

Italy

April 2021

More than **1,500 persons arrived in Italy by sea** in April, often fleeing persecution and enduring years-long journeys. The majority departed from **Libya** and disembarked in Sicily.

The **largest loss of life in the Central Mediterranean** since the beginning of the year was recorded in April, when a **shipwreck** off the coast of Libya tragically claimed the lives of up to 130 people.

During his visit to Italy and the Holy See, **UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi** met with the highest representatives of Italy and with Pope Francis, among others.

KEY INDICATORS (APRIL 2021)

1,595

Total sea arrivals to Italy disembarked at different sites across the country (Source: Ministry of Interior)

1,254

Sea arrivals assisted and informed about asylum procedures by UNHCR staff following disembarkation (Source: UNHCR)

4,028

Inquiries received and followed-up through UNHCR partner ARCI toll-free number (Source: ARCI)

86

Individuals who received medical assistance and psychosocial counselling from UNHCR partners (Source: MEDU)

Sea arrivals in 2021 by disembarkation site



Sea arrivals POPULATION OF CONCERN

9,013

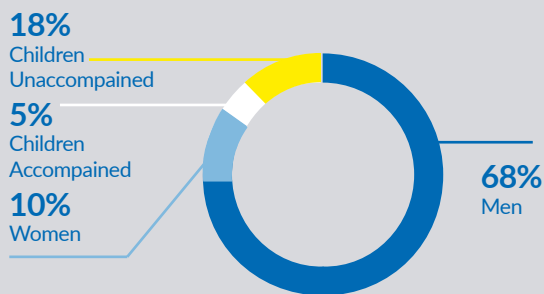
3,465

Jan-Apr 2021

Jan-Apr 2020

Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land arrivals and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals, as per official figures provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior.

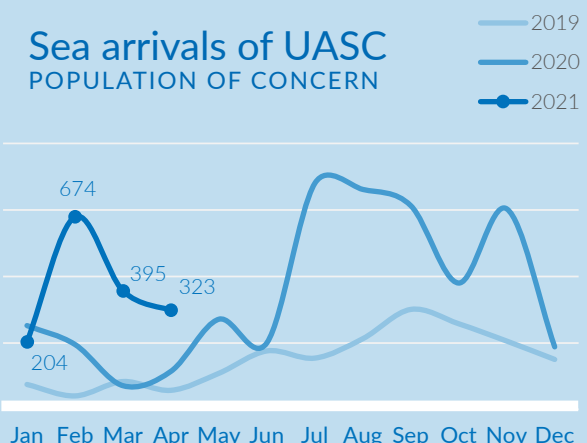
Sea arrivals by gender and age POPULATION OF CONCERN



Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100% exactly.

Source: Ministry of Interior. In addition to sea arrivals, Italy also receives land arrivals and air arrivals. This chart focuses on sea arrivals, as per official figures provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior. Gender breakdown for children is not available.

Sea arrivals of UASC POPULATION OF CONCERN



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Source: Ministry of Interior. Please note that the chart refers to the latest available data.

- Access to territory (sea arrivals).** In April, **1,595 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, a 60 per cent and 33 per cent decrease compared to the arrivals recorded in February and March respectively, but a significant increase over the same month in recent years. Year to date, 9,013 refugees and migrants reached Italian shores, compared to less than 3,500 in the same period last year and just under 800 in 2019. The majority of April 2021 sea arrivals (60%) departed from Libya, followed by Tunisia (28%), Turkey (8%) and Algeria (3%). Most sea arrivals this month originated from Tunisia and Bangladesh, in line with February and March trends, and from Egypt; Egyptian nationals passed from representing 3 per cent of total arrivals in March to 18 per cent in April.¹ Between 21 and 22 April, a shipwreck off the coast of Libya was feared to have claimed the lives of up to 130 people after their rubber boat capsized due to bad weather and stormy seas. SOS Méditerranée and commercial vessels searched the area the morning after but found only several bodies and no survivors. This tragic incident again confirms that **more needs to be done to save lives in the central Mediterranean, including by enhancing search and rescue capacity, strengthening protection in countries along routes to Libya, addressing root causes of displacement and increasing access to safe and legal pathways**, as reiterated in the joint UNHCR/IOM urgent call to action.² The limited availability of dedicated facilities for quarantine and reception of children continues to represent a serious concern. UNHCR continues to advocate for the identification of onshore alternatives for the quarantine of children.

- Access to territory (land arrivals).** Weekly averages of between 20 and 140 **refugees and migrants were apprehended crossing the Italy-Slovenia border** in April, but the real number is estimated to be much higher.³ It is of concern that some individuals who may be in need of international protection may not have been identified for referral to the asylum procedure. Land arrivals who are intercepted by the authorities observe quarantine in dedicated facilities but the capacity in border areas, particularly in Friuli Venezia-Giulia, remains limited. At the Italy-France border, a weekly average of 200 people were observed sleeping rough in Ventimiglia in April, including not only adults but also families with children and children travelling on their own. Many of them reported having tried several times to cross the border to France but were intercepted by French authorities and had to return to Ventimiglia. In response to these situations, **UNHCR continues to stress the need to make reception and quarantine facilities available and provide adequate services to cater for the needs of often vulnerable individuals** at Italy's northern borders.

