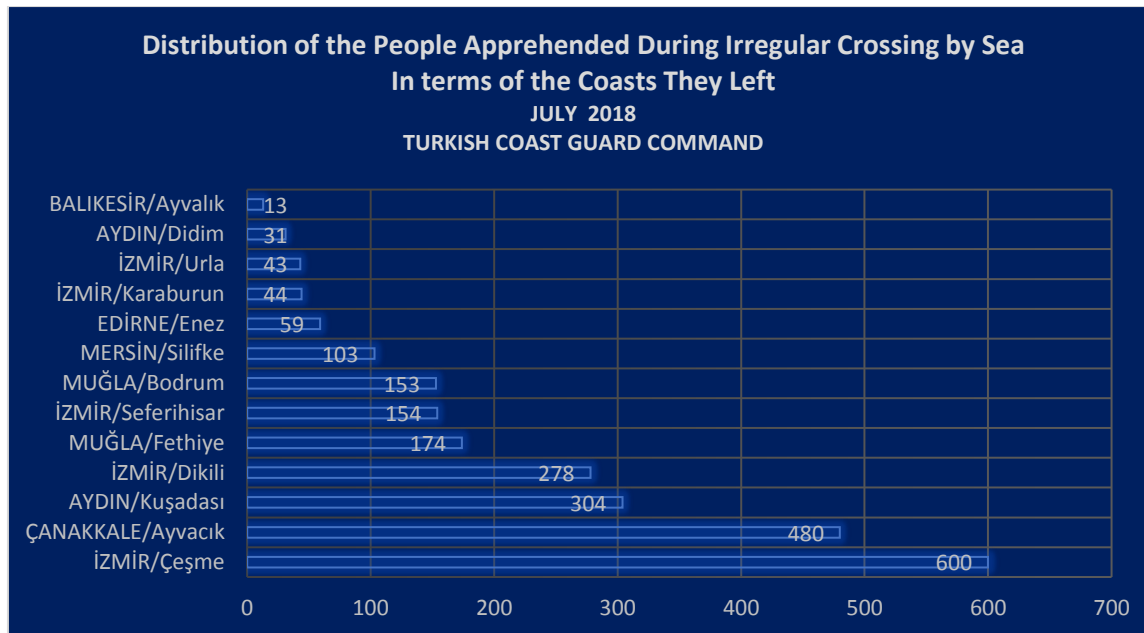
As in the previous months the largest group among the people apprehended during irregular crossings via sea is Syrians. While Central Africans were the second largest group in June 2018, it is Afghans in July as they were in April and May. The increase in number of Afghans continued in July 2018. The increase in number of Iraqis is more than three times when compared to their number in June and they became the third largest group in July. There is such an increase in number of Palestinians in July for the first time in 2018 and they represent the fourth largest group among the people apprehended during irregular crossings by sea. When the people coming from African countries as a group it is observed that there is a decrease in their numbers in general.

Regarding the substantial increase in number of Palestinians among the people apprehended during irregular crossings by sea, it is possible that this increase stems from Israel's violent and relentless attacks against Palestinians during Great March of Return, which has come to the fore in the last months and from USA's 80% cut to UNRWA's (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) budget. Due to these cuts in its budget the UN Agency has decided to limit its operations in Gaza and because of that many people working for the Agency would become unemployed and many Palestinians relying on the aids provided by UNRWA would be facing hardships in their lives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/premium-how-turkey-has-become-the-palestinian-promised-land-1.6263505>  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/180729105810213.html>

Italy and Malta are two destination countries on Central Mediterranean Route which is used to cross from Africa to Europe including Libya-Italy route which defined as “deadliest” by International Organization for Migration (IOM). These countries adopted anti-refugee policies (which are also in place in the countries on Balkan route) and because of these policies, they have not allowed the rescue ships carrying refugees to come aboard. Their attitude remains high in the world agenda in recent months. Nevertheless, it is noted that Spain pursues a more moderate refugee policy. Therefore, International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that Spain is the leading destination in 2018 and 42% of the irregular migrants and refugees arrived in Spain this year. Number of the people that have reached to Spain is five times higher than the number landed in Italy in July 2018.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this development may be one of the factors that led to the decrease in number of the people coming from African countries among the people apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard during irregular crossings by sea in July 2018. However, it is not possible to say that this is a regular tendency.

