

## Iceland

February 2022

**Strategic Partner:** Iceland continues to be a strong partner of UNHCR. Relative to its size, Iceland makes significant contributions to the protection of refugees and stateless persons.

**Protection and Solidarity:** Iceland remains committed to its international obligations and fulfilled its pledge to accept 120 persons evacuated from Afghanistan.

**Statelessness:** Iceland, through its accession to both Statelessness Conventions, is actively working toward the eradication of statelessness.

### POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

Refugees	<b>1,535</b>
Asylum-seekers	<b>201</b>
Stateless persons	<b>73</b>
Total population of concern	<b>1,809</b>

### TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN\*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Iraq	<b>303</b>	State of Palestine	<b>47</b>
Venezuela	<b>294</b>	Iraq	<b>41</b>
Syrian Arab Republic	<b>169</b>	Venezuela	<b>36</b>

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

### COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

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

**Inclusion:** Refugees in Iceland are included in the national COVID-19 response and provided with social support and other measures to mitigate unemployment and income loss. Low vaccination rates among persons of concern to UNHCR remain a challenge.

**Communication with Communities:** Government information related to COVID-19 is available in several languages: <https://www.covid.is/english>

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### New Arrivals

During last five months of 2021, 585 persons sought asylum in Iceland, marking a significant increase from the first seven months of the year when 285 persons sought asylum.

#### Resettlement

Iceland remains strongly committed to protect the most vulnerable, which is clearly demonstrated through its consistent offering of 100 resettlement places annually, and the welcoming of an additional 120 persons evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021.

#### Statelessness

Since acceding to both Statelessness Conventions in 2021, Iceland has continued to work toward operationalizing its statelessness determination procedure with the aim to eradicate Statelessness.

#### IRAQI FAMILY FINDS REFUGE AND NEW BEGINNINGS IN ICELAND



Refugees are helped to settle and rebuild their lives with a new hands-on integration approach in the Icelandic municipality of Reykjanesbær.

Read more [here](#).

## Key Priorities

- **Asylum procedures:** UNHCR promotes fair and efficient asylum procedures and provides guidance to relevant government agencies and NGOs, including on follow-up meetings on the 2016 Quality Initiative to strengthen the asylum procedures. UNHCR also supports the Icelandic Red Cross with their legal aid, when requested.
- **Resettlement and complementary pathways:** Iceland remains an important actor in supporting resettlement globally. Iceland has remained steadfast in its support, including by contributing to evacuations from Afghanistan of vulnerable refugees in 2021.
- **Integration:** UNHCR and partners continue to monitor the alignment of entitlements and rights for individuals with different legal status (continuous arrivals and resettled refugees). UNHCR also works with the Council of Europe's [Intercultural City Programme](#) as well as the [Multicultural Information Centre](#) to support local-level integration efforts.
- **Capacity-building:** UNHCR works with various stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, to build capacities linked to the asylum procedure as well as the statelessness determination procedure.

## Working with Partners

- In addition to working with relevant government agencies—efforts strengthened in the latter part of 2021—on legal matters, UNHCR also works with the Icelandic Red Cross on individual cases. Moreover, UNHCR has a good working relationship with all relevant stakeholders, including the UN Association in Iceland which is an important partner in sharing information related to the plight of refugees and stateless persons.
- **External engagement:** UNHCR continues to work with partners to raise awareness on asylum, family reunification, integration and statelessness issues. UNHCR also promotes and works to secure the inclusion of refugee voices in the public debate.

## Statelessness

- Iceland acceded to both the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions on 26 January 2021. Since then, the focus has shifted towards operationalizing the statelessness determination procedures.

## UNHCR Presence in Nordic and Baltic Countries

### Staff:

21 National Staff  
 11 International Staff

### Offices:

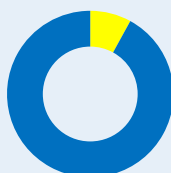
1 Regional Office in Stockholm  
 1 Liaison Office in Vilnius  
 1 Liaison Unit in Copenhagen  
 1 Liaison person in Riga

## Financial information (22 February 2022)

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 5.6 M**

**Funding gap**  
**92%**  
**5.2 M**



**Funded**  
**8%**  
**0.4 M**

UNHCR is grateful to the donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions to the 2022 global programmes. Donors of USD 10 million or more are:

**Sweden | Norway | Netherlands | Denmark | Germany | Switzerland | Belgium | Ireland**

Unearmarked contributions provide UNHCR with vital flexibility in determining how best to protect and assist persons of concern who are in the greatest need or at the greatest risk.