

Italy

July 2021

28 July marked the **70th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention**, a key international treaty which continues to protect the rights of refugees across the world and save millions of lives.

The increase in **arrivals of unaccompanied and separated children** on Italian shores continued to be observed in July, alongside a worrying pattern of systematic overcrowding in the Hotspots.

UNHCR continues to advocate for the full inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the **national COVID-19 vaccination campaign** and for the removal of all related barriers.

KEY INDICATORS (JULY 2021)

8,592

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

6,852

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

3,283

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

72

Individuals received **medical assistance and psychosocial counselling** from UNHCR partners (Source: MEDU and LHIVE-LILA)

Sea arrivals in 2021 by disembarkation site



Sea arrivals POPULATION OF CONCERN

29,124

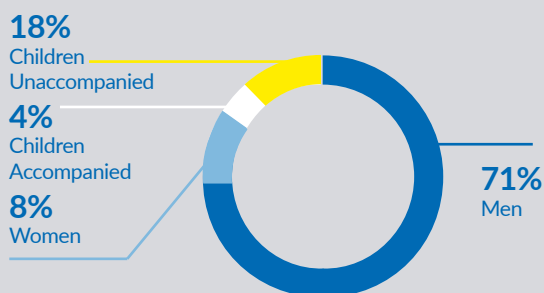
14,013

Jan-Jul 2021

Jan-Jul 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.

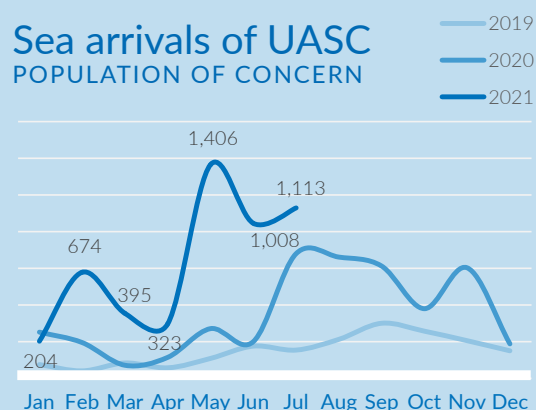
Sea arrivals by gender and age POPULATION OF CONCERN



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



Source: Ministry of Interior. Please note that the chart refers to the latest available data.

- **Access to territory (sea arrivals).** In July, **8,592 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, a significant increase compared to the number recorded in June (5,840) and to the same month in recent years (7,064 sea arrivals recorded in July 2020 and 1,088 in July 2019). Between January and July 2021, 29,124 persons arrived in Italy by sea, compared to 14,013 (+108%) and 3,867 (653%) in 2020 and 2019, respectively. For the first time in 2021, Tunisia overtook Libya to become the first country of departure for sea arrivals, with almost 5,000 arrivals (58%), followed by Libya (25%), the Eastern route (Turkey and Greece, 14%) and Algeria (1%). A combination of factors including improved weather conditions, the Eid al-Adha celebrations, Covid-related economic decline and the latest political developments and uncertainty in Tunisia likely triggered this increase, which was concentrated particularly towards the end of the month. In July, a notable increase in disembarkations on the island of Pantelleria was also observed.¹ During the month, the 44 survivors of the 30 June shipwreck, including 13 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), were kept for three weeks in Lampedusa without being quarantined and were only finally transferred to the mainland on 23 July as a result of joint advocacy by MSF and UNHCR. **A total of four NGO vessels were at sea in July:** two with search and rescue (SAR) capacity (Sea-Watch 3 operated by Sea-Watch and Ocean Viking operated by SOS Méditerranée) and two undertaking monitoring activities and assisting boats in distress (Nadir operated by Resqship and Astral operated by Open Arms). On 4 July, following the 15 days of quarantine and a 12-hour Port State control inspection, the MSF Geo Barents vessel was seized by Italian authorities for 22 alleged irregularities and finally released on 26 July. On 15 July, the International Missions Decree setting out the arrangements for the country's participation in international missions was approved by the Italian Senate by a large majority. The resolution to stop supporting the Libyan authorities, in particular the Libyan Coast Guard and the General Administration for Coastal Security, was rejected, while the motion to transfer such support to the EU Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI by the end of 2022 was approved. UNHCR Italy Representative participated in the Parliamentary hearing on 7 July, reiterating that **Libya cannot be considered a safe port and that every effort must be made to ensure that persons rescued at sea are not sent back there**, as well as the urgent need to strengthen Europe's search and rescue system.
- **Access to territory (land arrivals).** In July, **more than 1,300 persons were reportedly intercepted at the Italy – Slovenia border or spontaneously presented themselves to authorities to apply for international protection, including UASC.**² This reflects an increase compared to the previous monthly trends, but it is consistent with seasonal summer peaks which were similarly observed in previous years. For example, in July 2020, more than 2,000 persons reportedly entered Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region in a single month against slightly over 700 the month before (+195%). On 30 July, the Italian – Slovenian joint patrols, which had been suspended during the pandemic, officially resumed. On the Italy-France border, a steady weekly presence of around 300 refugees and migrants stranded in Ventimiglia was observed in July. The majority were adult men but, in line with sea arrival trends, an increase in the presence of UASC was observed, including very young children (14 years old or less). The majority of the persons present were nationals of Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, who reported having entered Italy by sea. A smaller but significant presence of persons originating from Afghanistan and Pakistan who entered Italy through the Balkan route was also reported. At the beginning of the month, IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR undertook a joint mission to Ventimiglia, accompanied by Save the Children. During the mission, representatives of the three agencies visited the informal settlements in the area and met with NGO and CSO representatives and with transiting migrants and refugees. **The three UN agencies jointly call for the swift establishment of a reception facility for refugees and migrants present in Ventimiglia, where basic humanitarian assistance, legal information and identification and referral of vulnerable cases can be provided** and for enhanced

