



IRC ITALY

# PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

JANUARY-MARCH 2024



# PROTECTION MONITORING

Protection monitoring is the **systematic and regular collection, verification and analysis of information over an extended period of time**, in order to identify violations of rights and protection risks for populations of concern, facilitate the prevention of these violations and risks, and inform effective responses. It means collecting primary and/or secondary data and analyzing them over time to identify trends in the needs expressed and risks faced by the populations of concern.

Protection monitoring is an important tool for both interventions and advocacy. Collecting and sharing high quality information on these issues is essential to making sure that IRC is able to respond to these needs through programming, referrals and advocacy activities.

As part of its dedicated efforts to enhance its protection monitoring activities, IRC Italy produces **quarterly protection monitoring reports**. These reports are a reflection of IRC Italy's commitment to systematically oversee and assess the protection conditions of individuals encountered and assisted. They capture the profiles, vulnerabilities, protection risks, and needs of IRC clients in Trieste and the rest of Italy, together with significant migration-related context updates covering the whole country. They provide numbers and insights on **clients who use IRC's digital information service, Refugee.Info, individuals arriving in Trieste via the Balkan route, as well as people in transit and asylum seekers in Milan Central Station.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



<b>↖ MAP - IRC SITES IN ITALY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>↖ INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>↖ REFUGEE.INFO</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>↖ PROTECTION AT THE BORDERS</b> People arriving via land from the Balkan route in Trieste	<b>6</b>
<b>↖ PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN MILAN</b> People on the move assisted in Milan Central Station	<b>8</b>
<b>↖ METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>↖ GLOSSARY</b>	<b>11</b>

# MAP OF ITALY

Pinpoints indicate operational sites of IRC in Italy



## BALKAN ROUTE

The Western Balkan Route is one of the **main migratory pathways via land into Europe**. It typically involves crossing multiple countries in the Balkans, often starting from Turkey and moving through countries such as Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia, and others in the region. **Trieste**, despite being located by the sea, **is one of the main entry points in Italy for people arriving from the Balkan route**.



## EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE



## CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE



## POLITICAL CONTEXT

During the first quarter of 2024, the Italian government continued to pursue efforts towards externalizing migration management and forging agreements with third countries.

On January 10th, the Parliament [approved](#) the conversion into law of [decree-law no. 161/2023](#), including urgent provisions for the “**Mattei Plan**” for the development of African countries. The Plan, named after the founder of the energy company ENI [Enrico Mattei](#), will last for four years and is [aimed](#) at “strengthening collaboration between Italy and African countries, promote their sustainable and lasting economic and social development, and prevent the root causes of irregular migration”. It includes [five pillars](#) of intervention: education and training, agriculture, health, energy, and water. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni presented the Plan on January 29th on the occasion of the ‘[Italia-Africa. A bridge for common growth](#)’ Summit, the first international event held in Italy since the beginning of the Italian G7 Presidency. In her [opening remarks](#), Meloni said Italy would set aside an initial [5.5 billion euros](#) for the Mattei Plan, including public guarantees for investment projects, 3 billion euros from the [Italian Climate Fund](#) and 2.5 billion from development cooperation resources. The Plan has been [welcomed](#) by EU institutions, and European Commission President von der Leyen stated she is [grateful to Meloni](#) for placing cooperation with Africa “at the heart of her foreign policy and her G7 presidency”.

On February 15th, the Italian Senate [finalized the ratification](#) of the [controversial deal](#) agreed upon between Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and her Albanian counterpart in November to send asylum seekers to Italian-run centers on Albanian soil. The deal was subsequently [ratified by the Albanian Parliament](#) on February 22nd, after the country’s Constitutional Court gave it the [go-ahead](#) in January. On March 21st, the [Prefecture of Rome published a call for tenders](#) for the management of the three centers that are being set up under the Italy-Albania deal. The [tender notification](#) invited bidders to submit their offers before March 28th, with the aim for the selected bidder to [start managing the centers in Albania by May 20th](#). The value of the tender for the first year is just under 34 million euros, which does not include additional expenses such as transportation services, utilities, and maintenance costs that are still to be quantified. The deal, which will cost Italy around [653 million euro in the first five years](#), still causes [concerns](#) over the provisions foreseeing the automatic use of detention (instead of issuing detention orders on a case-by-case basis) and the lack of safeguards for children and vulnerable people.

In the meantime, Italy keeps strengthening controls at its borders with EU countries. Ministry of the Interior Matteo Piantedosi has announced that border controls with Slovenia, which were reintroduced in [October 2023](#), have been [extended until June 2024](#). The decision was taken because of the “continuing risk of potential terrorist infiltration among those arriving irregularly in Italy, and due to the fact that the largest flows from the Balkan route pass through the land border with Slovenia”. At the same time, [police controls have doubled](#) in recent months at the Italy-France border, leading people to depart for the border later at night, going higher up in the mountains, and walking longer routes amid plummeting temperatures.

Definitions of terms in yellow can be found in the glossary on p. 11

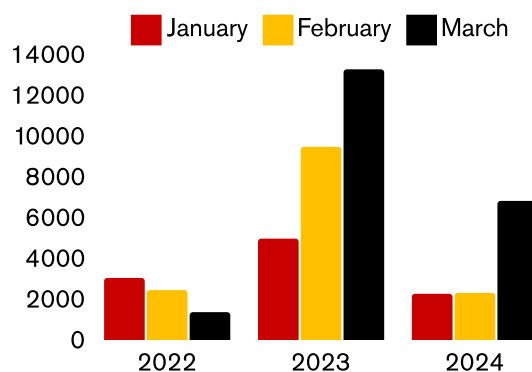
## PEOPLE ARRIVING BY SEA

From January to March 2024, a total of **11,373 people arrived in Italy by sea**, representing a **decrease of over -59%** when compared to the same period in 2023 (27,695).

Newly arrived third-country nationals mainly originated from **Bangladesh, Syria and Tunisia**.

**Out of the total, UAC arriving by sea comprised 10%** (1,086) (Data available up to 25th March).

Source: Ministry of Interior, Cruscotto Statistico Giornaliero. Months of [January](#), [February](#) and [March](#) 2024.



## PEOPLE ARRIVING BY LAND FROM THE NORTH-EAST BORDER

Between January and March 2024, approximately **2,900** people are estimated to have travelled through the **Western Balkans countries** (known as the **Balkan route**), as part of mixed movements.

