

# Italy

July 2019

The Chamber of Deputies approved the conversion into law of the **decree on security** passed by the Government of Italy, tightening measures against vessels conducting rescue at sea.

In July, **stand-offs** continued to occur over the disembarkation of individuals rescued at sea in the Central Mediterranean. During the month, **1,088 refugees and migrants** reached Italian shores.

On 25 July, 150 refugees and migrants were reported dead and missing in the **most serious incident at sea since May 2017**.

## KEY INDICATORS

**83%\***

Percentage of 2019 sea arrivals informed by UNHCR staff upon disembarkation

**5,109\***

Referrals of **sea arrivals with specific needs** to appropriate services since January 2015

**642\***

Monitoring **visits to reception facilities** since April 2013

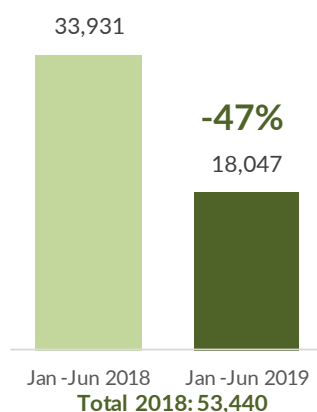
\* Source: UNHCR

Between April 2013 and December 2016, monitoring visits were conducted jointly with Ministry of Interior, Prefectures, IOM, Save the Children, and Red Cross. Between April 2017 and April 2019, monitoring visits were conducted jointly with Ministry of Interior staff and independent auditors.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Asylum applications

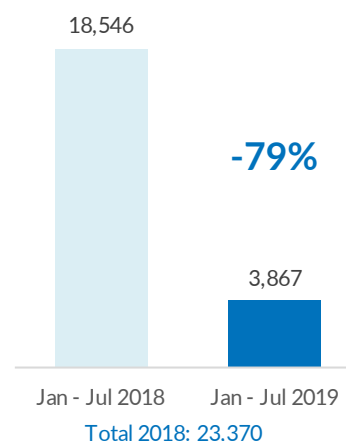
First time applications Jan-Jun 2018-2019



