Samake Fanto works as a carpenter in Echo Labs' craft workshop. ©Echo Labs

Italy Multi-Country Office

Highlights

Between April and June 2026, **8,271 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**. Bangladesh, Algeria, Sudan and Somalia were the most frequently reported countries of origin, while children accounted for 21% of people reaching Italy. Arrivals were also recorded through land and air routes.

In June, marking **World Refugee Day**, UNHCR gathered refugees, institutions, faith actors, civil society and private sector representatives in Rome. Under the theme "Until Everyone Is Safe", the event spotlighted solutions to prolonged displacement and recognized companies that are helping refugees rebuild their lives through employment opportunities.

The ***Welcome. Working for Refugee Integration*** programme continues to show how collaboration between businesses, institutions and civil society can translate inclusion into opportunity. Based on the report issued by UNHCR in June 2026, by the end of 2025, more than 69,000 refugee employment pathways had been created nationwide through the initiative.

UNHCR GLOBAL TRENDS 2025

At the end of 2025, **117.8 million people worldwide remained forcibly displaced**. While 14.7 million people returned during the year, many did so under pressure and to fragile conditions.

UNHCR's Global Trends Report 2025, released in June, found that **seven in ten refugees live in protracted displacement**.

Against this backdrop, UNHCR has recently presented its 50 by 35 vision that aims to halve by 2035 the number of refugees living in prolonged displacement who depend on humanitarian assistance through expanded opportunities for self-reliance and durable solutions.

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Read the latest Global Trends Report, and the Global Report 2025 on UNHCR and partners' impact during the year.

People Arriving in Italy by Sea

Overview. Between 1 April and 30 June 2026, **sea arrivals to Italy remained substantially lower than during the same period in 2025 (-60%),** although arrivals increased moderately from April as weather conditions improved. According to IOM data, 515 people died or went missing in the Mediterranean in the second quarter of the year, 35% of whom along the Central Mediterranean route.

Countries of departure. **Libya remained the main departure country** for sea arrivals (around 80%). However, its share declined slightly compared to the first quarter of 2026 due to a modest increase in departures from Algeria and, to a lesser extent, Tunisia, reflecting the seasonal diversification of routes as summer conditions enable small-group departures on wooden boats from both countries.

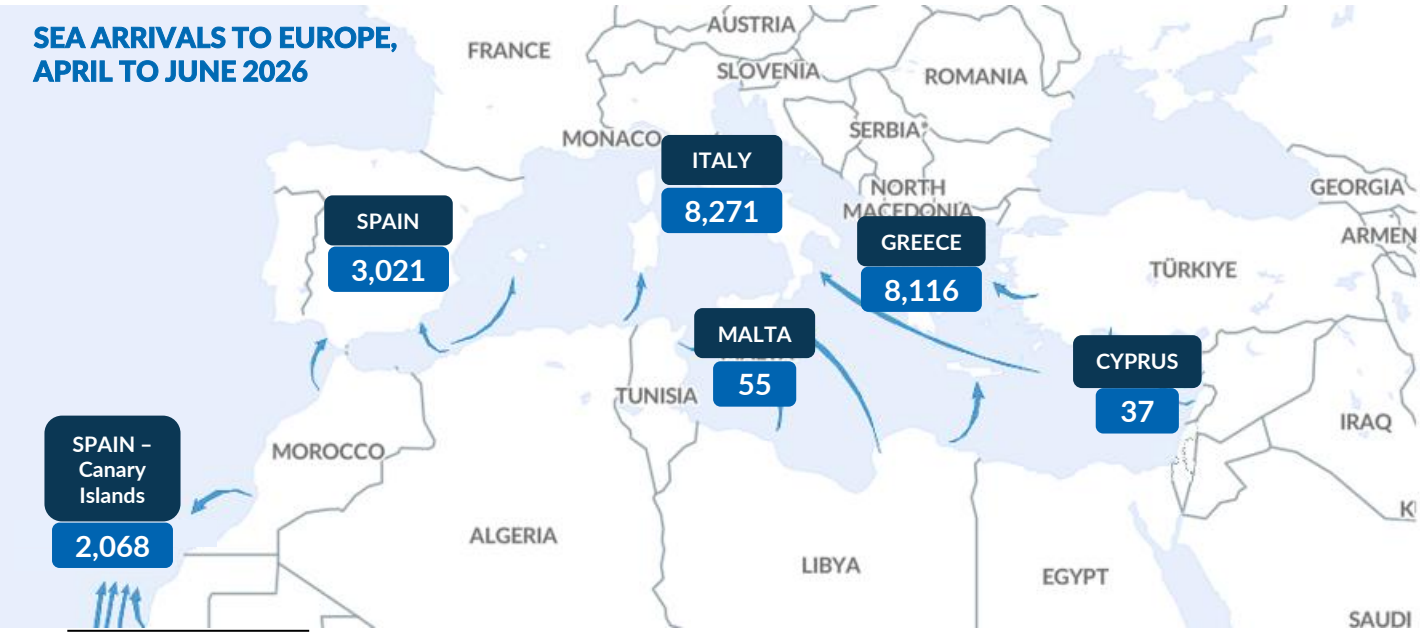
Main nationalities and profiles. The nationality profile remained broadly consistent with the first quarter of 2026, with **Bangladeshi nationals continuing to be the largest group (30%).** North African nationalities featured more prominently, reflecting increased departures from Algeria and Tunisia, while the share of some nationalities, including Somali and Pakistani, declined. Adult men accounted for most arrivals (74%), while women represented 5% and children 21%, more than four in five being unaccompanied.

