UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

FACT SHEET

Cyprus

30 September 2022

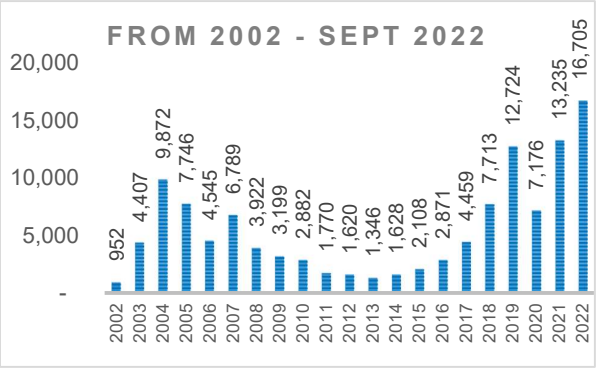
In **2002** the Government of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) took over refugee protection responsibilities from UNHCR. From January through to the end of September 2022, some **16,705 persons** have applied for asylum in the RoC. Currently there are **27,725 persons'** applications pending at the Asylum Service and another **8,013 persons' appeals** pending at the International Protection Administrative Court (IPAC). As of now there are **16,301 persons registered** as refugees or subsidiary protection beneficiaries. Some **110** refugees under UNHCR's mandate reside in the northern part of the island.

There are **21** refugees and asylum-seekers in the Sovereign Bases who have been there since 1998.

From January to September 2022, some **665** unaccompanied/separated children (UASC) applied for asylum in the RoC. Another **396** applied in 2021; **451** in 2020; **565** in 2019; **259** in 2018; **221** in 2017 and **220** in 2016.

TRENDS

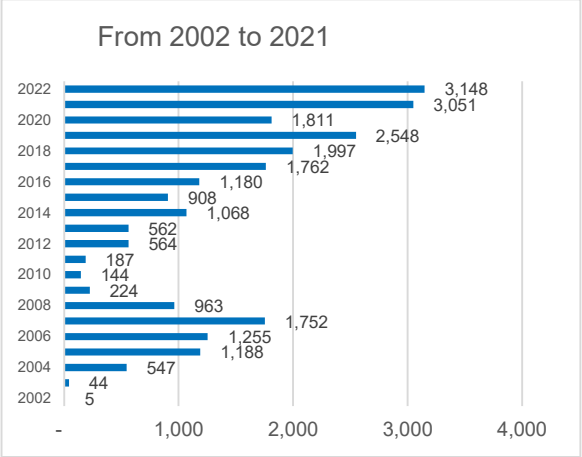
Persons submitting new asylum applications in Cyprus by year: 2002 to September 2022



The top ten countries of origin of new asylum-seekers in Cyprus through September 2022 are: Syria, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Somalia, Cameroon, India, Nepal

**Figures in this fact sheet relating to the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) are provided by the Asylum Service of the RoC.*

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS FROM SYRIANS



From 2002 through end September 2022, the protection rate for Syrians is **69.8%, with only 2% having been granted refugee status.** The five main nationalities of persons receiving international protection from 2002 to end September 2022 are: Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Iranian and Somali. Of the total applications received and processed since 2002, only **18.2% were accorded international protection**, of which the majority were given subsidiary protection status.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

1 International Staff

12 National Staff

5 Affiliate Staff

1 Intern

Offices:

1 Office in Nicosia

Refugee scholars share their university experience:
70+ deserving refugees have been awarded with full or partial scholarships through the University of Nicosia–UNHCR Refugee Scholarship Programme since 2017.

Working with Partners

The Government of Cyprus is UNHCR's key partner in its mission to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with international and European Union standards. Over the years, UNHCR has strengthened its partnership with various Government ministries, especially those of the interior, foreign affairs, justice, education and labour and social affairs. UNHCR has also established constructive working relations and mutual co-operation with the relevant Parliamentary committees, the Ombudsman, the Office of the Child Commissioner, diplomatic missions, the media, and others.

