

Italy

October 2019

In October 2019, **2,016 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, most of whom departed from Libya. On three occasions, a port of safety was allocated in Italy only following agreement by other

countries to receive new arrivals. A number of **NGO rescue vessels** were operational in the Central Mediterranean in October, including the Ocean Viking, the Open Arms, and the Alan Kurdi.

On 4 October, a list of **safe countries of origin** was introduced by way of an inter-ministerial decree signed by the Ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Justice.

KEY INDICATORS

81%*

Percentage of 2019 sea arrivals informed by UNHCR staff upon disembarkation

5,277*

Referrals of **sea arrivals with specific needs** to appropriate services since January 2015

662*

Monitoring **visits to reception and detention facilities** since April 2013

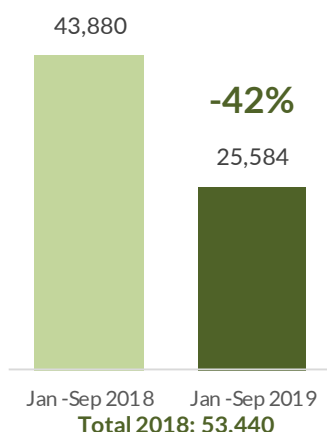
Between April 2013 and December 2016, monitoring visits were conducted jointly with Ministry of Interior, Prefectures, IOM, Save the Children, and Red Cross. Between April 2017 and April 2019, monitoring visits were conducted jointly with Ministry of Interior staff and independent auditors.

* Source: UNHCR

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Asylum applications

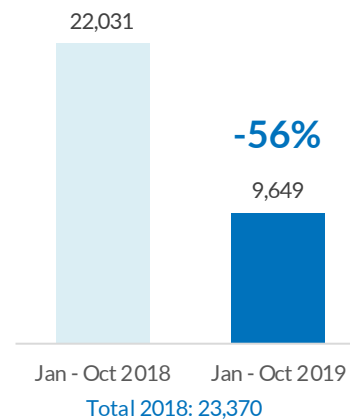
First time applications Jan-Sep 2018-2019



