

ITALY Sea arrivals dashboard

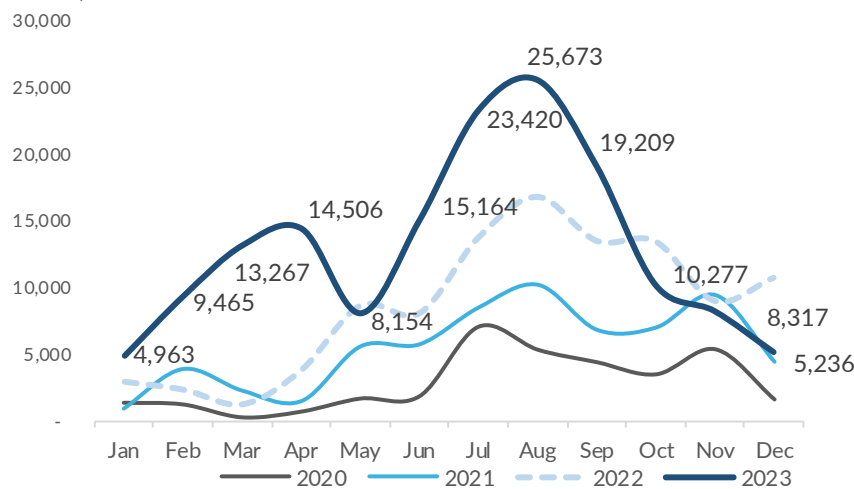
Overview

In 2023, 157,651 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea, compared to 105,131 in 2022 (+50%). December arrivals were down 37% compared to November, likely due to adverse weather conditions at sea. Most of the people arriving in December disembarked in Sicily (3,731), followed by Calabria (592), Puglia (472), Sardinia (179), Tuscany (145), Lazio (81) and Liguria (36).

