Overview

Between 1 January and 31 March 2021, 65 persons disembarked in Malta. This is a 94% decrease compared to sea arrivals in the same period last year (there were 1135 sea arrivals to Malta from January to March 2020), while it is 72% less than the 237 sea arrivals in the same period of 2019.

The last sea arrival to Malta was on 21 February. There were no arrivals in March.

The UNHCR team monitors disembarkations of persons rescued at sea, while providing interpretation support to the authorities and giving initial information on reception and asylum procedures to all new arrivals.

Monthly Sea Arrivals

Jan 2019 - Mar 2021

Age and Gender Demographics

Between 1 January and 31 March, most sea arrivals to Malta were adult men (72%), followed by unaccompanied and separated children (25%), adult women (2%) and accompanied children (1%).

There have been 16 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)* arrivals in 2021.

*Please note that this data is based on each individual's declared age on arrival, before any age assessment procedures have taken place.
Asylum Applications and Decisions
January - March 2021

In recent years the refugee population has been mainly composed of Libyan, Syrian and Somali refugees. Currently the rate of international protection (Refugee or Subsidiary Protection status) is 7% of total decisions.

‘Closed cases’ make up 65% of outcomes. Most of these relate to applications that were withdrawn, and applications that were closed because applicants were transferred to another EU country for relocation.

First Instance Asylum Applications - Decision Rates
January - March 2021

Demographics - Countries of origin
From January to March 2021, 21 persons, or 32% of sea arrivals originated from Sudan, followed by 13 persons from Eritrea (20%) and 8 persons from Syria (12%), 7 persons from Chad (11%) and 7 persons from South Sudan (11%).

UNHCR monitoring and activities
UNHCR visits open and closed centres to provide information on the asylum system, Dublin regulation, rights and obligations, and to refer persons of concern to appropriate services. UNHCR conducts child protection activities, detention monitoring and, through its implementing partners, provides legal aid and psycho-social support in centres.

Due to measures to combat COVID-19, since March 2020 UNHCR has strengthened its digital communications to provide information to persons of concern online and through Whatsapp. UNHCR and partner organisations have dedicated telephone helplines for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Top 5 Nationalities
of First-Time Asylum Applicants
January - March 2021

Sudan 18%
Somalia 17%
Syria 11%
Eritrea 9%
Libya 6%

TOTAL APPLICATIONS 447

Top 5 Nationalities
Granted International Protection
Refugee Status and Subsidiary Protection
Jan - Mar 2021

Algeria 1
Somalia 3
Eritrea 3
Syria 13
Libya 29

Note: The IRC has both ‘open’ and ‘closed’ sections.