

Italy

September 2019

In September 2019, **2,499 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, most of whom departed from Tunisia. This is the highest number of monthly sea arrivals this year so far.

NGO rescue vessels continued to operate in the Central Mediterranean. The Ocean Viking vessel was involved in two post-disembarkation transfer exercises led by the European Commission.

On 12 September, 98 refugees were evacuated from Libya, in the context of the third direct **humanitarian evacuation from Libya to Italy** in 2019 so far.

KEY INDICATORS

82%*

Percentage of 2019 sea arrivals informed by UNHCR staff upon disembarkation

5,209*

Referrals of **sea arrivals with specific needs** to appropriate services since January 2015

659*

Monitoring **visits to reception and detention facilities** since April 2013

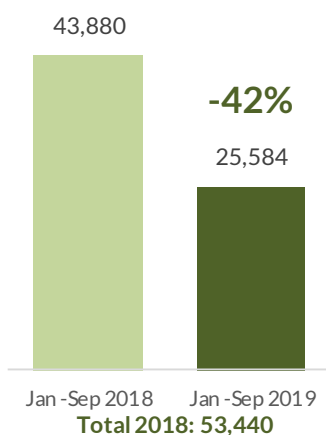
Between April 2013 and December 2016, monitoring visits were conducted jointly with Ministry of Interior, Prefectures, IOM, Save the Children, and Red Cross. Between April 2017 and April 2019, monitoring visits were conducted jointly with Ministry of Interior staff and independent auditors.

* Source: UNHCR

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Asylum applications

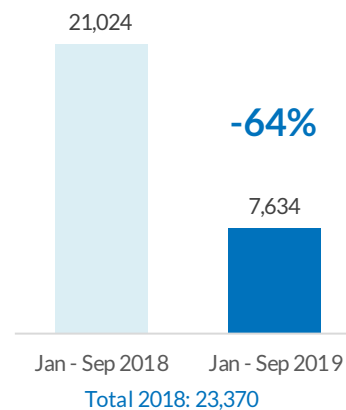
First time applications Jan-Sep 2018-2019



Source: Eurostat and Ministry of Interior

Sea Arrivals

Jan-Sep, 2018-2019

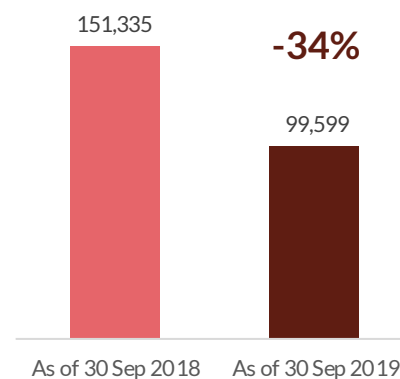


Source: Ministry of Interior

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Reception system

Population of concern in reception centres



Source: Ministry of Interior

Operational Context

- On 5 September, **a new Government was sworn-in** under the leadership of Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. Stemming from a Democratic Party – Five Stars Movement coalition, the newly formed Government called for a European response vis-à-vis refugee and migrant arrivals. The new Government also opened to the possibility of reviewing the security decrees approved by the previous Government, taking into account the observations made by the President of the Republic upon signing such decrees. The newly appointed Interior Minister, Mrs. Luciana Lamorgese, attended a migration summit in Malta on 23 September, together with the Interior Ministers of France, Germany and Malta, the European Commissioner for Migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos, and the Finnish Presidency of the European Council. Reportedly, preliminary agreement was found on a proposal for a temporary scheme to relocate asylum-seekers rescued in the Central Mediterranean to other European countries.
- On 26 September, the European Council **extended** the mandate of Operation Sophia until 31 March 2020. However, the deployment of the Operation's naval assets in the Central Mediterranean will continue to remain temporarily suspended.
- **NGO rescue vessels** continued to operate in the Central Mediterranean throughout September. During the month, the Norwegian-flagged NGO vessel Ocean Viking, operated by SOS Méditerranée/MSF, returned to the search and rescue zone and was at the centre of two European Commission-led negotiations on post-disembarkation transfers. Italy did not issue any entry ban against the vessel, but in both cases allocated a disembarkation port only following the agreement by other Member States (France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Portugal) to receive new arrivals. In the second half of the month, 58 new arrivals who disembarked the Ocean Viking vessel and who were not due to be transferred to other countries were accommodated in facilities run by the Italian Bishops Conference.
- Notably, in early September, **post-disembarkation transfer mechanisms** were activated also in the case of the NGO rescue vessel Eleonore, run by Mission Lifeline. The disembarkation followed the captain's declaration of a state of emergency on board, the vessel having been previously served with a ban preventing it from entering territorial waters. In this case, five EU countries (France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Portugal) agreed to receive part of the 104 persons who disembarked the NGO vessel, while the captain and the head of mission were placed under investigation in connection with allegations of aiding and abetting illegal immigration.
- In September, **2,499 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**, compared to 947 in the same period last year. This is the highest number of monthly sea arrivals this year so far, followed by 1,268 in the previous month. Approximately half of persons arriving by sea in September departed from Tunisia, followed by 23% from Libya, 9% each from Turkey and Algeria, and 8% from Greece. Most persons who departed from Tunisia in September were Tunisian nationals, but increasing numbers of Ivorians were reported, consistent with

previous months. Notably, the most common nationalities of sea arrivals in September were Tunisia, followed by Côte d'Ivoire, Algeria, Iraq, Sudan and Pakistan.

Between 1 January and 30 September 2019, 7,634 persons arrived in Italy by sea, a 64% decrease compared to the numbers of persons reaching Italian shores in the same period last year (21,024). Most refugees and migrants arriving by sea since the beginning of 2019 originated from Tunisia (28%), Pakistan (12%), Côte d'Ivoire (11%), Algeria (10%), Iraq (8%), Sudan (5%), Bangladesh (3%), Islamic Republic of Iran (2%), Guinea (2%), and Morocco (2%). For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the [Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard – September 2019](#).

- On 12 September, 98 refugees were evacuated from Libya to Italy. This was the third direct **humanitarian evacuation from Libya to Italy** in 2019 so far, resulting in 393 vulnerable individuals safely reaching Italy since the beginning of the year. The group mainly originated from Eritrea, but also from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan, and comprised 52 unaccompanied and separated children. Most evacuees experienced detention in Libya and presented with specific needs, having survived torture and sexual violence in transit countries (for further information, please refer to [UNHCR press release](#)).
- On 6 and 9 September, six Eritrean refugee students arrived in Italy from Ethiopia in the context of the **University Corridors** pilot programme, promoted by the University of Bologna, UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Caritas, with the collaboration of other partners (Archdiocese di Bologna, ER.GO – Emilia-Romagna regional agency for higher studies, Federmanager Bologna – Ravenna, Gandhi Charity, Manageritalia Emilia Romagna, and Next Generation Italy). The six refugees who arrived in September are the first group participating in the programme, which will enable them to continue their postgraduate studies at the University of Bologna and at LUISS University in Rome.
- On 26 September, nine Syrian and Palestinian refugees were resettled from Turkey to Italy in the context of the Italian **Resettlement** Programme, bringing the total refugees resettled since the beginning of 2018 to 685. Italy pledged to resettle 1,000 refugees in the 2018/2019 period.
- Between 1 January and 30 September 2019, there were **25,584 new asylum applications in Italy**, a 42 per cent decrease compared to the number of applications lodged in the same period last year (43,880). In September, 3,202 asylum-seekers lodged an application in



Italy, including 62 unaccompanied and separated children. In 2019 so far, first-time claimants more commonly originated from Pakistan (19%), Nigeria (8%), Bangladesh (6%), Ukraine (5%), El Salvador (5%), Peru (5%), Morocco (4%), Senegal (4%), Albania (3%), India (3%) and Venezuela (3%).¹

- As of 30 September, **99,599 asylum-seekers and refugees** were accommodated in **reception facilities** across Italy. Approximately 75% of them (74,738 persons) were accommodated in first-line reception facilities, predominantly located in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and Piedmont. An additional 25% (24,674 persons) were accommodated in second-line facilities belonging to the SIPROIMI network, most of which are located in Sicily, followed by Latium, and Emilia-Romagna. As of 30 September, 487 persons were accommodated in hotspots, all of whom were in Sicily.² Notably, transfers of asylum-seekers from the Italy-France border area in Ventimiglia to the Taranto hotspot continue to occur, as well as reported occurrences of violence before and during the transfer.

¹ Ministry of the Interior, *I numeri dell'asilo*, available at: <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/documentazione/statistica/i-numeri-dellasilos> (last access 15 October 2019)

² Ministry of the Interior, *Cruscotto statistico giornaliero*, 30 September 2019, available at: http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_30-09-2019_0.pdf (last access 11 October 2019)

Main Activities

Access to procedures

- In the context of the 12 September evacuation of vulnerable asylum-seekers from Libya to Italy, UNHCR staff assisted new arrivals providing relevant information and liaising with the authorities to ensure adequate follow-up on individual cases. UNHCR staff also assisted new arrivals in following-up on procedures to allow their reunification with relatives in other European countries. Adult evacuees were transferred to reception facilities in Ancona, Rimini, and Rome, while unaccompanied and separated children were transferred to first-line and second-line (SIPROIMI) children facilities in Chieti, Lecce, Salerno, Campobasso, and Avellino. After the evacuees' transfer to reception facilities, UNHCR staff and implementing partners have been involved in cases of unaccompanied and separated children, ensuring adequate care was provided, and liaising with authorities responsible for refugee status determination to prioritize vulnerable cases.



UNHCR staff assist vulnerable refugees at Fiumicino airport after their evacuation flight from Libya to Italy on 12 September.

- In September, UNHCR staff supported the transfers of individuals who are expected to be relocated to other European States in light of ad hoc agreements reached in connection with specific disembarkation events. UNHCR staff regularly visited the groups currently awaiting interviews and transfers from the Messina and Pozzallo hotspots, including new arrivals who disembarked the Ocean Viking and Eleonore vessels in September.

Reception and detention

- UNHCR staff conduct regular visits to reception facilities accommodating new arrivals near disembarkation locations, raising concerns over reception conditions with relevant authorities. In September, the office raised its concerns relating to the detention of new arrivals, including unaccompanied and separated children, in the hangar area of the first-line reception facility in Crotone. According to the authorities, persons were confined for the purpose of medical screening and identification.
- UNHCR staff also conduct regular visits to pre-removal detention facilities, to monitor the implementation of the detention ban for asylum-seekers whose health or vulnerability conditions may be incompatible with confinement. In September, UNHCR staff visited the pre-removal facilities in Turin and Restinco (Bari), focusing in particular on detainees with specific needs. In Turin, UNHCR staff also met with representatives of the Prefecture and the Provincial Police Headquarters, as well as with the Regional Ombudsperson for detainees, discussing conditions in detention. Furthermore, concerns were raised with the authorities over lengthy detention periods for self-declared children who await to undergo age assessments at the pre-removal facilities in Milo (Trapani) and Restinco (Bari).
- In September, UNHCR staff drafted recommendations to be shared with the Ministry of the Interior in view of the finalization of the 2019 decree on SIPROIMI facilities.

Community-based protection

- Through direct observation as well as exchanges with implementing and operational partners, UNHCR has monitored the eviction of the informal transit settlement in the Tiburtina station area in Rome, which took place in early September. The presence of persons of concern to UNHCR, including asylum-seekers and refugees, was reported at the settlement. UNHCR has advocated with relevant local authorities for a safe and dignified eviction. UNHCR has also called for the identification of sustainable housing and integration solutions for persons of concern, including by way of direct referral to the Italian reception system. Furthermore, in September, UNHCR staff carried out a mission to the so called “Ex Pista” informal agricultural settlement in Borgo Mezzanone, near Foggia, aiming at identifying protection risks and mitigation strategies for asylum-seekers and refugees living there.

During the month, UNHCR partner MEDU continued to engage in medical and protection outreach activities in informal settlements, both in urban and agricultural contexts, namely in Rome and Borgo Mezzanone. MEDU staff also delivered information sessions for asylum-seekers and refugees at the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center in Rome, and provided psychiatric and psycho-social care services for SGBV survivors in Rome.

- In September, the implementation of the UNHCR-Intersos joint [PartecipAzione](#) programme progressed with the third round of capacity-building / training sessions for community-based organizations. Sessions delivered in September focused on grants management and resource mobilization, and were held in Foggia, Milan, Naples and Palermo. They were

attended by 58 participants from 38 community-based organizations working across ten Italian regions. A wide range of stakeholders collaborated and participated in these training sessions, namely Open Society Foundation, Cariplo Foundation, Monti Uniti Foundation, Caritas, and the Municipality of Naples.

- Furthermore, the [Juma Map](#) project, developed by partner organization ARCI with support from UNHCR, was presented in various locations (Cecina, L'Aquila, Messina) with the aim of involving new associations and enlarging the range of services for asylum-seekers and refugees mapped through the project. A total of 240 persons attended the presentations, including social workers, reception centres staff, as well as asylum-seekers and refugees.
- UNHCR provided assistance to 152 individuals who approached the office, including through its front desk in Rome, to receive information and assistance, with regard to international protection, family reunification/reunion and marriage-related procedures. UNHCR was contacted either directly, or through lawyers, NGOs, institutional counterparts, or other UNHCR offices abroad. Front desk and individual counselling activities allow UNHCR staff to keep abreast of relevant issues impacting asylum-seekers and refugees' access to rights, such as difficulties in finalizing family reunification procedures. Such activities also inform UNHCR's advocacy work with relevant authorities at local and national levels.

Child protection

- In the context of the UNHCR partnership with the National Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents, in September, UNHCR staff conducted participatory activities for unaccompanied and separated children living in reception facilities in Rome. The sessions focused on social media and communication, and more specifically on hate speech, racism and xenophobia on social networks. Such participatory activities aim at raising children's awareness of social media and possible risks connected to their use, but also at preventing bullying. During these activities, children are encouraged to share their experiences with regard to racism, hate speech and xenophobia.
- In September, the photo exhibition *Io So(g)no* was on display during the InDivenire Festival in Rome. The exhibition stemmed from a participatory project developed in the context of the UNHCR partnership with the National Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents, which enabled unaccompanied and separated children accommodated in selected reception facilities in Rome to take part in participatory activities to express their aspirations, needs and voices through photography. The photos, taken by unaccompanied and separated children themselves, take the viewer through a journey into the children's everyday life in Italy and their future aspirations.
- On 23 and 24 September, UNHCR took part in a workshop organized by EASO in Brescia, delivering sessions on international protection and best interests of the child procedures for staff of children reception facilities.

- On 30 September, UNHCR attended a meeting of the Italian NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, discussing issues pertaining to the implementation of the Convention in Italy. The Group is open to any association, NGO, foundation, and other third sector stakeholder dealing with the promotion and protection of children rights in Italy; UNHCR participates as an observer.
- In September, UNHCR partner CIR progressed with planned activities in Sicily, carrying out two refresher sessions for volunteer guardians in Messina and Trapani, and further trainings on relevant legal developments as well as on the possibility to convert permits of stay for minor age into other permits of stay. CIR activities aim at strengthening the voluntary guardian system by offering trainings and capacity-development opportunities.

Sexual and gender-based violence

- In September, UNHCR partner [LILA Catania](#) started delivering information sessions on sexual and gender-based violence and sexually transmitted disease at the first-line reception facility in Pian del Lago (Caltanissetta). LILA works in close cooperation with the facility's management, who refer relevant cases to LILA. Furthermore, LILA continues to focus on urban outreach activities, conducting drop-in sessions in Catania.
- On 24 September, LILA conducted a two-day training event for reception facilities staff in Sicily, focusing on the identification of, and response to SGBV survivors. UNHCR contributed to the training delivering a session on the role of cultural mediation in the identification of SGBV survivors.

External relations

- On 24 September, UNHCR and OECD jointly organized a conference focused on the role of the private sector vis-à-vis refugee inclusion. On the occasion, two recent studies were presented in Italy, namely a [OECD-UNHCR study](#) on promoting refugees' access to employment through the private sector, and a [UNCTAD-UNHCR-IOM study](#) on policy guidance for self-employment of refugees and migrants (for further information, see [UNHCR press release](#)).
- On 18 September, a press conference was held at UNHCR premises in Rome to announce the regional winner for Europe of the 2019 Nansen Refugee Award, namely Italy's Humanitarian Corridors project. Representatives of the winning entities, the Comunità di Sant'Egidio, the FCEI, the Waldensian Table and Caritas Italia attended, together with UNHCR and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Interior officials. The press conference was followed, on 25 September, by an official prize-giving ceremony hosted by the Ambassadors of Norway and Switzerland to Italy in Rome.



Alessandra Trotta of the Waldensian Table holds the Europe region Nansen Refugee Award for Italy's Humanitarian Corridors Programme, as she poses for a photograph with (left to right) UNHCR's Regional Representative for Southern Europe Roland Schilling, Swiss Ambassador Rita Adam, fellow winners Oliviero Forti of Caritas, Marco Impagliazzo of the Community of Sant'Egidio, Luca Maria Negro of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy, and the host of the ceremony, Norwegian Ambassador Margit F. Tveiten.

- During the month, UNHCR staff presented the book *Anche Superman era un rifugiato* with refugee journalist Alidad Shiri twice in Bolzano, and took part in various public events, including a debate on the right to asylum and the externalisation of border control at the Festa dell'Unità in Bologna, and a speech at the Festival Francese in Bologna. UNHCR also took part in a training for approximately 40 journalists organised by partner association Carta di Roma in Aosta.
- From 26 to 28 September, UNHCR staff followed the first ever participation by a refugee team under the UNHCR flag in the International Cous Cous Competition at the annual Cous Cous Fest in S. Vito lo Capo, in Sicily.



UNHCR Italia @UNHCRItalia · Oct 12

Per la prima volta quest'anno una squadra di rifugiati ha partecipato al Campionato mondiale di cous cous del @Cous_Cous_Fest!

Loro sono Basim e Jamol, chef rifugiati del progetto #FoodForInclusion realizzato con @UNISG bit.ly/2IHJfH4
 @DiaconiaValdese @FoodKamba



1 comment, 9 shares, 28 likes

Working with Partners

- Since 2017, UNHCR has engaged in partnerships with a number of NGOs in Italy, with a view to enhancing its protection delivery, focusing in particular on SGBV prevention and response, child protection and integration. In 2019, partners include [AIDOS](#), [ARCI](#), [Cambalache](#), [Caritas \(Consortio Communitas\)](#), [Carta di Roma](#), [CIDAS](#), [Consiglio Italiano Rifugiati](#), [Di.RE](#), [Fondazione Adecco](#), [Intersos](#), [LILA Catania](#), [MEDU](#), and [University of Pollenzo](#). Further information is available on the [What we do in Italy](#) publication.



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