

# Estonia

September 2021

**Refugee protection:** Estonia is signatory to refugee and human rights treaties and hosts a small refugee community which it is helping to successfully integrate into the society.

**Support for refugees:** Estonia is UNHCR's largest donor in the Baltics and contributes to finding solutions for the causes of displacement, including as member of the UN Security Council.

**Solidarity:** Estonia participated in EU relocation and resettlement efforts and this should be developed into a regular Estonian resettlement program.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

Refugees	<b>297</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>16</b>
Stateless persons	<b>73,214*</b>
Total population of concern	<b>73,527</b>

\*This number comprises almost entirely of persons that Estonia refers to as "persons with undetermined citizenship".

## TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN\*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Syria	<b>105</b>	Russia	<b>3</b>
Russia	<b>40</b>	Iran	<b>2</b>
Ukraine	<b>29</b>	Nigeria	<b>2</b>

\*Data source: UNHCR 2020 Global Trends Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

## COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

**Advocacy:** UNHCR is in regular contact with authorities and partners to ensure that persons of concern to UNHCR are included and mainstreamed in pandemic prevention and response programmes.

**Inclusion:** Refugees in Estonia are included in [the national response](#) and provided with social support and other measures to mitigate their unemployment/income loss. Asylum-seekers and refugees living in the collective reception centre have been prioritized for vaccination and the majority have already been vaccinated.

**Communication with Communities:** UNHCR's NGO partners also continue their outreach to refugee communities through various contact lists and groups on social media to provide timely information on COVID-19 in different languages.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**76%**

of refugee respondents to a survey wish to stay in Estonia, while only 5% are considering moving to another country (2019 UNHCR survey).

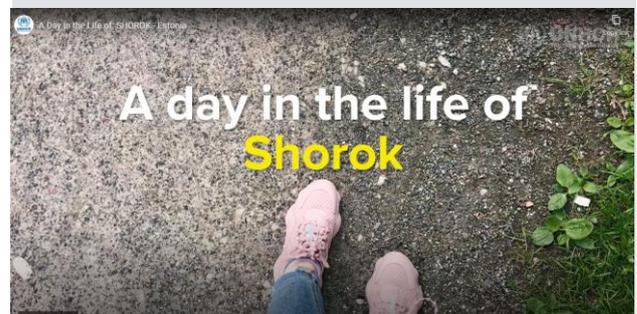
### Digital identity expertise

As a part of Global Refugee Forum pledge, Estonia seconded a digital identity expert to UNHCR's Global Data Service. Estonian governmental and private sector experts have been conducting workshops on e-Estonia for UNHCR.

### 56% of stateless persons

in Estonia (referred to by Estonia as persons with undetermined citizenship) wish to acquire Estonian citizenship.

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF SHOROK IN ESTONIA



Meet 19-year-old Shorok, a Syrian refugee now living in Estonia, as she shows us around her new hometown [in this video](#).

## Key Priorities

- **Advocacy:** UNHCR and Estonian partners advocate for EU legal and policy developments, and implementation of EU standards in accordance with international obligations.
- **Protection Sensitive Entry Systems:** UNHCR promotes the development of an independent border monitoring mechanism, and works to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to the territory and asylum, and helps with capacitation of border guards on refugee law and related practice.
- **Detention:** UNHCR promotes alternatives to detention in migration context and encourages to refrain from detention of children.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR is helps to improve the quality of asylum procedure with a focus on refugee status determination, access to and quality of state legal aid and the identification of vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees.
- **Resettlement and Complementary Pathways:** UNHCR is advocating for Estonia to re-engage in resettlement and consider complementary pathways in higher education.
- **Integration:** UNHCR is working with government counterparts and partners to support Estonia's comprehensive approach to integration and to further capacitate national and local authorities in providing support for refugees. UNHCR also promotes local level integration by encouraging Estonian cities' accession to the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme and labour market inclusion by working with employers engaged with the Estonian Diversity Charter. UNHCR is also working with partners to improve regulations and remove practical obstacles related to family reunification.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR is working with [Ministry of the Interior](#), [Ministry of Culture](#), [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) and [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) to support asylum and statelessness legal and policy development, and with [Police and Border Guard Board](#) to ensure the quality of asylum procedures, further reinforced by the partner [Estonian Human Rights Centre](#) with advocacy and legal interventions. With governmental counterparts, NGOs and local authorities, UNHCR helps to foster local integration of refugees in Estonia. Together with the [Integration Foundation](#), we work to support naturalisation of the in situ stateless population.
- **External Engagement:** UNHCR is mostly working with partners to raise awareness on asylum and statelessness issues. During key events, such as the World Refugee Day and the annual Opinion Festival, UNHCR promotes the inclusion of refugee voices in national public debates.

## Statelessness

- Estonia has not acceded to the Statelessness Conventions and does not have a statelessness determination procedure.
- Estonia has made significant efforts to enhance the inclusion of stateless persons (referred to by Estonian authorities as "persons with undetermined citizenship"), including offering citizenship agreements with free language courses.

## UNHCR in Nordic and Baltic Countries

### Staff:

21 National Staff  
 10 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Regional Office in Stockholm  
 1 Liaison Office in Copenhagen  
 1 Liaison Office in Vilnius

## Financial information (28 September 2021)

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

**USD 4.9 M**

Funding gap  
 43%  
 2.7 M



Funded  
 57%  
 2.8 M

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