

**COI QUERY**

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Question(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Information on societal and state perception / treatment of Syrian nationals under temporary protection in Turkey</a> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 <a href="#">Documented cases of violence against Syrians in Turkey</a></li><li>1.2 <a href="#">Syrians in Turkish media</a></li></ol></li><li>2. <a href="#">Information on whether protection is available and is granted by the Turkish authorities to Syrian nationals under temporary protection that face societal/state abuse</a></li></ol>
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## COI QUERY RESPONSE

### 1. Information on societal and state perception / treatment of Syrian nationals under temporary protection in Turkey

In June 2019, Turkey hosted approximately 4 million registered refugees and international protection applicants<sup>1</sup>, including over 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection.<sup>2</sup>

Despite an initial welcome of Syrian refugees in Turkey as ‘guests’<sup>3</sup>, the societal attitude has changed with the worsening economic situation, with Turkish nationals expressing wishes that Syrians would return to Syria.<sup>4</sup> The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) however noted, in a September 2019 study, that despite this wish, social acceptance of Syrian refugees in Turkey is still ‘very high’ [informal translation].<sup>5</sup>

Alan Makovsky, a senior fellow for National Security and International Policy at the Center for American Progress (CAP), described the perception of Syrians in Turkey in his March 2019 study as follows:

‘The smooth integration of Syrians into Turkish society is hampered by a profound difference in objectives and perceptions; the majority of Syrians want Turkish citizenship, while the majority of Turks want the Syrians to leave. Syrians say that they feel culturally close to the Turks—perhaps for reasons stemming from shared religious values and customs—whereas the Turks tend to say they see the Syrians as culturally alien.’<sup>6</sup>

In a November 2017 poll by CAP 79 % of Turkish nationals held unfavorable views towards Syrian refugees, while 15 % expressed favorable views. 78 % of respondents agreed with the idea that ‘Turkey spends too much time and money caring for refugees from other countries and should focus more on its own citizens.’<sup>7</sup>

The source indicates that ‘much of the hostility toward Syrian immigrants—and other Arab immigrants as well as Afghans—focused on their presence in the cities, where they are perceived to be begging, undercutting wages, raising rents, and collecting state benefits such as healthcare.’<sup>8</sup>

Makovsky found that the 28 % of the Turkish were preoccupied with ‘rising unemployment among Turks, which they blamed on the Syrians. Begging came in second at 18 percent, followed by

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, UNHCR Turkey Operational Update, June 2019, [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, UNHCR Turkey Operational Update, June 2019, [url](#); Turkey, Ministry of Interior, DGMM, Temporary Protection, Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Year, updated 27 November 2019, [url](#)

<sup>3</sup> Atlantic Council, Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees? Turkey’s Policy Response and Challenges, September 2018, [url](#), pp. 3-4; ICMPD, Working Paper: Assessing the Development Displacement Nexus in Turkey, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 35,37

<sup>4</sup> Makovsky, A., Turkey’s Refugee Dilemma, CAP, 13 March 2019, [url](#); Economist (The), As Turkey’s economy slows, attitudes toward Syrian refugees harden, 27 April 2019, [url](#); NBC News, Syrian refugees who fled to Turkey face backlash, 18 March 2019, [url](#); Los Angeles Time, Anti-refugee sentiment grows in Turkey as government begins to send Syrians back, 25 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> KAS, Syrische Flüchtlinge In Der Türkei, September 2019, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>6</sup> Makovsky, A., Turkey’s Refugee Dilemma, CAP, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> CAP, Turkey’s ‘New Nationalism’ Amid Shifting Politics, 11 February 2018, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> CAP, Turkey’s ‘New Nationalism’ Amid Shifting Politics, 11 February 2018, [url](#)



nonpayment of taxes at 16 percent, rising terrorism and security problems at 13 percent, and lower wages at 8 percent. Only 7 percent said, “nothing [about the refugees] upsets me”.<sup>9</sup>

A July 2019 study by the Istanbul Kadir Has University on public perception of the Turkish foreign policy indicates that when asked what policy should Turkey adopt towards refugees, 57,6 % of the respondents ‘prefers to end receiving refugees, and only 7 percent appear content with the existing Syrian refugees in Turkey’.<sup>10</sup>

In their February 2019 report, Doctors of the World stated that majority of Syrian refugees felt safe in their communities in Turkey. Nevertheless, the source added that some Syrians ‘also reported harassment from authorities or from host communities, discrimination and violence against them due to their refugee status. Violence against refugee children and youth, in particular, was mentioned.’<sup>11</sup>

