Italy

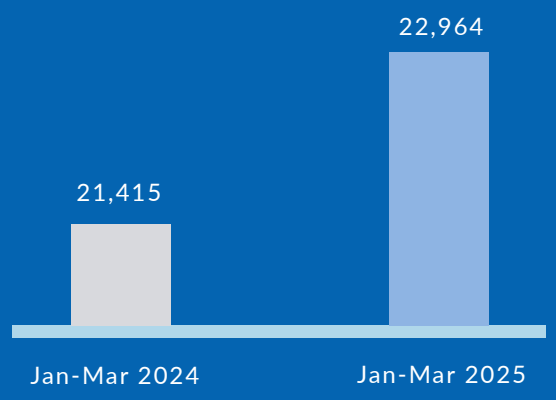
March 2024

In March, **2,407 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**. Most originated from Bangladesh (36%), Sudan (12%), and Eritrea (9%). **18 per cent were children**. Other people reached Italy via land and air.

On 12 March, UNHCR Represenative took part in the **Milano Welfare Forum**, where she stressed that access to services is key to inclusion, underscoring the Milano Welcome Center as a model for refugee reception and integration in Italy.

On 26 March, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, spoke at Bocconi University's **Pact4Future forum**, calling for the inclusion of refugees in national systems as a benefit for both host communities and refugees.

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

9,215

People reached Italy by sea disembarking in different ports across the country in January-March 2025. 8,446 (92%) were informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff and partners following disembarkation. (Source: Ministry of Interior and UNHCR)

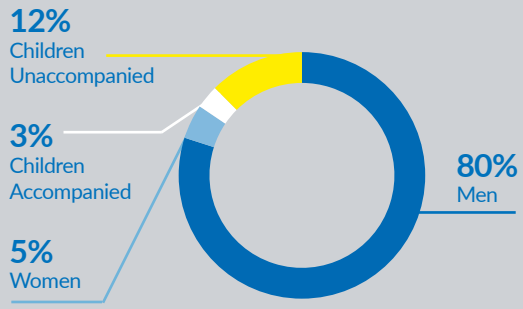
203,592

Temporary protection applications of people fleeing Ukraine as of end of March 2025. 70% of applicants are females. (Source: Civil Protection)

SEA ARRIVALS BY MONTH IN 2025

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, **2,407 people reached the Italian shores in 55 disembarkations**, a 45 per cent increase compared to the same month in 2024. Among arrivals, 18 per cent were children (16% in February). **Thirty-six per cent originated from Bangladesh** (**42%** in February), followed by 12 per cent from Sudan (up from 2% in February), and 9 per cent from Eritrea (5% in February). Other nationalities of people arriving by sea included Egyptians (7%), Syrians and Pakistanis (6% each), Somalis (5%), and Ethiopians (4%). In March, **the majority of sea crossings departed from Libya** (**90%**, 2,174 people), followed by 10 per cent from Tunisia (233 people). Around **half of the people arriving by sea in March** (56%, 1,332 people) **were disembarked in Italy as a result of Search and Rescue (SAR) operations**.[1] Tragically, on 18 March, an incident occurred at sea involving a rubber boat carrying 56 individuals, resulting in 6 reported deaths, 40 missing persons, and 10 survivors. According to the survivors, all of sub-Saharan origin, the boat began to deflate just a few hours after departure, causing many to fall overboard. UNHCR and partners provided psychological first aid and assistance to the survivors
- **Access to territory (land arrivals).** Around **400 people who reached Italy by land** were intercepted in March by the Border Police at Italy's northern borders with Slovenia, bringing the total estimated number of detected arrivals to around 1,100 as of March 2025. Those arriving by land via south-eastern Europe mainly originated from **Bangladesh**, **Afghanistan, Morocco, Pakistan, Türkiye**. Instances of ill-treatment by the Police along the Western Balkan route continued being reported. UNHCR staff conducted outreach activities informing arrivals on their rights and how to apply for international protection in Italy and collecting testimonies.

Resettlement and complementary pathways

- On 10 March, the UNHCR Representative for Italy, the Holy See and San Marino, Chiara Cardoletti, participated in a roundtable event entitled '**Innovative Pathways for Refugees: Between Resilience and Solidarity**' organized by the Embassy of Canada in Rome. The roundtable provided an opportunity to discuss challenges related to the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and scaling up of community sponsorship programmes. During her intervention, the UNHCR Representative underscored the importance of establishing safe migration pathways, commended Canada's support for complementary pathways and community-based refugee sponsorship through the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI), while also recognizing Italy's leadership in promoting humanitarian, university, and labour corridors. The event also featured the testimony of a refugee who shared his experience of protection in Italy through the Humanitarian Corridors programme.[2]

UNHCR participates in event organized by the Embassy of Canada on community sponsorship programmes.©UNHCR

Community-based protection

- On 4 March, UNHCR met in Milan with a group of students from the Inter Youth Academy with the objective of raising awareness on the topic of refugees, in the context of the FIFA Outrage campaign against racial discrimination in sports. The session was conducted by UNHCR jointly with "DreamBiG," a refugee-led organization promoting inclusion and well-being through sports.

