

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Aminata Soucko at the offices of the Red Aminata association she founded in Valencia to help other refugee women.
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UNHCR calls for renewed efforts to protect women and girls from gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses acts that cause physical, sexual or mental harm, and includes threats, coercion and deprivations of liberty in both public and private.¹ Violence against women and girls along migratory routes is significantly heightened due to their vulnerable circumstances, exacerbated by intersecting forms of discrimination. However, challenges in data collection and severe underreporting across all countries result in a lack of comprehensive data and analysis to fully capture this issue. Refugee women and girls often face a continuum of gender-based violence throughout their displacement journey, including physical, psychological and sexual violence. Such incidents may occur at multiple points—beginning in the country of origin, where some acts may constitute gender-based persecution under the 1951

Refugee Convention, and also manifesting as risks during transit along routes and upon arrival in the destination country.

[Research](#) has highlighted increased risks of sexual violence and trafficking for refugees and others on the move along various routes. Along certain migration routes towards Europe, including maritime as well as land routes, the risk of GBV is heightened.

It is critical to underline that GBV also impacts men and boys, with risks exacerbated by intersectional factors such as disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. These compounded vulnerabilities highlight the need for tailored interventions that address the diverse needs of all survivors.

1. [IASC GBV Guidelines](#)

GBV remains among the most pervasive and structurally embedded human rights violations, disproportionately affecting refugee populations.²

By end-2024, Europe hosted over 21 million refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced individuals and stateless people, representing 17 per cent of the global refugee population.

The humanitarian response has faced consistent challenges in addressing GBV impacting forcibly displaced people due to underreporting, gaps in resources and consequences of shifting political dynamics. Addressing GBV among forcibly displaced people is crucial for promoting resilience, safety and dignity. It aims to facilitate survivors' access to protection and support services, mitigates physical and psychological impacts, while supporting women, girls and vulnerable groups to participate in social, educational and economic opportunities. For host communities, strengthening GBV prevention and response systems, with support from UNHCR and partners, is essential for fostering social cohesion, safety, equality and inclusivity. By enhancing existing public services, these efforts help address the needs of both displaced populations and host societies, promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. This approach builds trust between communities, thereby contributing to safer and equitable environments.

In this context, GBV has profound and lasting impacts on **survivors' health and well-being**. Women who experience sexual violence often endure chronic physical injuries, reproductive health complications and mental health issues including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV), particularly in displacement settings, often endure repeated cycles of violence that intensify physical and psychological harm. Many survivors experience shame, fear and isolation, further compounded by the challenges of navigating life in a foreign country or post-conflict environment. These impacts extend beyond individuals, affecting families and communities, while also

limiting survivors' ability to rebuild their lives. Survivors also face **barriers to employment, education and social integration**, often due to stigma or ongoing trauma. For refugee survivors of GBV, these challenges may be compounded by precarious legal and social status in host countries. UNHCR addresses these gaps by supporting refugee survivors' inclusion into existing systems and ensuring access to services such as case management, legal assistance, psychosocial support and safety measures. In Europe, UNHCR's interventions focus on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response through direct programming and prioritising local actors, including women refugee-led organisations. Efforts also aim to transform social norms by developing curricula and communication materials addressing gender inequality, discrimination and power imbalances. GBV response initiatives emphasise quality, survivor-centred service provision, ensuring survivors have access to immediate and life-saving protection and support. Mainstreaming GBV risk mitigation involves integrating prevention, risk reduction and response strategies across all programming areas, with GBV Safety Audits and multisectoral assessments as key tools³. Capacity-building efforts focus on providing trainings to hundreds of UNHCR staff, partners, government officials and community structures, enhancing specialised GBV services through learning modules on survivor-centred frameworks, GBV minimum standards, emergency response and case management.

For women fleeing **the war in Ukraine**, the challenges are multifaceted. By the end of 2024, over 10 million Ukrainians had been forcibly displaced within the country and abroad, with women and girls comprising 75 per cent of the refugee population. This demographic underscores the scale of vulnerability, particularly in host countries where resources are stretched, and protection systems are still evolving. Meanwhile, along the **Mediterranean and Atlantic routes**, the situation is equally dire.

2. [World Bank 2024](#)

3. [The Compact](#)

Women and girls experience trafficking, exploitation and severe forms of abuse while navigating perilous journeys and inadequate reception systems. Overcrowded shelters, lack of privacy and limited access to tailored services further exacerbate risks.