Vulnerabilities. UNHCR teams in Italy collected testimonies from newly arrived people at disembarkation points, border locations and reception facilities, many of whom had specific needs requiring follow-up.

The incidence of specific needs varied significantly and was closely linked to nationality, journey length and means of travel. Testimonies indicated higher vulnerability levels among women, children and individuals who had spent prolonged periods in transit countries, particularly Libya.

Journeys to Italy. People met at arrival described highly diverse and nationality-specific journeys to Italy, ranging from a few months to several years. **Bangladeshis and Iraqis more often reported shorter, more direct routes, including air travel segments, while Sudanese, Eritreans and South Sudanese frequently described journeys lasting one to three years or longer**. Repeated failed sea crossings on the Libya route were common among Eritrean, Syrian and South Sudanese nationals, whereas Bangladeshis and Iraqis, who generally paid higher fees, often reported no prior attempts. Similar patterns emerged regarding detention in Libya: Eritreans, Sudanese and South Sudanese frequently reported detention following failed sea crossings, which often prolonged their stay in the country, while Bangladeshis reported more limited experiences.

Reasons for leaving the country of origin. For most new arrivals met by UNHCR, the main reasons for leaving their countries of origin were conflict, generalized violence and serious insecurity. This was particularly evident among Sudanese, Syrians, Eritreans, South Sudanese, Iraqis and Iranians. Egyptians described a more mixed picture, where discrimination, insecurity and limited access to services intersected, while Bangladeshis more frequently cited economic reasons.



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

Implementing the EU Pact

On 12 June 2026, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum entered into force. UNHCR welcomed the Pact, emphasizing that its success will depend on effective implementation to ensure asylum procedures are both efficient and fair, while maintaining adequate safeguards and access to international protection.

To support this process, UNHCR has issued guidance for EU Member States on key areas of implementation, including screening and identification of specific needs, restrictions on freedom of movement and alternatives to detention, the assessment of the risk of absconding, legal counselling and legal aid, and the establishment of independent national monitoring mechanisms.

In Italy, UNHCR is supporting the operational implementation of the Pact through technical advice, operational guidance and capacity development. UNHCR has also contributed to discussions on Italy's implementing legislation, including in a parliamentary hearing on 24 June on Law-Decree 100/2026.

Advancing Statelessness Protection

©Programma integra

In May 2026, **UNHCR and its partners launched a new cycle of the Statelessness Legal Clinics**, bringing together universities from Turin, Rome, Naples and Verona to expand access to justice for stateless persons in Italy. Through hands-on legal assistance, student training and new resources for frontline practitioners, the initiative aims at strengthening protection pathways for statelessness people. Learn more here.

