

## UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

### Internship Report – Ms. Maya Koca

**Duration:** 2 Weeks in October 2025 | **Location:** UNHCR Türkiye

**Supervisor:** Selin Unal, UNHCR Türkiye Spokesperson

31.10.2025, Ankara

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### Internship Aim

During her two-week engagement with UNHCR, Ms. Maya Koca contributed to the integration of sustainability and protection principles within the organization's work. Drawing on the 2030 Agenda's vision of "*leaving no one behind*," she supported efforts to connect environmental and social sustainability with refugee protection. Through this experience, she gained a deeper understanding of how global development goals can be translated into practical, rights-based action—an intersection she intends to explore further in her future studies.

Throughout the internship, Ms. Koca experienced a professional, intercultural working environment and actively supported several aspects of our office's work. With a particular interest in *Science for Sustainable Societies*, she researched and analyzed UNHCR programmes in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—especially SDG 10 (*Reduced Inequalities*), SDG 13 (*Climate Action*), and SDG 16 (*Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*).

She also developed a clearer understanding of UNHCR's mandate as the global refugee institution, including its protection role, its cooperation with states to find durable solutions for refugees, and its efforts to prevent and address statelessness.

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### Main Tasks

1. **Supported awareness initiatives** by contributing to materials that link environmental sustainability, human rights, and refugee protection — including the emerging discussion on climate-induced displacement.
2. **Mapped UNHCR programmes against key SDGs**, identifying areas of alignment and opportunities for further inclusion.
3. **Assisted research on inclusive development approaches** that promote the "*Leave No One Behind*" principle and explore how refugee communities can participate in local sustainability planning.

### Skills Gained

- Developed a stronger understanding of the link between sustainability, human rights, and refugee protection within the UN framework.
- Gained foundational research and analytical skills through exploring the application of SDGs to inclusion and climate-related displacement.
- Enhanced communication, teamwork, and intercultural collaboration skills through contributing to joint awareness activities and discussions on sustainable development.

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### Supervisor's Note

During her time as an intern at UNHCR, Ms. Koca demonstrated exceptional motivation, maturity, and curiosity. She was a collaborative and thoughtful team member who brought fresh perspectives and a positive attitude to our work. Maya adapted quickly to a multi-cultural environment, showing respect and genuine interest in the experiences of colleagues from diverse backgrounds. She approaches every challenge with composure, curiosity, and a smile, making her a valued member of the team.

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Selin Unal, Spokesperson

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