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

[2] See also Chiara Cardoletti's tweet on X.

Integration

- On 12 March, UNHCR participated in the **Milano Welfare Forum 2025**, organized by the Municipality of Milan from 11 to 13 March. During a panel discussion on social cohesion and access to services, UNHCR Representative for Italy, the Holy See and San Marino, Chiara Cardoletti, emphasized that access to services for refugees and migrants is essential to fostering inclusive communities. The discussion also highlighted the newly launched Milano Welcome Center — a one-stop hub for reception and integration services — as a key initiative supported by the city's welfare department, exemplifying a collaborative, rights-based approach to refugee integration.[3]

UNHCR participates in the Milano Welfare Forum organized by the Municipality of Milan 2025.©UNHCR

Training

- On 3 March, UNHCR organized a session on statelessness for students at the American University in Rome.
- On 7 March, a training session on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum was facilitated at La Sapienza University, as part of the course on Refugees and Migrants.
- In the second half of March, UNHCR, in collaboration with Programma Integra, resumed the implementation of the Statelessness Legal Clinics Project, where training sessions on statelessness were delivered to law students at the International University College (Turin), University Roma Tre, and University Federico II (Naples). The sessions involved over 250 students and covered key aspects related to the protection of stateless persons and statelessness status determination. Following the training, 21 students were selected to participate in the three university legal clinics and will receive UNHCR-funded scholarships.

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER AT THE 'PACT4FUTURE'

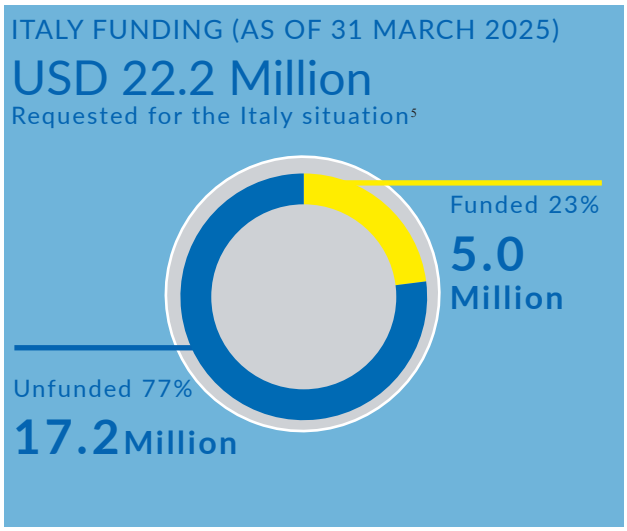
On 26 March, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, participated in the '**Pact4Future**' forum hosted by Bocconi University in Milan. The High Commissioner joined the session titled **Purpose in Action: Protect, Welcome, Integrate in a Changing World**, where he emphasized that including refugees in national services and labour markets is not only a humanitarian imperative, but also a social and economic opportunity for host governments, communities, and refugees alike. His intervention encouraged a rethinking of the roles of institutions and the private sector, highlighting how purpose and responsibility can translate into concrete solutions for a more equitable and sustainable future.[4]

High Commissioner Grandi speaking at the 'Pact4Future' event in Milan ©UNHCR

[3] See also Chiara Cardoletti's tweet on X.

[4] See also, Chiara Cardoletti's tweet on X.

Financial information



- UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided to the UNHCR Multi-country office (MCO) in Italy in March, and throughout 2025, including for unearmarked, softly earmarked, and tightly earmarked contributions.[6]

Fundraising

- UNHCR MCO Italy is also grateful for the generous contributions from the private sector and individuals. In March, **2.3 milllion euros** were raised. Among the private donors, a special thanks goes to AB Medica and Coop Italia for their generous contribution.

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LINKS UNHCR data portal - UNHCR Italy - Twitter - Facebook - LinkedIn - Global Focus

[5] Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund priorities activities. The funding update includes an indicative allocation of funds so as to accurately represent the resources available for the country. The contributions earmarked for Italy MCO shown above are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions listed below. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking. Adjustments relate to indirect support costs and carry-over.

[6] 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, Denmark, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Switzerland, España con ACNUR, Republic of Korea, Australia, Ireland, Germany and Belgium.