UNHCR urges States to strengthen policies and systems to prevent and respond to GBV, prioritising the protection and dignity of forcibly displaced women and girls. States should **adopt survivor-centred approaches** that ensure access to lifesaving services and integrate GBV risk mitigation into national protection frameworks across all sectors. Efforts must **address intersectional risks faced by marginalised groups**, including people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and those living in poverty, safeguarding displaced populations from violence at all stages of their journeys.

UNHCR also calls on States to allocate resources to effectively address GBV, particularly in conflict and displacement contexts, and to **collaborate with women-refugee-led organisations** (WRLOs) and women-led organisations (WLOs) to ensure culturally sensitive and inclusive responses. **Improved data collection mechanisms** are essential to provide disaggregated insights for guiding policies and programming. By **embedding GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation** into national systems. States can create safer environments for forcibly displaced populations while promoting equality, resilience and social cohesion in host communities.



“We are a network of women who support each other. If I have something to share, we share it together. If we need to cry, we cry together,” Aminata said. Attending the classes is “an opportunity for women to leave their houses, learn about their rights, and understand that they also have the right to seek asylum.” Aminata’s association, Red Aminata (Aminata Network in Spanish), advocates for an end to FGM and gender-based violence. In partnership with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, it provides refugee women with Spanish language classes and a safe space to share their stories and build a community.”

Women attend a session on asylum presented by Aminata and Fernanda Espuga, focal point for community-based protection at UNHCR in Spain ©UNHCR/Ebano Stories

UNHCR's Response

UNHCR's response to GBV across Europe focuses on prevention, response, risk mitigation and capacity building. Prevention efforts aim to advance social norms through tools and communication addressing gender inequality. Response ensures protection and access to essential services while risk mitigation integrates prevention and response strategies, guided by GBV Safety Audits⁴. UNHCR also focuses on capacity building with partners and officials to develop specialised GBV services.



Preventive initiatives to mitigate GBV risks

UNHCR's preventive initiatives to mitigate GBV risks have reached over 1.5 million individuals⁵, addressing immediate dangers and underlying vulnerabilities. Awareness campaigns, including large-scale efforts like the [Stay Safe Campaign](#), provide practical guidance for high-risk areas, focusing on avoiding exploitation and accessing assistance. Empowerment programs such as vocational training, financial literacy, and skills-building enhance self-reliance and reduce exploitation risks, particularly for single women and female-headed households. Life skills training fosters safety, resilience and informed decision-making for adolescent girls and young women in transit and host countries.



Enhancing inclusion and localization

UNHCR's regional GBV strategy emphasises the engagement of government service providers, including healthcare and social services, to improve access to safe shelters, healthcare and mental health and psychosocial support. Referrals are facilitated through community-based organisations, offering survivors practical advice

and localised solutions. Clear information on services and referral pathways provided by UNHCR and its partners ensures thousands of potential survivors can access legal aid and psychosocial support. This multi-layered approach fosters a responsive environment where survivors can recover and rebuild safely.

UNHCR also prioritises partnerships with women-led and refugee-led organisations (WLOs and RLOs) to ensure GBV programming is culturally appropriate, inclusive, and sustainable. WLOs deliver frontline services such as safe spaces, helplines, and shelters, while tailoring awareness campaigns to local cultural norms. RLOs foster trust within refugee communities through peer support, advocacy, and referrals, amplifying displaced individuals' voices in protection strategies. These partnerships strengthen local capacities, promote women's leadership, and enhance gender equality, contributing to the long-term sustainability of GBV prevention and response systems.

Small grants and multifunctional technical support to boost localisation

Between October – December 2024, UNHCR implemented over 12 grant and partnership agreements under the auspices of Safe from the Start (SftS) with WLOs across Europe to address GBV risks and support vulnerable populations. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Vive Zene's Safe House provided 24/7 medical and psychosocial care, with horticultural therapy fostering self-sufficiency and aiding trauma recovery. These services benefited 20 refugee women and girls who received specialised care. In **North Macedonia**, a vocational training curriculum focusing on beauty services improved economic independence for Ukrainian women, reducing GBV risks. Additionally, 10 WLO volunteers participated in a governance-focused capacity-building initiative to enhance organisational effectiveness. In **Georgia**, empowerment programs included self-defence training for 20 women and vocational training in copywriting and

4. [Call to Action GBV](#)

5. [Stay Safe Campaign](#)

English for 15 refugees from Ukraine, contributing to their safety, employability, and professional growth. In **Italy**, partnerships with WRLOs and LGBTQIA+ groups were initiated to create safe spaces in major cities and produce GBV/SEA awareness videos. These outreach efforts target refugees and asylum seekers, ensuring they have access to critical information and support. These initiatives collectively enhance safety, resilience, and empowerment for at-risk groups across the region.