Source: Eurostat and Ministry of Interior

## Sea Arrivals

Jan-Jul, 2018-2019

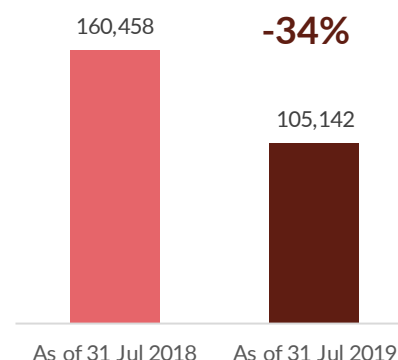


Source: Ministry of Interior

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Reception system

Population of concern in reception centres



Source: Ministry of Interior

## Operational Context

- On 25 July, the Chamber of Deputies approved the conversion into law of the **decree on security** recently passed by the Government of Italy. Some amendments to the original text were concurrently approved, further tightening the decree's provisions which address non-military and non-governmental vessels that engage in rescue at sea activities. Vessels that disregard the prohibition to enter Italian territorial waters would be subject to seizure starting from the first violation of the entry ban, and to fines ranging from €150,000 to €1,000,000. The conversion law is to be finally approved by mid-August, following discussion before the Senate. In July, UNHCR gave evidence in two hearings before the Chamber's joint Justice and Constitutional Affairs Commissions, and the Senate's Constitutional Affairs Commission. UNHCR focused on the potentially negative impact of the decree on search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, reiterating the positions set out in an earlier **press release** that no vessel or shipmasters should be at risk of a fine for coming to the aid of boats in distress and where loss of life may be imminent. UNHCR is of the view that at a time when European states have largely withdrawn from rescue efforts in the Central Mediterranean, NGO vessels are of utmost importance, as without them it is inevitable that more lives will be lost. On 18 July, several UN Special Rapporteurs also released a **statement** condemning Italy's criminalization of rescue activities in the Central Mediterranean and threats to the independence of the judiciary.
- In July, various **NGO rescue vessels** were operational in the Central Mediterranean, including the Proactiva Open Arms, run by NGO Open Arms, and the Alan Kurdi, run by NGO Sea Eye. NGO Mediterranea also returned at sea in early July with their support vessel Alex, as their other vessel, the Mare Jonio, remained moored in Sicily further to the seizure by the Italian authorities. Furthermore, in July, NGOs SOS Mediterranée and MSF announced their return at sea with the Norwegian-flagged vessel Ocean Viking.
- During the month, **stand-offs** continued to occur **over the disembarkation** in Italy of individuals rescued at sea in the Central Mediterranean. Following the rescue of 59 refugees and migrants off the Libyan coast on 4 July, the NGO vessel Alex was prevented from entering Italian territorial waters. The vessel stationed in international waters until 6 July, when the crew declared the state of emergency due to the intolerable hygienic conditions on board and the Alex entered territorial waters. On 7 July, the Italian authorities eventually authorized the disembarkation of the rescued persons in Lampedusa. The vessel was seized and the captain was placed under investigation in connection with allegations of aiding and abetting illegal immigration. The captain, the ship-owner, and the shipping company were also fined €64,000 each for having violated the entry ban. Furthermore, at the end of the month, the authorization to disembark some 140 rescued refugees and migrants from the Italian Coast Guard vessel Gregoretti was delayed for days until an agreement was reached regarding the subsequent transfer of the group to selected European countries (France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Portugal).

- On 2 July, the captain of the NGO vessel Sea Watch 3, Ms. Rackete, was released from house arrest. Earlier the vessel entered Italian territorial waters and forced through a blockade to enter the harbour. Notably, it was ruled that the captain acted pursuant to her duty to carry out a search and rescue activity, and that neither Libya nor Tunisia could be considered safe ports for the disembarkation of individuals rescued at sea. Ms. Rackete remains under investigation for aiding and abetting illegal immigration.
- In July, **1,088 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**. The number was lower than in the previous month, when over 1,200 refugees and migrants reached Italian shores, but still high if compared with earlier months of this year. The majority of persons arriving by sea in July departed from Tunisia (41 per cent of monthly sea arrivals), followed by Turkey (23 per cent), Libya (19 per cent), Greece (11 per cent), and Algeria (6 per cent). Sea arrivals reaching Italian shores in July mainly originate from Tunisia (24 per cent), Pakistan (18 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire (15 per cent), and Sudan (10 per cent). Most persons who departed from Tunisia in July were Tunisian nationals, with increasing numbers of Ivoirian nationals being reported. New arrivals who departed from Libya in July mainly originate from western African countries and Sudan, while refugees and migrants departing from Greece and Turkey predominantly originate from Pakistani, Iraq, and Iran. Between 1 January and 31 July, 3,867 persons arrived in Italy by sea, a 79 per cent decrease compared to the numbers of persons reaching Italian shores in the same period last year (18,546). Most refugees and migrants arriving by sea since the beginning of 2019 originated from Tunisia (22 per cent), Pakistan (16 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire (11 per cent), Algeria (9 per cent), Iraq (8 per cent), Bangladesh (5 per cent), Sudan (5 per cent), Islamic Republic of Iran (3 per cent), Guinea (2 per cent), and Morocco (2 per cent). For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the [Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard – July 2019](#).
- On 25 July, 150 refugees and migrants were reported dead and missing in the **most serious incident at sea since May 2017**. Before this last shipwreck, 669 deaths had been reported in the Mediterranean Sea so far in 2019. UNHCR issued a [press release](#) calling for restoring rescue at sea, putting an end to refugee and migrant detention in Libya, and increasing safe pathways out of Libya.
- Pursuant to a recently signed agreement, as of 1 July, the Italian and Slovenian police started implementing four **joint border patrols** per week, affecting refugees and migrants travelling into Italy by land. While access to territory and asylum procedures is generally granted, there is concern over possible irregular readmissions to Slovenia in connection with higher numbers of persons arriving by land having travelled through South-East Europe. NGOs in Italy and Slovenia are strengthening their collaboration to enhance protection monitoring activities in the area.
- On 31 July, **88 Syrian refugees were resettled from Lebanon to Italy**. Both children and adults with specific medical needs were among the group. The Italian Resettlement Programme is run by the Italian Government, with support from UNHCR, IOM, and other institutional actors. Since 2015, 2,307 refugees were resettled to Italy from Lebanon,

Jordan, Turkey, Sudan, Syria, and Libya. In light of increasing global needs, UNHCR **calls** for ever increasing efforts towards the strengthening of resettlement by Italy and other countries.

