

Albania

February 2024

UNHCR advocates for a strengthened national asylum system and refugee inclusion in line with the [Strategy for UNHCR Engagement in Mixed Movements in the Western Balkans](#).

UNHCR supports the government to further align its asylum legal framework with international and EU law. It also advocates for improving [access to protection and durable solutions](#).

UNHCR's longstanding work on strengthening access to and quality of legal counselling and assistance remains a high-priority under the [EU-funded IPA III Regional Programme](#).

UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS (as of mid-2023)*

Refugees	3,828
Asylum-seekers	5
Stateless people	2,126
Others of concern	1,178

Top three countries of origin*

	Refugees	Asylum-seekers
Ukraine	3,688	5
Serbia and Kosovo**	52	
Syrian Arab Republic	25	

*UNHCR 2023 Mid-Year Trends and UNHCR data finder
 **S/RES/1244 (1999)
 All designations of Kosovo are without prejudice to positions on status and are in line with the UN Security Council Resolution

Socio-economic inclusion of refugees in Albania

Strengthening Refugee Inclusion through Strategic Partnerships with Local Governments

In October 2023, the Municipality of Gjirokastër demonstrated its commitment to support refugee inclusion by joining UNHCR's #WithRefugees campaign and signing a statement of solidarity. Gjirokastër became the second municipality to sign the statement, following Tirana.

Enhancing Access to Rights and Services through Collaboration with Local Governments

UNHCR collaborates with local authorities to enhance refugee access to rights and services, while benefiting local communities. In October, UNHCR held a workshop in the Municipality of Gjirokastër to equip local professionals with knowledge on the best practices for refugee inclusion and inclusion. The workshop also provided insights on how to adapt and apply a toolkit of these best practices to the local context.

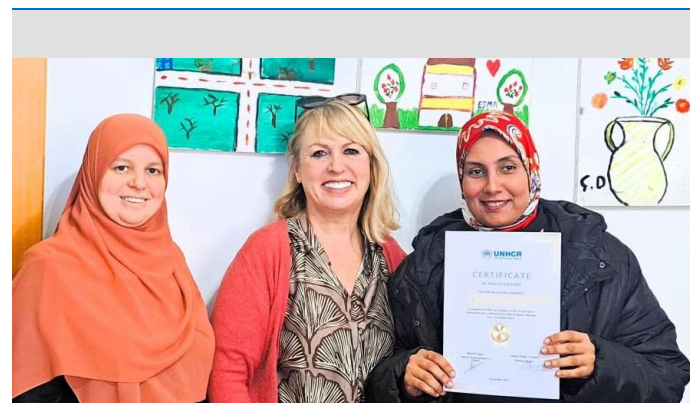
HIGHLIGHTS

Access to territory and asylum

UNHCR continues to advocate for access to territory and asylum, including identification and referral of people with specific needs, which remains a priority in the context of the ongoing mixed movement of refugees and migrants in the Western Balkans. As per data available to UNHCR, from 1 January - 31 December 2023, 4,307 people arriving as part of mixed movements were apprehended by border guards at Albania's borders. Of this number, 6.5 per cent were referred to the asylum procedure.

First instance decisions on asylum claims

From 1 January - 31 December 2023, 14 first instance decisions on asylum claims were issued, granting subsidiary protection to nationals of Iraq, Afghanistan, State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic. No decisions granting refugee status were issued.



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Empowering livelihoods in Albania

In 2023, UNHCR launched a job coaching program in Albania to help refugees and asylum-seekers with accessing and integrating into the job market. The program provides refugees with practical information and resources, personal coaching, resumé-writing and interview tips, as well as skills enhancement. It also equips NGO staff with trainings and resources to better support refugees.

For more details, see [here](#).

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory and asylum:** UNHCR and partners [conduct protection monitoring at the southern and southeastern borders of Albania](#). This monitoring includes the pre-screening process, supporting the identification and referral of persons who may wish to seek international protection in Albania, including those with specific needs and/or vulnerabilities. Additionally, it involves visiting communities in these areas to get additional insights on arrival trends.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR supports the [Government of Albania](#) in implementing their commitment to improving the quality of asylum decision-making, as pledged during the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). At the GRF 2023, Albania made two further pledges on decentralizing asylum procedures at the local level and ensuring improvement to the quality of the asylum decision making process.
- **Mixed Movements:** UNHCR, in partnership with IOM, [promotes a differentiated pathways and procedures approach](#) to support refugees and migrants travelling in mixed movements.
- **Legislation:** UNHCR [supports the Government of Albania](#) in its ongoing efforts to further align its legal framework on asylum, including its sub-legal acts, with international and EU laws. UNHCR also advocates for enhanced implementation to improve access to protection and durable solutions.
- **Documentation:** UNHCR and its partner assist refugees and asylum-seekers in [accessing electronic services](#) including applying for residence permits, ID cards and biometric travel documents.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR's main government counterpart is the [Ministry of Interior](#), and various organs thereunder including the Directorate of Policies for Asylum, Foreigners and Citizenship, the Border and Migration Police and the Reception Centre for Asylum. UNHCR coordinates with other line ministries to improve inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers into national systems, with the aim of enhancing refugees' access to rights and services while also benefitting local communities.
- **External engagement:** Other [key external partners](#) include the EU Delegation, EU agencies (EUAA and Frontex), diplomatic missions, UN agencies and civil society organisations.
- UNHCR partners with [EUAA, Frontex and IOM](#) under the EU-funded IPA III Regional Programme.

Statelessness

- Albania is a party to the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on Statelessness, and has taken significant steps towards fulfilling its statelessness commitments, including enacting laws protecting the rights of all children born in Albania and establishing a statelessness determination procedure. During the Global Refugee Forum in 2023, Albania pledged to amend the Civil Status Law, revise the statelessness determination procedure, and joined Western Balkan partners in reaffirming the [#IBelong Campaign](#).

UNHCR Presence in Albania

Staff:

16 National Staff
 2 International Staff
 1 International UNV

Offices:

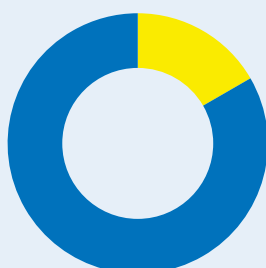
1 Country Office in Tirana
 1 Field Unit in Gjirokastër
 1 Field Unit in Korçë

Financial information (February 2024)

Financial requirements for 2024

\$3.5 M

**Funding gap 75%
\$3 M**



**Funded 15%
\$0.5**

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UNHCR is also grateful for the generous contributions from the private sector and individuals.