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 Please note that land arrivals figures on the Italian – Slovenian border are calculated by UNHCR to the best of its knowledge based on information gathered from local authorities on ad hoc occasions and through media and partners' outreach and monitoring activities. As a consequence, they likely constitute an underestimation of the total figure.

coordination of the various stakeholders on the identification and referral of vulnerable cases. In July, UNHCR's partner MEDU published its third [Report on the humanitarian situation of migrants transiting through the Alps' North-Western border](#), which offers an overview on the situation in the Val di Susa area and highlights how between the last months of 2020 and the first months of 2021, more than 7,700 persons transited through Oulx despite the COVID-19 pandemic, with an average of 1,000 monthly presences recorded during the first months of 2021 by the only two reception structures present in the area and managed by CSOs, namely ChezJesOulx and Fraternità Massi. Together with MEDU, UNHCR advocates for the immediate identification of adequate reception structures, with a particular focus on persons with specific needs.

- **Child protection.** In the first seven months of 2021, 5,123 unaccompanied and separated children arrived in Italy by sea. **As of 31 July 2021, 8,382 unaccompanied children – who arrived in Italy by sea, land and air – were accommodated in dedicated facilities across the country: 97 per cent were boys and 64 per cent were aged 17.** The main nationality recorded among UASC is Bangladesh (26%) and 33 per cent of the total are hosted in Sicily.³ Throughout the month, a significant number of UASC were still reportedly accommodated in non-dedicated and/or inadequate facilities, with many of them observing an extension of their quarantine period due to the lack of efficient prevention measures: when a new positive case is identified, the whole group is obliged to undergo a further quarantine period. On 18 July, a group of 80 UASC reportedly set fire to the central section of the Hotspot in Pozzallo (Ragusa province) after joining other 38 UASC who had already been present in the facility for over three weeks due to positive cases. Protests also broke out in the Hotspot of Taranto during July, driven by the fact that some of the UASC hosted there had been waiting to be transferred to a longer-term facility for weeks. In light of such events and the widespread frustration among UASC, **UNHCR strongly advocates for the swift identification of adequate and dedicated quarantine and reception facilities for UASC following their arrival.**
- **Quarantine, reception and detention.** As of 31 July, 76,488 persons were accommodated in reception facilities across Italy, of whom 49,829 in first-line reception facilities, 25,422 in second-line facilities and 1,237 in hotspots. UNHCR conducts regular monitoring missions to quarantine and reception facilities for refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as to pre-removal facilities (Centri di permanenza per il rimpatrio (CPR)). Several such missions were carried out in July, particularly to Sardinia and Calabria regions. **The situation in the government centre of Crotone, which shifted into a dedicated quarantine facility and which also hosts UASC and families with new-born and very young children, continued to remain of concern in terms of services provided in particular for persons with specific needs.** During its mission to the facility, UNHCR observed persistent criticalities, as the centre remains inadequate in terms of structure and access to services. At the end of July, the facility was hosting 1,165 persons and no specific services, including psychosocial support, were provided to children or other persons with specific needs. On 15 July, it was reported that people housed in the centre started a hunger strike in protest against the lack of information on quarantine, the delays in registering asylum applications and the poor sanitation standards. UNHCR is strongly advocating with authorities both at national and local level to address these criticalities. New calls for tenders for a total of 48.786 reception places were published in July by Prefectures, including in eight major cities: the overall trend shows that preference is given to apartments and collective centres of up to 50



