



IRC ITALY MONITORING REPORT 2025

Profiles and needs of people arriving
to Trieste from the Balkan route



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Executive summary

As the first major Italian city along the Italian-Slovenian border, Trieste remains a key entry point for people fleeing conflict and persecution, particularly those arriving from Asia. Its strategic location provides an important vantage point to observe migratory dynamics at one of the most critical nodes of the so-called Balkan route,¹ as well as the migration management practices implemented in this congested transit area.

Despite the relevance of this border crossing, comprehensive data on people arriving via land through Italy's northeastern border remain limited. No official statistics on such figures are regularly published by the Italian government, which only reports sea disembarkations through its [daily dashboard](#).

Recent reports by European and international bodies suggest a continued decline in movements along the Balkan route. According to [Frontex](#), detections of people crossing into Europe via this route decreased by 42% in 2025, falling from 21,520 in 2024 to 12,525 in 2025. Frontex attributes this reduction to strengthened border control measures and increased operational cooperation between national authorities and the agency, including the expansion of operational support in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo during 2025.

Similarly, [UNHCR](#) estimates that in 2025 mixed movements along the Balkan route declined by 39% compared to 2024, with approximately 9,350 people transiting through the Western Balkans as part of mixed migration flows. However, at the same time, [UNHCR](#) suggests a more limited decrease in the number of people arriving by land toward Italy. In 2025, around 6,400 people were intercepted by Italy's border police at the border with Slovenia, representing an 11% decrease compared to the 7,200 interceptions recorded in 2024. Regional authorities in [Friuli-Venezia Giulia](#) reported approximately 8,000 asylum seekers arriving in the region by 30 November 2025, a 20% decline compared to the previous year. [Data from neighboring Slovenia](#) also recorded 28,200 irregular arrivals in 2025, reflecting a 39% decrease compared to the 46,217 irregular crossings reported in 2024.

Field data collected by IRC Italy in collaboration with Diaconia Valdese in the area around Trieste's Central Station similarly indicates a decline in the number of people arriving to Italy, though at a different scale. In 2025, IRC and Diaconia outreach teams met and supported 9,761 people, compared to 13,460 in 2024, representing a 27% decrease. As these figures reflect only individuals directly reached by IRC and Diaconia staff, they offer a partial picture of movements along this border and indicate that the total number of people entering Italy through this route may be higher.

¹ The Western Balkan route is one of the main migratory pathways via land to Europe. It typically involves crossing multiple countries in the Balkans, often starting from Turkey and moving through countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia, and others in the region. Trieste is one of the main entry points in Italy for people arriving from the Balkan Route.



The purpose of this report is to shed light on changes in regional migration dynamics and analyze trends among people arriving in Trieste along the Balkan route. It aims to provide evidence-based insights to inform public and private actors and support more effective responses to emerging needs. The report presents key data on nationalities, demographic profiles, and migratory intentions, with particular attention to vulnerable groups. Adopting a client-centered approach, the report outlines the main protection concerns and challenges faced by newly arrived individuals in Trieste, highlighting barriers to accessing services and rights, as well as key developments in local migration management. Below is a list of the key findings of our 2025 monitoring report.

Key findings

- **Decline in arrivals:** in 2025, IRC Italy reached 9,761 newly arrived people in Trieste, marking a 27% decrease compared to 2024. This contrasts with official reports of declines, including a 42% drop in irregular border crossings along the Balkan route indicated by Frontex.
- **Afghanistan remains the main country of origin,** with rising numbers of people arriving from Turkey, Nepal and Egypt.
- **Vulnerable groups accounted for 34% of all people reached,** including unaccompanied children, families, and single women.
- **Half of the people declared Italy as their final destination:** in 2025, for the first time since IRC began systematic monitoring in Trieste, the majority of people encountered (51%) declared Italy as their intended country of destination. This marks a significant shift compared to previous years, when most individuals viewed Trieste and Italy primarily as a transit point towards other European countries.
- **Gap between intentions and asylum registration:** field data show a marked discrepancy between declared intentions and actual registrations. In 2025, 3,607 individuals (37%) expressed their intention to apply for asylum in Trieste, while around than 1,200 applications were officially registered by the Questura. This indicates that roughly two out of three individuals did not ultimately formalize their claim in the city. In practice, this may be due to a combination of factors, including transfers of people to reception systems in other regions before asylum formalization, transfers to other regions following eviction operations in the Old Port area, or the inability to access the procedure altogether, leading individuals to move elsewhere.
- **Systemic barriers to asylum access:** in 2025, access to the asylum procedure at the Trieste Questura continued to be a major obstacle. Only a small share of the 70–140 people queuing daily were admitted, with many repeatedly turned away without information. Waiting times averaged three weeks and could reach up to two months. Access was managed through opaque and arbitrary criteria, compounded by unlawful practices, and lack of prioritization for vulnerable individuals. In some cases, people expressing intent to seek asylum were even issued expulsion orders, underscoring serious barriers to protection.