Distribution of the people apprehended by Coast Guard in July 2018 in terms of the coasts from where they left the country is as follows:



**Graph 3:** Distribution of people apprehended by Coast Guard Command units during irregular crossing via sea in July 2018 in terms of the coasts from which they exit

<sup>2</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/topics/refugeesmigrants-emergency-europe>



**Figure 2:** According to Turkish Coast Guard Command data distribution of apprehended and rescued people in terms of the Aegean coasts in July 2018, International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Source: [http://migration.iom.int/docs/Sitrep\\_Turkey\\_July\\_2018.pdf](http://migration.iom.int/docs/Sitrep_Turkey_July_2018.pdf)

When we look at the distribution of people apprehended during irregular crossings via sea, it is noticed that the ranking of coast is relatively different from the previous months in July 2018. While Izmir Dikili was the first coast in previous six months, it is in the fourth rank in July 2018. While Izmir Çeşme was the second or third coast throughout these six months, it is the first coast in July. In addition, the number of people who left country from Çanakkale Ayvacık has increased steadily since April 2018 and this coast became the second in the rankings of July 2018. Distinctively different from previous months, there is a substantial increase in the number of people who left the country from Aydın Kuşadası in July and this coast is the third one in the rank. Another salient event in July 2018 was an irregular crossing incident that occurred on Edirne Enez Sultaniçe coast. In this incident, 59 people were apprehended at sea. Irregular crossing incidents which were also reflected in the press took place on this coast in previous years and there were people who lost their lives in some of these incidents. It is probable that the destination in this incident was the Greek island Samothraki which is across Sultaniçe.<sup>3</sup> Similar to the incidents that occurred in previous months, various vehicles such as gulet and fiber vessels were used in the irregular crossing incidents that took place in Muğla Bodrum and Fethiye, Balıkesir Ayvalık and Edirne Enez Sultaniçe. Inflatable boats were used on the other coasts.

The distribution of irregular crossing incidents in terms of the coasts is mostly in line with the distribution of number of people apprehended. Most of these incidents took place on Izmir Çeşme coast (13 incidents), the second coast was Çanakkale Ayvacık and the third one was Aydın Kuşadası (11 incidents

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/enez-aciklarinda-gocmen-operasyonu-edirne-verelhaber-767291/>  
<http://www.edirnehaber.org/haber/15885/saros-korfezinde-gocmen-faciasi.html>  
<https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/luks-yatta-68-gocmen-yakalandi>

for each) and the fourth one was Izmir Dikili (6 incidents), on which highest number of incidents occurred in July 2018.

In an irregular crossing incident from Mersin Silifke to Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on July 18, 2018, upon a call for help of a group of 150 people who were 30km far from Northern Cyprus shores Turkish Coast Guard units rescued 103 people who were Syrians. The units found that 19 people lost their lives and 25 people were missing.<sup>4</sup>

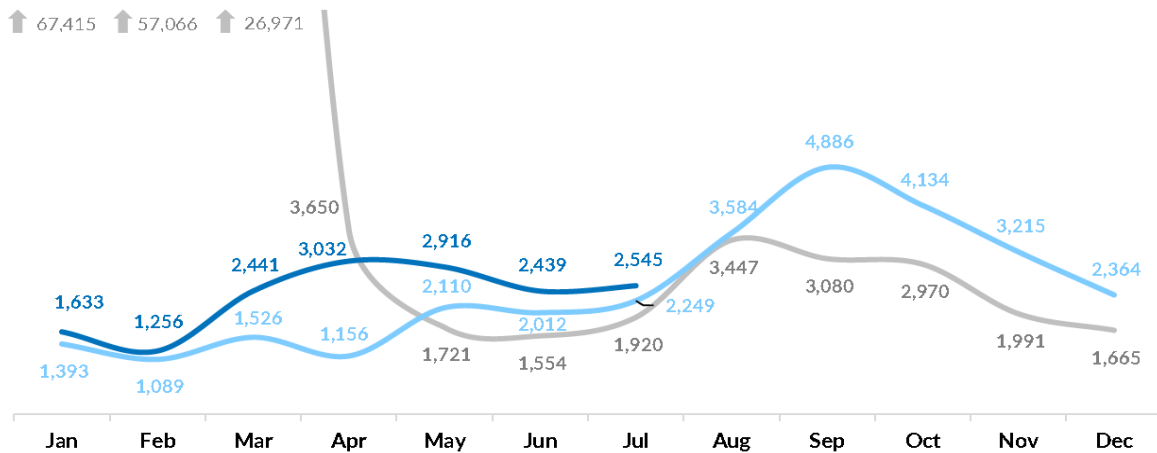
**Note:** According to Turkish Coast Guard Command data, 384 people were collectively apprehended by Gendarmerie, Police and Coast Command units in July 2018. There is a 36% decrease in this number compared to June and 74.5% decrease in compared to May 2018. In July 2018, 2 smugglers were apprehended during these joint operations. 9 organizers were apprehended by Coast Guard Command. Among these organizers, there were people who were Ukrainian, Turkish and Afghan nationals.