157,651 Jan-Dec 2023 ¹
105,131 Jan-Dec 2022 ¹

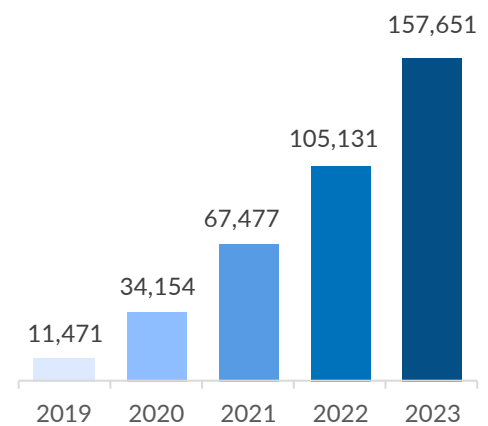
Monthly sea arrivals

January 2020 to December 2023



Yearly sea arrivals

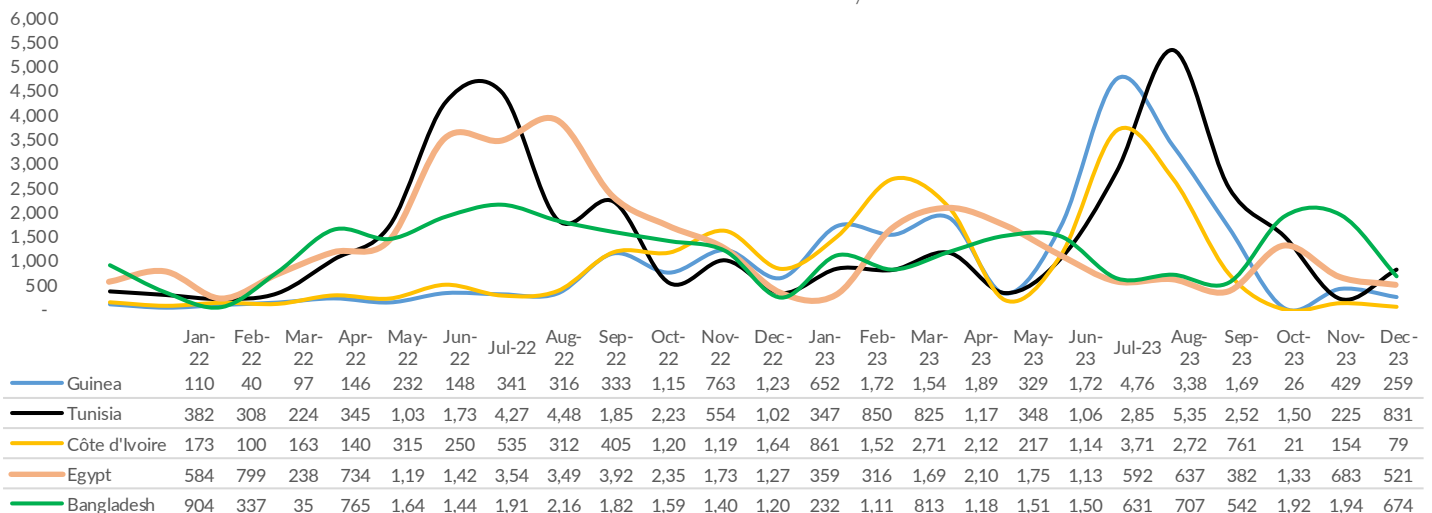
January to December, 2019-2023



Nationality of arrivals

In December, most new arrivals were Tunisians (16% compared to 3% in November), followed by 13% Bangladeshis and Syrians each (23% and 17% respectively in November) and 10% Egyptians (8% in November). Other nationalities arriving by sea in significant numbers were from Eritrea (7%), Pakistan (6%), Guinea (5%), the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan (4% each) and Ethiopia (3%). In December, most of those who departed from Libya were Bangladeshis, and Egyptians while the majority of those departing from Tunisia were Tunisians, Guineans and Malians. The main nationalities departing from Türkiye were Iranians and Iraqis and Afghans while Algeria departees were Algerians and Tunisians.

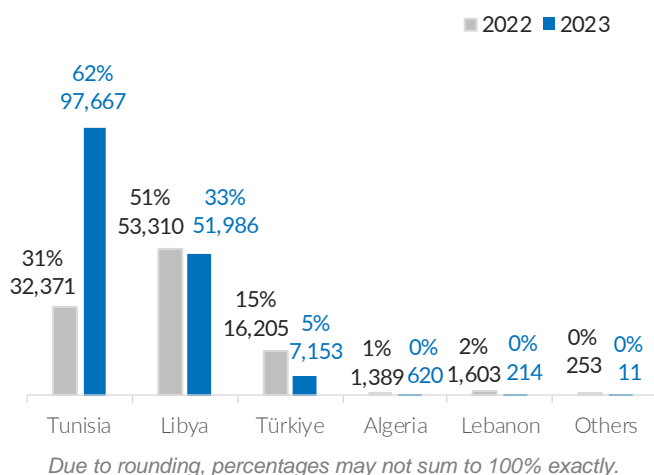
Most common nationalities of arrivals - January 2022 to December 2023



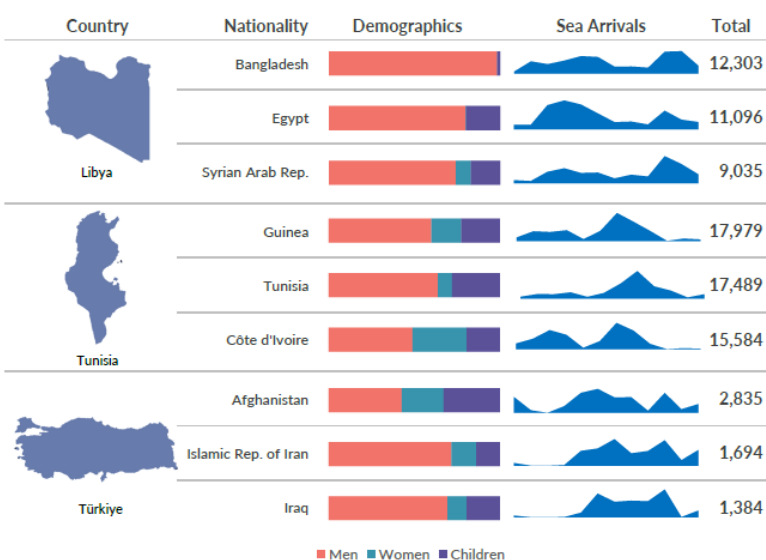
Country of embarkation

In 2023, 62% of sea crossings departed from Tunisia (97,667 persons; 2,796 disembarkations), followed by 33% from Libya (51,986 persons; 652 disembarkations), 5% from Türkiye (7,153 persons; 92 disembarkations), and less than 1% from Algeria (620 persons, 50 disembarkations), Lebanon (214 persons, 1 disembarkation) and Cyprus, respectively (11 persons, one disembarkation). In December 2023, 55% of migrants and refugees departed from Libya (2,875 persons, 50 disembarkations), 34% from Tunisia (1,806 persons, 69 disembarkations), 9% from Türkiye (470 persons, 6 disembarkations) and 2% from Algeria (85 persons, 8 disembarkations). This is in line with November, when Libya again was the main port of departure (64%), followed by Tunisia (34%) and Türkiye (2%).

January to December 2022 - 2023

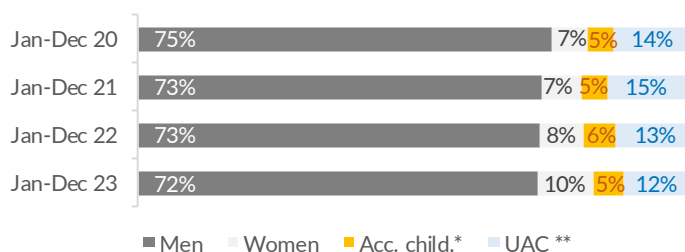


Top 3 nationalities by country of embarkation, January to December 2023



Demographics of arrivals

January to December 2020 - 2023

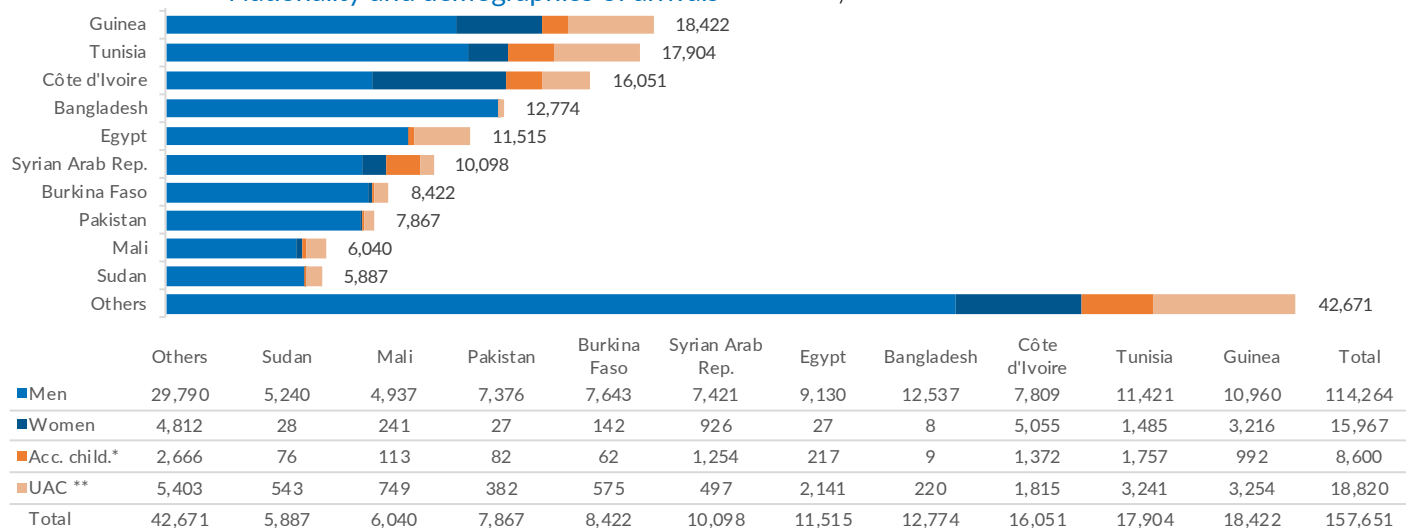

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100% exactly.

In 2023, most people arriving via sea were adult males (72%), followed by unaccompanied children (UAC, 12%), adult females (10%), and accompanied children (5%).

In December, 433 adult females reached Italian shores, mainly originating from Tunisia (70), Afghanistan (55) and Syrian Arab Republic (54).