- High Commissioner's mission.** UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi visited Italy and the Holy See on an official mission from 14 to 16 April. His visit included meetings with the President of the



The meeting between UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi and the President of the Italian Council of Ministers Mario Draghi. Photo: courtesy of the Italian Council of Ministers media.

Republic, the Speakers of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, the President of the Council of Ministers and the Ministers of Interior and Foreign Affairs. During his visit, **the High Commissioner welcomed Italy's efforts to uphold refugee protection principles throughout the COVID-19 emergency despite the many challenges** as well as its constructive approach to improve the balance between responsibility and solidarity underpinning the negotiations on the proposed EU Pact on migration and asylum, and recalled that collective efforts by States are essential to save lives at sea. He also met with representatives of civil society and refugee-led organizations in Italy and acknowledged the need for an increased focus

¹ For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the Italy page of the UNHCR data portal, available at [UNHCR - Mediterranean Situation](#).

² The official joint UNHCR/IOM press release is available at [UNHCR - Mounting death toll in the Central Mediterranean calls for urgent action](#).

³ Please note that official data is unavailable.

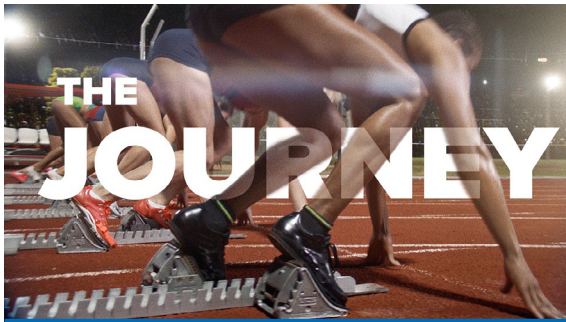
on refugee integration in Italy. **The High Commissioner also met with Pope Francis**, who handed him a signed copy of his message for the celebration of the 54th World Day of Peace and shared his concern over the extent of global humanitarian emergencies.⁴

- **Child protection.** In the first four months of 2021, 1,596 unaccompanied children arrived in Italy by sea. As of 30 April 2021, 6,633 unaccompanied children – who arrived in Italy by sea, land and air – were accommodated in dedicated facilities across the country: 96 per cent were boys and 65 per cent were aged 17.⁵ Two training activities for staff working in reception facilities and a workshop with social services were carried out in April by UNHCR’s partner Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR), in the context of the **“Strengthening guardianship system in Sicily and legal information at the northeast border” project, which focuses on the protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Sicily and in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region.** The training activities revolved around safeguarding family ties, family reunification, UASC residence permits, while the workshop focused on discussing possible operational guidelines on international protection procedures for UASC.
- **Gender-based violence.** On 21 April, UNHCR launched the **information campaign “Io ho diritto alla salute” for men, boy and LGBTIQ+ survivors of gender-based violence.** In line with UNHCR’s Policy on the prevention of, risk mitigation and response to gender-based violence, the campaign seeks to increase access to physical and mental health services in a gender-inclusive manner, including by providing information that can help interested people find out available services in their region.
 
- **Community engagement. Eight NGOs were selected among the 49 applicants for the fourth edition of PartecipAzione,** the empowerment programme led by INTERSOS in partnership with UNHCR aimed at promoting protection and active participation of refugees in social, economic and cultural life in Italy. The eight organizations (two are pending funding confirmation) are based in different cities across the country and will benefit from a capacity-building programme alongside tailored coaching and networking opportunities. Thanks to the support provided through the PartecipAzione project, the Unione Nazionale Italiana per i Rifugiati ed Esuli (UNIRE), a beneficiary of the second edition, formally launched the **European Coalition** in April, the first ever network of refugee, migrant, and diaspora-led groups in Europe. In April, UNHCR Italy also launched a **webpage** dedicated to the protection of persons living with disabilities.
- **Integration.** In collaboration with the Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI) and the Italian housing union (SUNIA), UNHCR published **“The Refugee House. Guide to housing autonomy for beneficiaries of international protection in Italy”**, a guide to help refugees find housing and inform them about their rights and obligations in relation to rentals and contracts, based on the awareness that achieving housing autonomy represents a fundamental step in the integration process of refugees and other persons of concern.⁷ In occasion of the International Day of Sports for peace and development on 6 April, **UNHCR also supported the launch of the global social media campaign in support of refugee**

⁴ Further information on the High Commissioner’s visit to Italy and the Holy See is available at [UNHCR’s Grandi commends Italy’s constructive approach to refugee protection in Europe and globally](#) and [UNHCR’s Grandi and Pope Francis share a vision of global response to displacement based on solidarity and care](#). The press conference, organized in conjunction with the Foreign Press Association in Rome, was followed in live streaming by 76 journalists and filmed by Rainews24, TV2000 and APTV. The mission generated 228 unique pieces of coverage in Italian media and 175 pieces of coverage internationally (20 countries, with the US and Canada in the top three along with Italy, data of 16 April). As of 19 April, 943 people had watched the press conference on the [UNHCR Italia Facebook page](#).

