

Italy

February 2021

Italy has been a State Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees since 1954. **A country office was established in 1954.** In 2020, it became a multi-country office covering Italy, the Holy See and San Marino.

Despite COVID-19, Italy kept its borders open in 2020 receiving over **34,100 refugees and migrants arriving by sea** and over **4,000 intercepted crossing the Italy-Slovenia land border**¹, having travelled through South-East Europe.

Law 173/2020, approved in December 2020, remedies many critical aspects of the previous Government's security decrees and restores rights to facilitate refugee integration in Italy. Click [here](#) to read UNHCR's press release.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	211,446
Asylum-seekers	57,108
Stateless people*	15,726

*Data on stateless people was reviewed downward to 3,000 at the end of 2020.

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Nigeria	26,108	Eritrea	13,198
Pakistan	20,396	Pakistan	8,847
Afghanistan	17,821	Nigeria	5,986

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Mid-Year Statistical report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

Click [here](#) for UNHCR Italy monthly factsheets and dashboards.

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Inclusion of persons of concern. While the law provides for the inclusion of regular and irregular migrants in the vaccination plan, unavailability of individual documentation of registration with the national health system may de facto limit the possibility to access vaccinations. UNHCR has regularly collaborated with the *Tavolo Immigrazione Salute*, a forum of NGOs dealing with migration and health related issues that shared recommendations on ways to ensure that potentially vulnerable and marginalized groups can effectively access COVID-19 vaccinations.

Communication with Communities. Partner ARCI, in collaboration with UNHCR, has developed a dedicated web page on the [Juma Map](#) website to ensure that refugees have access to up-to-date information on COVID-19 prevention measures and vaccinations.

Health. UNHCR distributed personal protective equipment to partners enabling them to continue their activities, while redesigning activities and switching to online modalities for capacity development and protection monitoring purposes.

HIGHLIGHTS

5,034

Sea arrivals from 1 January to 28 February 2021, including 578 unaccompanied children, compared to 2,553 in the same period in 2020: 77% were informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff at arrival points. New arrivals observe COVID-19 quarantine on ferries or in-land facilities.

Land arrivals

Hundreds of refugees and migrants are estimated to have crossed the Italy-Slovenia border in the first two months of 2021, consistent with rising numbers recorded last year. Many are vulnerable and unable to access information or reception services in northern Italy. Informal readmissions to Slovenia were suspended in January 2021.

8,921

Individual inquiries received and followed-up through UNHCR partner [ARCI helpline for refugees and asylum-seekers](#) between 1 January and 28 February 2021.



University Corridors for Refugees - UNICORE

Thanks to the UNICORE project, 26 refugee students are attending master's programmes at 11 Italian universities. After the 2019 pilot with six students, the project extended to 26 in September 2020 and in 2021, 43 new students will be selected to begin courses at 24 universities in September. More information [here](#).

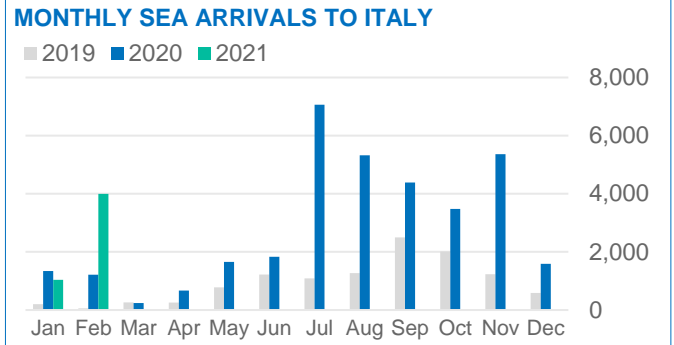
¹Source: border police. Data refers to interceptions by border police only and does not include interceptions by other authorities.

Key Priorities

- Access to territory.** UNHCR's field presence in southern Italy to provide sea arrivals with information on asylum procedures was supplemented in late 2020 with the deployment of a female staff member to Lampedusa to provide gender-appropriate support on the identification and referral of individuals with specific needs. UNHCR stepped up cooperation with Red Cross staff aboard quarantine ferries, providing training on information provision. In late 2020, UNHCR also increased its presence in Friuli-Venezia Giulia to gain fuller insight into the situation at the Italy-Slovenia border. For further information, UNHCR Italy monthly factsheets are available on the [UNHCR data portal](#).
- Asylum procedures.** COVID-19 prevention measures resulted in fewer refugee status determination interviews scheduled by the over 40 Territorial Commissions. Decision-making sessions take place remotely, with UNHCR staff participating and providing support to Ministry of Interior caseworkers.
- Integration.** The [Welcome – Working for refugee integration](#) programme has seen over 4,500 refugees find employment in Italy since 2017. In November 2020, 121 companies received the Welcome logo by UNHCR in acknowledgment of their efforts to promote employment opportunities for refugees.
- Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance.** Over the last three years, 33 refugee-led organizations have been offered training and small grants through the UNHCR-Intersos [PartecipAzione](#) programme, ensuring enhanced inclusion of refugee voices. An additional eight organizations will join in 2021.
- Capacity building.** In 2020, UNHCR delivered 225 training sessions and (co)organized 115 events raising awareness on refugee issues, reaching out to more than 25,000 refugees, authorities, reception centre staff, guardians, civil society and the general public.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR collaborates with national authorities to improve the country's response to refugees, including with the Ministry of Interior (updated [guidelines on trafficking](#); standard operating procedures on gender-



Source and more information: [UNHCR Data Portal](#)

based violence/GBV survivors) and Education ([Teachers toolkit](#)).

- UNHCR also works with other UN agencies (e.g. November 2020 UNHCR-IOM-UNICEF [pocket guide](#) for social workers focusing on first-line support to GBV survivors) and currently partners with seven NGOs ([Fondazione Adecco per le Pari Opportunità](#), [ARCI](#), [Carta di Roma](#), [CIDAS](#), [CIR](#), [Intersos](#), [MEDU](#)), on GBV response, child protection and community empowerment. Click [here](#) to access further information on our work with partners.

Statelessness

- Italy acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1962 and to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2015. It established a statelessness determination procedure through either administrative (since 1994) or judicial (since the 1950s) means. However, very few stateless persons have their status formally recognized. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Unrecognized stateless persons, mostly belonging to Roma communities originally from the former Yugoslavia, often live in marginalization and face limited access to fundamental rights and services.

UNHCR Presence in Italy

Staff:

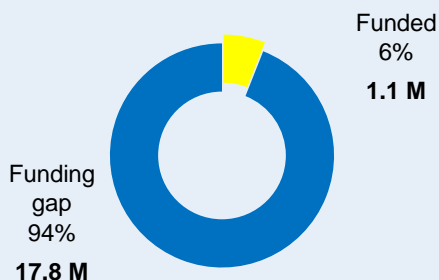
87 National Staff
 12 International Staff
 33 Affiliates

Offices:

1 Multi-Country Office in Rome
 1 Field Presence in Catania

Financial information (28 February 2021)

Financial requirements:
USD 19 M



UNHCR is grateful to the major donors of unearmarked contributions* to the 2021 global programmes (USD, as of 28 February 2021):

Norway 80 M | Sweden 66.9 M | Netherlands 36.1 M | Denmark 34.6 M | Germany 22.1 M | Switzerland 16.4 M | Private donors Spain 13.3 M | Ireland 12.5 M | Belgium 11.9 M

*Unearmarked contributions allow UNHCR for critical flexibility in how best to reach populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Above are donors of USD 10 million or more.