

# Spain

February 2024

Around **370,000 refugees** are currently recorded in Spain, mostly from Ukraine, Venezuela, Syria, Mali, Afghanistan, Colombia, Nicaragua and Honduras.







In 2023, **163,220 asylum applications were registered**. Over 85 per cent by nationals from Latin America, mainly from Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Honduras, Cuba and Nicaragua.

In 2023, 57,538 people arrived by land and sea to Spain, 81 per cent more than in 2022. In January 2024, **the number of arrivals reached 8,156**, over 89 per cent disembarked in the Canary Islands.

## UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS (as of mid-2023)\*

Refugees	<b>369,722</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>154,440</b>
Stateless people	<b>8,524</b>
Others of concern	<b>8,478</b>

### Top three countries of origin\*

Refugees	Asylum-seekers
Ukraine  <b>177'768</b>	Colombia  <b>56'745</b>
Venezuela  <b>134'554</b>	Venezuela  <b>34'995</b>
Syria  <b>17'205</b>	Peru  <b>15'355</b>

\*UNHCR mid-2023 Trends and UNHCR [data finder](#)

## Socioeconomic inclusion of refugees through the 'Green Employment Platform'

UNHCR has partnered with the Green Employment Platform, the Green Employment HUB (Konecta Foundation with the support of J.P. Morgan) and IGNIS to launch a **professional training program** for unemployed refugees, asylum-seekers or stateless people in Madrid for the installation of photovoltaic energy systems. Over **22 students have already started the program**, who will receive support in finding a job in the green sector and undergoing initial training. This pilot experience will expand to additional cities in 2024.

This program is the result of a pledge by the Green Employment Platform during the 'Forum Spain with Refugees' organized by UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation on June 20 2023. The Forum served as a platform for actors from civil society, the private sector, institutions and public administrations to announce contributions promoting the inclusion and integration of refugees in Spain.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Innovative funding

During the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, Spain pledged to devote 10 per cent of the humanitarian action aid, to meet the needs of refugees and internally displaced people worldwide. Spain also announced a EUR 1 M contribution to support connectivity in the field of early childhood education at global level.

### Complementary employment pathways

166 Nicaraguan refugees arrived for the first time from Costa Rica to Spain, including 72 who arrived under a pilot initiative for a future labour mobility pathway, under the US-led 'Safe Mobility Initiative (SMO)', which Spain joined in April 2023. Later in the year, the Government announced that in the framework of complementary employment pathways, it will facilitate the arrival of 500 refugees, in collaboration with UNHCR.



Lurdes Calvo © UNHCR

### Kudwa Academy - Where young refugees and migrants are both students and teachers

Created with the goal of being a community, a guide, and sometimes a lifeline for those who come to Barcelona fleeing conflicts, violence, and persecution, Kudwa Academy was selected by UNHCR to receive financial and technical support through the Social Entrepreneurship Grants program, which aims to promote social initiatives led or participated by refugees and stateless persons.

Read more [here](#)

## Key Priorities

- **Protection profiling:** UNHCR released a [report on the profiling of arrivals by land and sea](#) undertaken with partners, analysing reasons for departure from countries of origin, primary routes taken, incidents encountered along the journey and specific needs. The report highlights the reasons linked to international protection needs—particularly among nationals from Mali, Sudan and Yemen—and specific groups such as survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

**Capacity building:** UNHCR provided **interpretation services** mainly in Wolof, Bambara, Dariya, French and Pular in the context of sea arrivals to the Canary Islands through a partnership with the NGO ACCEM. In 2023, 14,869 persons were reached across 1,189 interventions - including reception, legal, psychological, and medical assistance.

- **Asylum procedure:** In December 2023, UNHCR conducted a review of **asylum procedures in Spain**, collaborating with the Ministry of Interior, resulted in several practical proposals to the Asylum and Refugee Office for the improvement of the management and asylum case processing, as well as the quality, efficiency, and fairness in decision-making.

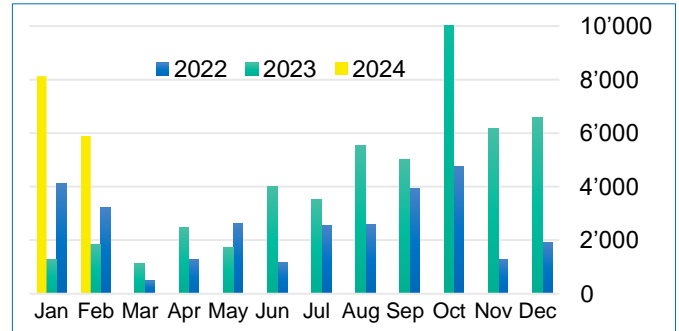
Following a rise in asylum applications at Madrid's main airport and deterioration of the reception conditions and processing of applications, UNHCR provided ad-hoc interpretation services, reinforced its monitoring activities, boosted coordination at different levels and made technical proposals to improve the conditions and management of applications, with a particular focus on applicants with special needs.

- **Gender-based violence:** UNHCR in coordination with NGO partners and representatives from the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations reception centres, supported the development of a **protocol for the prevention and response to violence against women in first-line reception centres for sea and land arrivals** through the [SEMilla2023 project](#), based on the results from the same project [implemented in 2022](#).
- **Solutions:** Pledges on economic inclusion made in the framework of the [Forum Spain with Refugees](#), have started to be implemented, including the "Building Digital Equity" initiative and the [Partnership with the Green Employment Platform](#) (see page 1).

- **Resettlement:** In 2023 Spain **resettled 1,111 persons**, mainly Syrian refugees from Lebanon and earthquake-affected areas in Türkiye – nearly reaching its annual quota of 1,200 for the year.

- **Community empowerment and self-reliance:** Over 220 refugees from Ukraine benefited from a Know Your Rights program organized by UNHCR, law firm DLA Piper and refugee-led Organization "Ucrrianos en España".

## MONTHLY SEA ARRIVALS TO SPAIN



Source: [Mediterranean Situation Data Portal](#)

## Working with Partners

- **External engagement:** UNHCR and Spanish airline Iberia [signed an agreement to facilitate the transfer of refugees to Spain](#) in the framework of family reunification and study programs, as well as through legal pathways linked to employment.

## Statelessness

- Spain is a party to both the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on Statelessness, and was among the first countries to implement statelessness determination procedures in 2001. Throughout 2023, Spain registered 953 statelessness applications and recognized the statelessness status of 909 people.

## UNHCR Presence in Spain

### Staff

- 41 National staff
- 2 International staff

### Offices

- 1 Country Office in Madrid
- 4 Field Units in Algeciras, Málaga, Melilla and Las Palmas

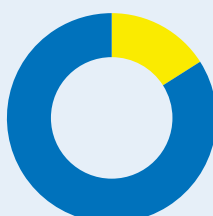
## Financial information\* (31 January 2024)

\*Information relates to UNHCR's Representation for Spain and Andorra

### Financial requirements for 2024

**\$6.8 M**

Funding gap 84%  
**\$5.8 M**



Funded 16%  
**\$1 M**

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