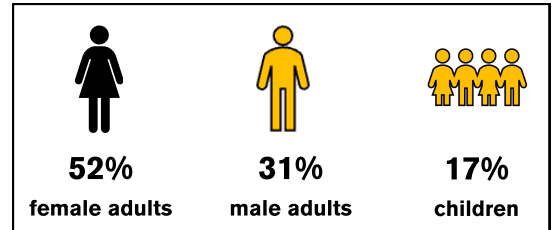
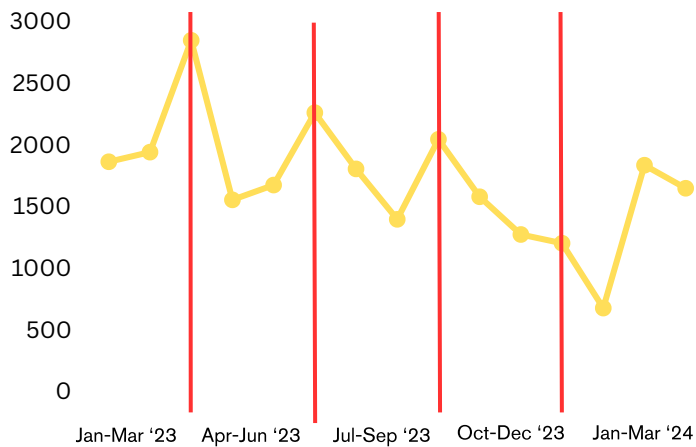
Source: UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal](#)

**No official national data on people arriving via land in Italy are available.** From January to March 2024, IRC staff working in Trieste assisted **2,073 people arriving via land from the Balkan route** to whom they provided information, NFIs and referrals to services, registering a **1% decrease** compared to the same period in 2023.

# PEOPLE ARRIVING FROM UKRAINE

During the first quarter of 2024 (January 1st - March 31st, 2024) **4,147 individuals from Ukraine applied for Temporary Protection**, representing a **3% decrease** from the previous quarter (October 1st - December 31st, 2023), during which a total of **4,042** people applied for Temporary Protection.

## TEMPORARY PROTECTION STATUS APPLICATIONS



The majority of applicants were **adult females**, representing **59%** of the total number of applications - a percentage that has remained consistent throughout the year. Regarding **adult males**, **there has been an increase in their share** compared to the 26% of the same quarter last year (Jan-Mar 23) and even more so since the first quarter following Russia's aggression (Apr-Jul 22) where they accounted for 9% of the total. **Children** make up **15%** of the total number of applicants (**46% female** and **54% male**), the majority being aged between **10 and 17**.

The regions which registered the highest number of Temporary Protection applications (January 1st - March 31st, 2024) were **Lombardy** with 989 requests (24%), **Emilia Romagna** with 552 (13%), **Campania** with 421 (10%) and **Lazio** with 404 (10%). This distribution is largely the same as last quarter. The other regions in which IRC provides support to Ukrainian nationals (**Piedmont and Friuli Venezia Giulia**) registered a lower number of applications (246, i.e. 6% and 113, i.e. 3%, respectively).

Source: Protezione Civile, [Dashboard richieste di protezione temporanea](#) (Temporary Protection applications)

## RECEPTION CENTERS

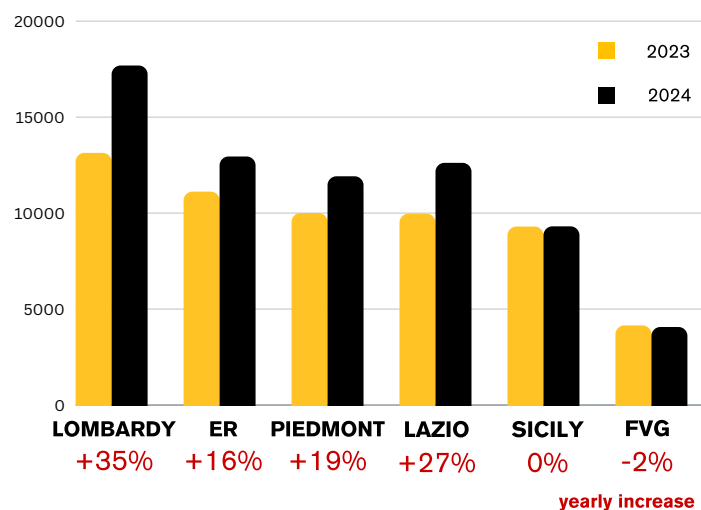
As of March 31st, 2024, **137,361 people are being hosted in the Italian reception system (+23% compared to March 2023)**, including:

- **225 in hotspots** (reception upon arrival).
- **101,795 in first-level reception centers** (CPA - governmental first reception centers; and CAS - centers for extraordinary reception).
- **35,341 in second-level reception centers** (SAI - Reception and Integration System).

The regions with the highest concentration of individuals in reception centers are **Lombardy (13%)**, **Piedmont**, **Emilia-Romagna (ER)** and **Lazio**, which host **9%** each. In the other regions in which IRC operates, the concentration of migrants in reception centers is lower (**7% in Sicily** and **3% in Friuli Venezia Giulia FVG**).

Source: Ministry of Interior, Cruscotto Statistico Giornaliero. Months of [January](#), [February](#) and [March](#) 2024.

## MIGRANTS IN THE ITALIAN RECEPTION SYSTEM



## UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN



**21,247**

UAC in Italy as of March 31st, 2024

As of March 31st, 2024, there are **21,247** registered unaccompanied children (UAC) in Italy (**+8% compared to 2023** when there were 19,640 UAC in Italy). **88%** of them are **males**, and **12% females**. The most common age group is **17 years old** (49%). The top nationalities for UAC male are **Egypt** (23%), **Tunisia** (12%), **Gambia** (12%), while the great majority of females come from **Ukraine** (79%), **Ivory Coast** (5%) and **Guinea Conakry** (3%). The majority are located in **Sicily** (25%), **Lombardy** (13%) and **Emilia Romagna** (8%).

During this quarter, the number of newly arrived unaccompanied children has **decreased (-29%)** compared to the previous quarter (Oct-Dec 23 where 4,097 UAC entered in the Italian territory). In particular, during this quarter, **826** UAC arrived in Italy in January (**99% males** and **1% females**), **659** in February (**96% males** and **4% females**) and **1,393** in March (**97% males** and **3% females**).

Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, [Monthly data on Unaccompanied Children 2024](#); [Report on Unaccompanied Children 2023](#)

## REFUGEE.INFO CLIENTS

**86,393**

total number of active website users

**1,799**<sup>1</sup>

unique clients provided with individualized support (i.e., two-way communication with a moderator)



Male  
85%



Female  
15%



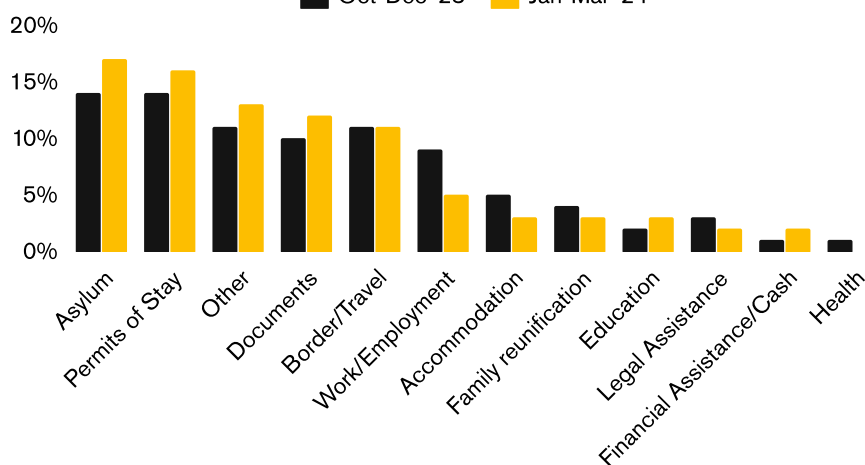
**AFGHANISTAN, BANGLADESH PAKISTAN and INDIA**  
most common countries of origin of clients provided with individualized support, according to RI moderators<sup>3</sup>

Definitions of terms in yellow can be found in the glossary on p. 11

## CLIENTS' INFORMATION AND SERVICE NEEDS

### Two-way communication topics<sup>4</sup>

■ Oct-Dec '23 ■ Jan-Mar '24



### Top 4 most visited articles on Refugee.Info website<sup>5</sup>

Article title	Unique visitors <sup>5</sup>
'Your right to travel'	4,632
'How to check the status of your permit of stay online'	4,112
'Driving license in Italy'	3,739
For those living in Italy more than 5 years: Permesso di Lungo Periodo (ex carta di soggiorno)	3,608

Between the quarters of October-December '23 and January-March '24, the most visited articles on the Refugee.Info website remained the same.

There were no significant variations in the frequency of topics addressed in two-way communications (messages between clients and R.I. moderators) between this quarter and last quarter, besides a small increase in messages related to Asylum (which became the most frequent message category this quarter), Permits of Stay, Documents and a decrease in messages regarding Work/Employment and Accommodation.

### Clients' main information needs



#### ASYLUM

- **Asylum applications** (How can I apply for asylum? Can I apply for asylum if I am not in Italy? How can I check the Commission date / result? How can I anticipate my appointment in **Questura**?)
- **Questura appointments and delays:** Clients report difficulties in applying for asylum, especially in Milan, or to even get their asylum request processed in other Questure. For further information, see IRC Italy new report "[Please, wait](#)".



#### PERMITS OF STAY

- **How to convert a special protection permit into a work permit** (Can I still convert my **protezione speciale** into a work permit?)
- **Permesso di soggiorno UE per soggiornanti di lungo periodo** (How to apply? What are the requirements?)



#### BORDER/TRAVEL

- **Information on travelling abroad** (both outside and within the EU, with or without VISA), and **to the country of origin with a specific permit** (*Protezione speciale, Asylum, Temporary protection*)
- **Family reunification** (How can I bring my family to Italy?)
- **Humanitarian corridors** (What humanitarian corridors are active from Afghanistan to reach Italy?)



#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

- **Where to find legal help** (Where can I find legal support?)
- **How to find accommodation** (How can I apply to enter a reception center? Where can I get help to find accommodation?)
- **Italian language courses** (Where can I find free courses to learn Italian?)

This snapshot presents findings from a quarterly analysis of data collected from IRC's digital information service, [Refugee.Info \(RI\)](#), which provides refugees and migrants with multilingual, accessible, actionable and accurate information nationwide through instant messaging apps, social media and a website.

<sup>1</sup> **Two-way communication** refers to conversations between clients and Refugee.Info moderators online through Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp and Telegram.

<sup>2</sup> Source: ZenDesk - Analysis based on a sample of 1,246 unique conversations.

<sup>3</sup> This finding is not based on quantitative data, but on observations collected from field staff (5 Refugee.Info moderators) through a monthly survey for protection monitoring purposes.

<sup>4</sup> Source: ZenDesk - Analysis based on a sample of 1,435 unique conversations for Oct-Dec '23 and 1,401 for Jan-Mar '24. The graph is based on the **percentages of messages received on specific topics in relation to the total number of messages for each quarter**.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Google Analytics 4 (GA4). **Unique users** visiting the website are calculated as *active users*, i.e. anyone who has an engaged session or when GA4 collects the first\_visit event or a specific event parameter relating to time.

# PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

JANUARY - MARCH 2024

## People on the move from the Balkan route in Trieste (Italian-Slovenian border)

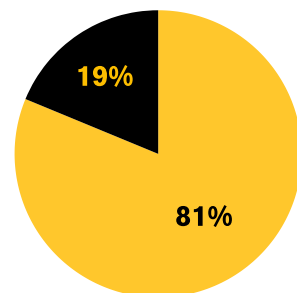
Jan - Mar  
2024

Total number of  
people assisted

**2,073**

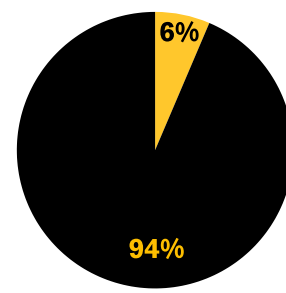
Nearly identical figure  
compared to  
1st quarter of 2023 (2,097)

Children  
389



Adults  
1,684

Female  
133



Male  
1,940

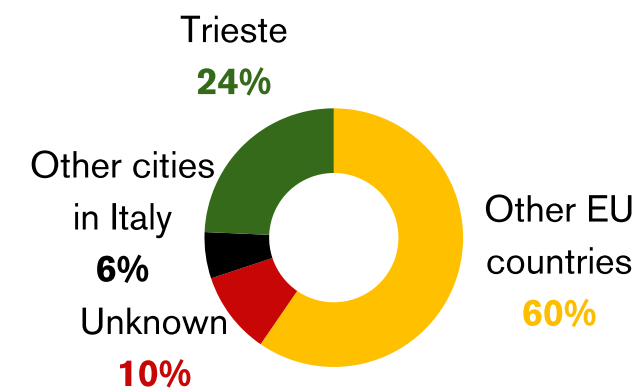


**943**

**46%**

coming from  
Afghanistan

### Migratory intentions



### Main countries of origin

Country	Number	Percentage
Afghanistan	943	46%
Bangladesh	267	13%
Syria	258	12%
Pakistan	190	9%
Nepal	129	6%
Turkey	116	6%
Egypt	51	2%
India	48	2%
Iraq	33	2%
Iran	16	1%
Mongolia	7	0,3%
Other	14	0,7%

### Main demographic profiles

**1,481**



Single Adult  
Men

**71%**

out of the total  
individuals assisted



2 out of 5  
single adult men  
are from  
Afghanistan

- Only a small portion of this demographic (38%) intends to **stay in Italy**, while the vast majority is in transit to other European countries (53%), mainly Germany. The intended destinations of the remaining 9% is unknown.

IRC assisted an average of **16 newly arrived single adults** every day

**80**



Single Adult  
Women

**4%**

out of the total  
individuals assisted

The main countries of origin of single women are **Nepal (73%)**, **India (8%)** and **Iran (5%)**

- Only 13% of the single adult women met **plan to stay in Italy**, with 8% of them specifically in Trieste. The majority (72%) expressed intention to **reach other European countries**, mainly Portugal. Intended destination is unknown for the remaining 15%.

IRC assisted almost **1 newly arrived single woman** every day

**290**



Unaccompanied  
Children (UAC)

**14%**

out of the total  
individuals assisted



4 out of 5  
UAC are from  
Afghanistan

- There was a **slight decrease** in the number of UAC from the 23% registered in the previous quarter.
- The vast majority of UAC (78%) report to be **in transit to other countries**, mainly to Germany and Switzerland. 18% intends to **stay in Italy** and 4% is unsure about their intended destination.

IRC assisted an average of **3 newly arrived UAC** every day

**42**



Family  
Units

representing  
**222 individuals**  
including 99 children

**11%**

out of the total  
individuals assisted

- The great majority of family units come from **Syria (38%)**, followed by **Turkey (26%)**.
- The majority of family units (74%) intend to travel to other countries, mainly to **Germany**.

IRC assisted an average of **1 newly arrived family unit** every other day

The IRC Italy program in Trieste at the Italian-Slovenian border reached **2,073 new people** in the 1st quarter of **2024**, almost identical to the number of individuals reached in the 1st quarter of 2023 (2,097).

**29% of people were vulnerable profiles** (unaccompanied children, single adult women and family units). The proportion of **single adult women** increased from last quarter, shifting from 1% to 4% of the total people supported by IRC Italy.

The three main nationalities were **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Syria**, with the notable presence of hundreds of people from Syria for the first time since January 2022. Afghanistan continued to be the main country of origin this quarter (46%), despite a decrease in the number of Afghan nationals compared to the past three months (56% out of the total in Oct-Dec 2023). The number of Pakistani and Turkish nationals encountered decreased, while people from Bangladesh increased, marking Bangladesh as the second most frequent nationality encountered for the first time. In general, the spectrum of nationalities met in Trieste has diversified.

**60% of people encountered did not indicate Italy as their final destination** and confirmed their wish to settle in another country, placing **Germany, France, and Portugal** in the top 3 intended destinations.





### Obstacles in applying for asylum persist

Over this quarter, challenges associated with applying for asylum in Trieste have persisted, as dozens of newcomers reported **issues in physically accessing the local police station** to formalize their application. In their attempts to access **Questura**, individuals have reported instances where the Police's cultural mediators at the entry doors asked them multiple questions before letting them in. These informal checks involved examination of documents and other data on people's personal phones, resulting in what may appear as **discretionary decisions**. In addition, people reported that Police's cultural mediators often try to redirect people to apply elsewhere or inexplicably deny them access to the Questura.



### Decrease in the waiting time to access the reception system

**Access to reception** for new asylum seekers in Trieste has been less challenging compared to last quarter, due to an overall decrease in arrivals and asylum applications - a common trend during the winter season - and a simultaneous intensification of reception and relocation activities managed by the local **Prefettura**. **The average waiting time** for a new asylum seeker to enter the reception system dropped to **about 20-30 days in this quarter** (compared to 70 days on average in the previous three months). Vulnerable asylum seekers, such as women alone, family units or people with medical conditions, are given priority access to reception within few days. The abandoned area known as **Silos** has served as shelter to an average of approximately 80-100 people this quarter, marking the lowest presence recorded since the winter of 2023.



### Access to territory

Despite the unfavorable winter conditions, the temporary reintroduction of border controls at the Italian-Slovenian border and **the number of reported pushbacks by the government**, over 2,000 new people have been encountered by IRC team in Trieste. **Among those interviewed on the topic of pushbacks, no one reported instances of these incidents.**



### Access to emergency overnight shelters

In the first quarter of 2024, the **most vulnerable people encountered by the IRC team**, including women travelling alone, families with children and people with medical conditions, **always found a place to sleep** due to a decrease in the number of newcomers in Trieste and a **slight increase in the city's overnight emergency shelters' capacity**. **The critical issue related to the absence of an emergency shelter for UAC in transit remains.** Throughout this quarter, during the evening outreach activities in Trieste's central train station, the IRC team facilitated the access to overnight shelters for 535 vulnerable people.



### Local authorities ready to implement **Silos** clearance

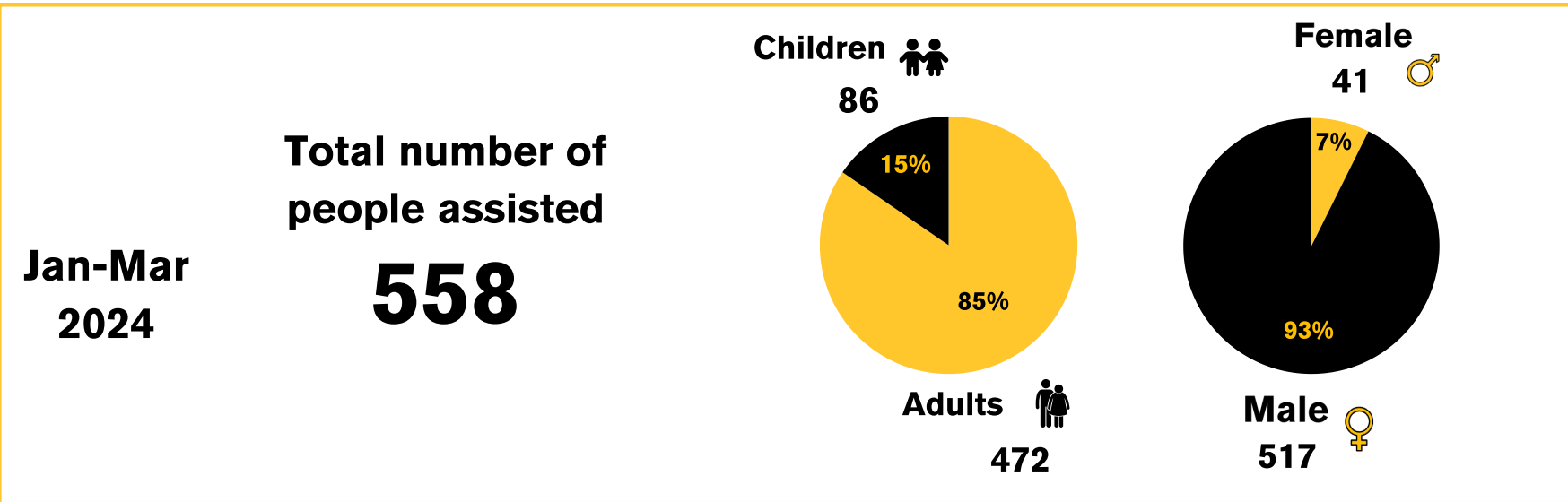
Trieste's Order and Security Committee, chaired by the Prefettura with the involvement of the law enforcement agencies and the Municipality, will implement an operation aimed at the relocation of the asylum seekers from the **Silos** to the Campo Sacro's reception camp in the coming weeks. This information was released to the IRC and other local NGOs during a roundtable in which the Prefettura sought the collaboration of the third sector to ensure the success of this initiative. The reception center in Campo Sacro, a site located 10 km from Trieste, has been operating as a first reception facility since 2020. The authorities' plan is to transform this camp into a very high-turnover facility for asylum seekers relocation to Italy. According to Minister of the Interior Piantedosi, the **Silos** building, which is privately owned, will be subject to a large-scale renovation for a **future sale** in the upcoming months.

This snapshot depicts the numbers of newcomers from the Balkan route encountered by International Rescue Committee Italy and Diaconia Valdese in the Trieste central station area during the reporting period. The data was gathered through individual and group interviews with people supported with legal orientation and first aid. The monitoring activity is carried out during the entire daytime, and partially in the evening, of every day of the year, including weekends and holidays. Please note that these figures refer only to newly arrived individuals physically encountered and assisted by IRC and Diaconia and might not comprehensively depict the actual numbers of individuals arriving in and moving through Trieste.

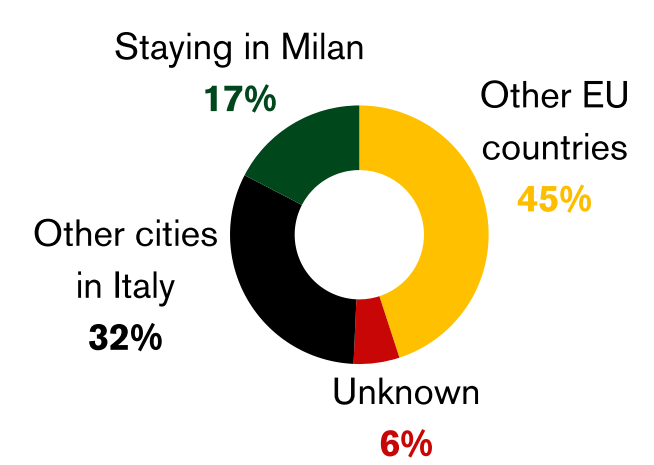
More info here: <https://www.rescue.org/eu/country/italy/reports#trieste>

<sup>1</sup> This information is not based on quantitative data, but on observations collected from field staff through a monthly survey for protection monitoring purposes.

### People on the move assisted in Milan Central Station



#### Migratory intentions



#### Main countries of origin

Country	Count	Percentage
Afghanistan	108	19%
Syria	83	15%
Egypt	64	11%
Morocco	40	7%
Pakistan	35	6%
Perù	31	6%
Eritrea	28	5%
Tunisia	28	5%
Iran	20	4%
Bangladesh	19	3%
Gambia	18	3%
Guinea Conakry	13	2%
Unknown	15	3%
Other	56	10%

#### Main demographic profiles

**404** 


**Single adult men**

**72%**

out of the total individuals assisted

The majority (58%) of men assisted travelling alone were sleeping on the streets of the Central Station.

- The main nationalities of adult men travelling alone were **Afghan** (21%), **Egyptian** (13%), **Syrian** (12%), and **Moroccan** (10%).

**14** 


**Single Adult Women**  
(including pregnant women)


**3%**

out of the total individuals assisted

2 of the women assisted who were travelling alone had no place to sleep.

- The majority of adult women travelling alone came from **Perù** (64%), followed by **Colombia**, **Guinea Conakry**, **Eritrea** and **Gambia**.

**54** 

**Unaccompanied Children (UAC)** 

**10%**

out of the total individuals assisted

The majority of UAC assisted (76%) had no place to sleep.

- Only 1 female UAC was met.
- Nearly half of UAC were from **Egypt** (24%), followed by **Afghanistan** (22%), **Pakistan**, **Syria**, **Guinea Conakry** and **Eritrea** (7%).

**26** 

**Family units**

representing **86 individuals**, including 32 children

**15%**

out of the total individuals assisted

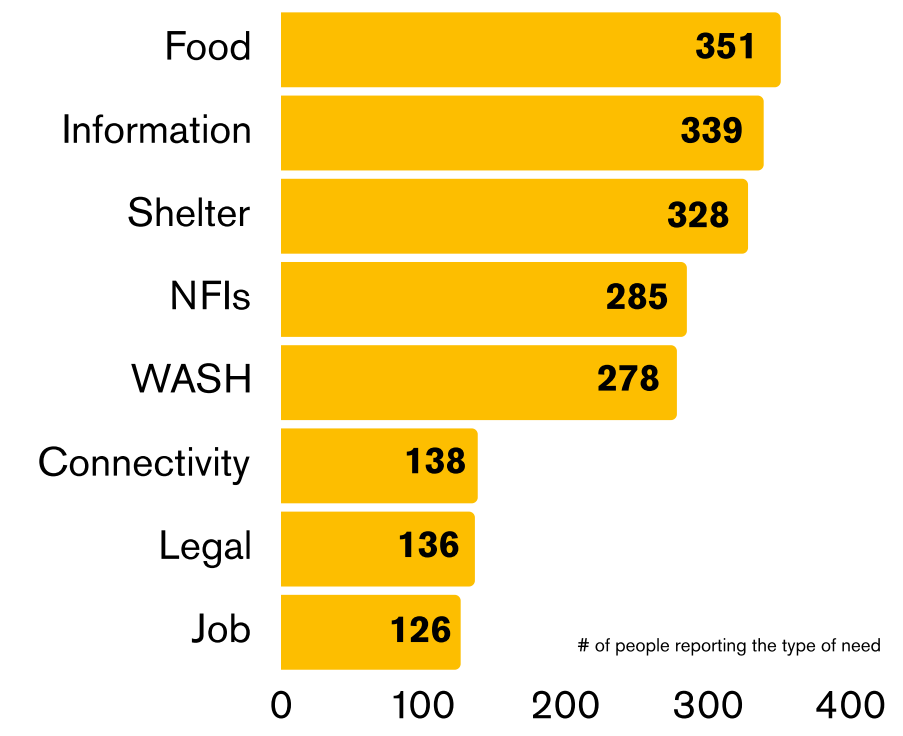
Almost all families encountered (88%) slept on the streets of Central Station.

- The majority of family units came from **Syria** (31%), followed by **Iran** (19%) and **Eritrea** (12%).

**The majority of the individuals (64%) assisted were sleeping on the streets in the Milan Central Station area**

#### Main needs reported





## Obstacles in applying for asylum

The waiting times for third-country nationals willing to apply for asylum in Milan have been **persistently lengthy** in the first quarter of 2024. In April 2023, the **Questura** and the **Prefettura** of Milan launched a new online system to apply for asylum. This was designed to ease barriers to accessing the asylum procedure, but in practice, discriminatory practices persist, with the system introducing new burdens for people applying for protection. In January 2024, new changes to the online system were introduced, which caused aspiring asylum seekers to lack information on where and how to seek support to file their claim. As a consequence, many people in Milan are stuck in an asylum vacuum, without proper documentation, work or accommodation, caught in a vulnerable and uncertain position and in a state of limbo that can last for up to months. For additional information about the obstacles that aspiring asylum seekers face when trying to file their claim, see IRC Italy's report ["Please wait: Barriers to access the procedure for international protection in Italy"](#).



## Protection concerns for vulnerable groups

During the first quarter of 2024, the roving team operating in Central Station has observed a **notable surge in the number of families, particularly those with young children, arriving in the city of Milan**. The challenge of securing accommodation for the night has forced many of these families to **sleep on the streets** surrounding the station, sometimes for up to a month. Focusing on UAC, any unaccompanied child met on the territory – in particular during nighttime – should be reported to law enforcement agencies, who should immediately complete the identification process and then refer the child to Social Services. The coordination between law enforcement personnel, IRC and other organizations in the territory continues to prove difficult. This situation has compelled children and adolescents to find informal solutions for the night, or to sleep in the streets. In some occasions, the Police has resorted to calling an ambulance to allow UAC to spend the night in a hospital, so that Social Services could be mobilized the following day.



## Access to emergency overnight shelter

In March 2024, the “cold emergency plan” implemented by the Municipality of Milan during the winter months came to an end. Yet weather conditions kept remaining harsh in Milan. As a result, **numerous individuals, including those with specific medical conditions, were once again grappling with the challenge of securing a warm shelter for the night**. Of particular concern is the shortage of available spots in reception centers for asylum seekers, exacerbating the situation for those who are still awaiting documentation. As a result, asylum seekers and migrants in transit without accommodation, who are temporarily sleeping around the Central Station, are **particularly exposed to attempts to be forcibly recruited into the smuggling network, robberies, and physical violence**, despite the presence of law enforcement agencies in the area.

IRC Italy has been supporting people on the move arriving in the Central Station of Milan with crucial information provision and legal orientation, connectivity, Non-Food Items (NFIs) distribution, psychological first-aid and referral to life-saving services (overnight shelters, canteens, showers, medical aid) since mid-October 2023.

This snapshot is a quarterly analysis of the demographics, needs and protection situation of people in transit and asylum seekers arriving in the Central Station of Milan from the Balkan route or through the Mediterranean sea route. The data in this snapshot were collected by IRC field staff through a monitoring activity carried out only in the area of the Central Station on a frequency of two/three times every week during night time.

Please note that these figures refer only to newly arrived people encountered and assisted by IRC and does not comprehensively depict the actual numbers of individuals moving through the city of Milan and the Central Station.

<sup>1</sup> This information is not based on quantitative data, but on observations collected from field staff.

In recent months, IRC Italy has strengthened its efforts to systematically and regularly monitor the protection situation of its clients. Monitoring activities aim at identifying shifts in the protection landscape by assessing rights violations, protection risks faced by the affected population, and the information and services needs of people assisted. Kindly note that IRC Italy's monitoring efforts do not cover the entire country, rather are limited to reporting observations made and clients reached through IRC programs. The **Introduction** and **political context** are the only exceptions, as they are based on secondary data.

Monitoring data is collected using the following methods:

- **Protection at the Borders (Trieste):** the city of Trieste is one of the main entry points in Italy for people traveling through the Balkan route. The team, composed of the Area Manager and three field protection assistants, gathers client-related data (e.g. gender, age, nationality, vulnerabilities, pushbacks) while disseminating information and NFIs. All data collected through individual and group interviews is anonymous and documented in a spreadsheet connected to a Dashboard.
- **People on the move in Milan Central Station:** in the area of Milan Central Station, one roving team composed of one manager, two field protection assistants and two cultural mediators, provide support to people in transit with crucial information provision and legal orientation, connectivity, Non-Food Items (NFIs) distribution, psychological first-aid and referral to life-saving services (overnight shelters, canteens, showers, medical aid). Concurrently, the team monitors protection issues, assesses needs and sleeping situation, and gathers demographic data through individual and group interviews to identify significant concerns and trends.
- **Refugee.Info (RI):** [Refugee.Info](#) is a IRC's digital information service which provides refugees and migrants with multilingual, accessible, actionable and accurate information nationwide through instant messaging apps, social media and a website. The RI team tracks the number of messages that are sent to and received by moderators per topic, by tagging messages with "labels". These labels sort the messages into categories. The team also use labels for clients' ages and genders, and labels indicating if any messages were sent to/from Ukrainian clients or Afghan clients.
- Since November 2022, moderators of Refugee.Info and field staff in Trieste and Milan have been asked to complete a monthly qualitative questionnaire which serves as an observation tool. The answers to this questionnaire allow IRC staff to monitor changes in the most prevalent migrant profiles and demographics, the most frequently asked questions and requested services, barriers to accessing services, and discriminatory practices faced by clients.

The results of these monitoring activities are presented in this **Protection Monitoring Report**, which is produced on a quarterly basis. The aim of the report is to provide a summary of the current protection context, highlight developments over the reporting period in terms of demographics, protection concerns and information and services needs, and highlight any trends. It consists of an **introduction** with information on the current political context, as well as national data on migration flows and the reception system in Italy, followed by **three snapshots on Trieste** (People on the move from the Balkan route in Trieste); **Milan** (People on the move assisted in Milan Central Station); and the **Refugee.Info project**.

A **glossary** of Italian context-specific terms along with their definitions is presented at end of the report.

## A

### **Anagrafe – Office of Vital Statistics or General Registration Office**

The Anagrafe is the population register in which each municipality keeps track of the numbers of the population residing in the area and the changes occurring in it due to natural and civil causes (birth, marriage, death, emigration, etc.).

Source: <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/anagrafe/>

### **Azienda Sanitaria Locale (ASL) – Local Health Department**

The Azienda Sanitaria Locale (or Unità Sanitaria Locale, USL) is a local health department where people register to get an Italian health card and be assigned a GP (general practitioner doctor).

Source: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/41893/terms-and-acronyms-that-asylum-seekers-need-to-know-in-italy>

### **Assegno Unico Universale per i Figli - Single and Universal Allowance for Dependent Children**

The Assegno Unico Universale per i Figli is a financial benefit granted by the Italian government to people with dependent children under 21 living in Italy, or to people with dependent children with disabilities of any age. It may be granted to third-country nationals, provided that they meet some income and residence permit-related requirements.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388918400663-Financial-support-and-bonuses-in-Italy>

## C

### **Carta d'identità – Identity card**

It is an identification document that is issued by the local municipality (Comune – Anagrafe) once an individual has been registered as a resident there.

Source: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/41893/terms-and-acronyms-that-asylum-seekers-need-to-know-in-italy>

### **Centro Assistenza Fiscale (CAF) - Fiscal Assistance Center**

Organizations, listed in a specific register kept by the Revenue Agency, which give fiscal assistance to taxpayers, including third-country nationals, in matters of tax compliance.

Source: <https://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/portale/web/english/nse/glossary#C>

### **Centri di accoglienza straordinaria (CAS) - Centers for Extraordinary Reception**

Despite the name, CAS (Centers for Extraordinary Reception) are the most common reception facilities for asylum seekers and have the most available spots. CAS are usually managed by civil society organizations and can take the form of big reception centers or apartments. Services available in CAS include food and accommodation, medical attention and support accessing the national healthcare system, social assistance, and cultural mediation.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388911887383-Your-right-to-stay-in-a-reception-center>

### **Centri di primo arrivo (CPA) - Governmental First Reception Centers**

CPA (First Reception Centers) are governmental centers for people who have expressed their will to seek asylum. While in these centers, people undergo the identification and fingerprinting process (if not done in the hotspot), submit their asylum application and wait until the Territorial Commission decides on their case. If they are identified as vulnerable, after submitting their asylum application they may be prioritized for transfer to a second level reception center. Services available in the CPA include food and accommodation, medical attention and support accessing national healthcare system, social assistance and cultural mediation.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388911887383-Your-right-to-stay-in-a-reception-center>

### **Codice Fiscale - Social security number**

The Codice Fiscale is the Italian social security number, made up of numbers or a combination of numbers and letters on the basis of the individual's first name, family name, date and place of birth. A Codice Fiscale is required for a number of different activities, such as opening an Italian bank account or signing a job contract.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388910816151-Italian-Social-Security-number-Codice-Fiscale>

### **Commissione Territoriale per il Riconoscimento della Protezione Internazionale - Territorial Commission for the Recognition of International Protection**

The Territorial Commissions for the Recognition of International Protection are the authorities who examine applications for international protection. The activities of the Territorial Commissions are coordinated by the National Commission for the Right to Asylum, based in Rome, which is also responsible for the revocation and withdrawal of international protection status.

Source: [https://asylum.dlci.interno.it/chi-siamo#:~:text=Le%20Commissioni%20Territoriali%20per%20il%20Riconoscimento%20della%20protezione%20internazionale%20\(CCTT,Frontiera%20e%20presso%20le%20Questure](https://asylum.dlci.interno.it/chi-siamo#:~:text=Le%20Commissioni%20Territoriali%20per%20il%20Riconoscimento%20della%20protezione%20internazionale%20(CCTT,Frontiera%20e%20presso%20le%20Questure)

### **Comune – Municipality**

The Comune is an administrative division, roughly equivalent to a township or municipality. The Comune is responsible for many basic civil functions such as a registry of births and deaths, registry of deeds, local residency (residenza), parking permits, garbage tax, etc.

Source: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/comune>

## D

### **Dichiarazione di ospitalità - Declaration of hospitality**

The dichiarazione di ospitalità is a mandatory written communication that every landlord/host must produce to inform the Italian authorities that they are hosting someone in their house. It is compulsory for non-EU citizens, even if they are hosted for one day only.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5392450690711-Italian-Declaration-of-hospitality-Dichiarazione-di-ospitalit%C3%A0>

## E

### **Esenzione X22 (Assistenza sanitaria stranieri provenienti dall'Ucraina) - X22 exemption (Healthcare exemption for foreigners from Ukraine)**

The X22 Exemption is a healthcare exemption which is issued to Temporary Protection holders at the time of enrollment in the National Healthcare System and when choosing a General Practitioner and/or Free Pediatrician, following the foreigner's declaration of non-employment. With X22, Temporary Protection holders are exempted from paying the co-pay ('ticket sanitario' in Italian) to access public healthcare services in Italy.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388954753175-Your-right-to-public-healthcare>

## H

### **Hotspot - Reception upon arrival**

The hotspots are centers, located on EU external borders, where the registration, identification, fingerprinting and medical screening of asylum seekers take place. These operations should be carried out within 48 hours of the asylum seeker's arrival (72 hours in exceptional circumstances).

Source: <https://openmigration.org/en/glossary/>

## I

### **Indicatore Situazione Economica Equivalente (ISEE) - Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator (ISEE)**

The ISEE is an indicator of a family's economic condition, issued by the National Institute for Social Security to people with income and assets in Italy. An ISEE is needed to apply for social financial benefits in Italy.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388954323607-ISEE>

### **“Invito” a formalizzare la domanda di asilo - “Invitation” to formalize the application for international protection**

The expression of willingness to apply for asylum (or international protection) should not be confused with the formalization of the relevant application, which happens even weeks after the expression of willingness to seek asylum - although it must take place within a short time frame according to the provisions of the current legislation (Legislative Decree 25/2008). From a procedural point of view, the expression of willingness is filed through an “invitation” issued by the territorially competent police headquarters or border police to formalize the application for international protection on the indicated date.

Source: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Abandoned%20lives%20in%20Trieste%202022-ENG.pdf> (p.14)

## M

### **Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (MSNA) – Unaccompanied Children (UAC)**

Also sometimes called ‘unaccompanied minors’, MSNA are children (i.e., people under the age of 18, as defined in article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) who are outside their country of origin, have been separated from both parents and other relatives, and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

Source: <https://www.rescue.org/eu/glossary>

## N

### **Non-Food items (NFIs)**

Non-Food items (NFIs) are items other than food used in humanitarian contexts, when providing assistance to those affected by natural disasters or war or in situation of need.

Source: <https://www.unhcr.org/sy/21-non-food-items-nfis.html>

## P

### **Patronato**

Patronato is a fiscal assistance center (see definition of CAF above). While the CAF deals strictly with tax assistance, Patronato offers clients a variety of services, ranging from social security assistance to filing claims to apply for various types of benefits.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388954323607-ISEE>

## **Permesso di soggiorno - *Permit of stay (or residence permit)***

An authorization issued by the authorities of a State that allows a foreigners to reside in their territory in accordance with national and regional regulations.

Source: <https://immigrazione.it/docs/2017/glossario-asilo-migrazione.pdf>

## **Permesso di soggiorno UE per soggiornanti di lungo periodo – *EU long-term permit***

An EU long-term permit may be issued to third-country nationals who have lived in Italy for at least 5 years. It allows permanent residency and does not have an expiration date. Also known as ‘ex carta di soggiorno’, ‘permesso illimitato’, or ‘00’, this permit prevents people from being expelled from Italy, except in the case of severe State security reasons.

Source: <https://immigrazione.it/docs/2017/glossario-asilo-migrazione.pdf>

## **Poste Italiane - *Italian postal service***

Poste Italiane is a provider of financial and postal products and services. It offers a range of products: mail and distribution services; payments, mobile data provider and digital services to individuals and corporate institutions. Among these, there are essential services for migrants, such as the possibility to open a basic bank account and to request the permit of stay and its renewal. The company offers these products and services through multi-regional area offices, post offices, branches and online services.

Source: <https://www.poste.it/>

## **Prefettura – *Prefecture***

A Prefettura is a territorial division of the Ministry of the Interior. In Italy, a Prefetto is the Government’s representative in a local province. The Prefetto’s office is called the Prefettura. There is a Prefettura located in each of the 110 provinces in Italy. Within this office, there is an immigration desk that provides intervention, consultation, and collaboration to protect the rights of migrants.

Source: [https://www.unhcr.org/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2020/07/Guida\\_pratica\\_rifugiati.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2020/07/Guida_pratica_rifugiati.pdf)

## **Protezione speciale - *Special protection***

Special protection is a form of national protection that may be granted to individuals who do not qualify for international protection if, in case they were sent back to their country of origin, they would be in danger of persecution based on factors such as race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, citizenship, religion, political beliefs, or personal and social circumstances, or of violations of Italy's constitutional and international obligations. Additionally, consideration is given to the potential risk of these individuals being forcibly relocated from their country of origin to another country where they could face persecution, torture, or cruel and degrading treatment based on the aforementioned criteria.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388907043095-For-people-who-do-not-qualify-for-international-protection-Permesso-per-Protezione-Speciale>

## **Protezione temporanea - *Temporary protection***

Temporary protection is an exceptional measure to provide immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries who are unable to return to their country of origin. This measure was activated for Ukrainian refugees on March 4th, 2022.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5457658294813-For-people-fleeing-war-in-Ukraine-Permesso-per-Protezione-Temporanea>

# Q

## **Questura - *Police headquarter***

The Questura is a territorial office of the State Police that works under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior. Its primary task is to ensure the maintenance of public order and security within the province. The Questura also deals with paperwork related to passports, residence permits, and regularization of foreigners, including international protection applications.

Source: <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/960>

# R

## **Residenza – *Residency***

Residency is the place where a person has their habitual stay (Article 43 of the Civil Code). Jurisprudence dictates that residency is determined by an individual’s physical presence in a certain place (with occasional absences), and his/her intention to remain there. Residency is evidenced by registration in a public registry of residents, in which each person must register themselves and those under their authority or guardianship.

Source: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/residenza-diritto-civile/>

# S

## **Silos**

The Silos is a huge and crumbling privately owned building located next to the Trieste train station. Despite being cordoned off by barriers, people who have just arrived in Trieste or those who have applied for asylum - but are forced to wait up to a month and a half to enter formal reception facilities - find shelter in tents set up inside this building. Given the absence of suitable facilities to host migrants and asylum seekers, the Silos has been used as an informal settlement for many years.

Source: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Abandoned%20Lives%20in%20Trieste%202022-ENG.pdf>

### **Sistema di accoglienza e integrazione (SAI) - *Centres within the Reception and Integration System***

SAI is a publicly funded network of local authorities and NGOs that provides shelter to unaccompanied children, beneficiaries of international protection, vulnerable asylum seekers and people who have obtained some other residence permits for specific reasons (such as beneficiaries of national protection).

The SAI system consists of small reception structures where assistance and integration services are provided.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388911887383-Your-right-to-stay-in-a-reception-center>

### **Servizio Sanitario Nazionale (SSN) - *National Healthcare Service***

The SSN is Italy's public health system. It is organized under the Ministry of Health and is administered on a regional basis (see 'Azienda Sanitaria Locale above'). It provides healthcare to all citizens for hospital care, emergency care and primary care provided by general practitioners and pediatricians. Those who are registered to SSN have the same rights and duties of Italian citizens including the co-payment of fees for the services provided (ticket). The contribution varies according to the financial situation of the applicant.

Source: <https://italy.refugee.info/hc/en-us/articles/5388954753175-Your-right-to-public-healthcare>



### **Tessera Sanitaria - *Italian health card***

The Tessera sanitaria is the Italian health card that gives access to health care services. It can be used to book medical checks and get medicines. It also referred to as the TS-CNS, which stands for “tessera sanitaria – carta nazionale dei servizi” (in English, health and national services card), as it gives access to some public services. For third-country nationals, the Tessera Sanitaria will be valid for the same time as their residence permit.

Source: <https://www.agenziaentrate.gov.it/portale/web/english/nse/glossary#R>



## CONTACT US:



**Visit our website:**

[www.rescue.org/country/italy](http://www.rescue.org/country/italy)



**For any further question or information, email us at:**

**Mila Siskovic**, MEAL and Protection Monitoring Officer IRC Italy  
[mila.siskovic@rescue.org](mailto:mila.siskovic@rescue.org)

**Tessa Piccinin**, Information Assistant IRC Italy  
[tessa.piccinin@rescue.org](mailto:tessa.piccinin@rescue.org)