

## Iceland

February 2021

**Strategic Partner:** Iceland continues to be strong partner of UNHCR. Relative to its size, Iceland makes significant contributions to the protection of refugees and stateless persons.

**Strong national system:** Iceland has a well-established asylum and protection system supported by inclusive integration programmes to facilitate education and employment.

**Resettlement and Relocation:** Through a spirit of solidarity and protection focus Iceland continues to support global resettlement annually, including relocation from Greece.

### POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugees	<b>924</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>280</b>
Internally displaced people	<b>0</b>
Stateless people	<b>48</b>

### TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Iraq	<b>196</b>	Iraq	<b>65</b>
Venezuela	<b>164</b>	Nigeria	<b>50</b>
Syria	<b>109</b>	Somalia	<b>25</b>

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

### COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

**Advocacy:** UNHCR regularly monitors developments and is in contact with authorities and partners where needed to ensure that persons of concern are included and mainstreamed in pandemic prevention and response programmes.

**Inclusion of persons of concern:** Refugees in Iceland are included in the national response and provided with social support and other measures to mitigate their unemployment/income loss.

**Communication with Communities:** UNHCR's partner, the Icelandic Red Cross has modified its legal aid services to ensure assistance remotely. Other NGO partners also continue their outreach to refugee communities through email and contact lists and groups on social media to provide timely information on COVID-19 in different languages.

### HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020 **654** persons sought asylum in Iceland. This represents a drop in approximately twenty percent compared to 2018 and 2019 when more than 800 individuals sought international protection.

Iceland remains strongly committed to protect the most vulnerable an action which is clearly demonstrated through its consistent offering of **resettlement** places steadily approaching 100 annually.

In an act of European solidarity Iceland also supported the **relocation from Greece** of vulnerable families affected by the devastating fire in the Moria camp.

On 26 January 2021 Iceland acceded to both the 1954 and 1961 statelessness conventions. The accession is a clear confirmation of Iceland's commitment to the prevention and reduction of **statelessness** and to the protection of stateless people.



#### Somali YouTuber in Iceland inspires young girls globally

Najmo was only 11 years old when she escaped a terrifying reality and a forced marriage in Somalia. Today she makes Social Media videos to empower girls around the world.

## Key Priorities

- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR promotes fair and efficient asylum procedures and provides guidance to relevant government agencies and NGO's, including follow-up on the 2016 Quality Initiative to strengthen the asylum procedures.
- **Resettlement and Complementary Pathways:** Iceland remains an important actor in supporting resettlement globally. Iceland has remained steadfast in its support also contributing to additional relocation of vulnerable refugees beyond its annual resettlement quota.
- **Integration:** UNHCR and partners continue to monitor the alignment of entitlements and rights for individuals with different legal status (continuous arrivals and resettled refugees).
- **Capacity building:** UNHCR continues to work with various stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental to build capacity linked to the asylum procedure as well as the statelessness determination procedure.

## Working with Partners

- In addition to working with relevant government agencies on legal matters UNHCR also works with Amnesty International on the future feasibility of community sponsorships, with the Icelandic Red Cross on individual cases. UNHCR also has good working relationship with the UN Association in Iceland which is an important partner in sharing information relevant to the plight of refugees and stateless persons.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR works with partners to raise awareness on asylum, family reunification, integration and statelessness issues. UNHCR continued to promote and secured the inclusion of refugee voices in the public debate.

## Statelessness

- Iceland acceded to both the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions on 26 January 2021.
- The accession is a clear confirmation of Iceland's commitment to the prevention and reduction of statelessness and to the protection of stateless people as demonstrated also by the fact that Iceland, prior to accession, aligned the national legislative framework with the UN Conventions on Statelessness, through introducing the Act on Foreigners in 2016 and amending the Icelandic Nationality Act in 2018, including establishing a Statelessness Determination Procedure, as well as safeguards for children born stateless in Iceland.

## UNHCR Nordic and Baltic Countries

### Staff:

14 National Staff  
 10 International Staff

### Offices:

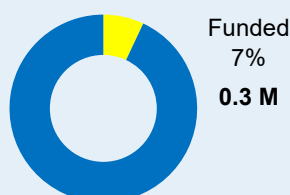
1 Regional Office in Stockholm  
 1 Liaison Office in Copenhagen  
 1 Liaison Office in Vilnius

## Financial information\* 28 February 2021

\*Information relates to the Representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries, which includes Representation for Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden

Financial requirements:  
**USD 4.9 M**

Funding gap  
 93%  
**4.6 M**



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

Norway 80 M | Sweden 66.9 M | Netherlands 36.1 M | Denmark 34.6 M | Germany 22.1 M | Switzerland 16.4 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