

# Malta

February 2022

UNHCR Malta opened in 2005 to promote and monitor access to territory, fair and fast asylum procedures, and durable solutions for persons of concern, while supporting Government and partners.

**Addressing Detention:** Over the past six months, UNHCR engaged with authorities on reception conditions in closed centres, non-detention of children and use of detention as last resort.

**Livelihoods:** UNHCR continues to work with the Government and partners to improve access to integration opportunities to enable persons of concern to rebuild their lives in Malta.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

|                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Refugees                    | <b>9,260</b>  |
| Asylum-seekers              | <b>3,088</b>  |
| Stateless persons           | <b>11</b>     |
| Total population of concern | <b>12,359</b> |

## TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN\*

| Refugees             |              | Asylum-seekers       |            |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|------------|
| Libya                | <b>2,851</b> | Sudan                | <b>780</b> |
| Syrian Arab Republic | <b>1,906</b> | Syrian Arab Republic | <b>361</b> |
| Somalia              | <b>1,785</b> | Eritrea              | <b>322</b> |

\*Data source: UNHCR 2021 Mid-Year Statistical Report and UNHCR [data finder platform](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Livelihoods

UNHCR has worked with authorities on recommendations for the National Action Plan Against Racism and Xenophobia launched in October 2021. UNHCR called for the holistic implementation of a fair and efficient asylum process and improved reception conditions to ensure a dignified standard of living and promote self-reliance.

### Alternatives to Detention (ATD)

UNHCR worked to identify and refer vulnerable people in detention to partners. With authorities, UNHCR advocates for the use of detention as a measure of last resort, for increased reliance on ATD, and for ensuring appropriate application of ATD by monitoring the activities of the Immigration Appeals Board (IAB). UNHCR also supported capacity-building in the form of a roundtable jointly organized with the Council of Europe on ATD for national authorities.

## COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

**Advocacy:** UNHCR has advocated for non-discriminatory inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees in the national COVID-19 prevention and response plans. UNHCR engages with the health authorities to offer support (e.g. translation of information) to facilitate the inclusion of POC, most recently with information on booster doses of the vaccine.

**Communication with Communities:** UNHCR ensured access to updated information of new health regulations, by creating tailored messages, translating them into common languages, and distributing them among communication channels, including WhatsApp broadcasting.

**Health:** UNHCR [donated thousands of hygiene items](#) to reception centres to help safeguard persons of concern against the pandemic. UNHCR also offered interpretation support to the national COVID-19 helpline.

## SCHOLARSHIP HELPS GIFTED ALGERIAN REFUGEE STUDENT THRIVE

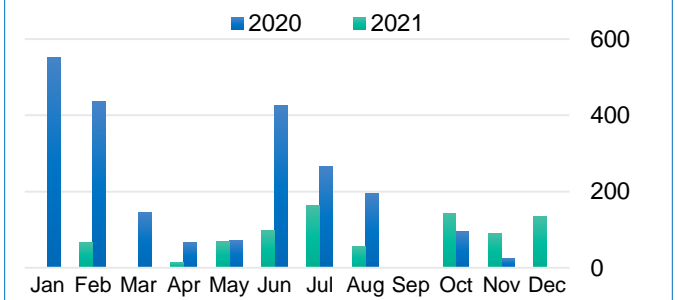


Kenza Lina speaks about her journey from Algeria to Malta (and Gozo!) and how winning a prestigious scholarship helped to ensure that her education remains a key priority. See her story [here](#).

## Key Priorities

- **Access to territory:** Monitoring that seeks to ensure that asylum-seekers have effective access to territory and can apply for international protection.
- **Asylum procedures:** Support for authorities in developing fair and fast asylum procedures with legal remedies in line with international standards.
- **Detention monitoring:** Regular visits and communication with the Detention Services, advocating for detention as a measure of last resort.
- **Integration:** Counselling and drop-in integration support through implementing partner JRS Malta; support to a community theatre project; sharing information on services and projects; and quarterly meetings with stakeholders.
- **Community empowerment and self-reliance:** Continuation of coaching for refugee-led organizations (RLOs) to build capacity; collaboration with State agencies to provide information to persons of concern; as well as dance and music workshops for women living in reception facilities.
- **Promoting social cohesion:** Participation in the national Anti-Racism Platform and in the Forum for Intercultural Affairs; and supporting local actors to facilitate refugee integration in communities, including on Malta's sister island of Gozo.
- **Advocacy** with authorities to follow up on the Global Refugee Forum pledge on complementary pathways. In light of new legislation relating to restricted employment for asylum-seekers from "safe countries of origin", UNHCR and partners advocate for access to territory and asylum, fair and fast asylum procedures and effective returns.
- **Capacity-building:** Training, including for two key employment stakeholders on persons of concern and their entitlements and for partners to strengthen cross-cultural competencies.

## MONTHLY SEA ARRIVALS TO MALTA



Source and more information: [UNHCR Data Portal](#)

## Working with Partners

- Partnership with Tama focusing on female genital mutilation and sexual and reproductive health; collaborating with international organizations such as IOM and Government entities (e.g., on employment); setting up a roundtable to address legislative gaps; providing legal information and psychosocial support through partner organisations; and reaching out to communities directly and through RLOs.
- **External engagement:** Highlighting stories of refugees and asylum-seekers in the community, amplifying the work of partners through social media, and maintaining advocacy efforts in mainstream media.

## Statelessness

- Malta acceded to the 1954 Statelessness Convention in December 2019 but does not have a statelessness determination procedure (SDP). UNHCR's advocacy with the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Law Enforcement continue, with a meeting held in January 2022 to share good practices for setting up an SDP.

## UNHCR Presence in Malta

### Staff:

13 National Staff  
2 International Staff

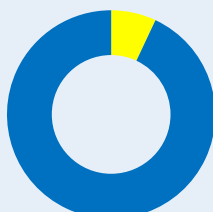
### Offices:

1 Branch Office in Hamrun

## Financial information (22 February 2022)

**Financial requirements**  
USD 1.9 M

**Funding gap**  
91%  
1.7 M



**Funded**  
9%  
0.2 M

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UNHCR Malta is grateful to the donors to its 2022 programme:  
**Malta**