Other initiatives across Europe have helped strengthen GBV prevention and response efforts in the Ukraine refugee situation. In the **Czech Republic**, UNHCR partnered with proFem to establish PORT, a comprehensive centre offering integrated services such as legal assistance, psychotherapeutic support, medical care, evidence collection, and emergency shelter. Outreach materials in **Ukrainian** were developed to raise awareness about GBV risks and available support services. Additionally, the 2024 Digital Gender Inclusion and Innovation Bootcamp – a global UNHCR initiative – engaged over 40 WRLOs around the world, bridging the digital gender gap for displaced women and girls. These partnerships emphasise survivor-centred approaches, risk mitigation, and resilience-building, addressing critical protection gaps and enhancing care for refugee survivors in the region.



Integrating GBV prevention and response into broader protection systems

UNHCR prioritises ensuring that access to GBV prevention and response measures for refugees and asylum-seekers are integrated into broader national systems, enabling survivors or those at risk reach critical services and support. UNHCR advocacy has focused on including forcibly displaced and stateless people in national health systems, enabling survivors to access care without financial or legal barriers in **Bulgaria**,

Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia among others. Additionally, UNHCR has supported governments in developing referral pathways that connect survivors to police, legal services, shelters and healthcare providers. Collaboration with inter-agency partners through the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) GBV Sub-Working Group has further ensured a coordinated and comprehensive response across countries.

In Ukraine...

Since February 2022, women, girls, men and boys in war-affected Ukraine have been exposed to GBV, including **conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)**. An estimated 2.5 million vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and non-displaced individuals are at high risk of GBV and require immediate and sustained prevention, risk mitigation and response efforts⁶. The ongoing war has exacerbated risks of intimate partner violence, CRSV, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), trafficking, sexual harassment and other forms of GBV. In 2024, incidents of IPV, including physical and psychological violence, have doubled (source: National Procurer of Ukraine), with GBV service providers reporting an increase in IPV cases involving returning war veterans. While many IDPs and returnees are accommodated in host families, the most vulnerable continue to reside in Collective Sites (CS) or precarious housing, where GBV risks are heightened. Safety Audits conducted in 2023 and 2024 identified several challenges for CS residents, including lack of privacy, insecure WASH facilities and communal areas, and limited access to critical information including on existing sexual and reproductive services and specialised GBV services.

In response to increasing needs, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government, UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs and WLOs, supported GBV prevention, mitigation and response efforts across Ukraine. This coordinated response included survivor-centred case management, information provision, and capacity-building activities. UNHCR

6. [Ukraine Emergency UNHCR Delivery Updates, December 2024](#)

also integrated gender mainstreaming into sectors like shelter and site management, addressing GBV risks at multiple levels⁷. Additionally, in 2024 UNHCR conducted a Socio-Economic Inclusion Survey (SEIS) under the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) to identify challenges refugees face across participating countries. Launched in the year's second half, the survey gathered household data to assess barriers, gaps and opportunities in accessing GBV services and protection mechanisms. By analysing gender, rural-urban location and vulnerabilities like disability, the SEIS provides evidence-based insights to guide survivor-centred interventions for improved protection and service delivery in 2025 and beyond.

Focus on action against Trafficking in Human Beings



Trafficking in human beings: heightened risks for refugees and persons on the move from Ukraine and beyond

Over 90 per cent of refugees fleeing Ukraine are women and children who face heightened risks of GBV and trafficking amid mass displacement. While refugees from Ukraine have benefited from rapid access to documentation and rights, their mobility frequently exposes them to risks posed by human smugglers and traffickers, as noted in the UNODC [Global Report](#) on Trafficking in Persons. Human trafficking involves the involuntary exploitation of victims, while smuggling is a voluntary act that can still entail life-threatening risks. However, smuggling can escalate into trafficking if victims are exploited, such as being held for ransom or forced to repay

smuggling debts through forced labour or sex work. The [Palermo Protocol](#)⁸ provides a framework for prevention, victim protection and prosecution of traffickers. The EU's [Common Anti-Trafficking Plan](#), launched in May 2022, reveals that the threat of trafficking is “high and imminent,” with criminal networks across Europe and Central Asia preying on refugees’ vulnerabilities, including their separation from support systems and urgent financial needs.

