

Switzerland

February 2024

The **2023 Global Refugee Forum** was **co-hosted** by Switzerland and UNHCR in December, in Geneva. Switzerland inter-alia supported the participation of more than 80 refugees from around the world to attend the event.

Around 30,000 **asylum applications** were registered in Switzerland in 2023. Numbers are expected to remain high in 2024 (approx. 28,000), which will result in predicted capacity challenges to the asylum system.

UNHCR **advocates with government** and non-governmental partners for **socioeconomic inclusion** of refugees into their regular planning and projects.

UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS (as of mid-2023)*

Refugees	189,100
Asylum-seekers	14,986
Stateless people	1,074
Others of concern	97

Top three countries of origin*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Ukraine	63,853	Türkiye	4,660
Eritrea	38,479	Afghanistan	2,877
Syrian Arab Rep.	20,433	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	860

*UNHCR mid-2023 Trends and UNHCR data finder

Refugee Inclusion in Switzerland

UNHCR launches website feature on job market integration among refugees

UNHCR published new content on [its website](#) on labour market integration and the role of the private sector. The page also features inspiring stories from refugee entrepreneurs.

New Integration App

Switzerland's State Secretariat for Migration has launched an [app with information](#) on integration and daily life for refugees.

2024 - 2027 Cantonal integration programs

The cantons launched implementation of the [integration programs](#) third phase, with specific objectives for refugees.

Employment of Refugees from Ukraine

Swiss authorities [announced](#) the extension of measures aiming at achieving a 40% employment among refugees from Ukraine.

HIGHLIGHTS

Recommendations on the asylum system

UNHCR provided recommendations in November 2023 on the quality of the reception of asylum-seekers in **Federal asylum centres**, after conducting a comprehensive review of the new Swiss asylum system introduced in 2019.

Survey on the intentions of Ukrainian refugees

UNHCR released the [Intentions and Perspectives Survey on Refugees from Ukraine in Switzerland](#) in December, which was conducted between March - May 2023 and carried out in cooperation with the State Secretary for Migration and Ipsos.

Effective access to rights for refugees

UNHCR published a [study](#) on free legal assistance for refugees in January.



On 28 November, a Panel discussion took place in Bern on Switzerland's engagement in Global Refugee Forum. © ASNU

FOCUS ON SWISS ENGAGEMENTS AT THE GRF

A well-attended event was organized in Bern on 28 November to present Switzerland's engagements at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The Forum itself took place from 13 - 15 December 2023 in Geneva. Switzerland presented several pledges, including one on refugee participation.

Key Priorities

- **Access to territory:** A public discussion on the topic of “borders” took place in Lausanne in early November 2023. UNHCR participated a mock penal procedure against the border, along with several well-known lawyers and politicians.
- **Advocacy:** In November 2023, UNHCR issued a [statement](#) examining the extent to which the right to freedom of movement guaranteed to refugees under Art. 26 of the 1951 Convention may be restricted. This analysis responds to a practice observed of certain Swiss cantons which do not allow refugees who are unemployed or dependent on social welfare to change cantons.
- **Asylum procedures:** As part of the “16 days of activism against gender-based violence” campaign, UNHCR and Amnesty Switzerland co-hosted a [panel discussion](#) on 30 November. Featuring experts from politics, legal professions, healthcare, the NGO sector, and the SEM (State Secretariat for Migration), the event addressed the situation of refugee women in Federal asylum centres.
- **Capacity-building:** Since January 2024, UNHCR has engaged a refugee participant to support with the launch of a Refugee Speakers program.
- **Protection:** In October 2023, UNHCR took part in a [colloquium](#) at the University of Neuchâtel with a presentation on temporary protection mechanisms in Europe, in light of the 1951 Convention.

Working with Partners

- **Swiss Asylum Symposium:** The full programme of the next [Swiss Asylum Symposium](#), which is co-organized by the Swiss Refugee Council and UNHCR, is now available. The Symposium will take place between 2 - 3 May 2024 in Bern. The event will focus on civil society engagement and refugee participation, with several high-level participants and refugee speakers taking part.

Statelessness

- Switzerland acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1972 and has a statelessness determination procedure in place; Switzerland has not yet acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- The national procedure is governed by general principles of the Federal Administrative Procedure Act, and currently has no special provisions suitable for the specificities of statelessness determination.
- Since December 2021, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court has allowed refugees to be recognized as stateless persons – in line with UNHCR advocacy.

UNHCR Presence in Switzerland

Staff:

7 National Staff
1 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Bern

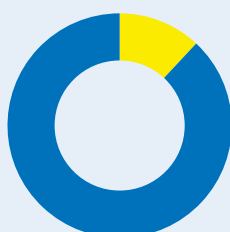
Financial information* (31 January 2024)

*Information relates to the Representation in Austria and to the European Institutions in Strasbourg, the Office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the Liaison Office in Vienna and the presence in Portugal

Financial requirements for 2024

\$ 5.4 M

Funding gap 81%
\$ 4.4 M



Funded 19%
\$ 1 M

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors:

[Australia](#) | [Belgium](#) | [Canada](#) | [Denmark](#) | [France](#) | [Germany](#) | [Ireland](#) | [Japan](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [Norway](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#) | [United States of America](#)

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