NGOs and civil society: UNHCR has forged useful links with a number of local NGOs and other members of civil society. At present, UNHCR has a funding-based partnership agreement with two NGOs:

- **Cyprus Refugee Council** (CyRC) provides free legal and social advice to asylum-seekers and refugees in the Republic of Cyprus.
  Tel.: +357 22 205 959 | Fax: +357 22 205 960 | info@cyrefugeecouncil.org |
  Website: www.cyrefugeecouncil.org | FB: @cyrefugeecouncil

- **Refugee Rights Association** (Mülteci Hakları Derneği) is a Turkish Cypriot NGO helping UNHCR address the protection needs of asylum-seekers arriving in the northern part of the island.
  Tel.: +90 392 22 84 910 | Email: info@mhdkibris.com
  Website: http://mhdkibris.com | FB: @MulteciHaklariDernegi | Twitter: @mhdkibris

Historically in Cyprus

UNHCR has been present in Cyprus since 1974 when it arrived on the island to provide humanitarian aid for the displaced populations in both communities. By 1998, the need for relief assistance for internally displaced Cypriots had declined, and UNHCR handed over the work to other UN development agencies. With the increase of refugee arrivals in 1998, and in the absence of national asylum legislation and infrastructure, UNHCR had to assume the responsibilities for registering asylum-seekers arriving on the island and processing their applications. In 2000, the Republic of Cyprus adopted its first national refugee legislation and asylum procedures, and in 2002 it took over from UNHCR the responsibility for asylum adjudication.

In 1974, some 400,000 people were internally displaced in Cyprus. UNHCR arrived on the island and coordinated humanitarian aid, including food, health and shelter provision.

© UNHCR/J.Mohr, 1976

Main Activities

UNHCR's fundamental business in Cyprus is to assist the Government to further refine and improve its asylum legislation and the procedures and capacities for a refugee protection system fully in line with international standards. This requires that existing gaps and weaknesses in the national asylum legislation and practice are addressed; migration management policies incorporate protection safeguards; the refugee status determination procedures are further reformed to make them both fair and efficient; and programmes are put in place to help refugees find a durable solution by way of local integration. To achieve these objectives, UNHCR undertakes a number of activities:

Legal advocacy and policy

- Monitoring and promoting respect for refugee rights and the standards of treatment of asylum-seekers, particularly as regards access to asylum procedures, reception conditions and detention.
- Influencing legislation affecting refugees and asylum-seekers by providing expert advice and comments on relevant draft laws to ensure compliance with international and EU standards.
- Providing technical assistance, legal advice and other forms of support to assist the authorities to further strengthen their refugee status determination procedures and ensure quality decision-making.
- Monitoring and advocacy to ensure that unaccompanied and separated children have effective access to the national child protection system with respect to accurate and timely identification, registration and documentation; guardianship and legal representation; adequate care and supervision; tracing and family reunification. Central to these actions is a best interest determination.
- Promoting good practices in relation to policies and measures that support the effective integration of refugees into the social, economic and cultural fabric of Cypriot society, including advocacy for naturalization, long-term residence permit and family reunification.
- Promoting accession to the UN statelessness conventions.

Protection outreach

- Training of key stakeholders from the government and civil society on basic protection issues, including refugee rights, reception conditions for asylum-seekers, durable solutions and child protection.
- Strengthening and broadening public information, awareness-raising and sensitization activities through media work, school activities, special campaigns, seminars and constituency-building.
- Strengthening partnerships with NGOs and other civil society actors involved in refugee protection.
- Implementation of the Refugee Outreach Volunteer Programme to enhance UNHCR's outreach to the refugee and asylum seeker community that is dispersed in urban settings throughout the country.

CONTACT US

Emilia STROVOLIDOU, Assistant Public Information Officer, Nicosia - Cyprus
Email: strovoli@unhcr.org | **Tel:** +357 22 359057 | **Mobile:** +357 99 832614

LINKS

Country Office Website: www.unhcr.org/cy
Social Media: Facebook & Twitter @UNHCRCyprus

Recent News

Refugee scholars share their university experience: 70+ deserving refugees have been awarded with full or partial scholarships through the University of Nicosia–UNHCR Refugee Scholarship Programme since 2017. [https://www.unhcr.org/cy/2022/06/09/refugee-scholars-share-their-university-experience/]

Operational Portal | Mediterranean Situation
https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean