

Italy

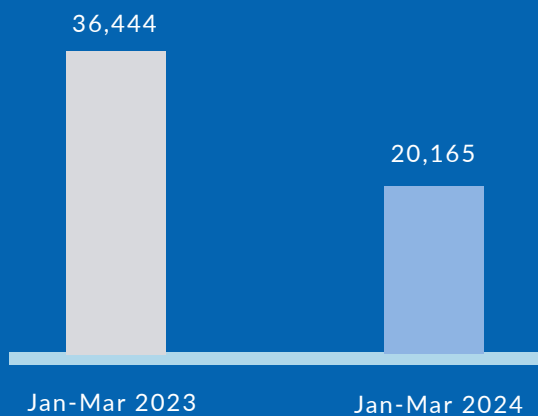
March 2024

In March, **6,857 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**. Most originated from Bangladesh (21%), the Syrian Arab Republic (19%) and Guinea (11%). **19 per cent were children**. Other people reached Italy via land and air.

On 4 March, **UNHCR and ANCI signed a MoU** to strengthen the SAI - Reception and Integration System - and to promote the adherence of Italian municipalities to the Charter for the Integration of Refugees.

On 5 March, **the first 2024 humanitarian evacuation flight of 97 refugees and people in need of international protection** arrived in Italy, in the context of the MoU signed in December 2023 between the Mol, MFA, UNHCR, ARCI, Comunita' di Sant'Egidio, Federazione Chiese Evangeliche and NIHMP.

TOTAL ARRIVALS



Source: Ministry of Interior for arrivals by sea. UNHCR estimates for arrivals by land and air. Please note that arrivals from Ukraine are not included in the chart.

KEY FIGURES

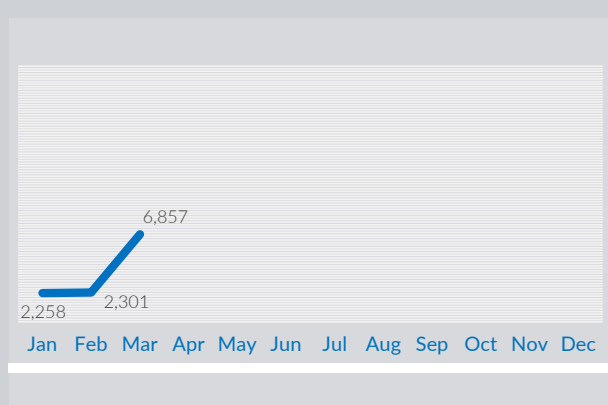
11,416

Sea arrivals to Italy disembarked at different ports across the country in January-March 2024. 9,350 (82%) were informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff, following disembarkation. (Source: Ministry of Interior and UNHCR)

187,475

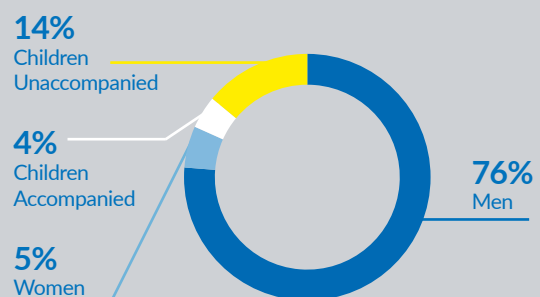
Temporary protection applications of people fleeing Ukraine as of end of March 2024. 71% of applicants are females. (Source: Civil Protection)

SEA ARRIVALS BY MONTH IN 2024



Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals only.

SEA ARRIVALS BY GENDER AND AGE



Source: Ministry of Interior. Please note that the chart refers to the latest cumulative data available. Gender breakdown for children is not available.



Arrivals

- **Access to territory (sea arrivals).** In March, **6,857 people reached the Italian shores** in 148 disembarkations, an increase of 198 per cent compared to the previous month but a decrease of 48 per cent compared to the same period in 2023. Among arrivals, **19 per cent were children**. Twenty-one per cent originated from **Bangladesh** (27% in February), followed by 19 per cent from the **Syrian Arab Republic** (15% in January) and 11 per cent from **Guinea** (2% in February). Other nationalities of sea arrivals were Tunisian (9%), Egyptian (6%), Pakistani and Malian (5% each), Gambian (4%), Sudanese and Senegalese (3% each). In March, almost two thirds of sea crossings departed from Libya (62%, 4,245 people), followed by 38 per cent from Tunisia (2,606 people) and less than 1 per cent from Algeria (6 people). In March, more than half of the people arriving by sea (58%, 4,011 people) were disembarked in Italy as a result of **Search and Rescue (SAR)** operations. Tragically, **123 people have died or gone missing in the Central Mediterranean**, due to several shipwrecks, bringing the total estimated number of dead and missing since the beginning of 2024 to 338.¹
- March was marked by a high number of arrivals in **Lampedusa**, with the hotspot on the island at times hosting more than 1,000 people (maximum reception capacity). Consequently, several rapid transfers to the mainland (Sicily and other regions) were organized to relieve the pressure on the facility.
- **Access to territory (land arrivals).** Around 500 people who reached Italy by land were intercepted by the Border Police at Italy's northern borders with Slovenia, bringing the total estimated number of arrivals to 1,700 since the beginning of the year. Those arriving by land via south-eastern Europe mainly originated from Bangladesh, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye and Afghanistan. Instances of ill-treatment by the Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian Police continued being reported. UNHCR staff conducted outreach activities, informing arrivals on their rights and on how to apply for international protection in Italy and collected testimonies.



Integration and legal pathways

- On 1 March, the sixth edition of the **UNICORE - University Corridors for Refugees** programme was launched with the goal to award 67 scholarships. These were generously provided by 39 Italian universities to enable refugees to pursue their studies in Italy and successfully complete a two-year Master's programme. The students, **refugees in Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe**, will be selected based on their merit and motivation. The application deadline for the scholarships was 15 April 2024, and successful applicants are expected to arrive in Italy in September 2024.² In the framework of the same initiative, UNHCR organized, on 6 February, legal counselling sessions for those who participated in the third and fourth editions of UNICORE, on postgraduate opportunities and legal status.
- On 4 March, UNHCR and ANCI (*Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, reflecting the joint commitment **to strengthen the SAI - Reception and Integration System** and promote the adherence of Italian municipalities to **the Charter for the Integration of Refugees**. The signature of the MoU formalized and consolidated the longstanding collaboration between UNHCR and ANCI, which started in 2001.³ Together with the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior (Moi), they established the National Asylum Programme—Italy's first public system for



Signature of the MoU between UNHCR and ANCI, in Rome.
 ©UNHCR/Alessandro Penso

¹ For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the [Italy page](#) of the UNHCR data portal.

² See also, UNHCR, [250 borse di studio per studenti rifugiati, aperte le candidature per la nuova edizione dei corridoi universitari](#), 4 March 2024.

³ See also, UNHCR, [Rifugiati, UNHCR e ANCI: ampliare il sistema di accoglienza diffusa](#), 4 March 2024.

receiving asylum seekers and refugees. The MoU includes provisions to strengthen integration programmes with a special focus on asylum seekers and refugees with specific needs, including unaccompanied children, and the establishment of a working group consisting of two ANCI representatives and two UNHCR representatives who will work in line with the MoU's objectives. Matteo Biffoni, Mayor of Prato and ANCI delegate for migration, commented: "Improving the well-being of communities to promote the integration of refugees, facilitating the matching of labour supply and demand, and improving the accessibility of services, are among the pillars of cooperation that qualify the commitment of Italian municipalities in favour of people seeking protection and that encourage ANCI to maintain a high level of commitment in this field."

■ On 5 March, the first group in 2024 of **97 refugees and people in need of international protection arrived in Italy from Libya.**

Among them were 55 women and 27 children, hailing from Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia and Sudan.

The successful evacuation was possible thanks to the new MoU signed in December 2023 between the **Mol, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFA), UNHCR,** and several civil society organisations, including

ARCI, Comunita' di Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy (FCEI) and the National Institute of Health, Migration, and Poverty (NIHMP). The MoU aims to welcome, over the next three years a total of 1,500 refugees, who have been

forced to flee their home countries due to war, violence, and other dire circumstances, and who are temporarily residing in Libya, facing immense challenges, including children, trafficked women, survivors of violence and torture, and those with serious health conditions. The process of identification and selection of the people participating in the evacuation is conducted by UNHCR, in collaboration with ARCI, Comunita' di Sant'Egidio and FCEI. Upon their arrival, the 97 refugees and people in need of international protection were transferred to reception centres managed by ARCI and Comunita' di Sant'Egidio. A second flight is planned for May.



Specific needs

- On 15 March, the UNHCR Representative took part in an **informal hearing** before the Parliamentary bicameral Committee on Schengen, Europol and Migration in the framework of a fact-finding investigation on the protection of unaccompanied foreign children in Italy. The UNHCR Representative spoke about the scale of the arrival of unaccompanied foreign children in Italy, migration trends, reception and protection systems, changes in national and European legislation and measures for their integration. Key points highlighted by the UNHCR Representative included the importance of enhanced coordination and stronger governance for the reception and protection of unaccompanied foreign children; a robust first reception system as crucial for their protection and access to rights, with a focus on their safety, health, psychosocial well-being and development. Additionally, investment in education, especially during times of crisis and in the face of the current migration flows, and legal education pathways were stressed as paramount, also in the context of **Italy's G7 Presidency priorities** and of the '**Mattei Plan**'. The full text of the UNHCR hearing is available [here](#).
- In March, the implementation of the **Vademecum for the identification, referral and care of persons living with vulnerabilities**, launched in March 2023 by the Mol and UNHCR, completed its first phase in the four pilot locations: Crotona, Rome, Agrigento and Milan. The final event took place in Milan on 12 March. The first phase included the organisation of webinars for relevant stakeholders, the establishment of local working groups (WGs) tasked with drafting local Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the formation of a sub-group focused on tools for the identification and referral of persons

with specific needs (PwSN). The second phase, covering the first half of 2024, will include activities such as the monitoring of existing working groups (WGs), mapping of service availability, capacity building initiatives and establishment of new local WGs.

- In March, UNHCR released the **new gender-based violence (GBV) information tools** related to the organization's GBV work in Italy. The tools, which were already launched during the GBV event "*Proteggere le persone in fuga dalla violenza di genere: sfide e risposte in Italia*" ("Protecting people escaping from gender violence: challenges and responses in Italy"), held at Spazio Europa in Rome on 15 November 2023, have been tested and are now available on the [UNHCR website](#).

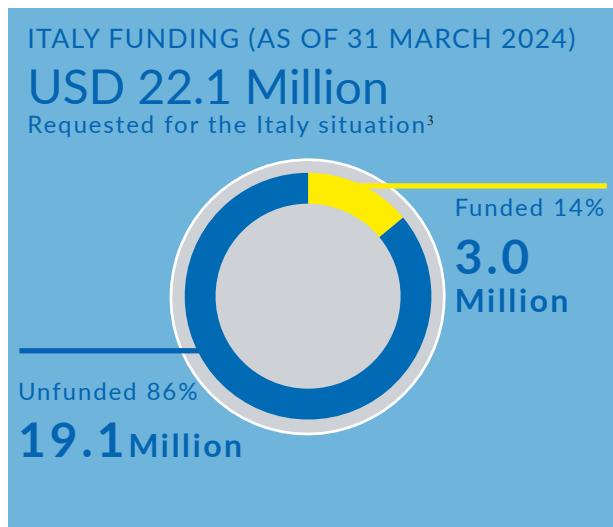
Asylum system

- Within the Judicial Engagement programme, UNHCR conducted, on 4 March, a **training focused on evidence assessment for the staff of the Specialized Division of Bologna's Tribunal**. Similarly, on 25 March, UNHCR provided **training on interviewing techniques** to the same judges.
- On 6 March, UNHCR organized a session on **statelessness** for students at the **American University in Rome**. On 18 and 19 March, UNHCR conducted a **training on statelessness for students at Federico II University in Naples** selected for the 2024 edition of the Statelessness Legal Clinics project.
- On 8 March, a **training session on subsidiary protection** was facilitated at the **University of Rome La Sapienza**, as part of the Master course on Refugees and Migrants.
- On 21 and 22 March, UNHCR co-facilitated the **face-to-face component of the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) training** for the inclusion of 13 new staff within the Territorial Commission of Rome.
- On 27 March, the **inaugural meeting of the WG on the Case Law Bulletin**—a collaborative effort between UNHCR, EUAA, and the National Asylum Commission (NAC)—took place. This joint product aims to enhance legal knowledge and promote informed decision-making.

External engagement

- On **World Water Day**, 22 March, Legambiente, with the contribution of UNHCR, launched the reported "*Acqua, conflitti e migrazioni forzate: la corretta gestione delle risorse idriche come strumento di stabilità e pace*". The report builds upon the report "*Un'umanità in fuga: gli effetti della crisi climatica sulle migrazioni forzate*", published in December 2023, also with the contribution of UNHCR. The report delves into the impact of access to water on forced displacement, emphasizing UNHCR's global strategy with a specific focus on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities in areas of displacement. Additionally, it highlights positive examples in addressing water scarcity and climatic challenges in countries significantly affected by climate change and experiencing substantial refugee inflows. One notable example within the report is the water pipeline in Agadez (video [here](#)), which connects the humanitarian centre to the town with the support of the Italian MFA.

 **Financial information**



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors to the Italy operation:

- **The European Union**
- **Other private donors**

UNHCR is also grateful to the donors who have contributed to UNHCR operations globally, with unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions.⁴

 **Fundraising**

- In March 2024, UNHCR raised **1.9 million euros** from private donors in Italy, bringing the total raised since the beginning of the year to **6.1 million euros**.

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LINKS [UNHCR data portal](#) - [UNHCR Italy](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [LinkedIn](#) - [Global Focus](#)

³ Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund priorities activities.

⁴ Unearmarked contributions are without restrictions on their use, allowing UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk globally. Softly earmarked contributions allow UNHCR to use them across the range of countries, activities or themes in a given region or situation in accordance with identified priorities; softly earmarked contributions can potentially be used for the Italy operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region. Donors of unearmarked contributions of USD 10 million or more are: Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, Ireland, Belgium, Australia.