

# Lithuania

September 2021

**Refugee protection:** unprecedented increase of the arrivals on the border with Belarus stretched the national protection capacity to the limits. Lithuania called for EU and UNHCR support.

**Restrictive legislative changes:** In reaction to the sudden increase of arrivals related to the situation on the border with Belarus, Lithuania adopted restrictive legislative amendments, which are currently being reconsidered.

**European solidarity:** Lithuania successfully participates in EU relocation and resettlement efforts, a good practice which hopefully can be developed into a regular Lithuanian resettlement program.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

Refugees	<b>1,915</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>122</b>
Stateless persons	<b>2,720</b>
Total population of concern	<b>4,757</b>

## TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN\*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Russia	<b>688</b>	Belarus	<b>65</b>
Syria	<b>463</b>	Iraq	<b>15</b>
Afghanistan	<b>230</b>	Afghanistan	<b>9</b>

Data source: UNHCR 2020 Annual 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:** Asylum-seekers and refugees are included in the national vaccination programmes. POC's seem however to be reluctant to make use of this opportunity.

**Communication with Communities:** At reception and detention centres, information is distributed in different languages and remote counselling is provided.

**Health:** UNHCR and WHO have jointly intervened with procuring protective equipment for two reception centres.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Reception in focus

Lithuania has improved reception conditions for asylum-seekers at the Pabrade Foreigners' Registration Centre; however, sudden increase in arrivals during the summer challenged the entire reception system.

### Family reunification

In 2021, Lithuania completed the reunification of families of Eritrean refugees relocated to Lithuania within the EU resettlement solidarity.

### Higher education for refugees

Universities in Vilnius and Klaipeda are providing full scholarships, accommodation, and other support for refugees.

### Statelessness

In January 2021 amendments to the Citizenship Law entered into force, extending grounds for automatic acquisition of nationality by stateless children and eliminating several preconditions for access to nationality through an application procedure.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YALDA AND HAMEED IN LITHUANIA



Meet Yalda and Hameed, students and Afghan refugees now living in Lithuania, as they guide us through a day at LCC University [in this video](#).

## Key Priorities

- **Protection (monitoring):** UNHCR and partners are monitoring the border situation, reception conditions, and asylum procedures, coordinating with relevant stakeholders, and providing technical advice as necessary on all refugee protection matters and adherence to the 1951 Convention.
- **Access to territory:** UNHCR is advocating for changes to the current legislation and works to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to territory.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR is advocating for fair and fast asylum processing and safeguards.
- **Solutions:** UNHCR is working with government counterparts and partners to support Lithuania's comprehensive approach to integration and to further capacitate national and local authorities in providing support for refugees. UNHCR is promoting local level integration and labour market inclusion. UNHCR is also working with partners to improve regulations and remove practical obstacles related to family reunification.
- **Resettlement and Complementary Pathways:** UNHCR is advocating for Lithuania to establish a regular resettlement programme and consider increasing complementary pathways in higher education.
- **Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance:** UNHCR is supporting refugee-led organisation Refugee Council to become a voice for refugees in Lithuania.
- **Capacity building:** UNHCR is assisting in providing capacity building support for newly recruited asylum decision-makers and staff of the appeal instance.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR is working with [the Ministry of the Interior](#), [the Ministry of Social Security and Labour](#), and [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) to support asylum, integration, and statelessness legal and policy development, and with [the Migration Department](#) and [the State Border Guard Service](#) to ensure access to the territory and asylum procedures, and reception conditions. With governmental counterparts and NGOs, UNHCR helps to foster local integration.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR is working with partners to raise awareness on asylum and statelessness issues. UNHCR promotes the inclusion of refugee voices in public debates.

## Statelessness

- Lithuania is a party to the Statelessness Conventions and UNHCR promotes the establishment of a statelessness determination procedure.
- Stateless persons have for the most part long-term (permanent) residence permits and enjoy access to a wide range of rights.
- Lithuania has made significant efforts to further decrease the number of stateless persons and has implemented 2 out of 3 pledges at High Level Segment.
- UNHCR legal partner, Lithuanian Red Cross provides counselling and advice to stateless persons on procedures for acquiring Lithuanian citizenship.

## UNHCR in Nordic and Baltic Countries

### Staff:

21 National Staff  
10 International Staff

### Offices:

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

## Financial information (28 September 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**  
43%  
2.7 M



**Funded**  
57%  
2.8 M

UNHCR is grateful to the donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the 2021 global programmes. Donors of USD 10 million or more are:

**Norway | Sweden | Private donors Spain | Netherlands | Denmark | Private donors Korea | United Kingdom | Germany | Private donors Japan | Japan | France | Switzerland | Private donors Italy | Private donors Sweden | Ireland | Belgium | Italy | United States of America**