The perceived hostility towards Syrians has extended towards other Arabs in Turkey, including Palestinians.<sup>12</sup>

Referring to several sources, a 2017 article by the Middle East Institute indicated that Turkey limited the issuance of exit permits for those Syrians who hold a university degree, as a measure to keep skilled Syrians in Turkey, including by granting them the possibility to obtain Turkish citizenship.<sup>13</sup>

In August 2019, Turkey granted citizenship to 47,000 adult Syrians and their children. The Turkish Minister of Interior stated that ‘[m]ost of them are teachers, engineers and qualified people who can make their own living.’<sup>14</sup> The original proposals to grant citizenship to Syrians in 2016 were met with disapproval by the Turkish society.<sup>15</sup>

In June 2019, Hayri Türkylmaz, mayor of Mudanya, forbade Syrians to enter public beaches to prevent ‘Syrians disturb[ing] Turkey’s own people’ in June 2019.<sup>16</sup> In Gazipasa (Antalya), an attempt to impose a similar measure was rejected by Gazapasa’s mayor, stating that the measure is ‘against Article 10 of the Constitution’.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Makovsky, A., Turkey’s Refugee Dilemma, CAP, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

<sup>10</sup> Kadir Has Üniversitesi, Research on Public Perceptions on Turkish Foreign Policy – 2019, [url](#), July 2019; Kadir Has Üniversitesi, Public Perceptions on Turkish Foreign Policy, 4 July 2019, [url](#), p. 84

<sup>11</sup> Doctors of the World, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Turkey, February 2019, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>12</sup> ACW, Turkey’s Nativist Turn Against Syrian Refugees and Other Arabs, 23 July 2019, [url](#); Haaretz, Palestinians Were Spared Turkey’s Rising anti-Arab Hate. Until Now, 16 July 2019, [url](#), accessed 11 November 2019; Jadaliyya, Racism and Syrians in Turkey: The Political Economy of Discrimination, 3 September 2019, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> Middle East Institute, Burden or Boon? Turkey’s Tactical Treatment of the Syrian Refugee Crisis, 10 January 2017, [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> Hürriyet Daily News, Turkey granted citizenship to over 92,000 Syrians: Interior Minister, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

<sup>15</sup> ACW, Turkey’s Nativist Turn Against Syrian Refugees and Other Arabs, 23 July 2019, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Erdogan: Syrian refugees could become Turkish citizens, 4 July 2016, [url](#); BBC News, Turks hit back at Erdogan plan to give Syrians citizenship, 5 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>16</sup> Ahval, Opposition mayor bans Syrians from beach in western Turkey, 8 June 2019, [url](#)

<sup>17</sup> Ipa News, Mayor of Turkish district returns motion to ban Syrians from beaches, 12 June 2019, [url](#)

555 179 Syrians who benefit from temporary protection reside in Istanbul, according to the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM).<sup>18</sup> By the summer of 2019, reports indicated that in practice, close to one million Syrians were residing in Istanbul.<sup>19</sup>

In Istanbul, shop signs must contain at least 75 % of Turkish words.<sup>20</sup> In July 2019, the municipality ordered 700 business signs in Arabic to be replaced by Turkish ones.<sup>21</sup>

On 22 July 2019, Istanbul Governor's office issued a statement ordering all unregistered Syrians to return to the provinces where they were registered until 20 August; those who would not comply with the set deadline 'will be sent under the instructions of the Interior Ministry to the provinces where they are registered'.<sup>22</sup> The deadline for returns was later extended until 30 October 2019.<sup>23</sup>

On 15 November 2019, the Istanbul Governor's office announced that more than 6 000 Syrians had been sent to temporary housing centres in other provinces since early July 2019.<sup>24</sup>

In October 2019, human rights organisations denounced Turkey's forced deportations to Syria. The Turkish authorities denied deportations, stating that Syrians returned 'voluntarily [...] to Syria'.<sup>25</sup>

Doctors of the World found that Syrian refugees face various challenges in Turkey, including 'language barriers, lack of recognition of their certification, skills and experience and obstacles such as obtaining work permits as well as discrimination and exploitation leaving them vulnerable to short-term, low-wage jobs in the informal sector. Perception of these barriers are higher amongst refugees living in rural areas'.<sup>26</sup>

On access to employment and labour market, '[o]verwhelmingly, refugees have continued to engage in informal employment, occasionally becoming subject to exploitation and discrimination as a result', according to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)<sup>27</sup>. The same source notes that Syrians are unable to legally own a property in Turkey because of legal restrictions set by the Law on Property No. 2644. Therefore, it is a common practice that Syrians buy a property which is officially registered under a Turkish citizen.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Turkey, Ministry of Interior, DGMM, Temporary Protection, Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Province, updated 27 November 2019, [url](#)

<sup>19</sup> Al Jazeera, Deadline extended for unregistered Syrians to leave Istanbul, 21 August 2019, [url](#); BBC News, Syrian migrants in Turkey face deadline to leave Istanbul, 20 August 2019, [url](#); DW, Turkey clamps down on Syrian refugees, 14 September 2019, [url](#)

<sup>20</sup> Al Monitor, Turkey removes Arabic shop signs as refugee problem simmers, 17 July 2019, [url](#); Hürriyet Daily News, 29 June 2018, Istanbul municipality takes down shop signs in Arabic, [url](#); Reuters, 'They want to kill you': Anger at Syrians erupts in Istanbul, 9 July 2019, [url](#); Hürriyet Daily News, Istanbul municipality takes down shop signs in Arabic, 29 June 2019, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), Turkey's war on Arabic signs reflects intolerance of Syrian refugees, [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> National (The), Violence against Istanbul's Syrians raises fears of renewed refugee backlash, 10 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> HRW, Unofficial Translation of Turkish Provincial Governor Press Statement, 16 October 2019, [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> AP News, As warm welcome chills, Turkey clamps down on Syrians, 21 August 2019, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> Reuters, Turkey removed more than 6,000 Syrians from Istanbul: governor's office, 15 November 2019, [url](#)

<sup>25</sup> AI, Sent to a war zone: Turkey's illegal deportations of Syrian refugees [EUR 44/1102/2019], 25 October 2019, [url](#); HRW, Turkey: Syrians Being Deported to Danger, 24 October 2019, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> Doctors of the World, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Turkey, February 2019, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>27</sup> ICMPD, Working Paper: Assessing the Development Displacement Nexus in Turkey, November 2018, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>28</sup> ICMPD, Working Paper: Assessing the Development Displacement Nexus in Turkey, November 2018, [url](#), p. 29

## 1.1 Documented cases of violence against Syrians in Turkey

An article by Al Monitor recalls that on 15 July 2016, the night of the attempted military coup in Turkey, more than 30 Syrian shops in Onder, a neighbourhood with strong refugee presence in Ankara were attacked. Since then, no similar incidents were reported in Onder, according to the source.<sup>29</sup>

According to International Crisis Group, in June 2018 three persons were killed after an argument between Syrians and locals in the southern city of Gaziantep. On 2 July 2018, some 500 residents protested against Syrians in the city of Bursa, and Syrians-owned shops were attacked.<sup>30</sup>

On 28 September 2018, two Turkish youths were killed by Syrians after an argument between their families in Sanliurfa in southeast Turkey. In the following days, 'angry mobs of locals attacked Syrians and their businesses'.<sup>31</sup>

On 9 February 2019, attacks on Syrian shops in the Esenyurt district in Istanbul left 12 people injured, according to the Middle East Eye (MEE).<sup>32</sup>

On 29 June 2019, various properties including Syrian-owned shops a restaurant employing Syrians were attacked by a mob in the Kucukcekmece district of Istanbul because of a rumour that a Syrian male harassed a local girl.<sup>33</sup> According to Reuters, '[s]uch large-scale clashes are rare, with only one other big attack happening this year, also in western Istanbul, in February. Small incidents are more frequently shared by Syrians on social media, and some fear tensions are on the rise.'<sup>34</sup>

However, another source wrote about the incident that '[a]t the end of June, a crowd in Küçükçekmece, Istanbul, threw stones at Syrians' houses and stores after fake allegations of the rape of a young girl by a Syrian man. The police did not take any action to disperse them, despite the incident happening in front of the police station.'<sup>35</sup> Middle East Eye wrote about the incident that the '[p]olice used tear gas and water cannon to disperse the rioters.'<sup>36</sup>

In September 2019, crowds attacked Syrian business in the city of Adana after a rumour of a sexual abuse by a Syrian man spread, which proved to be false. The police detained 138 persons suspected of causing damage at the event or encouraging it on social media.<sup>37</sup>

In October 2019, BBC News reported on a Syrian boy who reportedly committed suicide after being bullied at a Turkish school.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Al Monitor, Syrian refugees becoming scapegoats for Turkey's troubles, 11 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisiswatch June - July 2018, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> Irish Times, Syrians in Turkey face anger and violence, 7 November 2018, [url](#)

<sup>32</sup> MEE, 'This is Turkey!': Syrian refugees face the force of growing Turkish resentment, 5 April 2019, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> ACW, Turkey's Nativist Turn Against Syrian Refugees and Other Arabs, 23 July 2019, [url](#); National (The), Violence against Istanbul's Syrians raises fears of renewed refugee backlash, 10 July 2019, [url](#); France 24, Attacks against Syrians in Turkey raise fears of escalation, 12 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>34</sup> Reuters, 'They want to kill you': Anger at Syrians erupts in Istanbul, 9 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> Jadaliyya, Racism and Syrians in Turkey: The Political Economy of Discrimination, 3 September 2019, [url](#)

<sup>36</sup> MEE, As Turks clash with Syrians, a dangerous spark is lit in Istanbul, 2 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>37</sup> MEE [online video], Syrian shops attacked in Turkey over false sexual abuse claims, 23 September 2019, [url](#)

<sup>38</sup> BBC News, Syrians highlight racism after boy dies in Turkey, 7 October 2019, [url](#)

## 1.2 Syrians in Turkish media

The European Commission's May 2019 report noted that '[h]ate speech and threats directed against minorities [in Turkey] remain a serious problem. This includes hate speech in the media targeting national, ethnic and religious groups.'<sup>39</sup>

In their November 2018 report, ICMPD noted 'a role played by mass media in triggering negative attitudes towards foreigners in Turkey, Syrian refugees in particular (...)'.<sup>40</sup>

Teyit, a Turkish fact-checking organisation that investigates media coverage of events related to Syrians in Turkey reported that, between October 2016 and January 2019, they received 271 'suspicious stories' about Syrian refugees in the Turkish press. According to Teyit, 23 out of 25 stories they investigated proved to be fake.<sup>41</sup>

Hâlâ Gazeteciyiz, a Turkish media company publishing in Turkish and English, reporting on discrimination and hate speech in Turkey found that '[s]ince 2011 hate speech targeting the Syrians has become commonplace both in the pro-government and anti-government press. This is so much the case that according to 2017 Media Watch On Hate Speech Report prepared by the International Human Rights Foundation, one of the two targets of hate speech along with the Armenians is the Syrians.'<sup>42</sup>

According to a September 2019 study on racism in Turkey by Jadaliyya, an independent e-zine produced by the Arab Studies Institute<sup>43</sup>, '[d]iscourse in mainstream media depicts Syrians as burglars, beggars, criminals, as culturally different (not "modern"), and as creating social tensions.'<sup>44</sup>

Throughout 2019, the Turkish media outlets reported the arrest of dozens of Syrian nationals under the headline of being suspected of having ties with Daesh.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. Information on whether protection is available and is granted by the Turkish authorities to Syrian nationals under temporary protection who face societal/state abuse

The ICMPD noted that 'Turkey has no dedicated anti-discrimination legislation. However, its penal code contains anti-discrimination provisions concerning racism and punishments for those who discriminate on the grounds of language, race, colour or religion in employment and access to services available to the public and in the exercise of an economic activity'.<sup>46</sup>

Article 3 of the Turkish Penal Code establishes the Principle of Equal Treatment before the Law, including non-discrimination, stating:

<sup>39</sup> European Commission, Turkey 2019 Report [SWD(2019) 220 final], 29 May 2019, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>40</sup> ICMPD, Working Paper: Assessing the Development Displacement Nexus in Turkey, November 2018, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>41</sup> Teyit, Syrian Refugees: #1 The Usual Suspects, 31 January 2019, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> Hâlâ Gazeteciyiz, Discrimination and Hate Speech in Mainstream Turkish Media: Quo Vadis?, 24 September 2018, [url](#)

<sup>43</sup> For more information about the institute, see: [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> Jadaliyya, Racism and Syrians in Turkey: The Political Economy of Discrimination, 3 September 2019, [url](#)

<sup>45</sup> Anadolu Agency, Turkey arrests 43 Daesh/ISIS-linked terror suspects, 29 October 2019, [url](#); TRT World, Fifty-two Syrian nationals with ties to Daesh arrested in Turkey's Bursa, 14 February 2019, [url](#)

<sup>46</sup> ICMPD, Working Paper: Assessing the Development Displacement Nexus in Turkey, November 2018, [url](#), p. 31



'(1) [...]

(2) In the implementation of the Criminal Code no one shall receive any privilege and there shall be no discrimination against any individual on the basis of their race, language, religion, sect, nationality, colour, gender, political (or other) ideas and thought, philosophical beliefs, ethnic and social background, birth, economic and other social positions.' <sup>47</sup>

Article 122 of the Penal Code refers to Hatred and Discrimination, and reads:

'(1) Any person who

- (a) Prevents the sale, transfer or rental of a movable or immovable property offered to the public,
- (b) Prevents a person from enjoying services offered to the public,
- (c) Prevents a person from being recruited for a job,
- (d) Prevents a person from undertaking an ordinary economic activity

on the ground of hatred based on differences of language, race, nationality, colour, gender, disability, political view, philosophical belief, religion or sect shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of one year to three years.' <sup>48</sup>

Finally, article 216 of the Turkish Penal Code on Provoking the Public to Hatred, Hostility or Degrading establishes that:

'(1) A person who publicly provokes hatred or hostility in one section of the public against another section which has a different characteristic based on social class, race, religion, sect or regional difference, which creates a explicit and imminent danger to public security shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of one to three years.

(2) A person who publicly degrades a section of the public on grounds of social class, race, religion, sect, gender or regional differences shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to one year.

(3) A person who publicly degrades the religious values of a section of the public shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to one year, where the act is capable of disturbing public peace.' <sup>49</sup>

The European Commission's May 2019 report on Turkey noted that '[t]he principle of non-discrimination is not sufficiently protected by law or enforced fully in practice' and that '[h]ate crime legislation is not in line with international standards'. <sup>50</sup>

The OSCE's (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Hate Crime Reporting 2018, containing official Turkish data, notes that

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<sup>47</sup> Turkey, Penal Code of Turkey, 2004, including amendments up to 27 March 2015, Article 3, English translation of the Council of Europe from 15 February 2016, available at: [url](#)

<sup>48</sup> Turkey, Penal Code of Turkey, 2004, including amendments up to 27 March 2015, Article 122, English translation of the Council of Europe from 15 February 2016, available at: [url](#)

<sup>49</sup> Turkey, Penal Code of Turkey, 2004, including amendments up to 27 March 2015, Article 216, English translation of the Council of Europe from 15 February 2016, available at: [url](#)

<sup>50</sup> European Commission, Turkey 2019 Report [SWD(2019) 220 final], 29 May 2019, [url](#), p. 37





1 983 persons suspected of committing hate crimes were prosecuted in 2018, with 589 persons sentenced. The data reveals a continued increase in reporting and sentencing compared with previous years (2014 to 2018).<sup>51</sup>

ODIHR notes however that Turkey has not implemented any 'specific procedure for recording or investigating hate crimes', and in practice when reported, hate crimes are registered as any criminal record in the the UYAP system (National Judicial Network System).<sup>52</sup>

Following the [29 June 2019 incidents in Istanbul's Kucukcekmece district](#), Reuters reported that after the attacks, the police captured five persons suspected of sharing hashtags 'Syrians Get Out' and 'I Don't Want Syrians in My Country' on social media. The police also discovered a messaging group held responsible for inciting the clashes, with 11 persons detained. According to the source, 'Syrians expressed relief that police were acting'.<sup>53</sup>

According to a January 2018 International Crisis Group report, 'Syrians also distrust Turkish police. They complain that law enforcement gives locals the benefit of the doubt when they are involved in brawls with refugees. Fearing deportation, or simply out of mistrust, they almost never call the police to report crimes or threats.'<sup>54</sup> In another report dated February 2019, the same source noted that 'few police speak Arabic, hampering investigation of crimes in which Syrians are suspects and/or victims'.<sup>55</sup>

Amnesty International indicated in October 2019 that 'any interaction' of Syrians with the Turkish police would put people at a risk of being deported back to Syria.<sup>56</sup> The source further indicates that several Syrians were detained and forced to sign documents stating their wish to return voluntarily to Syria.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> OSCE ODIHR, Turkey, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>52</sup> OSCE ODIHR, Turkey, How hate crime data is collected, 15 November 2019, [url](#)

<sup>53</sup> Reuters, 'They want to kill you': Anger at Syrians erupts in Istanbul, 9 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> International Crisis Group, Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>55</sup> International Crisis Group, Mitigating Risks for Syrian Refugee Youth in Turkey's Şanlıurfa, 11 February 2019, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>56</sup> AI, Sent to a war zone: Turkey's illegal deportations of Syrian refugees, 25 October 2019, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>57</sup> AI, Sent to a war zone: Turkey's illegal deportations of Syrian refugees, 25 October 2019, [url](#), p. 5





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