



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

what we do in Italy



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UNHCR ITALY
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UNHCR in Italy¹

In line with its mandate, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works with the Italian government, other organisations and refugees themselves to promote access to rights for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons.



PROTECTION

UNHCR advises key governmental counterparts, as well as Parliament and other stakeholders (e.g. regional and local administrations), on policy and legislative developments. UNHCR also provides technical support to the authorities with a view to strengthening their capacity to ensure adequate responses to the needs of persons of concern to UNHCR in Italy, namely refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. Furthermore, through its staff and partners, UNHCR is engaged in activities aimed at ensuring full and equal enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern, addressing protection risks in an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) sensitive manner, with a particular focus on persons with specific needs, such as minorities, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UNHCR's protection delivery is based on a community based protection approach, which aims at putting people of concern at the centre of all decisions affecting their lives. Based on this approach, UNHCR promotes active refugee participation in all aspects of the UNHCR programme cycle, builds protection strategies and solutions in partnership with them and supports the community's own goals, also through better communication with communities. In addition, it aims at strengthening partnerships with civil society, as well as engaging and empowering communities with a view to increasing access to rights.

Access to territory

UNHCR staff, including cultural mediators, are present in several locations in southern Italy and attend key phases of disembarkation procedures, providing new arrivals with information on international protection and other relevant procedures, through leaflets and group information sessions. UNHCR also supports the authorities in identifying persons with specific needs, including persons with medical conditions, pregnant women, UASC, victims of trauma, and survivors of torture or SGBV. UNHCR participates in institutional working groups aimed at developing and enhancing standard procedures to ensure that access to the territory and to asylum is granted in accordance with national and international standards. UNHCR staff monitor the implementation of such procedures, promoting the adoption of adequate safeguards.

UNHCR staff are also present in northern Italy, where they conduct capacity-building activities, in close coordination with civil society organisations, to assist the authorities in providing persons in transit with information on accessing asylum and other relevant procedures in Italy. In northern Italy, the team also monitors land border procedures as well as instances of readmission, and their potential impact on access to international protection, focusing in particular on people with specific needs, including UASC.

UNHCR has been working in close cooperation with other European agencies, in particular the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), providing information to new arrivals and liaising to ensure their registration for relevant procedures, including Dublin procedures.

¹ Version 1.3 (as of June 2018). For further information on relevant developments and activities in Italy, please visit the UNHCR Italy website at <https://www.unhcr.it/> or the UNHCR data portal at <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205>.

Reception

UNHCR has long engaged in supporting the authorities with the establishment of monitoring and quality control mechanisms, to ensure harmonization of reception standards, build capacity and strengthen accountability. UNHCR staff have been conducting monitoring visits to reception facilities nationwide, jointly with representatives of the Prefectures, Police and Ministry of the Interior. Facility types vary and include first assistance facilities (first assistance and reception centres – CPSA, and hotspots), first-line facilities, second-line facilities, and temporary reception centres offering accommodation in the event that capacity is lacking in either first-line or second-line facilities. Since 2017, UNHCR staff have been participating in monitoring visits together with authorities and external auditors contracted by the Ministry of the Interior to carry out monitoring activities. UNHCR provides technical support to external auditors, including through an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) and participatory approach. UNHCR also focuses on SGBV-related risks in reception and advocates for the implementation of relevant legislation ensuring that reception facilities are equipped with ad hoc services for persons with specific needs. UNHCR also conducts monitoring visits in pre-removal facilities, assessing the situation of persons of concern who are in administrative detention.

Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

UNHCR participates in first-instance Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures, with staff posted in the decentralized Territorial Eligibility Commissions. UNHCR provides advice on the use of eligibility criteria, procedural standards, and country of origin information. It also ensures identification of persons with specific needs, as well as case prioritization, sensitive procedures and referrals. Furthermore, in close cooperation with the National Commission for the Right to Asylum, UNHCR staff monitor the quality of RSD procedures, while an Asylum and Trafficking Expert supports the implementation of guidelines for the referral of potential victims of trafficking who seek asylum. We have also engaged in participatory activities with refugees, additionally aimed at monitoring the quality of procedures. UNHCR staff are involved in capacity-building activities, including training design and delivery for decision makers, judges and police staff. They also provide support to the National Commission for the Right to Asylum, including on the reform of the RSD procedure.

Protection of persons with specific needs

Through the systematic application of an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach, UNHCR protection work pays particular attention to persons and groups with specific needs, and to persons or groups which, due to their characteristics, have faced, or are at higher risk of facing, protection problems, such as violence, exploitation or discrimination. UNHCR staff work to ensure that all persons of concern enjoy their rights on an equal footing and are able to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives and the lives of their family members and communities.



Through the systematic application of an AGD approach, the protection and prompt identification of persons with specific needs and their access to adequate services are promoted and mainstreamed across all activities UNHCR carries out in Italy. UNHCR staff support competent authorities in the identification of persons with specific needs at arrival points and in first-line reception facilities, and promote their prioritization into the asylum procedure and their prompt referral, with the aim of ensuring their access to dedicated services and the provision of targeted assistance responses.

UNHCR also works with the authorities at local and national level to develop standard mechanisms, competencies and good practices grounded in the AGD, person-centred and multi-sectorial approaches. UNHCR also focuses on developing recommendations on standardization of practices, prevention, empowerment, prioritization of transfers, and services ensuring a specific needs-sensitive response. Furthermore, support is given for the assistance of persons of concern outside the formal reception system and their referral to adequate services. UNHCR supports the development of information material regarding access to health, and sexual and reproductive rights.

Lastly, UNHCR contributes to a series of workshops and trainings aimed at raising awareness on the specific needs of particular groups of refugees, such as persons with health and mental health needs, LGBTI persons, minority groups and others. Such capacity-building activities target a wide range of stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society and refugees.

SGBV prevention and response

UNHCR has developed a 2017-2019 SGBV Strategy structured around six main thematic operational areas and objectives: Coordination; Prevention; Response; Trafficking; Mainstreaming; and Participation. The Strategy focuses on enhancing partnerships, promoting governance and engaging communities.

UNHCR also contributes to policy formulations, such as the National Extraordinary Plan against SGBV, ensuring adequate inclusion and protection for persons of concern, and undertakes a wide range of capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives related to prevention and response to SGBV. Since 2017, UNHCR has been engaged in partnerships with [AIDOS](#) (Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo), [D.i.Re](#) (Donne in Rete contro la violenza), and [LILA Catania](#) (Lega Italiana Lotta Aids), working together on projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of institutions, front-line operators and cultural mediators to prevent, mitigate and respond to SGBV and promoting access to sexual and reproductive health and services for SGBV survivors, also through the development of information materials for persons of concern. Furthermore, UNHCR is supporting mobile outreach activities carried out by partner organisation [MEDU](#) (Medici per i Diritti Umani), which promotes access to health, social and psycho-social services to persons of concern in Rome and in Sicily.



Child protection

UNHCR staff work with the authorities to develop mechanisms, competencies and good practices grounded in the best interests of the child principle. Training and capacity building activities, including with reception centre staff, are also carried out, with a focus on best interest of the child, international protection, cooperation and governance, and participation. Furthermore, UNHCR staff support information provision for UASC at arrival points and in reception facilities. Consultations with UASC, including through focus group discussions, are prioritised, with a view to inform UNHCR's approach and programming.

UNHCR also works to develop child-friendly materials explaining international protection procedures in Italy. Furthermore, in partnership with **CIR** (Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati), UNHCR is collaborating on a project aimed at strengthening, training and supporting voluntary guardians in Sicily and at providing legal information in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, so to enhance the protection and social inclusion of UASC in accordance with the provisions of Law 47/2017. UNHCR also supports a project implemented by partner organization **AMMI** (Associazione Multi-etnica dei Mediatori Interculturali) which focuses on strengthening the protection of UASC at regional level in Piedmont by deploying and training cultural mediators.

UNHCR further works in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents, to promote participation of refugee children and turn the expressed needs and gaps into enhanced rights. Social integration and youth participation of young refugees is also promoted through their inclusion into sports programmes in partnership with **Sport Senza Frontiere** and **FC Barcelona Foundation**. Additionally, UNHCR started a partnership with **Safe Passage** to follow up on UASC family reunion cases in order to set up a precedent that could lead to more effective and protection-sensitive procedures. The Agency also liaises with other organisations, such as IOM, UNICEF, and Save the Children, promoting a coordinated child protection response.



