

# Italy

June 2019

A new **law decree** came into force in mid-June, which could limit the disembarkation of refugees and migrants rescued at sea. UNHCR asked Parliament to amend it and prioritize rescue operations.

In June, **1,218 refugees and migrants reached Italian shores**, the highest number of monthly sea arrivals in 2019 so far. Most sea arrivals in June departed from Tunisia.

**Increasing numbers of land arrivals**, including unaccompanied children, were reported travelling from Slovenia into the northern region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

## KEY INDICATORS

**80%\***

Percentage of 2019 sea arrivals informed by UNHCR staff upon disembarkation

**5,069\***

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

**632\***

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

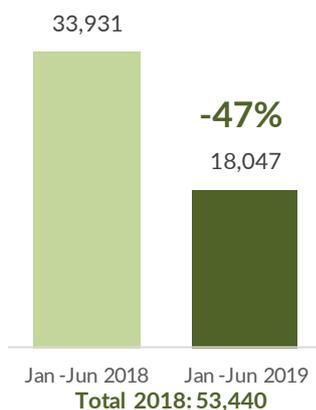
\* Source: UNHCR

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.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Asylum applications

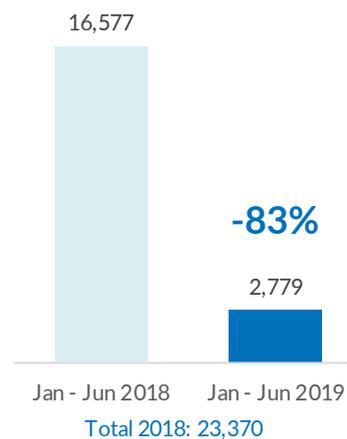
First time applications Jan-Jun 2018-2019



Source: Eurostat and Ministry of Interior

## Sea Arrivals

Jan-Jun, 2018-2019

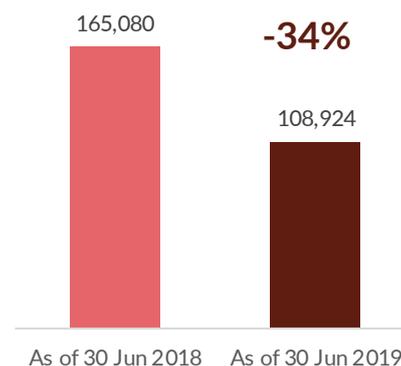


Source: Ministry of Interior

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Reception system

Population of concern in reception centers



Source: Ministry of Interior

## Operational Context

- A new law decree was approved by the Council of Ministers and came into force in mid-June. The new decree authorizes the Minister of the Interior to limit or prohibit the entry of non-military and non-governmental vessels in Italian territorial waters for reasons of public order and security. Furthermore, the decree introduces an administrative sanction of €10-50,000 for shipmasters who do not follow the order not to enter Italian territorial waters, which can be extended also to the shipping company and the owner of the vessel. Furthermore, the vessel will be impounded in the event that it repeatedly disobeys the order not to enter territorial waters. The decree will have to be converted into law by Parliament within 60 days. UNHCR issued a [press release](#) asking the Government to review the decree, and Parliament to amend it, prioritizing refugee protection and rescue operations.
- As of 30 June, **108,924 asylum-seekers and refugees** were accommodated **in reception facilities** and hotspots across Italy. Approximately 76 per cent of them (82,597 persons) were asylum-seekers accommodated in first-line reception facilities, predominantly located in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont and Campania. An additional 24 per cent (26,209 persons) were refugees, who are accommodated in second-line facilities belonging to the SIPROIMI network, most of which are located in Sicily, Latium, Apulia, Calabria, Emilia-Romagna, and Campania. The SIPROIMI network has a total capacity of 35,650. Furthermore, as of 30 June, 118 persons were accommodated in hotspots in Sicily.<sup>1</sup> As of the end of the month, 87 provinces across Italy had published tenders for the management of asylum-seekers reception facilities in their respective territories, for a total of over 96,000 reception places, the vast majority of which are in smaller-size facilities accommodating up to 50 persons. Many reception providers decided not to apply to the recent tenders stating that the resources foreseen are insufficient to provide adequate services.
- As of 30 June, **7,272 unaccompanied and separated children** were accommodated **in children reception facilities** across Italy. The majority of unaccompanied and separated children are accommodated in Sicily (28 per cent), followed by Lombardy (11 per cent), Emilia-Romagna (9 per cent), and Friuli Venezia-Giulia (8 per cent). Most of them are boys (93 per cent) aged 17 years old.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 1 January and 30 June 2019, **18,047 new asylum applications were lodged in Italy**, a 47 per cent decrease compared to the same period last year. First-time claimants more commonly originated from Pakistan (19 per cent), Nigeria (9 per cent), Bangladesh

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of the Interior, *Cruscotto statistico giornaliero*, 30 June 2019, available at: [http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto\\_statistico\\_giornaliero\\_30-06-2019.pdf](http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_30-06-2019.pdf) (last access 26 July 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Employment, *Report mensile. Minori stranieri non accompagnati (MSNA) in Italia*, 30 June 2019, available at: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Documents/Report-MSNA-mese-giugno-2019.pdf> (last access 2 August 2019)

(7 per cent), Ukraine (5 per cent), El Salvador (5 per cent), Peru (5 per cent), Morocco (4 per cent), Senegal (4 per cent), Albania (4 per cent), and Venezuela (3 per cent).<sup>3</sup>

- In June, **1,218 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea**. This is the highest number of monthly sea arrivals this year so far, and corresponds to some 44 per cent of all refugees and migrants who reached Italian shores in the first half of 2019. The majority of persons reaching Italian shores in June departed from Tunisia (33 per cent of monthly sea arrivals), followed by Libya (28 per cent), Turkey (30 per cent), Algeria (6 per cent), and Greece (3 per cent). Most persons who departed from Tunisia were Tunisian nationals, but increasing numbers of Ivorian nationals were also reported embarking from places along the Tunisian coast. New arrivals who departed from Libya in June mainly originate from western African countries and Bangladesh, while refugees and migrants departing from Greece and Turkey were predominantly Pakistani and Iraqi nationals. Between 1 January and 30 June, 2,779 persons arrived in Italy by sea, an 83 per cent decrease compared to the numbers of persons reaching Italian shores in the same period last year (16,577). Most refugees and migrants arriving by sea since the beginning of 2019 originated from Tunisia (21 per cent), Pakistan (15 per cent), Algeria (10 per cent), Iraq (9 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire (8 per cent), Bangladesh (7 per cent), Sudan (3 per cent), Islamic Republic of Iran (2 per cent), Morocco (2 per cent), and Guinea (2 per cent). For further information on sea arrivals in Italy, please refer to the [Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard – June 2019](#).
- Various **SAR operations** took place in the Central Mediterranean in June, including by NGOs and national authorities. The NGO vessel Sea Watch 3 returned at sea on 9 June, but was impounded at the end of the month, after a stand-off regarding the disembarkation of 53 refugees and migrants it rescued off the Libyan coast on 12 June. The Sea Watch 3 refused to disembark rescued individuals in Libya, referring to the security and human rights situation in the country. Italian authorities prevented the vessel's entry into Italian territorial waters. While 13 vulnerable individuals were medically evacuated to Italy, the remaining passengers – including unaccompanied children and persons with specific needs- remained on board the Sea Watch 3 stationed south of Lampedusa, just outside Italian territorial waters, between 14 and 26 June. On 20 June, UNHCR issued a [press release](#) asking European countries to allow disembarkation. On 26 June, the Sea Watch 3 entered Italian territorial waters despite the ban by the Italian Government. Eventually, on 29 June, in light of passengers' deteriorating conditions, the Sea Watch 3 forced the bloc by the Italian authorities and entered the Lampedusa port, where the remaining rescued individuals disembarked. The Sea Watch 3 captain, Carola Rackete, was arrested and subsequently placed under house arrest in connection with investigations for resistance or violence against a war vessel, and for aiding and abetting illegal immigration. Furthermore, administrative sanctions provided for by the latest security decree were applied against the captain, the ship-owner, and the shipping company. A number of European countries agreed to receive new arrivals following disembarkation in Italy.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of the Interior, *I numeri dell'asilo*, last update 25 July 2019, available at: <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/documentazione/statistica/i-numeri-dellasilolo> (last access 7 August 2019)

- Another **NGO vessel**, the Open Arms, returned at sea in the Central Mediterranean at the end of June, after a six-month stop. On 30 June, it spotted a boat in distress with 42 refugees and migrants on board, and alerted the Italian Coast Guard, who proceeded to rescue the group taking them to Italy. The Italian Coast Guard, together with the Tax and Customs Police, were also involved in the rescue of 81 persons who departed from Zuwarah, Libya on board three different boats before being transferred onto a larger boat, and again on to a wooden vessel close to the shores of the Italian island of Lampedusa.
- **Increasing numbers of land arrivals**, including unaccompanied children, were reported travelling from Slovenia into the northern region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, where an average of 50 arrivals per day were recorded, with peaks of 100-150. NGOs estimate that some 3,000 refugees and migrants arrived by land in the area since the beginning of 2019. New arrivals mainly originate from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Algeria. In Trieste, reception facilities for asylum-seekers were at full capacity, thus individuals seeking international protection near the border areas were transferred to other provinces and regions in Italy, while other persons of concern reportedly found shelter in informal settlements.
- In June, 135 vulnerable individuals were transferred from Lebanon to Italy in the context of the **Humanitarian Corridors** Programme. In 2019 so far, 205 persons were transferred to Italy from Lebanon and Ethiopia pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding on Humanitarian Corridors.
- In Messina, Sicily, the local Municipality set up a public **civil registry of asylum-seekers**, enabling all asylum-seekers in the city to register, so to access municipal services on equal footing as citizens who are regularly registered.



Italian actress Greta Scarano (left) talks to a refugee at Grottarossa reception centre. Grottarossa hosts 30 refugee women of different nationalities who have recently arrived in the country.

## Main Activities

### Access to procedures

- In June, UNHCR staff provided new sea arrivals with information on asylum and other relevant procedures, either at the port or in reception facilities which accommodate recent arrivals. UNHCR staff also followed-up on the transfers of individuals who, following disembarkation in Italy, are expected to relocate to other European States in light of ad hoc agreements reached in connection with specific disembarkation events. In early June, the remaining individuals who disembarked Italian Tax and Customs Police vessels in mid-July 2018 were finally transferred to Germany, putting an end to the first post-disembarkation transfer exercise involving individuals disembarked in Italy. UNHCR staff regularly visited the individuals who disembarked the Cigala Fulgosi vessel in early May, and who have since been accommodated at the Messina hotspot. In June, 12 persons from the group were transferred to France, Luxembourg, and Portugal, while 13 others remained at the hotspot awaiting transfer to Germany and Malta. UNHCR has also been following up on the group of refugees and migrants who disembarked the Italian Navy Cigala Fulgosi vessel in early June and who were subsequently accommodated in a reception facility in the outskirts of Rome, pending transfer to other European states. As of the end of June, no one from the group had been transferred from Italy yet.

### Reception

- In June, UNHCR staff conducted monitoring visits to 11 reception facilities across four Italian regions, jointly with external auditors (Mi.Re.Co. project), and staff of Prefecture, and IOM. Shortcomings relating, *inter alia*, to service provision, structural inadequacy, and safety were raised with relevant authorities. Recently, UNHCR provided the MoI with comments to updated monitoring guidelines and tools developed in the context of the Mi.Re.Co. project, following the approval of the 2018 reception facilities' contract specifications.
- UNHCR has been regularly liaising with Servizio Centrale for the prompt transfer of eligible individuals from temporary facilities to second-line, SIPROIMI facilities.

### Community-based protection

- On 20 June, UNHCR conducted a focus-group discussion with a group of asylum-seekers and refugees originating from southern American countries, focusing on access to territory and asylum procedures, as well as access to reception and family reunion. Accessibility of relevant information was also discussed. In the first six months of 2019, Peru, El Salvador, and Venezuela were among the ten most common nationalities of asylum-seekers lodging an application in Italy.

### Child protection

- In the context of the "Cinema for Inclusion" project, funded by the European Youth Initiative Fund, UNHCR has been collaborating with Palermo-based NGO Zabbara, which provides trainings on storytelling and cinema to children and adolescents aged 15 to 24, who are at risk of social marginalization. In June, children and adolescents taking part in workshops shared experiences and developed a shared story that will be the framework for the subject, the outline and the screenplay of a movie.
- UNHCR staff continued to support AMIF-funded reception facilities for unaccompanied and separated children in Sicily and Molise, focusing in particular on arranging and delivering participatory activities with children.

### Sexual and gender-based violence

- In the context of the UNHCR-LILA Catania partnership, LILA recently developed Standard Operating Procedures providing for their interventions in reception facilities and at their drop-in centre, which are aimed at facilitating the disclosure of sexual and gender-based incidents as well as early referral and response. LILA has been regularly visiting informal locations in the Catania area where persons of concern to UNHCR live in situation of high vulnerability, and provide them with sexual and gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation, and response services. In June, LILA, together with UNHCR, delivered a two-day training on sexual and gender-based violence addressed to cultural mediators and refugee community representatives in Catania.

### Capacity development

- In June, UNHCR took part in the first of two trainings for journalism students organised in collaboration with UNHCR partner Carta di Roma, addressing 30 students at the Scuola di Giornalismo Walter Tobagi in Milan.
- In June, UNHCR delivered various trainings on protection related topics, reaching a total audience of over 250 persons. Training topics included, *inter alia*, the protection and reception of unaccompanied and separated children, the identification and referral of victims of trafficking in the context of asylum procedures, statelessness, and asylum claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The first three of a series of trainings on the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees with specific needs were also delivered in June, addressing health authorities, social workers and anti-violence centres staff in Bari, Foggia, and Taranto. UNHCR also continued its series of trainings, delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and EASO, focusing on the registration of asylum claims addressed to police personnel: in June, sessions were held in Catania and Rome.

### External relations

- On 1 June, the High Commissioner participated in the [Festival dell'Economia](#) in Trento, delivering a public interview on conflicts, migration, and populism, to Italian journalists

Annalisa Camilli and Francesca Mannocchi. The conversation touched upon several topics including global crises, UNHCR mandate and budget structure, the role of humanitarian agencies, and the situation in Libya. Furthermore, the High Commissioner delivered a speech at another public event held at ISPI, in Milan, on 10 June.

UNHCR's World Refugee Day official [programme](#) kicked off on 17 June and ran through until 29 June, with 15 events in cities across the country. The programme included meetings of UNHCR supporters, Italian actress Greta Scarano and British actor Douglas Booth, with refugees and asylum seekers, and visits to the livelihood project +Gusto.



The staff of Pastella restaurant on their stall at the +Gusto food festival in Virgiliano Park, Rome.

- UNHCR presented the annual [Global Trends](#) report at a press conference in Rome attended by some 60 international and Italian journalists, institutional representatives, and NGOs. The key findings were illustrated by refugee spokespersons Mirvat Sayegh and Yagoub Kibeida, who also gave interviews to the media.
- On 17 June, artists, actors and dancers celebrated World Refugee Day at the ancient Greek Theatre of Syracuse, Sicily, with dance performances, speeches, and a monologue called *The Abyss* focusing on the desperate sea crossings across the Mediterranean.
- On 20 June, in collaboration with ARCI Roma (the Italian Recreational and Cultural Association), UNHCR organised a free concert in Rome by Italian singer Nada and the band Orchestra dei Braccianti to raise awareness of the more than 70 million people worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution and human rights violations. On the same day, an open-air screening of the documentary *Where are*

you? *Dimmi dove sei* produced by National Geographic with UNHCR support took place at Rome's Maxxi museum.



UNHCR Senior Regional Public Information Office, Carlotta Sami, presents the NGO-backed solidarity campaign *Io Accolgo* during the World Refugee Day concert in Rome.

- On 21 June, Refugees Got Talent, a UNHCR supported talent contest, took place in Catania, featuring 13 finalists. Contestants included refugees seeking shelter from conflict or abuse in their home countries. They performed music, theatre, dance and poetry in front of a judging panel that included UNHCR Supporter and British actor Douglas Booth.



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- As part of the celebrations for the World Refugee Day 2019, the Ara Pacis Museum, one of the major museum in Rome, hosted the exhibition *Io So(g)no all'Ara Pacis*, a photographic project realized by 15 unaccompanied children aged 14-17 who have been accommodated in reception facilities in Rome. Photography is the artistic medium that allowed them, with the support of professional photographers, to express their visions of reality and their relationship with the places that protected them, such as the city of Rome and host communities.



As part of the celebrations for World Refugee Day 2019, the Ara Pacis Museum, one of the major museum in Rome, hosts the exhibition *Io So(g)no* from 19 June until 9 July 2019.

## 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 [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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