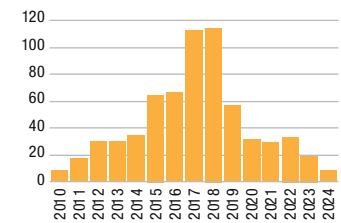


# Refugee Labor Exploitation in Türkiye and Europe's Plastic Waste

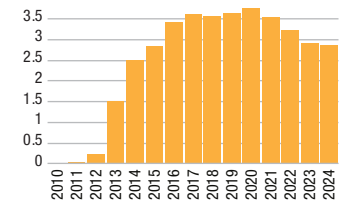


## Refugee Origins

Instability in neighboring countries have driven millions of refugees into Turkey. Because the country has limited industrial recycling capacity, the dirty and dangerous work of sorting, cleaning and processing plastic waste is frequently done by hand, often by refugees and children. [European exporters profit financially](#) by falsely claiming the waste is pre-cleaned and sorted when in fact it's often too contaminated to be recycled. These predatory practices, combined with harsh EU anti-immigrant border policies, contribute to the exploitation of refugees in Turkey's plastic waste industry.



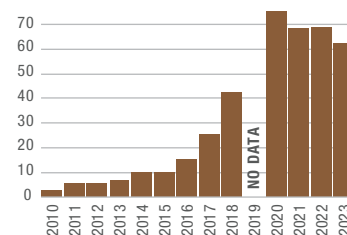
Migrant applications for international protection in Türkiye, 2010-23 (thousands).



Syrian refugees under temporary protection, 2010-23 (millions).

## Sources of Waste

After China's 2018 ban on imported plastic waste, Türkiye became Europe's plastic dumping ground, receiving [nearly 70 million kilograms of plastic every month](#). The [results](#) include chemical pollution from burning, soil degradation from toxins, and marine contamination from illegal dumping.



Total plastic waste imports into Türkiye 2010-23, in million kg.



MAIN MAP: Top 10 exporters of plastic waste to Türkiye, 2023, with net weight of exports, in million kg.



Largest refugee population origin states