⁵ Ministry of Labour, *Report mensili MNSA*, April 2021, available at [Report MSNA mese Aprile 2021](#) (in Italian).

⁶ The information package, which was developed in collaboration with Bologna-based LGBTIQ+ NGO Il Grande Colibri and includes videos and comic strips, is available at [Io ho diritto alla salute – UNHCR Italia](#) (in Italian).



Click [here](#) to view The Journey, the video launched by UNHCR on the occasion of the International Day of Sports for peace and development in support of refugee athletes.

athletes participating in the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 by promoting “The Journey”, a video depicting a refugee's path from conflict to international sporting success, and published a locally produced [video](#) about a South Sudanese national who has been recruited to play for Premier League Second Division basketball team Stella Azzurra after learning to play at a campus led by former refugee and NBA star Luol Deng.

■ **Fundraising.** In April, UNHCR raised **2.5 million Euros from private donors** in Italy, totalling 7.4 million Euros since the beginning of the year. The major private donor in Italy contributing to UNHCR operations worldwide this month was Mrs. Lagetto.

 Focus on Niger 

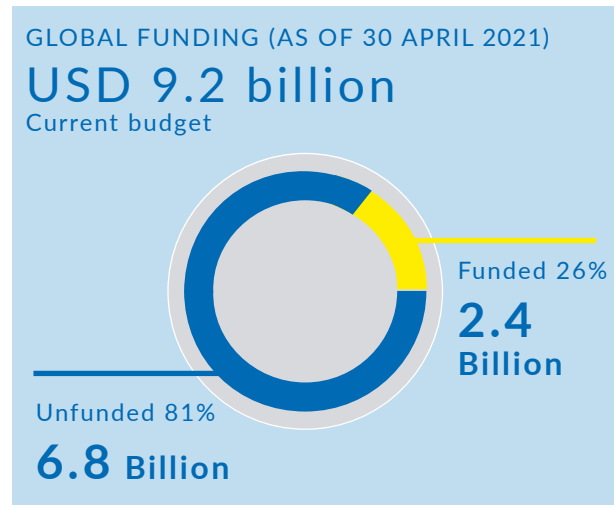
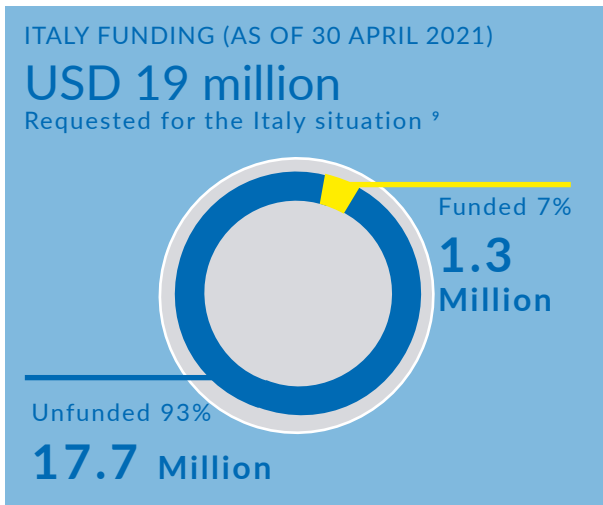
Since 2013, Italy supports UNHCR operations in Niger, where the Agency is assisting around 600,000 people fleeing violence in the Lake Chad or Sahel regions, or Nigerien citizens fleeing internal violence. On the occasion of her mission to the country, **UNHCR Director of External Relations**, Dominique Hyde, thanked the Italian government for its support (click [here](#) to view the video).



⁷ The Italian version of the guide is available at [La casa dei rifugiati. Guida all'autonomia abitativa dei titolari di protezione internazionale](#) (in Italian). Further information can be found at [LA CASA DEI RIFUGIATI: UNHCR, ASGI e SUNIA lanciano una guida per aiutare i rifugiati ad orientarsi fra affitti, contratti, diritti e doveri di proprietari e inquilini](#) (in Italian).

⁸ Further information about UNHCR Italy's involvement in the campaign are available at [L'UNHCR pubblica un video di grande impatto sociale a sostegno delle Squadre olimpiche e paralympiche di rifugiati](#) (in Italian).

Financial information



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

United States of America 5.3 M | **Canada** 2.9 M

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Norway 80 M | **Sweden** 66.9 M | **Netherlands** 36.1 M | **Denmark** 34.6 M | **Germany** 26 M | **Private donors of Spain** 21.5 M | **Switzerland** 16.4 M | **Ireland** 12.5 M | **Belgium** 11.9 M | **Private donors of the Republic of Korea** 10.8 M

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines (the) | Portugal | Republic of Korea (the) | Russian Federation (the) | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

CONTACTS

Irene Manganini, Senior Reporting Assistant, manganin@unhcr.org

Cristina Franchini, External Relations Associate, franchin@unhcr.org

LINKS

[UNHCR data portal](#) [Mediterranean situation](#) - [UNHCR Italy](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Global Focus](#)

⁹ Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritised activities. The contributions earmarked for Italy shown above are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking.