

Italy

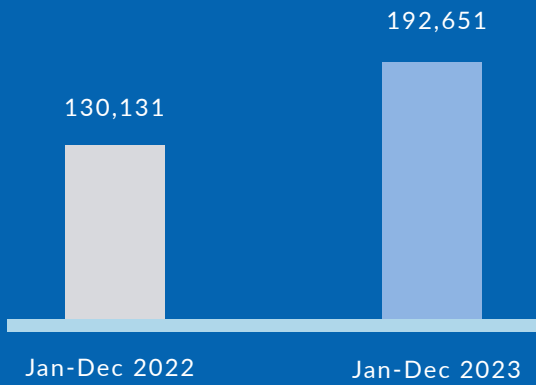
December 2023

In December, **5,236 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**. Most originated from Tunisia (16%), Bangladesh and the Syrian Arab Republic (13% each) and Egypt (10%). 21% were children. Additional arrivals reached Italy **via land and air**.

The **Global Refugee Forum** convened in Geneva from 13-15 December, brought together States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), refugees, and the private sector to support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees objectives.

On 20 December, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, UNHCR and Italian NGOs signed a **Memorandum of Understanding for the evacuation of 1,500 refugees from Libya to Italy**.

TOTAL ARRIVALS



Source: Ministry of Interior for arrivals by sea. UNHCR estimates for arrivals by land and air. Please note that arrivals from Ukraine are not included in the chart.

KEY FIGURES

157,651

Sea arrivals to Italy disembarked at different ports across the country in January-December 2023. 136,559 (87%) were informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff, following disembarkation. (Source: Ministry of Interior and UNHCR)

184,851

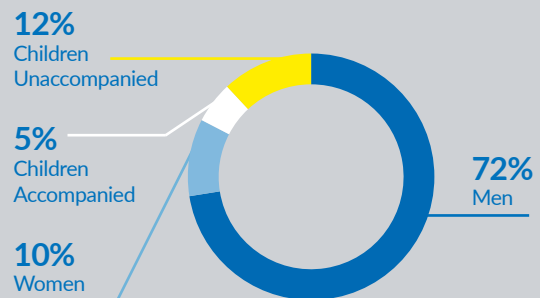
Temporary protection applications of people fleeing Ukraine as of end of December 2023. 71% of applicants are females. (Source: Civil Protection)

SEA ARRIVALS BY MONTH IN 2023



Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals only.

SEA ARRIVALS BY GENDER AND AGE



Source: Ministry of Interior. Please note that the chart refers to the latest cumulative data available. Gender breakdown for children is not available.



Arrivals

- Access to territory (sea arrivals).** In December, the number of refugees and migrants arriving in Italy via the Mediterranean Sea continued to decrease, likely due to adverse weather conditions. During the month, **5,236 people reached the Italian shores** in 133 disembarkations, a 37% decrease compared to November. Among total arrivals, **21% were children**. New arrivals mainly originated from **Tunisia** (16%), followed by **Bangladesh** and the **Syrian Arab Republic** (13% each) and **Egypt** (10%). Other nationalities arriving by sea in significant numbers were Eritreans (7%), Pakistanis (6%), Guineans (5%), Iranians and Afghans (4% each) and Ethiopians (3%). Similarly to the previous month, more than half departed from Libya (55%, compared to 64% in November), followed by 34% from Tunisia (same as in November), 9% from Türkiye (2% in November) and 2% from Algeria (no arrivals in November). Almost 2,468 people (47% of the monthly arrivals) were disembarked in Italy as a result of **Search And Rescue (SAR) operations**. In December, the situation at the **Lampedusa hotspot** remained within the centre's maximum reception capacity. In addition, rapid transfers of persons within 48 hours were carried out during the month. In December, two loss-of-life situations occurred at sea on boats departing from Libya: On 27 December, a 32-year-old Egyptian man died during the sea crossing due to gunshots allegedly fired - according to witnesses - by Libyan militias when they were already on board, to prevent the departure. The body was disembarked in Lampedusa. On 29 December, a 17-year-old Pakistani unaccompanied child (UAC) died of suffocation due to inhaling gasoline during the sea crossing, and several others were hospitalized for the same reason once disembarked in Lampedusa. In 2023, nearly **1,900 people died or went missing** in the Central Mediterranean due to several incidents, representing a concerning 27% increase compared to the approximately 1,500 casualties recorded in 2022.¹
- Access to territory (land arrivals). Some 1,300 land arrivals were intercepted at Italy's northern borders with Slovenia in December.** In 2023, more than 12,000 new arrivals were reported in this area. Those travelling by land via south-east Europe mainly originated from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh** and **Pakistan**. New arrivals reported **systematic ill-treatment and pushbacks** by the Bulgarian, Croatian and Slovenia Police. UNHCR staff continued to conduct outreach activities and collecting testimonies, informing new arrivals on their rights and ways to apply for protection in Italy.



Resettlement and complementary pathways

- On 20 December, a new **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the evacuation of 1,500 refugees and people in need of international protection from Libya to Italy over the next three years** was signed between the Ministry of the Interior (Moi), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFA), UNHCR, *Comunita' di Sant'Egidio*, *Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche*, ARCI and *Istituto Nazionale per la promozione della salute delle popolazioni Migranti ed il contrasto delle malattie della Povertà* (INMP).² The new MoU follows the first one of 2021 and renews the commitment initiated by Italy in 2017 which has so far allowed 1,400 beneficiary of international protection to arrive in the country thanks to evacuation mechanisms or through humanitarian corridors. The MoU will benefit people who have been forced to flee their countries due to wars and violence and who are temporarily in Libya. Among them will be children, women victims of trafficking, survivors of violence and torture and people in serious health conditions, identified by UNHCR in collaboration with *Comunita' di Sant'Egidio*, *Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche*, ARCI and INMP. Of the 1,500 people who will arrive, 600 will be transferred to facilities of the Integration Reception System (SAI), while 900 will be hosted by



Over 2.4 million refugees worldwide are in need of resettlement, a 36% increase over the 2022 need.
 ©UNHCR/Alessandro Penso

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

² See also, UNHCR, [Libia: 1500 rifugiati arriveranno in Italia con i corridoi umanitari e le evacuazioni](#), 20 December 2023.

associations following the model of humanitarian corridors throughout the national territory: 400 will be hosted by *Comunita' di Sant'Egidio*, 300 by ARCI and 200 by *Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche*. On the occasion of the signature of the MoU, the UNHCR Representative in Italy, the Holy See and San Marino, Chiara Cardoletti, underlined the importance of this unique life-saving mechanism in Europe, hoping it will serve as an example and inspiration for other European countries.³



Community-based protection

- On 30 November and 1 December, the final event of the sixth edition of **PartecipAzione** was held at *Binario F* in Rome. This is a programme implemented by UNHCR and INTERSOS, along with the **Community Outreach Volunteers** programme. The event was attended by refugee associations, local organisations promoting active participation, institutions and the media. It was an opportunity to learn about the results of the programme, the projects implemented and the stories of those taking part in the 2023 edition. It closed with a round table and thematic workshops. The event was also **an opportunity to discuss the central role of refugee associations in fostering socio-economic inclusion in Italy**, bringing services and institutions closer to communities, often filling pre-existing gaps, starting at the local level. In 2023, 60 associations participated in over 260 coaching sessions on communication, networking, project proposal development and administration. In addition, 130 refugees (of whom 70% women) of the associations selected for 2023 participated in training modules on protection, calls for proposals and planning and communication strategies, totalling 300 hours.⁴
- On 4 December, the UNHCR Representation to Italy, the Holy See and San Marino participated in the **8th European Migration Forum** organised by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee. The forum addressed the identification and support of migrants and refugees with specific needs, examined public attitudes and communication on migration and inclusion, and discussed sustainable integration into the labor market. The Italian Mol and UNHCR presented the **Handbook for the identification, referral and care of persons living with vulnerabilities** as a best practice that promotes the communication and collaboration between all relevant public and private partners to this endeavour, and which could be replicated in other European Union (EU) Member State. The Handbook provides standardised guidelines for each actor involved in the asylum system at national level, addressing how to identify, refer and respond to specific needs.



Training

- On 5 December, a national training event on the **United Nations human rights monitoring mechanisms** was organized by UNHCR and the National Asylum Commission for Presidents, eligibility staff, caseworkers and International Protection and Human Rights Expert of the Territorial Commissions.
- On 6 December, UNHCR co-facilitated a training session on statelessness organized by the *Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati* and the European Network on Statelessness.
- On 12 December, UNHCR conducted a training session on UNHCR's mandate and activities for students enrolled in the joint Bari-Manchester Master's programme on Migration and Diversity Management at the University of Bari. Additionally, on 15 December, UNHCR conducted a training on UNHCR mandate and activities in Italy, including its role, for students enrolled in the Bachelor/Master's programme on the protection of human rights at the University La Sapienza.