**ACCORDING TO UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) DATA;**

**2545 people irregularly crossed to Greek islands via sea in July 2018.<sup>5</sup> There is a 4% increase in this number compared to the number recorded, 2439, in June 2018.** Moreover, the downward tendency observed in the number of people who irregularly crossed to Greek island after April 2018, although there is not a significant change, has turned into an upward trend again.

Distribution of the people who irregularly crossed to Greece via sea during 2018 and previous years 2016 and 2017 is as follows:

### Monthly Arrivals 2016 to 2018



**Figure 3:** UNHCR data for the relevant months of 2016, 2017 and 2018, distribution of the numbers of irregularly crossed people via sea in terms of months

Source: Greece Sea Arrivals Dashboard, July 2018

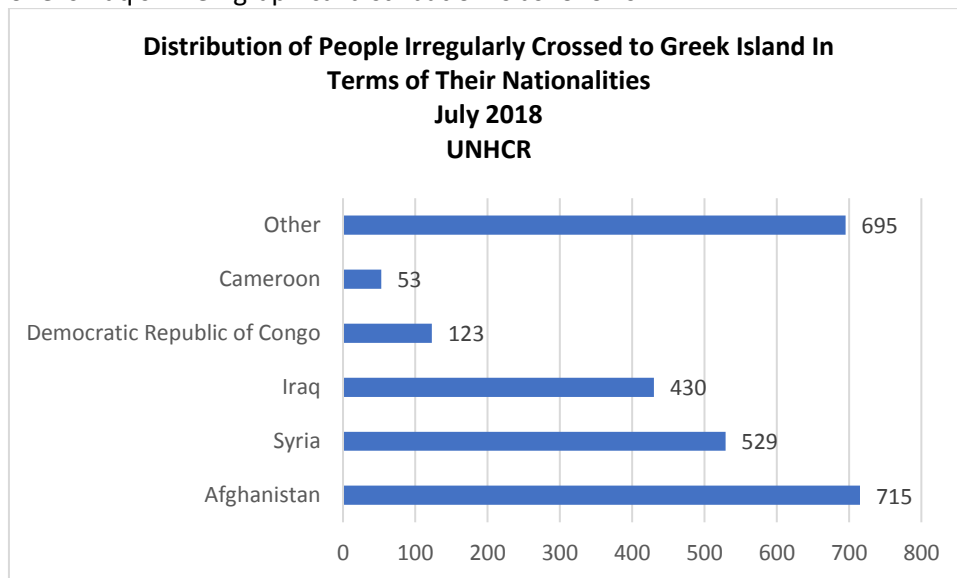
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65159>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sahilguvenlik.gov.tr/haberdetay/2018/07Temmuz/18temmuztasucu.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR Greece Sea Arrivals Dashboard- July 2018

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65159>

According to the numbers provided in UNHCR’s June and July 2018 Dashboards, regarding the distribution of people who irregularly crossed to Greek islands in terms of their nationality it is observed that the first largest group is Afghans as it was the case in June 2018. Second group is Syrians and third one is Iraqis. Their graphical distribution is as follows:



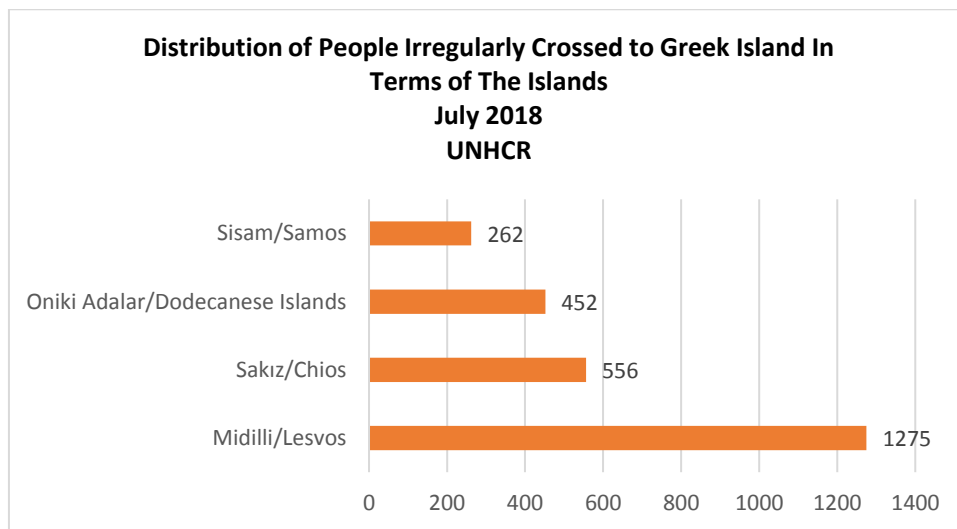
**Graph 4:** Distribution of people who irregularly crossed to Greek islands in terms of their nationalities