- As of 31 July, **105,142 asylum-seekers and refugees** were accommodated **in reception facilities and hotspots** across Italy. Approximately 75 per cent of them (78,865 persons) were asylum-seekers accommodated in first-line reception facilities, predominantly located in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and Piedmont. An additional 25 per cent (26,167 persons) were accommodated in second-line facilities belonging to the SIPROIMI network, most of which are located in Sicily, followed by Latium, and Apulia. The SIPROIMI network has a total capacity of 35,650. Furthermore, as of 31 July, 110 persons were accommodated in hotspots, of whom 53 were in Sicily (Lampedusa) and 57 in Apulia (Taranto).<sup>1</sup> In early July, the first-line reception facility in Mineo, Sicily, was closed down. Mineo was once the largest reception centre in Europe, accommodating over 4,000 people in 2014. Registered Mineo residents were transferred to first-line and second-line, SIPROIMI, facilities in anticipation of the closure, while other solutions were explored with local charities for persons who were not entitled to transfer, including individuals who had been granted humanitarian protection in accordance with the previous legal framework. Reportedly, however, some persons with specific needs were not provided with alternative housing.
- According to the latest available data, in the 1 January – 30 June 2019 period, there were **18,047 new asylum applications in Italy**, a 47 per cent decrease compared to the same period last year. First-time claimants more commonly originated from Pakistan (19 per cent of applicants), Nigeria (9 per cent), Bangladesh (7 per cent), Ukraine (5 per cent), El Salvador (5 per cent), Peru (5 per cent), Morocco (4 per cent), Senegal (4 per cent), Albania (4 per cent), and Venezuela (3 per cent).<sup>2</sup>
- In July, the Naples Tribunal granted the appeal of an asylum-seeker against the Local Health Authority's refusal to enrol him in the National Health System, ruling that enrolment in the municipality's civil registry is not necessary for the purposes of accessing basic services.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of the Interior, *Cruscotto statistico giornaliero*, 31 July 2019, available at: [http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto\\_statistico\\_giornaliero\\_31-07-2019.pdf](http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-07-2019.pdf) (last access 26 August 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of the Interior, *I numeri dell'asilo*, available at: <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/documentazione/statistica/i-numeri-dellasilo> (last access 7 August 2019)

## Main Activities

### Access to procedures

- In July, UNHCR continued to monitor the transfer of persons from Italy to other European States in light of ad hoc agreements reached in connection with specific disembarkation events. UNHCR regularly visited the group of 36 persons at the Messina hotspot who were disembarked by the Italian Navy Cigala Fulgosi vessel in May. By the end of July, all persons had undergone interviews by EASO and the receiving countries, and had registered their asylum applications in Italy. Some transfers also took place in July. The Messina hotspot also currently accommodates refugees and migrants who disembarked the Sea Watch 3 vessel in late June, who have also registered their asylum applications in Italy, and are currently waiting to undergo interviews with delegations from the countries who pledged to receive them. UNHCR has referred to the hotspot staff individuals who presented with specific needs and required adequate follow-up. UNHCR has also closely monitored progress on the group of 69 persons who disembarked the Italian Navy Cigala Fulgosi vessel on 2 June, who are now in a reception facility in the outskirts of Rome awaiting subsequent transfers to other European countries.