UNODC indicates that refugees are at risk of various forms of trafficking, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, illegal adoption, surrogacy, forced begging and forced criminality⁹. Traditionally, it has been difficult to identify cases of sexual exploitation (and therefore have clear statistics in some countries) because of the reluctance of the victims to denounce perpetrators. This is due to distrust, fear, shame, trauma and stigmatization by families and communities, criminalization, and the hidden nature of the phenomenon. Data shows that various crimes including trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation, forced labour and for the extortion of ransom are committed against migrants and refugees who travel along routes through, from and to Africa and Europe. However, most investigations and prosecutions address individual perpetrators on the ground who [profit](#) from these crimes, as the complexity of transnational criminal networks presents significant challenges to effectively dismantling the syndicates. There are a range of perpetrators involved in these crimes, including small loosely connected groups, transnational organised crime groups (often specialised on certain segments of the route), armed groups and individuals. Along these routes “the same actors involved in the smuggling industry may opportunistically collaborate with, or operate as, trafficking networks aiming at exploiting migrants.”¹⁰

How is UNHCR supporting survivors of sexual violence along dangerous routes

7. [GBV Accountability Framework](#)

8. Formally known as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

9. [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024](#)

10. *ibid*

and what more can be done to address this?

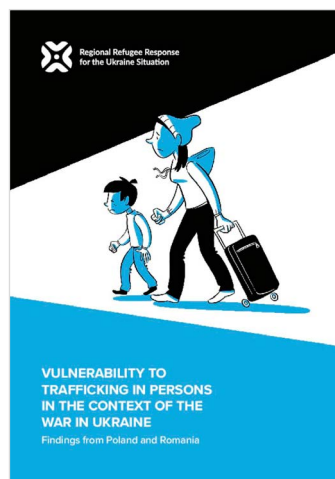
UNHCR collaborates with partners specializing in GBV along dangerous routes to provide support to refugee women and girls. Through UNHCR's support, partners operate women and girls' safe spaces, offering specialised psychosocial support and coordinating access to services such as emergency health care, including clinical management of rape, legal aid and cash assistance when needed. Survivors are also supported with safe accommodation options, either in shelters or within communities based on risk levels. Information on available GBV services is accessible through the UNHCR Help Page.

However, addressing crimes committed by smugglers and traffickers against refugee women and girls requires a multifaceted approach. Key actions include increasing safe and legal pathways for refugees and migrants, investing in effective anti-trafficking frameworks and policies, and scaling up GBV programming along migration routes. Further tools are needed to inform refugee and migrant women and girls on the move about risks and available support. Route-based protection responses must be integral to efforts, focusing on saving lives, reducing suffering, and addressing root causes of displacement, such as conflict, climate change, governance issues, and inequality. This requires an "all-of-route" approach, spanning countries of origin, transit and destination, while emphasizing collaboration with local actors to build accessible safety networks, safe houses and referral systems.

Efforts must also include providing accurate information to those planning to move, countering

misinformation spread by smugglers, and addressing the role of social media in glamorizing irregular migration. Finally, it is critical to investigate and prosecute traffickers¹¹ and those committing crimes against refugees and migrants to ensure accountability and justice. In most countries across Europe, UNHCR advocates for comprehensive safety audits, cross-border collaboration and survivor-centred interventions to address GBV risks effectively. Priorities include enhancing access to legal aid, psychosocial support, and secure housing options for vulnerable individuals across the region.

Vulnerability to trafficking in persons in the context of the war in Ukraine



The Regional Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings, led by IOM and UNODC with UNHCR participation, released this report in October 2024 examining trafficking risks among refugees from Ukraine in Poland and Romania. The study draws on survey responses from 755 participants and interviews with key stakeholders

11. [The Compact](#)

UNHCR Policy on prevention and mitigation of GBV



This document outlines the progress achieved by UNHCR and its partners in preventing, mitigating, and responding to GBV. The policy applies to all UNHCR operations and people of concern, encompassing all stages of the programme cycle across the displacement continuum, including emergencies, protracted displacement, mixed flows and onward movements.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GBV RELATED ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE



In 2024, funding for UNHCR’s activities aimed at preventing and responding to GBV in Europe, under Outcome area 4, (Gender Equality) faced a funding gap of 56 per cent.¹² Of the \$28 million required to undertake activities, UNHCR is so far 44 per cent funded at \$12 million.

The underfunding of GBV services further hampers response efforts, leaving gaps in key services such as legal aid, psychosocial support and safe housing. Without adequate resources, millions of displaced people face the risk of being left without the support they need.