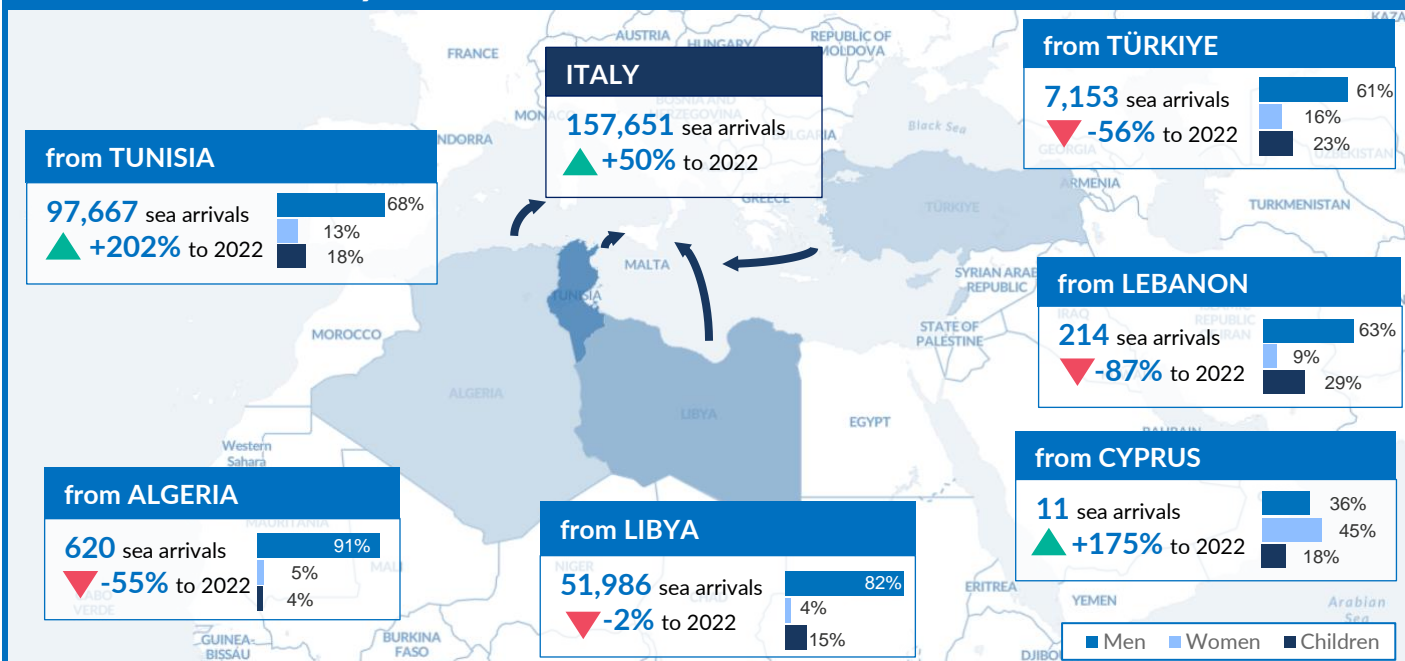
In the same period, 725 UAC arrived in Italy by sea. The main nationalities were Tunisian (146), Guinean (105), Eritrean (96) and Egyptian (94).

Nationality and demographics of arrivals – January to December 2023



2023 FOCUS

Sea arrivals to Italy in 2023



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Please note that 'children' in this map refers to both accompanied and unaccompanied children. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100% exactly.

Overview

- In 2023, **157,651 refugees and migrants** reached Italy via sea in **3,592 separate landings**, marking the fourth consecutive year of increasing arrivals and a 50 per cent rise compared to the previous year. Notably, 2023 ranked as the third highest year for sea arrivals since 1998, following the peaks of 2014 (170,100) and 2016 (181,436). To respond to the situation, the Government of Italy declared a state of emergency in April 2023 and expanded its reception capacity. Tragically, **1,908 migrants and refugees** are reported to have lost their lives or gone missing at sea while attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean towards Italy in 2023.

Routes travelled by refugees and migrants

- The increase in sea arrivals in 2023 was a direct consequence of the exponential upsurge in sea **departures from Tunisia**, which for the first time in recent migratory history became the main country of sea crossing towards Italy, surpassing Libya. **Nearly 100,000 migrants and refugees, primarily from West Africa, reached Italy via the sea route from Tunisia** in 2023. More than half (62% of all sea arrivals) arrived during the July-September quarter. In 2023, Libya emerged as the second country of departure for sea arrivals to Italy. Notably, nearly one in three sea arrivals had embarked from Libya, primarily originating from the Tripolitania region. However, there was a significant shift observed during the year, with a sudden decrease in departures from Cyrenaica starting July 2023. This decline marked a notable change, considering that the Cyrenaica Sea route had become increasingly active since the spring of 2022. Departures from Türkiye significantly decreased in 2023 (representing 4.5% of the yearly figures), while departures from Algeria, Lebanon and Cyprus accounted for less than 1 per cent of the yearly sea arrivals figures.
- In 2023, the majority of refugees and migrants landing in Italy (88,228 people, eq. to 56% of total arrivals) was disembarked on Italian shores following **rescue operations conducted by various actors**. The remaining arrivals were intercepted by Italian authorities (35%), with few cases of spontaneous landings or tracings once already on land - a trend attributed to the increased aerial surveillance system, both through Italian and European assets, which has significantly reduced such cases in recent years. Italian authorities, primarily the Italian Coast Guard followed by the Tax and Customs Police, conducted most rescue operations (83%), while NGO search and rescue (SAR) operations accounted for 16 per cent of all disembarked refugees and migrants in Italy. The upsurge in arrivals from Tunisia led to a rise in incidents at sea and loss of life on this sea route, partly due to the use of makeshift metal boats by West African nationals, and consequently to an increase in rescue interventions by authorities. By the end of 2023, in

contrast to previous years, more than half of the rescue operations (58%) involved vessels departing from Tunisia, while 38 per cent of SAR operations involved vessels departing from Libya.