Communication with communities

UNHCR gives great importance to ensuring that persons of concern have reliable information on their rights, obligations and services available to meet their needs so they can make informed decisions. UNHCR teams provide face-to-face information on rights, with particular emphasis on asylum-related procedures. Furthermore, in partnership with ARCI (Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana), UNHCR is supporting a national free phone number for information and the **Juma project**, an open source map of services and resources available for institutions, organizations and persons of concern across Italy. UNHCR is enhancing its engagement and capacity building of community-based and refugee-led organizations in partnership with **Intersos**. UNHCR also offers a drop-in service in Rome, providing information through individual protection counselling to persons of concern in a confidential manner.



Integration

UNHCR provides support to the government, most recently contributing to the drafting of the 2017 National Integration Plan, building on findings from prior consultations with refugees. UNHCR staff have been deployed to selected Italian Regions to support the implementation of the National Integration Plan at local level and to promote the establishment of regional integration plans. Other UNHCR initiatives focus on raising awareness on asylum issues in schools ([Viaggi da Imparare](#) project) and on engaging private companies to promote refugees' employment ([Welcome](#) project). UNHCR also supports a project, in partnership with [Fondazione Adecco per le Pari Opportunità](#), to facilitate the employment of refugees through vocational training and career inclusion guidance, as well as through the capacity building of reception centres staff, in selected Italian Regions. Furthermore, with UNHCR's support, vocational training in the gastronomy and beekeeping and agricultural fields is provided, respectively, by partner organizations [Pollenzo University](#) and [Cambalache](#). In 2018, UNHCR, in partnership with NGO [Camelot](#), also launched a project to promote refugee social inclusion through host family reception arrangements with a view to strengthening community mobilization and building capacity across local municipalities. An additional partnership with [Teatro dell'Argine](#) aims at strengthening the inclusion of young refugees and asylum-seekers in Bologna through engagement in theatre events and activities.



Resettlement

UNHCR collaborates with various stakeholders - including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Police, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) - involved in implementing the Italian Resettlement Programme, which was launched by the Ministry of the Interior in 2014. UNHCR staff liaise with UNHCR offices in other countries and provide support to the Ministry of the Interior, providing technical assistance and contributing to ensuring the adequate reception and integration of resettled refugees. The Resettlement Programme is run and coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior.



Statelessness

In the context of UNHCR's [#I Belong](#) global campaign, UNHCR advocates to strengthen the protection of stateless persons in Italy, focusing on safeguards that could prevent statelessness at birth as well as on status determination procedures. UNHCR also works to raise awareness on statelessness, through dissemination of testimonies and public events. Furthermore, UNHCR staff, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, contribute to training and capacity-building events, and facilitate the creation of networks of civil society organizations.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

UNHCR collects, handles, analyses and disseminates data pertaining to persons of concern, including statistical information. UNHCR brings together and analyses information on protection and other specific issues, facilitating information sharing across the operation and relevant country and regional offices. Information management assists managers in identifying gaps, priorities and target resources based on the analysis of needs. UNHCR staff also develop and disseminate information products, including through the UNHCR [data portal](#).

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

UNHCR engages in awareness-raising initiatives, events and campaigns to disseminate information on persons of concern. UNHCR also maintains close contact with the press and promotes training and guidelines for journalists, including through its partnership with [Carta di Roma](#). UNHCR also produces video, photographic and other content regarding refugees for media and social media. UNHCR works with Goodwill Ambassadors and High Profile Supporters to broaden public support on refugee issues.

UNHCR works in close coordination with key institutions, other UN agencies, universities, associations, as well as representatives from refugee communities and other relevant stakeholders in the field of asylum. Public Information and External Relations activities complement Protection efforts aimed at ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern.



PROGRAMME/ADMIN/FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES

UNHCR staff design and ensure the delivery of programming in line with the UNHCR protection mandate. Activities are implemented either directly through UNHCR staff, or through operational and implementing partners. Throughout the operational cycle, UNHCR ensures a multi-functional approach involving staff members from various units. UNHCR staff also support the management of human and financial resources, ICT and logistics administration. In so doing, they ensure compliance with rules and procedures applying to UNHCR and the UN system at large and guarantee that donors funds are used as planned.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

UNHCR works with individual and corporate donors as well as with foundations in order to generate funds to sustain UNHCR activities worldwide. Private Sector Partnerships staff engage with individuals through different channels of acquisition and develop fundraising campaigns that are broadcast through media and often involve high-profile supporters and celebrities. Partnerships with corporate donors, foundations and philanthropists also contribute to raise awareness of persons of concern in Italy and worldwide.





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