**Source:** Greece Sea Arrivals Dashboards June2018 and July 2018

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65159>

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/64636>

Distribution of these people in terms the islands to which they irregularly crossed is as follows:



**Graph 5:** According to data provided by UNHCR through monthly published Dashboards, distribution of the people who irregularly crossed to Greece via sea in terms of the islands they arrived in

**Source:** Greece Sea Arrivals Dashboards June2018 and July 2018

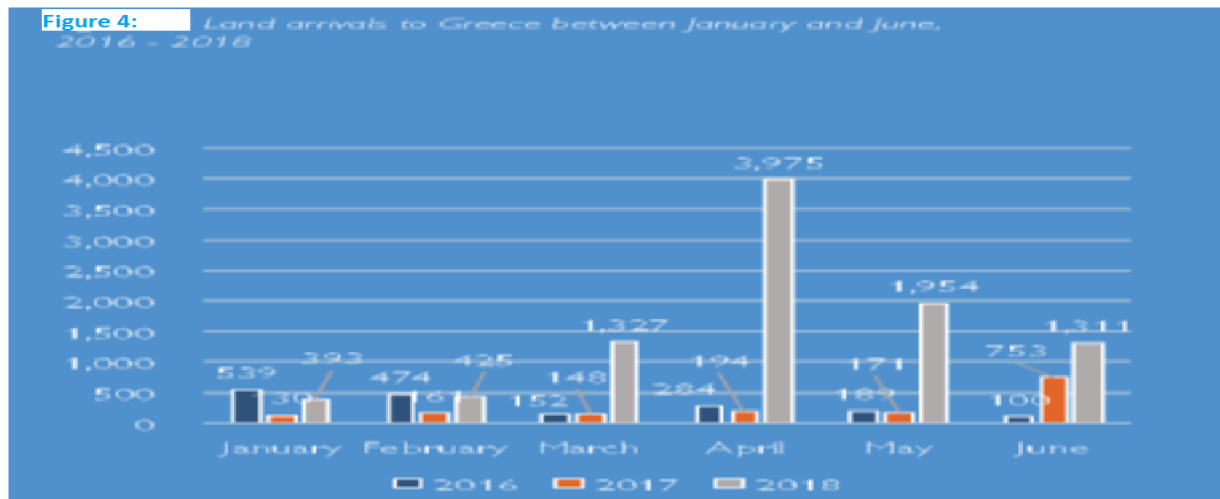
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/65159>

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/64636>



As seen in the graph, most of the people who irregularly crossed to Greece via sea arrived in Lesbos in July 2018 as it was the case in the previous months. The second mostly crossed island is Chios. It is stated in July 2018 Dashboard that the largest group among those who irregularly crossed to Lesbos is Afghans, while Syrians is the largest group among the ones who arrived in Chios in 2018.

**Note:** In June 2018 issue of IOM's (International Organization for Migration) report titled as "Mixed Migration Flow in The Mediterranean"<sup>6</sup> distribution of the number of people who irregularly crossed to Greece from Turkey by land in the first half of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 is given as follows:



**Figure 4:** International Organization for Migration: Distribution of the people who irregularly crossed to Greece from Turkey by land in the first half of 2016, 2017 and 2018 in terms of months.

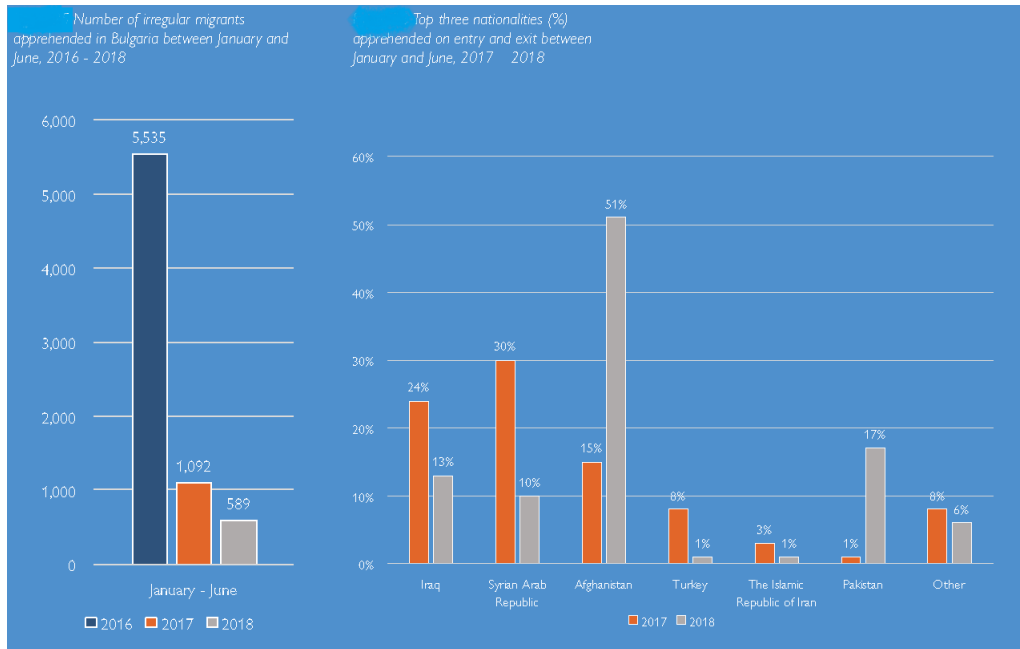
The report indicates that the number of people irregularly crossed from Turkey to Greece by land represents 41% of the total number (total number of sea and land arrivals). The number recorded in 2018 regarding the land arrivals is the highest number since 2015.<sup>7</sup>

According to the same report, 589 irregular migrants were apprehended by Bulgarian security forces in January-June period in 2018. One fourth of these people were were apprehended during irregular crossing to Bulgaria on Turkish-Bulgarian land border.<sup>8</sup> The graphs including data related to Bulgaria in the report are as follows:

<sup>6</sup> [http://migration.iom.int/docs/Flows\\_Compilation\\_Report\\_June\\_2018.pdf](http://migration.iom.int/docs/Flows_Compilation_Report_June_2018.pdf), p.19

<sup>7</sup> [ibid]

<sup>8</sup> [ibid], p. 24

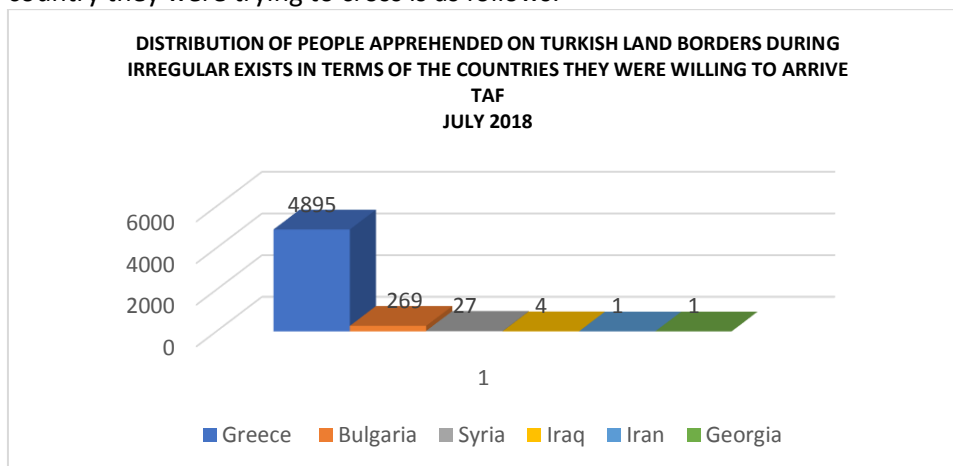


**Figure 5:** International Organization for Migration (IOM): Distribution of numbers of the people apprehended inside Bulgaria and during irregular entrance and exit on Bulgarian land borders in January-June period of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in terms of the years and nationalities.

**THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE APPREHENDED WHILE IRREGULARLY CROSSING THROUGH LAND BORDERS ACCORDING TO TURKISH ARMED FORCES (TAF-TSK) DATA:**

According to daily published data by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), **5197 people in total were apprehended while trying to irregularly cross to Greece, Bulgaria, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Georgia via land borders in July 2018. 5164 of these people were the ones apprehended during irregular exit from Turkey on western land borders, while 33 of them were apprehended on eastern, southern and North eastern land borders.** There is a 64% increase in number of people apprehended on western land borders when compared to the number in June 2018, while number of the people apprehended on southern and eastern borders decreased (10 people less) in July 2018 compared to June.

Distribution of the people apprehended by Border Units during irregular crossings by land in terms of the country they were trying to cross is as follows:



**Graph 6:** According daily data provided by TAF distribution of the people apprehended on western, southern and eastern borders during irregular exits from Turkey in terms of the countries they were trying to reach to

There is a 58% increase in number of the people apprehended on western land borders while irregularly crossing to Greece compared to the number in June 2018. There was a significant decrease in the number of people apprehended on land borders during irregular crossings to Greece in March. The number started to rise again, however, as there was a 38% decrease in June following May. It is observed that the number increased again in July 2018. As mentioned in the previous issues of this bulletin, this increase may be stemming from the deteriorating conditions in Greek islands which push people to cross directly to the mainland.<sup>9</sup> Regarding the number of people apprehended on Turkish-Bulgarian land border, it is observed that the number recorded in July 2018 is the highest number in the course of 2018. It is two times higher than the number (128) recorded in April 2018, which was the highest number until July. This is also five times higher than the number (49) in June 2018.

The number of people apprehended on southern land borders while trying to irregularly exit from Turkey continued to stay low as it was the case June. There was a sharp decrease in number of the people apprehended during irregular crossings to Syria in March 2018. This number increased in April and following that there was a significant decrease again in this number. The number recorded in June is the lowest one between January and July 2018. There is a slight increase in July (27 people) compared to June 2018 (19 people). On eastern borders, the lowest number is recorded in July 2018. Although the number regarding these borders in July is the lowest, for the first time in 2018 in May and June there were people apprehended during irregular crossings by land to Georgia. There is one person apprehended on that border in July 2018.

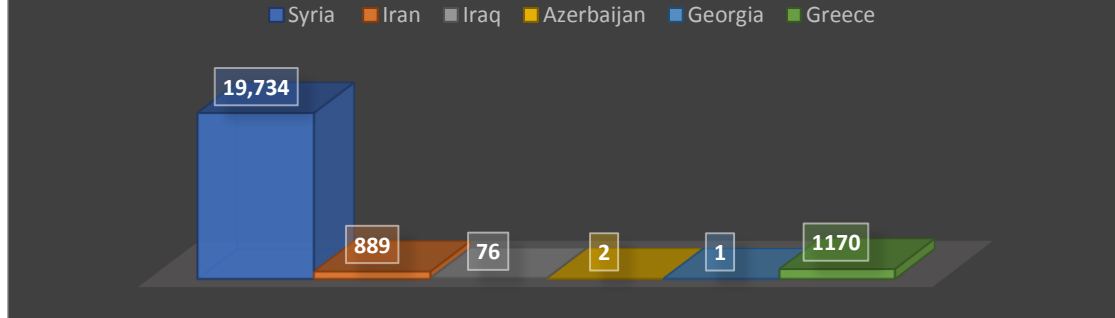
According to daily data published by Turkish Armed Forces, **21872 people were apprehended by Border Units while irregularly crossing to Turkey from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Greece with which Turkey shares land borders.** 20702 of these people were the ones apprehended during irregular crossing on southern, eastern and north-eastern land borders. The remaining 1170 people were apprehended on Turkish-Greek land border while irregularly entering to Turkey. Distribution of these people apprehended during irregular entrance to Turkey in July 2018 in terms of the country where they were coming from is as follows:

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<sup>9</sup>For a brief assessment please see:

<http://www.multeci.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/D%C3%9CZENS%C4%B0Z-GE%C3%87%C4%B0%C5%9ELER-B%C3%9CLTEN%C4%B0-5-1-31-MAYIS-2018.pdf>

**DISTRIBUTION OF THE PEOPLE APPREHENDED ON LAND BORDERS  
DURING IRREGULAR CROSSING TO TURKEY IN TERMS OF THE COUNTRY  
THEY WERE COMING FROM  
TAF  
JULY 2018**