[Click here to support](#)

12. Figures are subject to update without notice.



Eva, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, rebuilt her life in Albania after fleeing political instability. As a single mother, she prioritizes her son Viki’s happiness, guiding him through a new life. Overcoming language barriers and fear, she learned Albanian, found work, and embraced a positive outlook. Eva’s journey reflects strength, sacrifice, and determination. Despite hardships, she remains focused on providing a better future for Viki, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth.

Caption: From the sidelines, Eva watches as Viki practices, her gaze steady with quiet pride ©UNHCR/Z. Kokonozi

Europe, at a glance



Czech Republic: Improving online and presential services for survivors

In 2024, UNHCR achieved key milestones in addressing GBV in Czech Republic. This included a pioneering partnership with proFem, leading to the establishment of PORT, Czech Republic’s first integrated response centre for survivors of GBV, offering a range of services such as legal assistance, psychotherapeutic support, evidence collection and emergency shelter. Innovations like remote court testimony and medical transport services were introduced in collaboration with Bolt and a local hospital. With additional funding from the Regional Bureau for Europe. UNHCR strengthened capacity by providing trainings to 42 social workers and representatives from RLOs on GBV risk mitigation. Four RLOs were awarded small grants to improve referral pathways, disseminate GBV information and provide psychosocial support, including for LGBTIQ+ survivors. UNHCR also facilitated access to Aurora, an online platform offering specialized psychotherapeutic support and case management for GBV survivors, in partnership

with UNFPA in Ukraine. To address online safety risks, Safe Online booklets in Ukrainian and English were distributed, helping refugees navigate safer digital engagement for employment and services.



Hungary: Advocacy and skills reinforcement

In 2024, UNHCR advanced GBV prevention and awareness while advocating for refugee survivors’ integration into the national care system. Monitoring visits to state and UNHCR-funded shelters informed 2025 advocacy for inclusive GBV services. Capacity-building efforts included training Hungarian Border Police on identifying vulnerable groups and supporting She4She with workshops on GBV prevention. Collaborating with Hungarian Interchurch Aid, UNHCR co-hosted events on GBV and trafficking risks and integrating refugee survivors into care systems, reinforcing its commitment to systemic improvements and inclusive protection.



Italy: Innovation, capacity building and reinforced local partnerships

In 2024, UNHCR advanced GBV prevention and response through innovative tools, capacity-building, and localized partnerships. Key initiatives included launching e-learning modules on GBV risk mitigation and providing psychosocial support to over 500 survivors. Field missions to key regions facilitated service mapping, including identifying gaps in women-friendly health services and tailored training needs. UNHCR provided training to 70 WRLO staff, supported safe spaces in Rome, Milan, and Palermo, and initiated direct grants for vocational training, language courses, and GBV support. These efforts underscore UNHCR’s commitment to survivor-centred and localized strategies in strategies in preventing and responding to GBV.



Republic of Moldova: Community based support

In 2024, UNHCR progressed in combating GBV and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) through community-based support, capacity-building and advocacy, contributing to more inclusive and survivor-centred national systems. In partnership with the National Coalition Life Without Violence, UNHCR completed the [Barriers to the Disclosure of GBV](#) report in June 2024, which identified obstacles faced by survivors and proposed evidence-based solutions. A case management client survey further highlighted the need for integrated rehabilitation services and holistic support mechanisms. Capacity-building initiatives included training 78 GBV specialists in safe disclosure, risk mitigation, and referral pathways, and holding workshops for 45 participants to strengthen protections for displaced LGBTIQ+ individuals. Two GBV grants were supported: one in Gagauzia focused on awareness, risk reduction, and psychological first aid, and another on LGBTIQ+ media advocacy and communication materials for refugees. UNHCR also conducted a safety walk workshop and collaborated with the National GBV Agency to draft a concept note for a GBV training hub. Continuous mapping of shelters with MLSP and Gender Centru aimed at improving service quality, and plans were made to transition the GBV Sub-Working Group’s co-chairing role to national actors. Additionally, the inter-agency working group developed a [Tip Sheet](#) on SEA to strengthen prevention and response efforts. on SEA to strengthen prevention and response efforts.



Poland: Engaging with WLOs

UNHCR, in partnership with the women-led organization Feminoteka, has implemented a comprehensive GBV programme in Poland, focusing on prevention, response, and risk

mitigation. The programme integrates Mental health and psychosocial support, legal aid, education, economic empowerment, and safe shelter. In 2024, 70 refugee women participated in Wen-Do self-defence training, designed to build confidence, resilience, and practical safety skills while fostering trauma recovery and breaking isolation. Additionally, tailored case management services supported approximately 30 new GBV cases per quarter, offering survivors legal aid, psychological counselling, and assistance through Feminoteka’s independence programme. Economic empowerment was advanced through the Safe Work programme, which provided five women employment in eco-friendly social enterprises, creating therapeutic, violence-free environments. UNHCR also strengthened national systems by training 253 stakeholders, including police, healthcare workers, and social services, to enhance GBV responses. Advocacy efforts included contributions to clinical guidelines for GBV case management and organizing events for the 16 Days of activism, such as roundtables, public campaigns, and a panel in Kraków addressing challenges like legislative gaps and underfunded specialized services. UNHCR’s leadership in the GBV Sub-Sector Working Group, co-chaired with IRC and Feminoteka, fostered collaboration among stakeholders. To improve access to services, UNHCR is developing a multilingual, interactive service map, set to launch next year, further supporting refugees and service providers in addressing GBV.



Romania: Coordinating to find mitigate and address

In 2024, UNHCR enhanced coordination among GBV stakeholders, raised community awareness and strengthened response capacities in Romania. Collaborating with partners like ANES, Sensiblu Foundation and UNFPA, UNHCR addressed gaps in GBV case management, refining survivor-centred national SOPs through a December consultation workshop. Community-

based initiatives included 124 awareness sessions for 1,804 participants and Empowerment through Self-Defense workshops for 85 women and girls. UNHCR also partnered with the EUAA to train border police and migration officers in trafficking prevention using trauma-informed approaches. These efforts enhanced intersectoral collaboration, increased refugee awareness, and integrated GBV prevention into national systems for more effective and inclusive responses.



Slovakia: Bolstering capacities

In 2024, UNHCR advanced efforts to address GBV and bolster PSEA capacities in Slovakia through public advocacy, survivor support, and comprehensive training initiatives. Monologues about Violence, a special performance co-organised with the Slovak National Center for Human Rights and Aliancia žien at Bratislava's City Theatre, featured stories of women and girls overcoming GBV. Together with the League for Mental Health and Equita, UNHCR provided survivor-centred assistance to 50 survivors, including counselling, referrals, and economic support. Additionally, UNHCR delivered GBV and PSEA training to 285 participants from the Migration Office, Border and Alien Police, and NGOs, emphasising survivor-centred approaches, psychological first aid, and gender-based asylum, along with national legal frameworks and European Court of Justice case law. By the end of the year, all seven UNHCR partners in Slovakia had reached full PSEA capacity, strengthening protections and safeguards for refugees.



Spain: Semilla, Aminata and much more

Building on the outcomes of Project Semilla in [2022](#) and [2023](#), UNHCR continued efforts in 2024 to strengthen GBV prevention and response within Spain's reception asylum system and first-line reception for sea arrivals. These efforts focused on capacity building for personnel to ensure effective implementation of GBV SOPs and providing key information on GBV protection mechanisms and asylum rights for women arriving

by sea. This aimed to guarantee their access to asylum procedures and adequate services. UNHCR also maintained its consultative role in the asylum process, advocating for the proper identification and support of GBV survivors, particularly in accelerated border and RSD procedures. GBV remained the primary basis for granting asylum, including cases involving female genital mutilation (FGM) and trafficking-related violence.

UNHCR developed an online training module for police on interviewing GBV survivors and conducted capacity-building activities with key stakeholders including police, Bar associations, legal counsellors and asylum NGOs. Advocacy efforts focused on improving reception conditions, such as at Madrid airport, and integrating international protection considerations into Spain's forthcoming comprehensive anti-trafficking law. UNHCR also pushed for robust border identification mechanisms to detect survivors, or those at risk, of trafficking. Additionally, UNHCR supported WRLOs like Red Aminata, led by FGM survivor Aminata Soucko in Valencia. This multidisciplinary approach helps women integrate and rebuild their lives in Spain.



Türkiye: comprehensive and multidisciplinary partnerships

In 2024, UNHCR implemented comprehensive GBV prevention and response initiatives under the 3RP framework, reaching 16,318 individuals with GBV response services and provided trainings to 1,499 technical staff across 126 institutions. Key efforts included cash assistance for 1,749 survivors, including 945 transgender and intersex individuals and mobile outreach teams providing psychosocial and legal support to remote areas. Peer-led empowerment groups fostered survivor solidarity, while community workshops on gender roles engaged male leaders to promote behavioural change and allyship. These initiatives strengthened local capacities, increased community awareness, and reinforced a survivor-centred approach to care.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Every year, between 25 November - 10 December, UNHCR observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, aiming to raise awareness and mobilise action to end violence against women and girls. In 2025, UNHCR intensified efforts across its European operations to highlight GBV and strengthen mitigation and response initiatives.

Hungary



In Hungary, the Budapest Helps! Information and Community Center (BICC) hosted Women’s Circles,

wellness practices, and discussions to empower refugees from Ukraine and promote GBV awareness. UNHCR also facilitated a GBV session for She4She, a refugee women-led organization, with participants from diverse backgrounds, including Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Palestine, and Egypt. The event featured sessions on GBV core concepts, a short film screening, discussions, and a quiz to deepen participants’ understanding of GBV issues.

Kosovo*



In Kosovo, UNHCR hosted “The Storytelling of Refugee Women Survivors of Gender-Based Violence,” providing

a safe platform for 15 refugee women from Syria, Libya, Jordan, and Ukraine to share their experiences. The event raised awareness of GBV challenges faced by refugees, fostered dialogue, and highlighted the importance of psychosocial support, with participants expressing gratitude for services aiding their recovery.

Romania



In Romania, UNHCR worked to address the root causes of GBV through activities like Men in the Mirror, which engaged refugee

men on behaviours that typically precede violence, complemented by sessions on self-care and non-violent communication.

Slovakia



In Slovakia, UNHCR engaged in high-level advocacy and creative initiatives, including the “Orange the World” campaign, featuring

a photo session with the President and key officials to raise awareness of violence against women and girls. A theatrical performance, “Monologues about Violence,” in Bratislava showcased survivors’ resilience, while art-based workshops produced canvas paintings advocating “Say NO to Violence,” later exhibited in Bratislava and Košice to foster community dialogue on GBV.

Türkiye



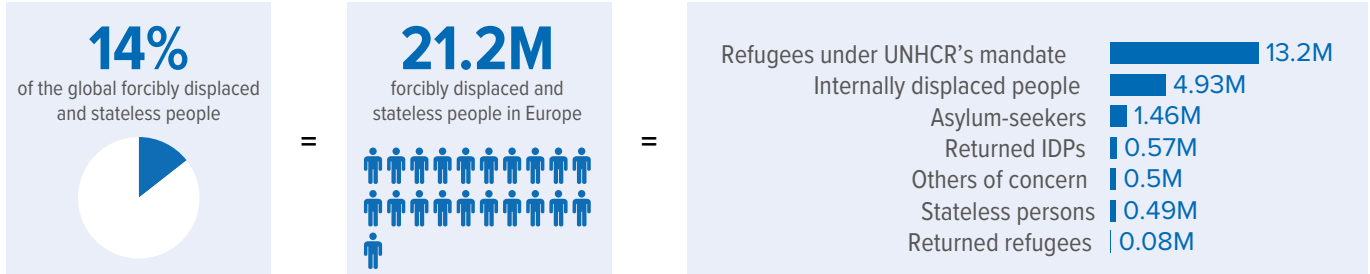
In Türkiye, 44 community-based events engaged 1,179 participants, supported by the innovative “We

Hear You” podcast, which reached nearly 3,000 listeners.

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UNSC resolution 1244(1999)

People and movements across Europe

CUMULATIVE POULATION FIGURES (AS OF 30 DEC 2024)

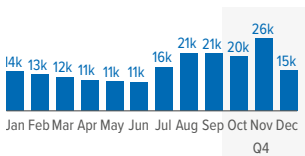


Source: UNHCR [data finder platform](#), Mid-Year statistics 2024.

Mediterranean and northwest African maritime routes

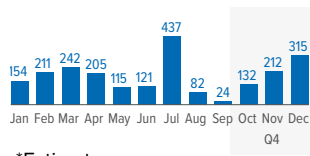
SEA ARRIVALS IN 2024

199k



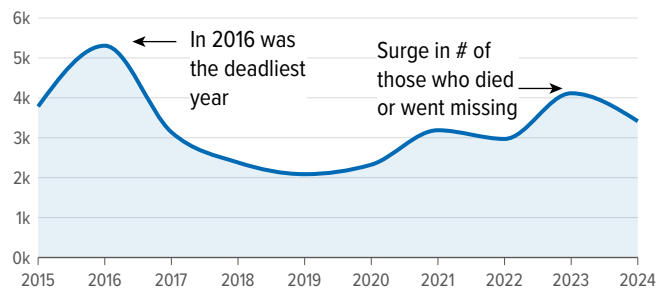
DEAD & MISSING IN 2024*

2,824



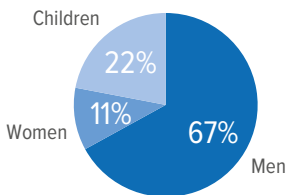
*Estimate

DEAD & MISSING SINCE 2015 (AS OF 14 DEC 2024*)



