ICELAND FACT SHEET

Iceland

February 2026

Contributions to international protection: Iceland maintains a favourable protection environment for forcibly displaced and stateless people and continues to explore modalities to strengthen protection.

Increase of funding: Iceland has responded to rising displacement needs globally by increasing its funding to UNHCR. In 2025, Iceland contributed USD 4.6 million to UNHCR.

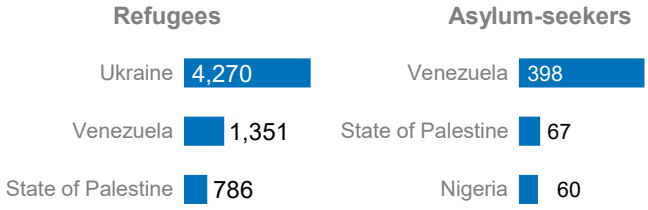
Access to procedures: Iceland ensures effective access to asylum procedures for forcibly displaced people, including beneficiaries of temporary protection.

POPULATION STATISTICS (as of mid-2025)*

Refugees	**8,231**
Asylum-seekers	**767**
Stateless people**	**32**

***Figures include both displaced & non-displaced stateless persons*

Top three countries of origin*



**UNHCR Refugee Data Finder*

Protecting forcibly displaced and stateless people in Iceland

Quality asylum procedures

UNHCR works together with the Icelandic authorities in ensuring quality of asylum procedures through a multi-year quality initiative. The objective is to identify challenges and good practices and support fair and efficient asylum procedures.

Law observations

UNHCR provided observations on a legislative proposal concerning "withdrawal of international protection" and on establishing a "departure centre". UNHCR's observations aim to ensure legal safeguards are preserved in line with international standards and obligations under the 1951 Convention.

Capacity Development

In 2025, UNHCR supported the Icelandic authorities and refugee law practitioners with training on refugee law and the application of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Further trainings are foreseen in 2026.

HIGHLIGHTS

Harmonization with neighbouring countries

In line with the "Platform for the Coalition Government", authorities are reviewing migration and asylum law in Iceland to harmonize it with neighboring countries.

First ever visit to Iceland by High Commissioner

The High Commissioner visited Iceland in November 2025 to reaffirm the positive relationship between UNHCR and Iceland and express appreciation for Iceland stepping up its international support. The High Commissioner met with the President, the Prime Minister and other Ministers, as well as civil society actors and refugees.

Collective protection

The collective protection scheme for people fleeing Ukraine following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been extended until March 2027.



MEDIA MISSION TO UKRAINE

The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RÚV), with support from UNHCR, went on a media mission to Ukraine, including a visit to the city of Poltava, which had recently been hit by Russian missiles. The mission covered the impact of the ongoing war and resulted in strong coverage across both print and television. See here and here.

Key Priorities

- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR advocates for fair and efficient asylum procedures with national authorities and provides technical guidance. UNHCR also works with various stakeholders to strengthen capacity linked to the asylum procedure, facilitating trainings, workshops and other initiatives.
- **Resettlement and complementary pathways:** Iceland has paused its small but long-standing resettlement programme. UNHCR is in dialogue with the Government regarding its resumption. Iceland also plays a significant role in facilitating family reunification.
- **Inclusion:** UNHCR supports the significant steps taken by Iceland with regards to its inclusion policies, including to ensure that all refugees have the same access to employment and inclusion support.
- **Legal aid:** UNHCR supports NGOs to strengthen their capacity to help forcibly displaced people to access rights and services. UNHCR also advises and provides capacity building to lawyers offering legal aid and representation to asylum-seekers in Iceland.
- **Law and policy:** UNHCR supports the Government in developing and strengthening national laws and policies around international protection and improve public attitudes towards refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people in Iceland.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with the Ministry of Justice and other authorities to support legal and policy development in the area of asylum and statelessness. UNHCR also works with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour as well as Ministry of Education and other actors to support inclusion efforts.
- UNHCR also works in partnership with civil society to raise awareness on asylum and statelessness issues and the provision of support and advice to those in need of international protection.

Statelessness

- Iceland has acceded to both the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on Statelessness.
- Iceland has taken steps towards operationalizing Statelessness Determination Procedures, including through developing and implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- UNHCR stands ready to support Iceland to join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness that seeks to build on the concrete gains and momentum generated by the #IBelong Campaign.

UNHCR Presence in Nordic & Baltic Countries

Staff:

18 National Staff

7 International Staff

Offices:

1 Regional Office in Stockholm

1 Office in Vilnius, Lithuania

1 Office in Riga, Latvia

1 Office in Tallinn, Estonia

Financial information (as of 28 February 2026)

**Information relates to the Representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries, which includes Representation for Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden*

Financial requirements for 2026:

$ 7.6 M



Funded 35%
$ 2.7 M

Funding gap 65%
$ 4.9 M

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors in 2026:

Australia | Belgium | Denmark | Germany | Ireland | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland

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