³ Ministry of Labour, Report mensili MSNA, July 2021, available at [Report-MSNA-mese-luglio-2021.pdf \(lavoro.gov.it\)](#) (in Italian).

places. UNHCR welcomes the publication of the new [Sicilian Regional Law on Reception and Inclusion](#), which was approved unanimously on 20 July, and stands ready to support as needed. Another positive development observed in July was the approval by the Minister of Interior of an expansion of the SAI (Sistema Accoglienza e Integrazione) system with 971 additional spaces, 797 for UASC and 174 for persons with mental health conditions.



Asylum. 28 July 2021 marked the 70th anniversary of the [1951 Refugee Convention](#) which, together with its [1967 Additional Protocol](#), clearly spells out who is a refugee and the kind of protection, other assistance and social rights they are entitled to receive. As the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi reminds us, **millions of lives have been saved thanks to the Convention, and it is crucial that the international community defends its principles seventy years since it was drawn up.**⁴

To mark such an important anniversary, UNHCR ensured high visibility among the general public in Italy to both the remarks of the [High Commissioner](#) and the [UNHCR Italy Representative](#).⁵ In the framework of the pilot project on the introduction of

“Experts on International Protection and Human Rights” as members of the Territorial Commissions for recognition of international protection, the selected individuals started formally participating with voting rights in collegial discussions in July, specifically in the Territorial Commissions of Bologna, Lecce, Livorno, Naples, Padua and Rome. In close collaboration with the National Asylum Commission, a first [call for expression of interest](#) was published to identify additional Experts to be deployed in other Territorial Commissions, who will gradually replace UNHCR staff. In the context of UNHCR’s work towards the strengthening of the national asylum system, a working group has been established to foster good practices of collaboration between Territorial Commissions and local services, map existing services and reinforce the protection environment. In April 2021, UNHCR started contributing to the implementation of the Backlog reduction project in support of the specialized Division for international protection of the first-instance Court of Rome, which at the end of 2020 presented a total backlog of 19,000 pending international protection cases (10.3% of total cases). **By mid-July, the backlog reduction team – composed by legal trainees coordinated by UNHCR - had managed to screen a total of 1,105 pending cases, reaching the capacity to analyze around 400 cases and to draft around 60 decision proposals in a day’s work. UNHCR welcomed the publication, in July, of the Circular of the National Commission on Special Protection**, which clarifies several interpretative issues that arose after the entry into force of Law No 173/2020.

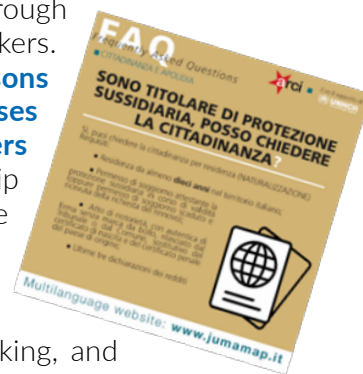
- **Gender-based violence (GBV) and persons with specific needs.** In July, UNHCR participated in the consultation process promoted by Action Aid on the submission of amendment proposals to Law 119/13 (Domestic legislation transposing the Istanbul Convention on violence against women and domestic violence). **UNHCR advocated for the inclusion in the text of explicit references to refugee women’s direct participation in all stages of legal processes and for an increased acknowledgment of cultural mediation as a professional and structural component of the national anti-violence system.** UNHCR welcomed the publication, on 20 July, of the [Decree establishing financial support measures for women GBV survivors](#) (DPCM 17 December 2020, *Reddito di libertà per le donne vittime di violenza*), providing

⁴ Further information about the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 70th anniversary can be found at [UNHCR - The 1951 Refugee Convention: 70 years of life-saving protection](#) (in English) and at [La Convenzione del 1951 sui Rifugiati: 70 anni di protezione vitale per le persone costrette a fuggire – UNHCR Italia](#) (in Italian).

⁵ UNHCR Italy Representative’s interview to Vatican Radio is available in four languages ([Italian](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#) and [English](#)). On such occasion, the Representative was also interviewed by Radio 24, RSI and global Catholic news network EWTN.

for a lump sum aimed at assisting eligible women to cover housing and child education expenses. UNHCR will closely monitor the developments of the decree and in particular its implementation regulation with a view to ensuring its full application to refugee and asylum-seeking women. In July, multi-language posters on the toll-free number for GBV and trafficking survivors, realized together with the National Asylum Commission, were distributed in Territorial Commissions across the country.