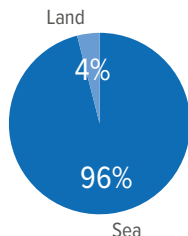
*Includes sea arrivals to Italy, Cyprus and Malta and both sea and land arrivals to Greece and Spain (including the Canary Islands). Data is as of 31 December 2024 for all countries.. Source: [IOM](#)

DEMOGRAPHY*



*Q4 demography breakdown is based on UNHCR estimates and does not include data for Spain. For Greece demographic data is only until October 2024. For Italy demographic data for December is not included

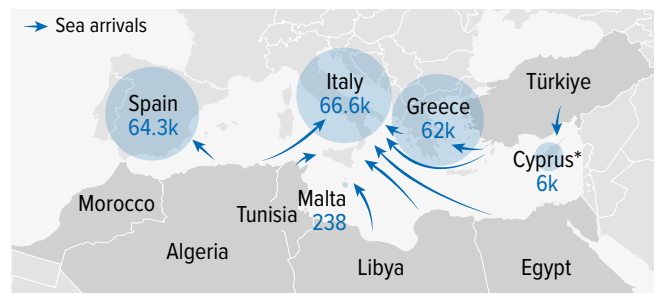
SEA VS LAND ARRIVALS



MONTHLY ARRIVALS TO EUROPE SINCE 2019 (LAND AND SEA)



EUROPE SEA ARRIVALS IN 2024*



Between January – December 2024, 199,247 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe via the three Mediterranean and Northwest African Maritime Routes, 26% less than same period last year (270,675). The top three nationalities for sea and land arrivals in Europe were Syrian, Mali and Bangladesh. Since 1st January 2024 2,824 people have been reported dead or missing on the three Mediterranean and the northwest African maritime routes.

*For further information on data updates pertaining to mixed arrivals to Europe please view [Disclaimer relating to data sources within the ODP](#)

Ukraine Situation

REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE REGISTERED GLOBALLY (16 JAN 2025)

6.8 million

REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE REGISTERED ACROSS EUROPE 16 JAN 2025)

6.3 million

Southeastern Europe

ARRIVALS/IN TRANSIT (JAN - DEC 2024)*

17,500

Between January – December 2024, some 17,500 people arrived in, or transited through, the subregion. Arrivals in 2024 were 43% less than the same period in 2023. For further information click [here](#)

*Figures do not include mixed arrivals to South Eastern Europe in September

Türkiye

SYRIANS REFUGEES UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION**

3.1 million

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES UNDER INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION**

230.6k

**As per Mid-Year statistics 2024

Financial information

REQUESTED FOR UNHCR'S ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE IN 2024

\$ 1.466 billion

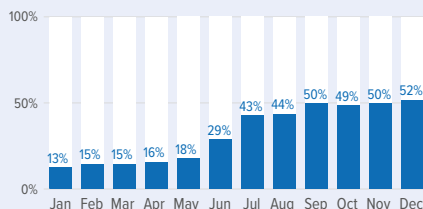
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED OR PLEDGED AS OF 30 DEC 2024

\$ 766 million

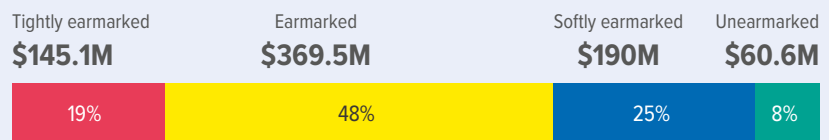
FUNDED AS OF 31 DEC 2024

52%

FUNDING TREND



FUNDING BY TYPE AS OF JUNE 2024



UNHCR is grateful for the support from our top government donors throughout Q2:

Australia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | New Zealand | Norway | Republic of Korea | Poland | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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

For more information, reports and other resources:

- [UNHCR Europe webpage](#)
- [UNHCR Europe country operations fact sheets](#)
- [Europe pages of UNHCR's Global Focus webpage](#)

- [UNHCR Ukraine Emergency webpage](#)

Operational data portals:

- [Ukraine Refugee Situation](#)
- [Europe Sea Arrivals](#)

Contact

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