Source: Eurostat and Ministry of Interior

Sea Arrivals

Jan-Oct, 2018-2019

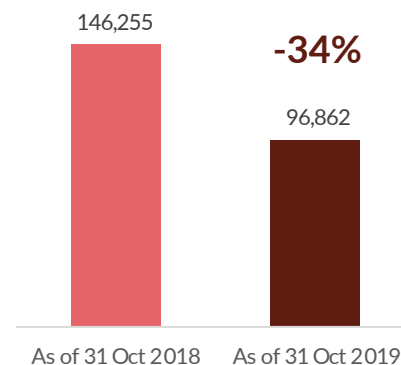


Source: Ministry of Interior

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Reception system

Population of concern in reception centres



Source: Ministry of Interior

Operational Context

- In October 2019, **2,016 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, compared to 1,007 in the same period last year. This is the second highest number of monthly sea arrivals this year so far, following a peak of 2,498 in the previous month. Different than previous months, in October, the vast majority (i.e. 45%) of persons arriving by sea departed from Libya, followed by 20% from Tunisia, 17% from Turkey, 10% from Greece, and 8% from Algeria. The most common nationalities of sea arrivals in October were Tunisia, followed by Pakistan, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Bangladesh, Somalia, Eritrea, and Nigeria. Between 1 January and 31 October, 9,649 persons arrived in Italy by sea, a 56% decrease compared to the numbers of persons reaching Italian shores in the same period last year (22,031). Most refugees and migrants arriving by sea since the beginning of 2019 originated from Tunisia (27%), Pakistan (12%), Côte d'Ivoire (11%), Algeria (10%), Iraq (8%), Sudan (4%), Bangladesh (4%), Islamic Republic of Iran (4%), Guinea (2%), and Morocco (2%). For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the [Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard – October 2019](#).
- Various **NGO rescue vessels** were operational in the Central Mediterranean throughout October, including the Ocean Viking, run by NGOs SOS Méditerranée and MSF, and the Open Arms, run by NGO Proactiva Open Arms. The Alan Kurdi vessel, run by NGO Sea Eye, also returned at sea in October. On three occasions in October, Italian authorities allocated a disembarkation port for refugees and migrants rescued on the high seas only following the agreement by other Member States – namely, France, Germany, Ireland, and Portugal – to receive some among new arrivals. In late October, Interior Minister Lucia Lamorgese [met](#) with representatives of NGOs conducting search and rescue operations in the Central Mediterranean, with a view to opening a dialogue with them. Meanwhile, a resolution calling on the European Union to step up search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean was not approved before the European Parliament.
- **Incidents at sea** continued to occur in October, with reports of refugees and migrants dying or going missing while attempting to cross the Mediterranean and reach Italian shores. On 6 October, an incident occurred off the Lampedusa coast when a wooden boat carrying some 50 persons capsized: 22 individuals were rescued and brought to the Lampedusa hotspot by the Italian Coast Guard and Tax and Customs Police, while the corpses of 13 women were retrieved. Furthermore, some 15 refugees and migrants are thought to have gone missing as a result of the incident. The wooden boat had departed from Sfax, Tunisia, and mainly carried Ivoirian and Tunisian nationals. For further information on dead and missing persons, please refer to the [Dead and Missing at Sea Dashboard – October 2019](#).
- The vast majority of refugees and migrants who reached Italy by sea in October, i.e. over 850 individuals, disembarked in **Lampedusa**. As a result, the island's hotspot was significantly overcrowded, with peaks of over 400 persons being accommodated there, against an official capacity of 96. Concerns thus arose in connection with the adequacy of reception conditions and services provision. During the month, groups of new arrivals were

transferred from the Lampedusa hotspot to the Pozzallo hotspot for the purposes of undergoing identification procedures, so to reduce pressure in Lampedusa.

- On 4 October 2019, the Ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs and Justice signed an inter-ministerial **decree** which introduced a list of safe countries of origin, as envisaged by Law 132/2018. As a result, asylum applicants originating from Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Capo Verde, Ghana, Kosovo, Morocco, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Senegal, Serbia, Tunisia, and Ukraine shall undergo accelerated asylum procedures on the basis of a presumption that their countries of origin are safe.
- According to the latest available data, **25,584 new asylum applications** were lodged in Italy between 1 January and 30 September 2019, a 42% decrease compared to the number of applications submitted in the same period last year (43,880). In 2019 so far, first-time claimants more commonly originated from Pakistan (19%), Nigeria (8%), Bangladesh (6%), Ukraine (5%), El Salvador (5%), Peru (5%), Morocco (4%), Senegal (4%), Albania (3%), India (3%) and Venezuela (3%).¹ Reportedly, authorities in various Italian regions request evidence of a residence address in order to allow asylum-seekers to lodge a claim, hindering effective access to asylum procedures.
- As of 31 October 2019, **96,862 asylum-seekers and refugees** were accommodated in **reception facilities** across Italy. Approximately 74% of them (71,935 persons) were accommodated in first-line reception facilities, predominantly located in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and Piedmont. An additional 25% (24,577 persons) were accommodated in second-line facilities belonging to the SIPROIMI network, most of which are located in Sicily and Latium. As of 31 October 2019, 350 persons were accommodated in hotspots, all of whom were in Sicily.²

UNHCR's Desperate Journeys report (January – September 2019) was released in October 2019, with a focus on refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe and how to strengthen their protection. You can click on the photo to access the Italian version of the report.



¹ Ministry of the Interior, *I numeri dell'asilo*, available at: <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/documentazione/statistica/i-numeri-dellasil> (last access 11 November 2019)

² Ministry of the Interior, *Cruscotto statistico giornaliero*, 31 October 2019, available at: http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-10-2019.pdf (last access 11 November 2019)

Main Activities

Access to procedures

- In October, UNHCR staff regularly attended disembarkation sites and nearby reception facilities to provide new sea arrivals with information on asylum and other relevant procedures, and assist authorities in the identification of persons with specific needs for prompt and adequate follow-up. UNHCR staff also collected testimonies from new sea arrivals, many of whom reported experiences of torture and ill-treatment in countries of transit, more specifically in detention facilities in Libya.



On 22 October 2019, in Pozzallo, UNHCR staff attend the disembarkation of 67 refugees and migrants who were rescued by commercial vessel Asso29 and subsequently transferred onto a Coast Guard vessel. Many among new arrivals, including women and children, originate from Somalia.

- UNHCR staff also continued to follow-up on the transfers of individuals who, after disembarkation in Italy, are expected to relocate to other European States in light of ad hoc agreements reached in connection with specific disembarkation events. UNHCR staff regularly visited groups currently awaiting interviews and transfers from the Messina and Pozzallo hotspots, as well as groups who were transferred to reception facilities in Crotona and Bari, such as persons who disembarked the Ocean Viking vessel in Taranto in mid-October. Where concerns emerged with regard to inadequate reception conditions in such facilities, for example in connection with poor hygienic conditions and heightened risks of sexual and gender-based violence, UNHCR reported these to relevant authorities.

- UNHCR conducted regular missions to land border areas in northern Italy, more specifically to locations near the Italy-Slovenia border, to monitor the situation of land arrivals and issues concerning access to relevant procedures. In October, staff conducted a focus group discussion with recent arrivals and asylum-seekers originating from Pakistan, who travelled through South East Europe and were accommodated in the Udine area. Reception facilities near the border are almost at full capacity, with asylum-seekers being offered temporary accommodation before being transferred to other Italian regions.

Reception and detention

- In October, UNHCR staff conducted monitoring visits with Ministry of Interior staff and independent auditors (MiReCo project) to various reception facilities, adopting a methodology that favours the involvement of asylum-seekers and refugees in the monitoring process. Where shortcomings emerge in the context of monitoring visits, UNHCR reports these to relevant authorities, such as Prefectures.
- During the month, UNHCR staff visited the pre-removal facility in Trapani, Sicily, following which a number of shortcomings were highlighted to the responsible Prefecture, such as the absence of a standard procedure to identify and promptly refer persons with specific needs to adequate services, and the presence, among detainees, of 15 individuals who declared to be underage and were waiting to undergo age determination procedures. Persons who declare to be underage ought to be given the benefit of the doubt and treated as children until the outcome of age determination procedures.
- In October, UNHCR staff held meetings with both the national Ombudsperson for detainees and the regional Ombudsperson for detainees in Sicily. Opportunities to strengthen coordination on activities in the detention field were discussed. Furthermore, UNHCR staff participated in a roundtable organized by the Robert Kennedy Foundation, where they delivered a presentation on the reception system in Italy and on the main changes introduced by Law 132/2018, including its impact on reception standards as per the most recent Contract Specifications.

Refugee status determination

- On 10 October, UNHCR staff delivered a presentation on refugee status determination interviewing techniques in the context of a workshop taking place in Trieste, focusing on credibility assessment. A training initiative for interpreters working in the refugee status determination context was held in Padua, while a session on the criteria of exclusion from refugee status was delivered to Territorial Commissions staff in Turin.

Community-based protection

- In October, UNHCR co-delivered a training to community-based organizations awarded through the UNHCR-Intersos joint **PartecipAzione** programme in Catania, Milan, and Naples. The training focused on international protection, global trends, situation analysis and protection monitoring, as well as on community-based protection in urban areas and relevant participatory methods.
- Numerous events by refugee-led organizations awarded in the context of the 2019 edition of the **PartecipAzione** programme took place in October. In particular, on 26 October, the first national refugee association, **UNIRE**, presented itself to the public during a press conference held in Rome. UNIRE's objectives are to ensure that refugees can participate in platforms making decisions impacting on them, and to shape a new narrative on asylum providing evidence of refugees' contribution through active participation.



Two representatives of UNIRE, the first national refugee association, during the 26 October press conference. Syed Hasnain, a refugee from Afghanistan living in Rome, is UNIRE's president. He states: "It is always others who talk about us. We want to go beyond this, and be the ones talking about ourselves".

- During the month, a community-based organization awarded through the 2018 edition of the UNHCR-Intersos **PartecipAzione** programme, **Laboratorio 53**, was declared the winner of the UNHCR NGO Innovation Award 2019 in connection with their Invisible Guides project. Invisible Guides are soundwalks developed by asylum-seekers and refugees to guide visitors through various areas of Rome. With the award, Laboratorio 53 will expand their Invisible Guides, with the aim of amplifying the initiative outside Italy.

Child protection

- Throughout the month, UNHCR staff contributed to capacity building initiatives on child protection in various Italian locations, including a Council of Europe training for judges in Naples, a presentation for university students in Salerno, a workshop for staff of children reception facilities organized by EASO in Campobasso, as well as training sessions for service providers in Savona, for social workers in Catania, and a Training of Trainers for SIPROIMI staff in Catania. Furthermore, in October, UNHCR delivered two online trainings. The first online training, aimed at staff of AMIF-funded reception facilities for children, included two webinars and was made available through UNHCR Learn & Connect online platform. The second online training, directed at social workers, was organized in the

framework of the partnership between UNHCR and the National Board of Social Workers (CNOAS).

- In October, UNHCR continued to provide support to staff of AMIF-funded reception facilities for children in Molise and Sicily, in particular by carrying out several participatory activities with children accommodated in such centres, with the collaboration of staff from such facilities.
- In early October, UNHCR staff organized a session of the project titled “Viaggio in Italia tra i principi della CRC” (A journey across Italy through the Convention on the Rights of the Child principles) in Naples. The project aims at raising awareness on children’s right to participation and strengthening inclusion opportunities through participatory activities involving both Italian children and unaccompanied and separated children who discuss about the Convention on the Rights of the Child while sharing their personal experiences. This project takes place in the framework of the ongoing partnership between UNHCR and the National Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents.



UNHCR staff conduct participatory activities with children in Naples, in the context of the “Viaggio in Italia tra i principi della CRC” project, developed jointly by UNHCR and the National Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents.

- On 17 October, UNHCR took part in the final conference of the joint CIR-UNHCR project on strengthening voluntary guardianship in Sicily and legal information at the northeast border, which was held in Trieste.
- During the month, UNHCR staff, jointly with UNICEF and IOM staff, met with the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Health, Ms. Sandra Zampa. The purpose of the

meeting was to foster advocacy on the age assessment protocol and on the implementation of Law 47/2017, providing for the protection of unaccompanied and separated children in Italy.

Sexual and gender-based violence

- Between 7 and 11 October, UNHCR staff co-facilitated a workshop in Rome, addressed to cultural mediators working in anti-violence centres. In collaboration with partner [D.i.RE.](#), a network of some 80 anti-violence centres in Italy, on 15 October, UNHCR staff co-delivered a presentation in Pescara focusing on migrant and refugee women who survived sexual and gender-based violence, with a view to strengthening relationships between local institutions and support organizations, and ensuring effective social inclusion for survivors. Similar sessions were also held in Palermo, Grosseto, and Milan.
- In the second half of October, UNHCR staff delivered a training session for midwives and gynaecologists in Latina, focusing on female genital mutilation, highlighting also the links with the right to asylum.