- **Community engagement.** In July, **UNHCR further strengthened its advocacy efforts towards the full inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the national COVID-19 vaccination plan**, in accordance with the [guidelines](#) issued by the Italian National Institute of Health on how to increase the uptake of vaccination among the migrant and refugee population. These include, among others, a review of the criteria for inclusion in priority groups and a recommendation to consider one jab vaccines for all those population groups with high mobility or living in conditions of marginality for whom tracking and monitoring may be particularly challenging. In the territory under the competence of the Local Health Authority Roma/1, vaccination of closed communities and people with social fragilities, including homeless people, started in July thanks to a collaboration with voluntary associations. UNHCR's partner ARCI published in July its biannual [factsheet](#) on the activities carried out through the [toll-free number](#) and the [Jumamap](#) services for refugees and asylum-seekers. Among other achievements, **between January and June 2021, 1,436 persons were assisted through the toll-free number, 46 family reunification cases were followed, 34 requests to the SAI system were submitted, 13,325 users visited JumaMap**. In the framework of the "Strengthening the guardianship system in Sicily and legal information at the Northeast border" project, the third and final of the planned training activities was delivered to local actors working on the Italian-Slovenian border, in partnership with the Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR). Local law-enforcement and asylum authorities, social services and NGOs representatives were trained on human trafficking, and particularly on issues related to identification and social and international protection.



- **Public information.** In July, **UNHCR spoke to 500 young people during an event organised by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies on a person-centred approach to politics**. It also delivered a class to students from 18 different countries on the [Summer Course on Migration and Human Rights](#) organized by the John Cabot University in Rome and UNICRI. The session included a focus on forced displacement in 2020 and an overview of the Mediterranean situation; the testimony of refugee Syed Hasnain, including an overview of the current situation in Afghanistan; and two case studies on children on the move and the challenges for integration. UNHCR also discussed migration routes and dynamics from a UNHCR perspective during a talk organised by the IULM School of Communication and Languages. The quiz "[Quanto ne sai dei rifugiati nel mondo?](#)" was launched on UNHCR partner's



Carta di Roma website in July, the first of three planned activities aimed at raising awareness on the 2020 Global Trends report as well as on UNHCR's mandate and global operations.

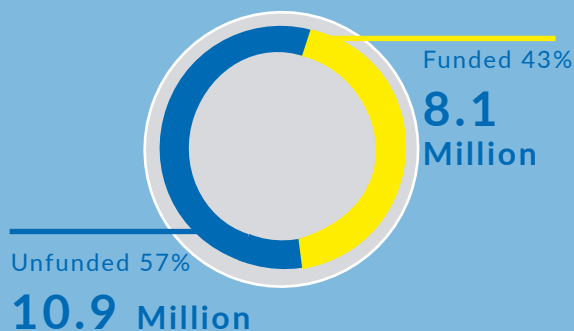
- **Fundraising.** In July, UNHCR raised **1.8 million Euros from private donors** in Italy, totalling 12.7 million Euros since the beginning of the year. The major private donors in Italy contributing to UNHCR operations worldwide this month were Intesa Sanpaolo and Mrs Squarcialupi.

Financial information

ITALY FUNDING (AS OF 27 JULY 2021)

USD 19 million

Requested for the Italy situation⁶



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 17.2 M | **Private donors of Australia** 6.1 M

Luxembourg | Norway | Spain | Private donors

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.

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Norway 80 M | **Sweden** 66.9 M | **Private donors of Spain** 42.6 M | **Netherlands** 36.1 M | **Denmark** 34.6 M | **Private donors of the Republic of Korea** 21.5 M | **France** 20 M | **Private donors Japan** 17.6 M | **Switzerland** 16.4 M | **Ireland** 12.5 M | **Belgium** 11.9 M | **Private donors Sweden** 10.6 M | **Private donors Italy** 10.4 M

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

ITALY'S SUPPORT TO UNHCR OPERATIONS WORLDWIDE

In the month of July, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate General for Italian Citizens Abroad and Migration Policies (DGIT) generously donated several contributions for the amount of **Eur 9.25M** through the Migration Fund for the support of vulnerable asylum seekers, refugees and IDPs in UNHCR's operations in Libya, Niger and in East Sudan and Northern Ethiopia.

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LINKS

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

⁶ 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.