³ See also, Chiara Cardoletti, UNHCR Representative in Italy, the Holy See and San Marino, post on X , 20 December 2023.

⁴ See also, UNHCR, *Chiude a Roma la sesta edizione di PartecipAzione*, 1 December 2023.

External engagement

- On 6 December, Legambiente, with the contribution of UNHCR, presented the report "[Un'umanità in fuga: gli effetti della crisi climatica sulle migrazioni forzate](#)";⁵ at the University of Rome La Sapienza. The report analyses **the impact of the climate crisis on forcibly displaced people**, highlighting the double burden of persecution, conflict, human rights violations and the additional challenges posed by climate adversity. The event was accompanied by institutional greetings from the Director General of Legambiente, Giorgio Zampetti, and the UNHCR Representative in Italy, the Holy See and San Marino, Chiara Cardoletti. The presentation included the testimonies of Keita Madi, from Mali, a cultural mediator at *Centro Astalli*, and Jules Bitwayiki Mende, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a graduate in Natural Resources Management for Tropical Rural Development at the University of Florence, who came to Italy thanks to [UNHCR's University Corridors](#).

Global Refugee Forum 2023

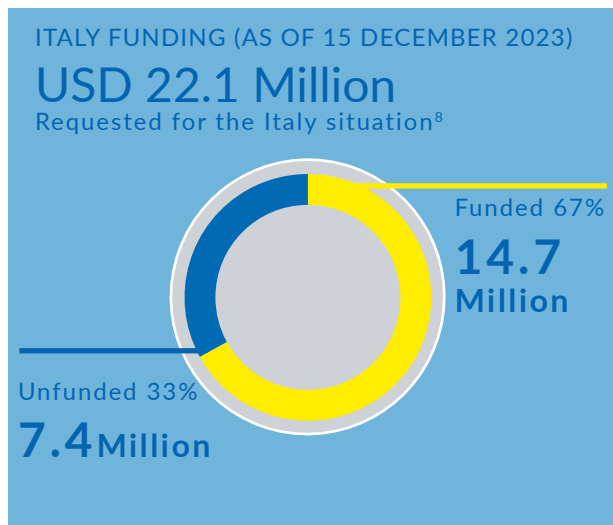
The second Global Refugee Forum (GRF), convened in Geneva from 13 to 15 December 2023, drew over 4,200 participants from 168 countries, including more than 300 refugee delegates. The Forum, which takes place every four years, aims to promote the implementation of the objectives of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#): alleviating pressures on host countries, enhancing self-reliance of refugees, increasing access to third country solutions and for return and safety in dignity improving conditions in countries of origin. In its 2023 edition, more than 1,600 pledges were mobilized, encompassing financial, material, technical, policy, and additional forms of support. Approximately \$2.2 billion in new financial commitments from States and other actors were pledged during the Forum, including \$250 million from the private sector. Giorgio Silli, MFA Undersecretary of State, who led **the Italian delegation**, presented the pledges submitted by the Italian Government and actors.⁶ This showcased the successful collaborative efforts by Italian authorities, the private sector, civil society, and other actors in supporting refugees in Italy and abroad. Additionally, **the Holy See delegation** led by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, conveyed a [message from Pope Francis](#), inviting participants to remember that "we are at a crucial moment, called to choose between a culture of fraternity and humanity and a culture of indifference".



UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi speaks at the closing plenary of the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. © UNHCR/Jose Cendon

During the second GRF, Italian actors registered **13 new good practices** and presented **18 pledges**. The pledges focused along others, on addressing the external dimension of forced migration. In this regard, the Italian **MFA** pledged support to third countries in Lebanon, Jordan and Côte d'Ivoire, while **The Human Safety Net** pledged to provide financial and non-financial support to entrepreneurship. The **AVSI Foundation** also pledged to support sport therapy and economic inclusion. Italian actors also confirmed their strong commitment to complementary pathways. This included the MFA's support to the [Global Sponsorship Fund](#) and the **Mol's** commitment to resettlement and humanitarian admissions for 2024-2025. Moreover, pledges included the joint efforts by the MFA, **MoL** and Mol for the implementation of labour corridors as well as the commitment by the **University of Bologna** and other **34 universities** to expand university corridors, accompanied by **Fondazione Finanza Etica's** support to students participating in the [UNICORE](#) project. Furthermore, **LUISS University's** pledged to support the Mediterraneo II project. The Italian pledges also addressed integration and protection at the domestic level. **Assolavoro**⁷ and the MoL presented pledges to enhance labour inclusion; the **Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation** to strengthen refugee integration through sport; the Mol committed to establish a referral system between asylum and statelessness procedures; the **National Council of Notaries** to provide legal services to refugees; and the **One Sight Essilor Luxottica Foundation** to support refugees with visual impairments. The full list of pledges presented at the GRF, can be seen [here](#) and the full list of Italian good practices, [here](#).