Inclusion and integration

- On 10 October, UNHCR met with actors promoting dignified work conditions in the agriculture sector, in the context of the second edition of the [Bee my job](#) project. The project, implemented by UNHCR partner [Cambalache](#), provides asylum-seekers and refugees with reception, as well as training and support towards accessing employment in the beekeeping sector. During the October meeting, NGOs and farmers had the opportunity to share best practices, but also proposals aimed at improving asylum-seekers' and refugees' livelihoods in rural contexts.
- The first cohort of participants to the Italian edition of the [PowerCoders](#) programme were recruited in October. PowerCoders, a coding academy for refugees, will run its programme in Turin in early 2020: following an intensive coding course, participants will be offered job placements in the IT industry. The programme is funded by Reale Foundation, Accenture Italian Foundation and La Stampa-Specchio dei Tempi Foundation, and entails collaboration with UNHCR.
- On 31 October, the [Manifesto on Inclusive Universities](#) was presented at Sapienza University in Rome. The Manifesto was developed by UNHCR in cooperation with a number of Italian Universities, with a view to promoting refugees' access to higher education, as well as their social inclusion and active participation in academic life. Universities subscribing to the Manifesto commit to undertake or expand programmes benefiting refugee students, such as information and tutoring services, mutual recognition of academic titles obtained abroad, scholarships and university corridors enabling refugees to travel safely and continue their studies in Italy. The 31 October event entailed a roundtable where refugee students shared their testimonies and experiences, and a presentation on good practices in the context of University education in Italy vis-à-vis

refugee inclusion. The event was attended by representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Education and Foreign Affairs, as well as by representatives of 45 Italian universities, and refugee students. So far, 23 Italian universities subscribed to the Manifesto. For further information, see UNHCR [press release](#).



The Manifesto on Inclusive Universities, presented on 31 October, aims at promoting refugees' access to higher education, as well as their social inclusion and active participation to academic life. Click [here](#) for a video on the University Corridors project ([UNICORE](#)), which enables refugee students to pursue their university careers in Italy.

External relations

- UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi spoke at the conference 'Same origin, same destinies' in Bergamo on 12 October, while Italy-based UNHCR staff delivered presentations on various topics, including on the humanitarian imperative of sea rescue and solidarity with refugees at a public event organised by local authorities in Rome and on the condition of child refugees at an event at Genoa University. UNHCR staff also spoke at "L'Eredità delle Donne" in Florence and was in Turin to inaugurate an exhibition on rescue at sea, meeting with 200 students and a group of refugees at a local secondary school.
- UNHCR was represented at the Barcolana regatta on 12-13 October in a joint initiative with Moleskine Foundation to promote a culture of the sea and the imperative to help people in distress.
- UNHCR was in Lampedusa from 1 to 3 October for events marking the Sixth National Day of Remembrance and Reception, organized under the banner #siamosullastessabarca. This year more than 200 students from 60 schools in 20 European countries took part. UNHCR led three workshop sessions for around 60 Italian and European students titled

“Refugees, not just numbers”. The sessions focused on data and on UNHCR operations in the Mediterranean area, and included direct testimonies from refugees. UNHCR also took part in a round table discussion with representatives of IOM and NGOs. The programme ended with the annual commemorative march and wreath-laying ceremony at sea. For further information, see the High Commissioner’s [comment](#) and UNHCR [press release](#).



On the sixth anniversary of the 3 October 2013 shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa that claimed at least 368 lives of refugees and migrants attempting to reach Italy, a wreath is handed down during a ceremony to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Reception in honour of those who died.

- In the second half of October, UNHCR Special Envoy for the Mediterranean, Mr. Vincent Cochetel, was on mission to Italy, where he attended the Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on Libya, organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the European Commission’s Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. During his time in Italy, the Special Envoy also met with senior representatives of the Italian Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, as well as with NGOs working on asylum-related issues, with representatives of the Eritrean diaspora in Italy, and with private donors. Finally, Mr. Cochetel held a press conference attended by Italian and foreign media outlets, to provide a briefing on the situation in Libya and the Central Mediterranean.

Working with Partners

- Since 2017, UNHCR has engaged in partnerships with a number of NGOs in Italy, with a view to enhancing its protection delivery, focusing in particular on SGBV prevention and response, child protection and integration. In 2019, partners include [AIDOS](#), [ARCI](#), [Cambalache](#), [Caritas \(Conorzio Communitas\)](#), [Carta di Roma](#), [CIDAS](#), [Consiglio Italiano Rifugiati](#), [Di.RE](#), [Fondazione Adecco](#), [Intersos](#), [Laboratorio 53](#), [LILA Catania](#), [MEDU](#), and [University of Pollenzo](#). Further information is available on the [What we do in Italy](#) publication.



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