### Reception

- UNHCR staff regularly visited the large first-line reception facility in Mineo, which closed in early July. More specifically, UNHCR staff counselled asylum-seekers and refugees in view of the closure and followed-up on the transfer of eligible persons to other reception facilities. UNHCR followed-up on the transfer of persons with specific needs advocating for adequate support to be put in place.
- Following regular visits by UNHCR staff to reception facilities accommodating recent arrivals, and monitoring visits to reception and detention facilities, UNHCR has raised concerns over the inadequacy of reception conditions and over situations enhancing protection risks for specific groups of asylum-seekers, including women and children, and persons in need of psychological support. During the month of July, UNHCR staff deployed near sea arrival locations conducted 86 visits to reception facilities accommodating recent arrivals, including 8 visits to pre-removal facilities.

### Community-based protection

- In July, through its partners, UNHCR has been closely following-up on the evictions of informal settlements in Rome, Foggia, and Turin, affecting significant numbers of asylum-seekers and other persons of concern to UNHCR. The informal settlement near Tiburtina station in Rome was evicted by the authorities in the first half of July, adding to the challenges that asylum-seekers and refugees face with regard to accessing rights and services with a view to successfully integrating into the host community. NGOs, including UNHCR partner MEDU, have been regularly providing individuals in need with shelter,

medical services, and legal assistance. Furthermore, UNHCR maintains regular contact with partners and community-based organizations in Foggia, where the informal settlement near the first-line reception facility of Borgo Mezzanone was partly demolished in early July. Finally, on 30 July, some 400 persons, including asylum-seekers and refugees, were affected by the final stages eviction of the so called Ex-MOI occupied building in Turin.

- In July, UNHCR and its partner Intersos delivered the second training module of their joint [PartecipAzione](#) programme, focused on fundraising and communication strategies, in various Italian cities. The module aims at increasing the familiarity of community-based [organizations awarded through the programme](#) with fundraising techniques and communication strategies to get new donors involved, and present activities externally. Furthermore, UNHCR partner Intersos supported awarded organizations in implementing their projects. On 11 July, Berbere, a newly established association led by a group of refugee and Italian women to promote intercultural dialogue, mutual exchange and hospitality, organized their first thematic meeting in Bari. UNIRE, a recently formed network of refugees across Italy, organized presentations and focus group discussions in Parma, Rome, Palermo, Catania, and Turin, to introduce their network and gather inputs from local refugee communities. Coop Simo launched their new project at a public event in Rome, which was attended by some 150 people. In Catania, Africa Unita provided trainings on active citizenship, transcultural psychology, and access to civil registration and residence permit renewals. In Palermo, Blitz started a workshop series focused on theatre. In Cagliari, Carovana SMI has been organizing an artistic festival engaging asylum-seekers and refugees in various activities. In Naples, Tobili opened a new facility where they started delivering trainings. In Caserta, Kalifoo ground started outreach activities, and organized a concert in Foggia on 16 July. Finally, in Turin, Donne Africa Subsahariana delivered a training on website design.
- UNHCR partner ARCI launched the social media campaign “Màppati” to encourage new associations to register to ARCI’s [Juma Map](#), a map which collects information in 11 languages, including Spanish, on services for asylum-seekers and refugees across Italy.

### **Child protection**

- On 9 July, UNHCR and the National Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents [presented](#) the final [report](#) on their joint activities carried out in 2017 and 2018. A total of 22 child facilities were visited across 11 Italian regions, and a total of 203 children from 21 different nationalities were involved in participatory activities. The main concerns highlighted by children were lack of information, lack of activities aimed at socialization, and prolonged stays in first-line reception facilities (i.e. longer than the 30 days provided for by law). Other concerns raised also by reception facilities staff were delays in guardian appointments, and the impossibility for children to join football teams listed in the Italian federation. Children asked for further information on asylum procedures and expressed the wish to spend more time with Italian children, raising also their limited involvement in decisions affecting them.

- In July, UNHCR partner CIR organized activities involving refugee and Italian children in Sicily, more specifically a cooking session aimed at creating opportunities for children to engage with the host community. Furthermore, CIR arranged a peer-to-peer meeting for guardians, covering communication with children, access to education, and the role of guardians. CIR works in partnership with UNHCR in Sicily to strengthen the voluntary guardian system, through refresher training and peer-to-peer sessions. It also arranges regular exchanges with children aimed at enhancing their participation and at ensuring that their views are heard.
- In collaboration with UNHCR, the National Board of Social Workers (CNOAS) launched a protection induction training through its virtual learning platform. UNHCR and CNOAS have been collaborating pursuant to an agreement signed in July 2018, which aims at identifying and sharing best practices in relation to access to services for asylum-seekers and refugees. The collaboration looks in particular at good practices envisaging the collaboration of various actors operating in the asylum field, including reception centres staff, and health and social assistance providers. It focuses in particular on persons with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children, torture survivors, and persons in need of psychological support.

#### **Sexual and gender-based violence**

- On 1 July, UNHCR, in collaboration with partner MEDU, delivered a training on sexual and gender-based violence to medical personnel and volunteers supporting MEDU in their outreach activities. On 10 July, UNHCR delivered a workshop in Naples presenting the guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking in the context of asylum procedures. The workshop was aimed at Territorial Commissions staff, as well as staff of anti-trafficking NGOs. Furthermore, together with partner D.i.RE., UNHCR co-led two trainings aimed at cultural mediators and staff working in anti-violence centres in Rome, and Caserta. The trainings focused on sexual and gender-based violence against refugee and asylum-seeking women, and on the relationship between sexual and gender-based violence and the right to asylum.
- In July, UNHCR partner [LILA Catania](#) signed a referral protocol with the Catania local health authority, which includes provisions for the delivery of capacity-development activities by LILA to sex centres staff, starting in September 2019. LILA also conducted four field missions to the Cassibile informal settlement, delivering individual information sessions on sexual and gender-based violence and sexually transmitted diseases to 42 asylum-seekers and refugees, and administering HiV/HCV tests.

### External relations

- In July, UNHCR staff addressed international students of the Summer Course on Migration and Human Rights at John Cabot University, participated in a discussion of Giulia Bertoluzzi's 2018 documentary *Strange Fish* focusing on the refugee crisis as seen through the eyes of Tunisian fishermen, and gave a lecture on Global Displacement, with testimonies from an Afghan refugee. UNHCR staff also gave a speech at the summer course of the international league of law faculties at the University of Turin.
- On 2 July UNHCR staff helped deliver the first of three annual trainings for journalists in ethical reporting on asylum-related issues, organized in cooperation with partner association [Carta di Roma](#).
- On 16-17 July, UNHCR Director of External Relations, Ms. Dominique Hyde, was on mission to Rome, where she met with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior.



**Dominique Isabelle Hyde** @DominiqueHyde · Jul 23

Great meeting with @LuigiVignali. Amazing support for refugees, host communities and internally displaced people affected by the conflict in Burkina Faso through Fondo per l'Africa! Grazie Italia!



Farnesina 🇮🇹 Italy UN Geneva, UNHCR Government Partners and 2 others



UNHCR Director of External Relations, Ms. Dominique Hyde, meets with Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Director General for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies, Mr. Luigi Vignali.



## Working with Partners

- Since 2017, UNHCR has engaged in partnerships with a number of NGOs in Italy, with a view to enhancing its protection delivery, focusing in particular on SGBV prevention and response, child protection and integration. In 2019, partners include [ARCI](#), [Cambalache](#), [Caritas \(Conorzio Communitas\)](#), [Carta di Roma](#), [CIDAS](#), [Consiglio Italiano Rifugiati](#), [Di.RE](#), [Fondazione Adecco](#), [Intersos](#), [LILA Catania](#), [MEDU](#), and [University of Pollenzo](#). Further information is available on the [What we do in Italy](#) publication.



### CONTACTS

**Elisabetta Dolzan**, Senior Reporting Assistant (Protection), Italy  
[dolzan@unhcr.org](mailto:dolzan@unhcr.org), Tel: +39 06 8021 2113

**Guido Vittorio Di Gioacchino**, Senior Data Management Assistant, Italy  
[digioacc@unhcr.org](mailto:digioacc@unhcr.org), Tel: +39 06 8021 2112

### LINKS

[UNHCR data portal Mediterranean situation](#) - [UNHCR Italy](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Recent press releases](#) - [UNHCR Global Focus/Central Mediterranean Route Situation](#)