- In 2023, the main port of disembarkation in Italy remained the island of [Lampedusa](#), where 108,498 refugees and migrants (69% of the total) were disembarked, an increasing share compared to previous years (52% in 2021 and 44% in 2022). This can be attributed largely to the rise in departures from Tunisia, aiming to reach the island. Notably, in September, 110 vessels departed from Tunisia and arrived in Lampedusa on a single day, carrying 4,849 people. Other main areas of disembarkation were other locations in Sicily (11%), Calabria (8%) and Apulia (3%).

Nationalities of refugees and migrants

- In 2023, [62 different nationalities were registered](#) by Italian authorities at disembarkation sites, with the top five countries of origin being Guinea (12%), Tunisia (11%), Cote d'Ivoire (10%), Bangladesh (8%) and Egypt (7%). The nationality breakdown in 2023 was significantly influenced by the presence of West African nationals, reminiscent of the peak year in 2016 when they had also arrived in Italy via sea, albeit in smaller numbers and transiting through Libya. In 2023, most West-African nationals reached Italy from Tunisia (Tunisians accounting for only 18% of the departures from that country), while Asians and North and East African nationals typically crossed the Central Mediterranean from Libya. On the Libya-sea route, the top five countries of origin were Bangladesh, Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, Pakistan, and Eritrea, with Asian nationals and Syrians mostly travelling to Libya via air through Benghazi and moving onwards to Tripolitania for embarkation. On the Türkiye-route, the main nationalities were Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi and Pakistani.
- In addition to the overall increase in West African nationals, which can be attributed to the prevailing insecurity in the Sahel region, a significant development in 2023 was [the unprecedented surge in nationals from Burkina Faso](#): over 8,400 Burkinabe reached Italy via sea in 2023, a figure never registered before in Italy (peak year for Burkinabe arrivals was 2016 with 1,055 persons) representing a [2,189 per cent surge](#) compared to the previous year. New arrivals reported leaving Burkina Faso due to growing political instability, the expansion of the Boko Haram Islamist jihadist organization and the jihadist insurgency as well as the fear of being forcibly recruited by the army. Similarly, from June onwards, a considerable increase in [Sudanese](#) arrivals through Tunisia was recorded (by end 2023, the increase was at +456% compared to 2022), a movement that was strictly related to the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that started in April 2023.

Profiles of refugees and migrants

- In 2023, the demographic composition of sea arrivals to Italy continued to reflect patterns observed in previous years, with mainly adult males, and [adult females only representing 10 per cent of the total arrivals](#) (15,967 adult females). However, there are notable variations in sex and age profiles across different sea routes. For instance, adult females constituted only 4 per cent of arrivals from Libya but made up 13 per cent of arrivals from Tunisia and 16 per cent from Türkiye. These variations are closely linked to nationality, with some groups such as Afghans and Syrians being more likely to migrate as families. Risks associated with transit countries also played a significant role, particularly in Libya, where harsh conditions deterred female refugees and migrants as well as families from choosing that route. Focusing specifically on sea arrivals to Italy by adult females, the majority departed from Tunisia, accounting for 81 per cent of the total. While the absolute number of adult female arrivals nearly doubled between 2022 and 2023, they still only represented between 8 and 10 per cent of the total arrivals. Among the main countries of origin of adult females arriving by sea in 2023 were Côte d'Ivoire (32%, i.e., one in three adult females landed in Italy via sea), Guinea (20%), Tunisia (9%), Cameroon (7%), the Syrian Arab Republic (6%), and Afghanistan (4%).
- In 2023, UAC accounted for 12 per cent of all sea arrivals to Italy (eq. to [18,820](#)). While the proportion of UAC among total arrivals has remained relatively stable over the past years, fluctuating between 12 per cent and 15 per cent, in absolute terms, the number of UAC landing on Italian shores in 2023 grew by 34 per cent compared to the previous year. The top nationalities of UAC in 2023 were Guinean (17% of total UAC arrived), Tunisian (17%), Egyptian (11%), Gambian (10%) and Ivorian (10%).