 **Financial information**



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors, who have contributed to the Italy operation:

Italy | private donors in Italy | USA for UNHCR | European Union

UNHCR is also grateful to the donors who have contributed to UNHCR operations globally, with unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions.⁹

 **Fundraising**

In December, UNHCR raised **4.2 million euros from private donors** in Italy, including from Intesa San Paolo, Diesel, Fondazione EOS, Brunello Cucinelli, Loro Piana, totalling **33.3 million euros** since the beginning of the year.

In the same month, the Italian MFA/Directorate General for Development Cooperation provided **500,000 euros** in support of UNHCR's project titled "Intervention providing protection and humanitarian assistance to indigenous communities as well as refugees, migrant children and teenagers from Venezuela in Brazil".

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LINKS [UNHCR data portal](#) - [UNHCR Italy](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [LinkedIn](#) - [Global Focus](#)

⁵ See also, UNHCR, "Un'umanità in fuga: Gli effetti della crisi climatica sulle migrazioni forzate", 6 December 2023.

⁶ See also, Posts on X the Italian [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation](#).

⁷ See also, Posts on X by [Assolavoro](#).

⁸ Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund priorities activities.

⁹ Unearmarked contributions are without restrictions on their use, allowing UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk globally. Softly earmarked contributions allow UNHCR to use them across the range of countries, activities or themes in a given region or situation in accordance with identified priorities; softly earmarked contributions can potentially be used for the Italy operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region. Donors of unearmarked contributions of USD 10 million or more are: Sweden, España con ACNUR, Norway, Japan for UNHCR, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark, France, Private donors in the Republic of Korea, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Private donors in Italy, Sweden for UNHCR, Belgium, Ireland, USA for UNHCR. Donors of softly earmarked contributions of USD 10 million or more are: Germany, Switzerland for UNHCR, UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe, United States of America, Sweden for UNHCR, USA for UNHCR,



Access to territory and Reception

In 2023, UNHCR has provided information on international protection to **86% of new arrivals**, including those who disembarked in central and northern Italy following NGO operations. This information has been delivered either directly upon disembarkation or through subsequent follow-up activities.

UNHCR continued to support authorities by conducting monitoring activities, **visiting 198 reception and detention centers** across 66 provinces. During the monitoring activities, some 800 people eligible of some form of international protection were consulted through individual or group interviews regarding reception and detention conditions.



Refugee status determination

In November, the **first national meeting of UNHCR's designated International Protection and Human Rights Experts** was convened with 70 participants, uniting experts working in the Territorial Commissions, in charge of first-instance asylum procedure, providing a space for dialogue and for exchanging best practices. The sessions focused on key topics related to the Refugee Status Determination procedure.



Specific needs

UNHCR actively supported the interagency Working Group (WG) on Vulnerabilities, chaired by the Mol, and involving different institutional counterparts. In June 2023, the WG released the **Handbook for Vulnerabilities**, which provides guidance to national asylum system actors on the identification, referral and care of persons with specific needs, marking a significant milestone as the first national Standard Operating Procedure on the subject. The launch was followed by a roll-out phase in September 2023, covering four pilot locations, training, nationwide webinars reaching thousands, and establishing local WGs (refer also to the information provided on page 3).

In April and June 2023, UNHCR organized three webinars titled "**Strengthening the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in the Context of Forced Displacement**" developed in collaboration with experts and NGOs, including CBM Italia, Ledha, and Special Olympics.

In 2023, MEDU and UNHCR produced a short documentary entitled "**Un luogo sicuro. Voci contro la tortura**" which features the therapeutic journeys in Italy of two refugees, echoing the experiences of hundreds of thousands of refugee survivors who have faced extreme violence and torture.



Child protection

UNHCR, with UNICEF, contributed to the report of the **Guarantor Authority for Children and Adolescents** based on a series of visits to monitor unaccompanied foreign children hosted in the SAI projects in Italy.