Protecting the Most Vulnerable

In June 2026, **Italy adopted the national Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for preliminary health and vulnerability checks** within asylum screening, with nationwide effect.

The SOPs create a unified operational framework for border and in-country screening, supported by detailed annexes and standardized tools. Central among these are the health and vulnerability screening form and checklists in Annexes I–III, designed to ensure consistent identification, assessment and follow-up of specific needs.

The SOPs pave the way to strengthen referral pathways and ensure that people with heightened vulnerabilities are connected to appropriate services and protection.

The adoption of the SOPs takes place in the framework of the implementation of the Handbook for the identification, referral and care of persons living with vulnerabilities entering Italy and within the protection and reception system (English version / Italian version)

For UNHCR's positions, policy documents, and legal guidance on international protection, visit Refworld

UPDATED GUIDANCE ON SEARCH AND RESCUE

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To help turn law and principle into life-saving practice, the International Maritime Organization, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and UNHCR have updated "Rescue at Sea: A guide to principles and practice in the context of refugees and migrants movements" – a global guide addressed to Masters, ship owners, Government authorities, insurance companies, and other interested parties involved in rescue-at-sea situations. The document provides guidance on relevant legal provisions, practical procedures to ensure the prompt disembarkation of rescued persons, and on measures to meet their specific needs, particularly in the case of refugees and migrants.

"Welcome. Working for Refugee Integration"

Welcome. Working for Refugee Integration is UNHCR's flagship programme that contributes to turn corporate engagement into real jobs and career paths for people forced to flee. Through the **Welcome logo**, companies are recognized for creating qualified employment, traineeships and training opportunities for refugees, while the **WeWelcome logo** recognizes chambers of commerce, associations and local actors that help connect talent with opportunities.

Over nine years, the programme has grown into a collaborative ecosystem linking refugees, employers, public institutions and civil society through the digital platform **Welcome In-one-click**, local WelcomeNet partners and dedicated Welcome Liaison Officers who accompany candidates from profiling to onboarding.

Since 2017, more than 69,000 inclusion pathways have been activated in the framework of the programme implemented with Fondazione Adecco and supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Confindustria, Global Compact Network Italy, the Italian Association for Personnel Management (AIDP) and Confimprese, among others.

In 2025 alone, over 18,600 employment pathways were created, a 15% increase compared to the previous year. Hospitality and catering and manufacturing were the leading sectors, while over 99% of placements resulted in employment contracts. These achievements were recognized at the award ceremony held in Rome in June 2026, where 230 companies received the Welcome logo for their commitment to refugee inclusion.

> ***... At last, I have the freedom to do something meaningful. I love the company, my colleagues and the work I do."***
> Wafi Izzeldin, software developer at Btinkeeng

READ HERE →
Welcome. Working for refugee integration report. (2025 edition)

For more information on the Welcome. Working for refugee integration project, visit Welcome webiste

©CD Steel

©UNICOOP Firenze

For participating companies, refugee inclusion is increasingly viewed as both a social commitment and a business opportunity. The main reported drivers in 2025 were the desire to foster a more inclusive society and combat discrimination (37%), strengthen ethical brand positioning (30%) as well as expanding professional networks, increasing corporate visibility and engaging new and socially conscious customer segments.

This growing engagement reflects an emerging business case for refugee inclusion, demonstrating how partnerships between the private sector, institutions and civil society can deliver lasting benefits for refugees, employers and communities alike.

> ***...Kere's experience demonstrates how employment can be a tangible tool for social inclusion. Determination and the ability to build positive relationships with others have had a meaningful impact on the team."***
> Company Representative, Sani Trasporti

2026 World Refugee Day – "Until Everyone is Safe"

Marked each year on 20 June, World Refugee Day celebrates the strength and resilience of people forced to flee and reaffirms the collective responsibility to protect them.

In 2026, under the campaign *Until Everyone Is Safe*, UNHCR highlighted a stark reality: despite some returns, 117.8 million people remained forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2025, with 70% of refugees in prolonged exile. These trends inform **UNHCR's 50 by 35 initiative, which seeks to expand opportunities for inclusion, self-reliance and solutions**.

In Rome, UNHCR brought together refugees, government institutions, the Church, civil society, local actors and the private sector for a dialogue on moving from protection to opportunity (Read the press release of the event). Through her personal testimony, refugee advocate Rehema Amisi highlighted the transformative role of education, inclusion and the possibility to contribute to society with dignity.

From government ministries and local actors to civil society, artists and business leaders, the event showcased how refugee inclusion increasingly relies on a broad coalition of partners. The breadth of this engagement was also evident in the recognition of companies that, in the framework of the *Welcome* programme are investing in refugee talent and contributing to more inclusive labour markets.

Addressing the event on behalf of the Holy See, Msgr. Daniel Pacho highlighted the 1951 Convention as a living expression of solidarity and called to approach refugee protection with benevolence translated into concrete policies of welcome, dignity and social justice.

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> ***... And I hope that one day, refugees everywhere will not only be known for what they survived, but for what they were empowered to become."***
> Rehema Amisi, refugee advocate

©UNHCR/Valerio Muscella

The message resonated with Pope Leo XIV's World Refugee Day appeal after the Angelus on 21 June to uphold the spirit of the 1951 Refugee Convention, welcome those fleeing persecution, and ensure that people seeking protection can live in peace, dignity and hope for the future.

Adding great significance to World Refugee Day, President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella issued a statement reaffirming Italy's constitutional commitment to asylum, expressing solidarity with people forced to flee, and calling on the international community to protect every human being and strengthen solidarity among peoples.

Building Solutions through Partnerships

Francesca Bonelli, UNHCR Head of Partnership and Coordination at UNHCR

As displacement becomes increasingly prolonged, Italy and UNHCR are working together to promote approaches that combine humanitarian action, development and economic inclusion.

This shared vision featured prominently at **COOPERA 2026**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's flagship conference on development cooperation, where UNHCR highlighted the *Opportunity Villages* initiative in Niger, supported by the Italian cooperation. Bringing refugees and host communities together through shared services, livelihoods and local development, the model reflects UNHCR's *50 by 35* vision to expand opportunities for self-reliance and reduce long-term displacement. Actor and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Lino Guanciale drew on his field visits with UNHCR to highlight the importance of complementing protection with education, employment and safe pathways.

At **CODEWAY Expo 2026**, Italy's leading event on development cooperation and sustainable business partnership, UNHCR convened representatives from the IT, recruitment, education and philanthropic sectors to explore how skills development, employment and labour mobility can create shared value for refugees, host communities and local economies. UNHCR also contributed to discussions on how Italian companies can contribute to humanitarian and development efforts through UN procurement.

Responding to Growing Resettlement Needs

As global displacement remains at record levels, UNHCR is calling for a renewed commitment to refugee resettlement as a critical expression of international responsibility-sharing. Despite persistently high needs, resettlement opportunities continue to decline, with an estimated 2.4 million refugees worldwide expected to require resettlement in 2027. For refugees facing acute protection risks and unable to return home safely, resettlement remains a vital lifeline, offering not only safety but also the opportunity to rebuild their lives and contribute to their new communities.

In 2026, Italy welcomed 215 refugees through its resettlement programme from Niger, Pakistan, Libya and Egypt, the majority as part of family units.

Since 2015, the programme has provided protection to 3,239 refugees and has become a key component of Italy's broader commitment to safe and legal pathways. Coordinated by the Ministry of Interior in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, UNHCR, IOM and *Servizio Centrale*, the programme supports refugees from some of the world's major displacement situations and facilitates their integration through the SAI reception system.

Alongside resettlement, UNHCR and its partners in Italy continue to expand complementary pathways, including humanitarian evacuations, labour mobility schemes and university corridors, contributing to create opportunities for refugees to access protection and solutions.

A Sudanese refugee family takes a photo after they arrive from Libya at Rome Fiumicino Airport.

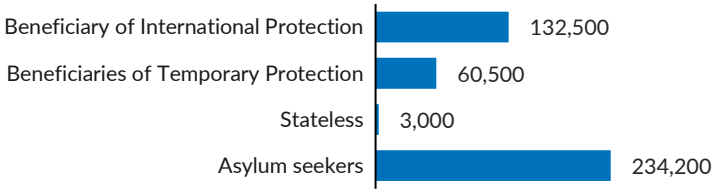
TEN YEARS OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION PROGRAMME FOR NORTH AFRICA (RDPP-NA)

2026 marks a decade of the RDPP-NA, a flagship initiative co-financed by the European Union, the Italian Ministry of the Interior and the Government of the Netherlands. Since 2016, the programme has supported efforts to strengthen protection, resilience and opportunities for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants across North Africa and along the Central Mediterranean route. By bringing together governments, international organizations, civil society and local communities, RDPP-NA promotes access to protection, livelihoods, education and essential services, while fostering more sustainable and inclusive responses to displacement.
VISIT HERE: Regional Development and Protection Programme for North Africa.

Italy at a glance[5]

Population figures

430,200
people as follows:



Data source: UNHCR estimates, Ministry of Interior and EUROSTAT. Data as of December 2025.

Total arrivals by air, land, and sea

41,900
arrivals in the country
in Jan-Jun 2026

Data source: Ministry of Interior for arrivals by sea. UNHCR estimates for arrivals by land and air.

Asylum applications

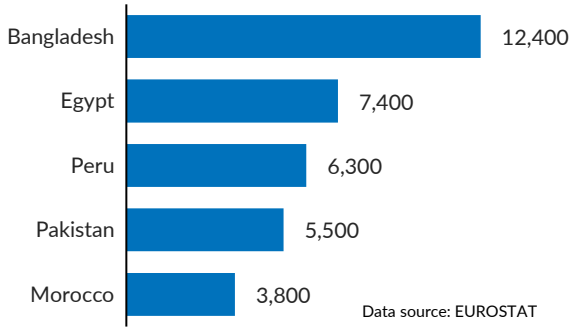
66,000
asylum applications
in Jan-Jun 2026

+2%
compared to
same period in 2025

Data source: EUROSTAT

Top 5 nationalities of asylum applications

Jan-Jun 2026



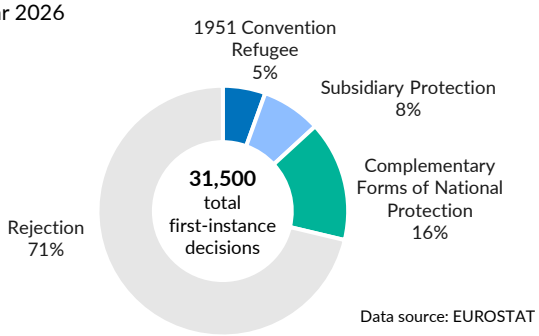
Data source: EUROSTAT

UNHCR operational presence

UNHCR staff in Italy also cover the Holy See and San Marino.

First instance decisions on asylum applications

Jan-Mar 2026



Data source: EUROSTAT

Safe pathways

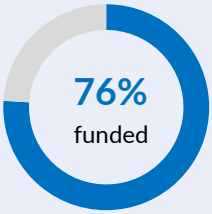
459 persons arrived in the country with UNHCR support in the period January-June 2026, including **215** through resettlement, **211** through humanitarian corridors, **1** person who was evacuated, **30** through labour mobility schemes and **2** through education pathways (University Corridors for Refugees)

[5] Data is based on the most up-to-date figures available for each area. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred, except for small values.

Financial information

Requested for UNHCR Multi Country Office for Italy, Holy See, Malta, San Marino and Cyprus activities in 2026

$ 21.0 million



UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions from the Government of Italy and other governmental donors, the private sector and individuals.

From April to June 2026, Italian private donors contributed to UNHCR operations globally with 8.1 million euros. Among the private sector donors, a special thanks goes to AB Medica, ACRI, Chiesi Farmaceutici, Ferrari, Fondazione Con il Sud, Intesa Sanpaolo, Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, Permira Foundation, and The Human Safety Net for their contributions.

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