**Graph 7:** According to daily published data by TAF, distribution of people apprehended during irregular entrance to Turkey on southern, eastern and western borders in terms of the country they were coming from

There is about a 70% increase in number of the people who try to irregularly enter to Turkey from Syria through southern borders in July 2018 when compared to the number in June 2018. It is noted that the downward trend observed in this number since April 2018 (there was sharper decrease in June 2018) turned to an upward one again. It is probable that this increase has stemmed from that Syrian regime forces that have been making preparations for attacking Idlib, a city with a population of 3 million people.<sup>10</sup> In addition, another reason leading to this increase may be that the people were necessarily evacuated from the places which were taken by the regime forces to Idlib in June 2018.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, regarding the eastern borders, in parallel with high numbers of Afghans crossing the borders in spring, the number of people apprehended while irregularly crossing from Iran to Turkey was at its highest point in March 2018. However, probably due to impact of the policies implemented after this influx there was a downward trend in this number in April 2018. Nevertheless the numbers turned to be upward again in July 2018 and it is observed that the number of people apprehended during irregular crossings from Iran to Turkey increased more than 2.5 times in July 2018 compared to June 2018. This increase may be a result of that there are people including Afghans thinking about leaving Iran because of the recently increasing economic instability in the country and Iranian government's violent attitude toward the protestors.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, although there are news reports that peace talks with Taliban was in process after the ending of ceasefire, Taliban reinstated and increased its attacks and civilian casualties reached high levels in the first half of 2018 as stated in UNAMA's (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) reports. Therefore, these developments may have caused the increase in the number of people who irregularly crossed to Turkey through Turkish-Iranian border.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://tr.sputniknews.com/ortadogu/201807121034263054-idlib-suriye-savas-son-verecek/>  
<https://tr.sputniknews.com/ortadogu/201807271034494936-suriye-ordusu-idlibi-kurtarmaya-hazirlaniyor/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/suriyenin-guneyinden-zorunlu-tahliyeler-suruyor/1211160>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.timeturk.com/iran-da-doviz-kurundaki-artisan-afgan-multecilere-etkisi/haber-935584>  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/anti-government-protesters-injured-irans-khuzestan-180702190117872.html>  
<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz-haber/irandaki-gosteriler-ve-muhtemel-sonuclari/1198615>

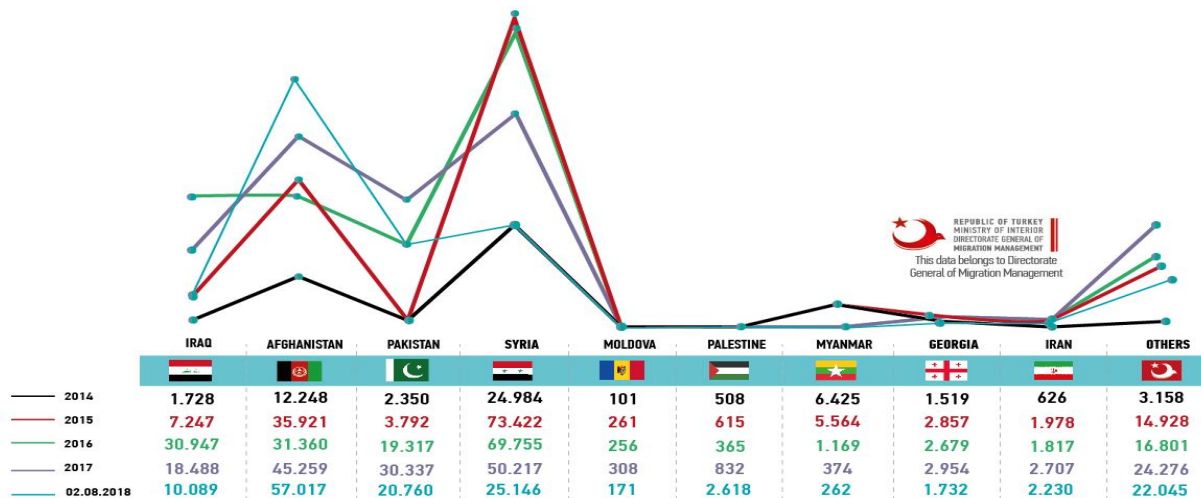
<sup>13</sup> <http://tr.euronews.com/2018/07/15/bm-raporu-2018-in-ilk-yarisi-afgan-siviller-icin-en-kanli-donem-oldu>  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/07/1014762>

There was a decrease in the number of people apprehended on Turkish-Greek land border during irregular crossing to Turkey in June 2018, however there is an approximately two-times increase in this number in July 2018 compared to June. As stated in previous issues of this bulletin and in international press because of the increasing anti-refugee policies in Europe such as the restrictions posed upon family reunification in Germany, people may tend to irregularly cross to Turkey by land by reversing the route which they have used to cross central European countries.<sup>14</sup>

For the first time in 2018, in June it was recorded that there were 14 people apprehended during irregular crossing from Bulgaria to Turkey by land. However, there are no people apprehended during irregular crossing from Bulgaria to Turkey in July 2018. **Nonetheless, two push back cases which appear to be separate events were reflected in the press in July 2018. In the news dated 11 July 2018 it is stated that 5 Pakistani people who irregularly crossed to Bulgaria through land border in Kırkkale were pushed back to Turkey by Bulgarian police after taking their belongings by force and beating them.**<sup>15</sup> In addition, according to another news report dated as 26 July 2018, 22 Pakistanis, 7 Iraqis and 4 Afghans (33 people in total) who followed the same route with the previous ones were pushed back by Bulgarian police and as in the previous case their belongings were seized and they were beaten.<sup>16</sup>

Turkish Armed Forces data regarding the people apprehended during irregular crossing on land borders are as stated in the previous pages and the statistics published by Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management regarding the irregular migrants apprehended in Turkey, including the numbers recorded in July 2018, are as follows:

#### DISTRIBUTION OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS BY CITIZENSHIP BY YEAR

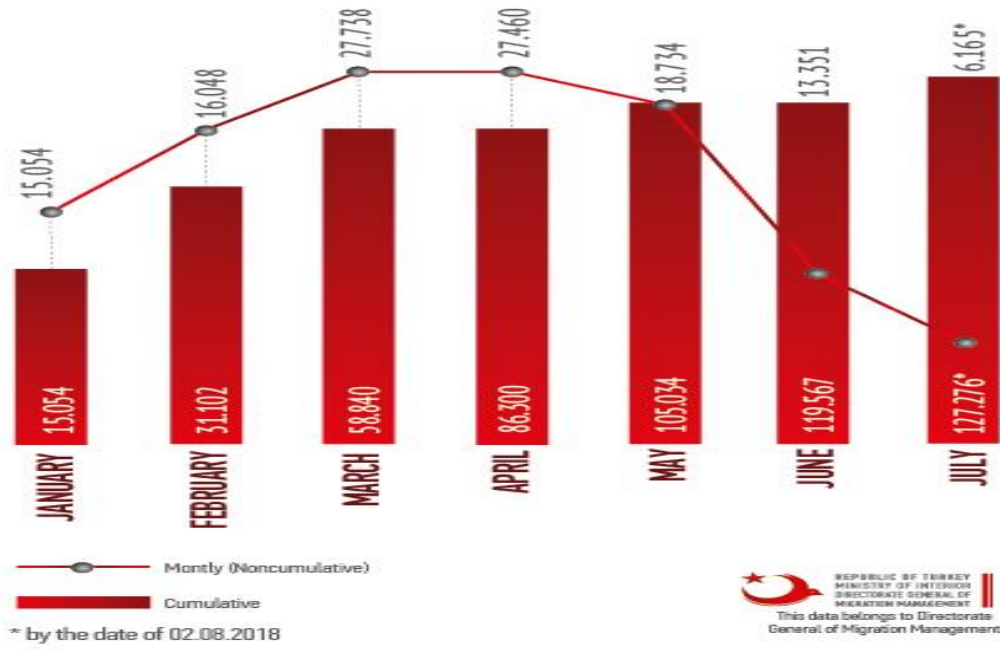


<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-44240903/refugee-crisis-the-syrians-abandoning-europe?utm>  
<http://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/9233/sharp-increase-in-refugee-suicides-in-hesse-germany>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.haberturk.com/kirklareli-haberleri/62112667-bulgaristana-yasa-disi-gectiler-paralarindan-olup-donduler>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.trakyagazetesi.com.tr/genel/avrupa-hayalinden-dayakla-uyandilar-h17082.html>

### MONTHLY AND CUMULATIVE TOTALS OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS IN 2018



**Figure 6:** Directorate General of Migration Management, graphs related the apprehended migrants in Turkey  
[http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/duzensiz-goc\\_363\\_378\\_4710\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/duzensiz-goc_363_378_4710_icerik)