

# Albania

February 2022

In the past four years, Albania witnessed a remarkable **increase in the number of refugees and migrants arriving** in mixed movements, putting a strain on asylum and border management.

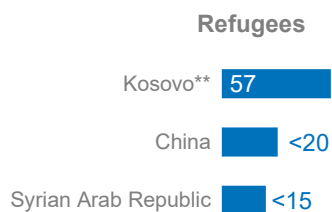
In 2021, Albania adopted **new laws on asylum** and **on foreigners**, further aligning with international and EU standards and setting the basis for a statelessness determination procedure.

MoI, UNHCR and IOM are advancing towards **differentiated pathways and procedures to address mixed movements** by increasing reception capacity and improving procedures.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

Refugees and others granted protection	<b>107</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>0</b>
Persons at risk of statelessness	<b>1,528</b>

## TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN\*



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

\*\*All designations of Kosovo are without prejudice to positions on status and are in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution

## COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

**Inclusion:** UNHCR and IOM have implemented the EU-funded project “Addressing COVID-19 challenges within the Migrant and Refugee Response in the Western Balkans” to enhance authorities’ preparedness to respond to the pandemic; prevent COVID-19 transmissions; protect the most vulnerable people and build capacity on child protection. UNHCR and IOM have successfully advocated the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in the national vaccination plan.

**Communication with Communities:** During 2021, UNHCR supported 30 information sessions for refugees and asylum-seekers to convey updates on the COVID-19 situation and life-saving health advice. For many refugees and asylum-seekers, the sessions were the only source of information on the pandemic.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 2021 arrivals top 10,000

10,102 people arrived as part of mixed movements in 2021, of whom 19 per cent were women and children. 82 per cent declare to be from countries with high protection recognition rates, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, while less than 1 per cent were referred by authorities to the asylum procedure.

### Access to territory and asylum

UNHCR remains engaged with authorities on restoration of access to the asylum procedure. Since the re-opening of borders in June 2020 after initial COVID-19 restrictions, referrals to the asylum system remain limited, and most arrivals returned to Greece without being screened for international protection needs or specific vulnerabilities.

### Tirana Joined Cities #WithRefugees

At the premise of the Tirana Marathon, the Mayor of Tirana signed the Cities #WithRefugees petition.



With a pledge to continue strengthening inclusive services for refugees and asylum-seekers, the Mayor of Tirana signed the **Cities #WithRefugees** solidarity statement at the Tirana Marathon in presence of the Greek Ambassador and UNHCR Representative. UNHCR work with the Tirana Municipality to enhance social inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers.

See more stories on: [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

## Key Priorities

- **Mixed movements:** The Ministry of Interior (MoI), UNHCR and IOM are engaged in advancing towards [differentiated, higher-quality pathways and procedures to address mixed movements of refugees and migrants](#). Such an approach requires increased reception capacity and services at borders as well as the streamlining of pathways based on expressed protection needs or migration profile, vulnerability and intention to remain in the country, with a focus on the integration of refugees and migrants. The MoI has reaffirmed its commitment to implement this approach through its 2022 priorities.
- **Capacity-building:** UNHCR signed the [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#) for 2022-2026 with the Government. [UNHCR is Co-Chairing Outcome 3 on Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights with UNDP and Output 3.6 on Migration and Asylum with IOM.](#)
- **Access to territory:** UNHCR and partners continue to monitor arrivals at the border and pre-screening procedures. UNHCR and the MoI are developing a [joint 2022 action plan](#) aimed at enhancing operational cooperation in pursuit of [Albania's pledges at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum](#). UNHCR is supporting implementation of the new law on asylum.
- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR continues to support the Government to fulfil its [commitment to strengthen the quality of asylum decision-making](#). Coordination with [EUAA](#) is reinforced in the context of UNHCR's Quality Assurance Initiative and the EASO-Albania Roadmap. UNHCR is also working closely with [FRONTEX](#) through regular briefings.
- **Integration:** As part of its [integration strategy for refugees](#), the office is strengthening its partnerships to promote economic inclusion of refugees and those granted other forms of international protection.

- **Documentation:** UNHCR has supported the Government to [issue biometric ID cards for refugees](#) and other foreigners granted protection in Albania to facilitate their access to government services. An improved system is currently being piloted.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR's main government counterpart is the MoI, specifically the directorates responsible for asylum and citizenship, the Border and Migration Police and the Reception Centre for Asylum. The 2022 MoI-UNHCR joint work-plan will give additional substance and depth to the cooperation. UNHCR also cooperates with other line ministries to improve inclusion of persons of concern in national systems.
- Other key external partners are the EU Delegation, Diplomatic Missions, UN agencies and civil society.

## Statelessness

- Albania has taken significant steps towards reducing the risk of statelessness. Fulfilling a [pledge made at the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness](#), the 2020 Law on Citizenship provides an unrestricted safeguard to citizenship to all children born in Albania who would otherwise be stateless. In 2021, Albania adopted the Law on Foreigners that sets the basis for a statelessness determination procedure (SDP). UNHCR is offering support to the MoI in drafting relevant administrative instructions to outline the criteria for the SDP. UNHCR and partners are also working with the National Statistics Institute to identify persons at risk of statelessness during the 2022 census, including Roma and Egyptian communities and returned Albanian migrants.

## UNHCR Presence in Albania

### Staff:

15 National Staff  
 3 International Staff

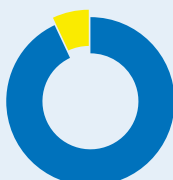
### Offices:

1 Country Office in Tirana  
 2 Field Units in Gjirokastra and Korca

## Financial information (22 February 2022)

Financial requirements  
**USD 3.5 M**

Funding gap  
 93%  
 3.3 M



Funded 7%  
 0.2 M

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