UNHCR assisted in developing a guide for accurately filling the **Best Interests Assessment form** linked to the family reunification request, which facilitates the transfer of unaccompanied foreign children, who applied for international protection, to the European State where a family member resides, as per **EU Regulation no. 604/2013**.

UNHCR partnered with Save the Children on the publication of two mapping exercises, one on **Age Assessment** and one on **Voluntary Guardianship**, to document gaps and pinpoint solutions.



Gender-based violence

With UNICEF and the Italian Civil Protection, UNHCR developed a **Practical Guide** aimed at providing a framework, including standards and tools to mainstream gender-based risk mitigation as well as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Italian reception system.



Community-based protection

The 6th edition of the **PartecipAzione** project, in collaboration with INTERSOS, which aims to empower and build the capacities of refugee-led organizations in Italy was successfully implemented.

In 2023, the **Help page** and **Juma** recorded **161,109** and **128,217 views** respectively.



Partnerships

In 2023, UNHCR implemented **17 partnerships with Italian NGOs**, addressing various protection needs, notably reinforcing the GBV component and primary/specialized health services.



Integration

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the [EU Directive 2003/86/EC](#) on family reunification, UNHCR, IOM, ARCI, *Consiglio Italiano per i rifugiati*, the Italian Red Cross, and Save the Children launched the [Community of Practice on Family Reunification](#), an online platform to foster knowledge sharing among international organizations, NGOs, institutions, legal and social professionals, and sector experts.

Three new [Spazio Comune](#) centers were established in Bari, Milan and Naples, in addition to those in Rome and Turin, aiming to facilitate coordinated management and service provision by various stakeholders to enhance the socio-economic inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.

In 2023, UNHCR awarded 167 private companies with the [Welcome](#) logo for creating job opportunities for nearly 9,300 refugees in 2022. Since 2017, the initiative facilitated the creation of 22,000 job entries for refugees in more than 520 companies.

In November, the National Council of Notaries and UNHCR signed a [MoU for the social and economic integration of refugees and the protection of their fundamental rights](#).



Resettlement and complementary pathways

In 2023, **182 people were resettled** (72 from Pakistan, 51 from Türkiye, 50 from Iran and 9 from Lebanon) and **768 people arrived in Italy through humanitarian corridors** (355 from Lebanon, 67 from Ethiopia, 33 from Türkiye, 305 from Pakistan and 8 from Iran - Afghan nationals).

In 2023, the 5th edition of [UNICORE – University Corridors for Refugees](#) saw the participation of **32 universities**, giving **52 refugees** the opportunity to receive scholarships and continue their university studies in Italy. Since its inception, UNICORE has offered more than 200 scholarships involving 41 universities.

In May 2023, the Italian government introduced in [Law 50/2023](#), a provision, also advanced and welcomed by UNHCR, which paves the way for labour pathways for refugees in Italy. Among other provisions, the law creates an extra line to

admit refugee workers after a period of training in the countries of asylum and/or departure.



External engagement

On 10 June, the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi attended the “**Not Alone**” event in the Vatican, the first world meeting on human fraternity organized by *Fratelli Tutti* Foundation. On that occasion, he signed the [Declaration on Human Fraternity](#) along with 33 Nobel Laureates.

Throughout the year, UNHCR actively participated in a number of initiatives spearheaded by Italy, including the [Rome Process](#) which was launched on 23 July during the [Conference on Migration and Development](#). The conference was attended by the High Commissioner for Refugees, the UNHCR Representative in Italy alongside the EU, Southern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern states, EU first port states, partners from the Sahel and Horn of Africa, regional organizations, development banks and other international bodies.

In addition, UNHCR continued to work closely with the Government of Italy to advance global policies that support forcibly displaced, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. Besides key protection priorities, this included advocating, in cooperation with IOM, for a [route-based approach](#), focused on providing protection and solutions along migratory routes to people forced to flee.



Law and Policy developments

In 2023, UNHCR engaged in continuous advocacy efforts providing [in-depth analysis, including proposing amendments](#) to several legislative processes, in compliance with international human rights and refugee law, including those leading to the adoption of [Law 15/2023](#), [Law 50/2023](#), [Law 176/2023](#), [Law 2/2024](#) on the “[Mattei Plan](#)” and the [bill ratifying and executing the Protocol between Italy and Albania](#).



Statelessness

In 2023, UNHCR and the Mol signed a [MoU aimed at improving the statelessness determination procedure](#) through joint technical cooperation as well as at exploring the opportunity to set up referral mechanisms between the asylum and the statelessness procedures.