- **Ongoing basic needs:** despite the decrease in arrivals, humanitarian needs in Trieste remain comparable to previous years, with thousands of people still in need of essential support, including food, clothing, blankets, access to sanitation facilities, emergency shelter, healthcare, service orientation, and legal assistance.
- **Recurring evictions fail to address structural issues:** evictions and transfers from the Old Port continued throughout the year and became a standard operational procedure. However, without adequate reception alternatives, these measures only temporarily relieve pressure and do not address the cyclical re-emergence of informal settlements.
- **Severe humanitarian consequences, including loss of life:** delays in accessing asylum and reception continue to lead to homelessness and heightened protection risks. Exposure to health risks due to poor hygiene and harsh living conditions, exploitation and abuse in the old port area remain high. In 2025, for the first time, two people were found dead in the area.
- **Humanitarian response remains dependent on civil society:** Trieste still lacks a structured and sustainable plan for managing migration and addressing the needs of an average of 13,000 newly arrived people per year. Basic assistance, legal information, and support with accessing services continue to rely entirely on NGOs and volunteers, with limited funding sustainability and no involvement from the public sector as a key pillar of the response.



1. Introduction

Founded at the call of Albert Einstein in 1933, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) delivers lasting impact for people whose lives have been shattered by conflict and disaster. Today, the IRC operates in over 40 countries, responding to major humanitarian crises and helping individuals restore health, safety, and control over their lives.

Since 2021, IRC Italy has been active in the Italian city of Trieste, located at the Italian-Slovenian border, providing daily support to people who arrive through the Western Balkan route. A team of multilingual Field Protection Officers engages with dozens of people in need each day in the Central Station area. They provide information on rights, orientation and assistance in accessing critical services such as overnight shelters, food and healthcare, as well as the asylum procedure and reception. They also identify people with specific needs (such as people with injuries, illnesses, survivors of violence, pregnant women, etc.) to immediately activate protection measures in coordination with other local actors.



2. Methodology

The monitoring activity at the Italian-Slovenian border is conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The activities take place in Trieste's central station area, between Piazza Libertà and the San Martino al Campo's Daytime Care Centre in Via Udine,² during the daytime and partially in the evening, every day of the year, including weekends and holidays.³

Methodological note: 2025 annual figures are likely underestimated compared to previous years due to a reduced data collection capacity throughout July and August.

Data collection team

Data and testimony collection is carried out by a team of three Field Protection Officers who are fluent in Pashto, Dari, Urdu, Hindi, English, French, and Italian. This multilingual capacity enables effective communication with most newly arrived individuals. However, it is important to note that for some nationalities or ethnic groups (e.g. Syrians, Turks, Kurds), language barriers continue to pose challenges, limiting mutual understanding and, consequently, affecting the quality of the data collected.

Quantitative data collection

Quantitative data is collected through:

- **Individual and group interviews:** using standardized questionnaires to gather information.
- **Direct observations:** field staff record visible details⁴ during their interactions.

All data is collected anonymously and does not include personal information. Key indicators focus on:

- **Demographics:** gender, age, nationality.
- **Demographic profiles and vulnerable groups:** we categorize our demographic profiles into four groups: adult single men, adult single women, unaccompanied children, and families.⁵
- **People with special needs:** we collect data mainly on individuals with visible special needs, such as elderly people, pregnant women, individuals with serious illnesses, and people with disabilities.
- **Legal status and migratory intentions:** understanding individuals' legal status and plans.

The questionnaire is periodically adjusted to address emerging trends or specific monitoring needs, ensuring a comprehensive and up to date understanding of the situation.

² The Daytime Care Center is open 365 days a year. Every person in need, without distinction, can have access to the Center during daytime hours to toilets, medical examinations at a small in-house clinic, distribution of clothing, information and orientation to the asylum procedure and the registration of applications for a place to sleep. IRC Italy has formally co-managed the Center since 2022.

³ Activities take place from Monday to Friday from 9. 00 a.m. to 10 p.m., while on weekends or holidays only during the evening hours from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

⁴ For example: gender, family composition, and whether there are any individuals who are sick or visibly injured.

⁵ Methodological note: in this report, we define vulnerable groups as any profile that includes women and/or children (accompanied or unaccompanied), thereby excluding only adult single men (except for cases with special needs). This categorization is also designed considering referral pathways and access to protection services, such as emergency dormitories.



Qualitative data collection

Field staff complete a monthly questionnaire to document their observations. This includes:

- Barriers to accessing services.
- Discriminatory practices reportedly experienced by individuals.
- Access to the asylum procedure and reception services: evaluating the availability and accessibility of these systems.
- Local authorities' practices: observing changes in border control and migration management measures.
- Overnight shelters: monitoring the accessibility and conditions of emergency accommodation.
- Protection risks: identifying and addressing any new or evolving risks.
- Referral context: tracking significant changes in service referral systems.

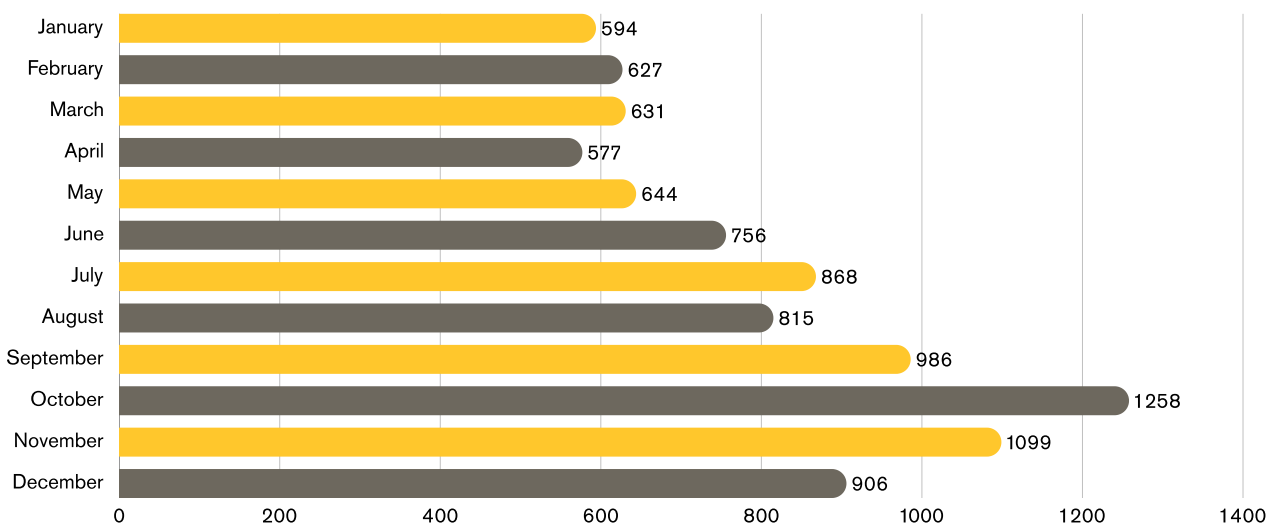


3. Analysis of data and profiles

Between January 1 and December 31, 2025, a total of **9,761 people arriving via the Balkan route** were reached and supported in the area of Trieste Central Station, corresponding to an average of **27 new people per day**. This represents a 27% decrease compared to 2024 (13,460 people), a **39% decrease** compared to **2023** (16,052 people), and a **26% decrease** compared to **2022** (13,127 people).

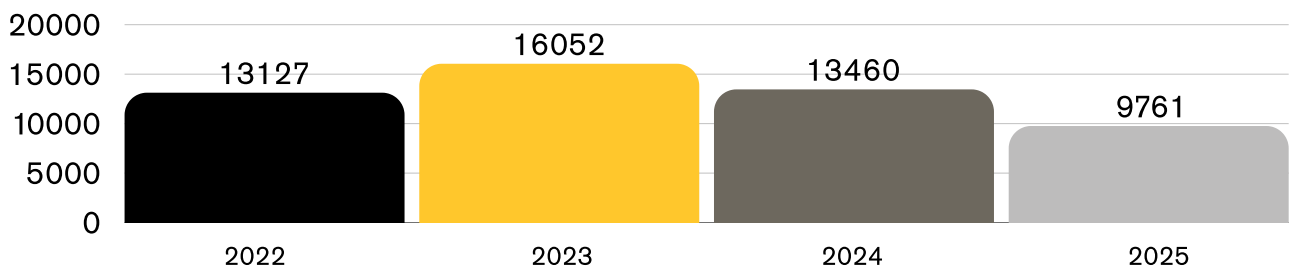
The graph below illustrates the number of newly arrived individuals encountered each month in 2025. In contrast to 2024, when the monthly figure of people arriving exceeded 1,000 between June and October, figures in 2025 remained below this threshold for most of the year, with a peak occurring between October and November.

Fig. 1 Number of new people encountered by IRC Italy and Diaconia Valdese each month in Trieste in 2025



Between 2022 and 2025, we met a total of **52,395 newly arrived people**, averaging approximately **13,100 per year and 36 per day** over the four-year period.

Fig. 2 Number of new people encountered by IRC Italy and Diaconia Valdese in Trieste in 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025



3.1 Overview of 2025 data



9,761

new people met
and supported



74%
Adults (7,200)



92%
Males (9,027)



26%
Children (2,561)



8%
Females (734)

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES



66%

Single
adult men
(6,448)



13%

Unaccompanied
children (1,299)



18%

Households
(398) made up
of 1,760 family
members



3%

Single
adult women
(254)

TOP 3 NATIONALITIES:



- Afghanistan
- Turkey
- Bangladesh



51% of the people
encountered intend to
seek for asylum
in Italy

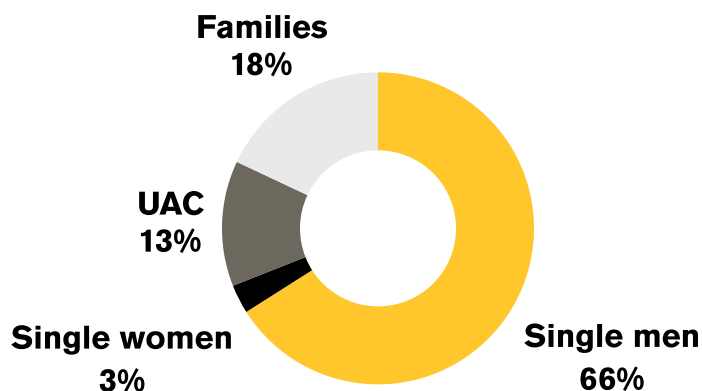


36% intend to go to
other countries, such as
Germany, France &
Switzerland.



3.2 Demographic profiles

Fig.3 Share of demographic profiles encountered by IRC Italy and Diaconia Valdese in Trieste in 2025



In 2025 **adult men** travelling alone accounted for **66%** of the caseload, while **families** represented **18%**, **unaccompanied and separated children** **13%**, and **adult single women** **3%**.

In absolute terms, of the 9,761 people reached, approximately **3,300 individuals belonged to a vulnerable group** — including around 1,750 family members, 1,270 unaccompanied children, and around 250 adult single women, highlighting the sustained need for tailored protection responses.



Over one-third of people met in 2025 fall under a vulnerable group

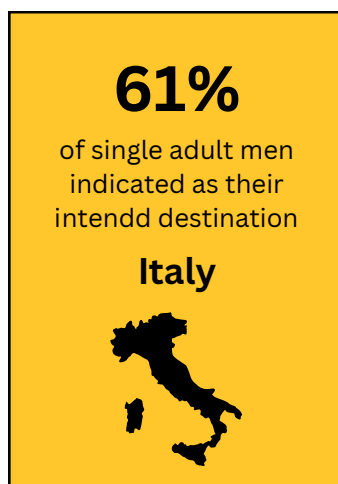
Over the past four years, the share of vulnerable individuals has increased steadily, rising from 11% in 2022 (2,392 of 13,127) to 31% in 2023 (5,051 of 16,052) and 37% in 2024 (5,061 of 13,460). In 2025, vulnerable groups continued to represent over one third of all arrivals (34%), indicating that approximately one in three people encountered required specific protection support.



3.2.1 Single adult men



Single adult men remain the predominant profile among people arriving in Trieste via the Balkan route. In 2025, approximately **6,448 adult men travelling alone** were met.



Among single adult men, migration intentions in 2025 show a notable shift compared to previous years. While a significant share still expressed the intention to move onward to other European countries, a growing proportion declared their intention to remain in Italy.

More specifically, **61% of single adult men indicated Italy as their intended destination**, with a substantial number specifically mentioning Trieste (47%), while roughly **one third declared an intention to move to other EU countries** (31%), particularly France and Germany.

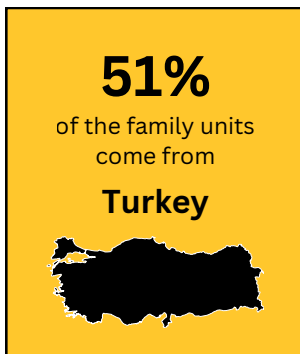
However, as highlighted in the section on migration intentions, these figures should be interpreted with caution. Declared intentions at the time of first contact do not necessarily translate into actual settlement or formalization of asylum claims in Trieste. Secondary movements and structural barriers to accessing asylum procedures may significantly affect final outcomes.



3.2.2 Families



Over the course of 2025, the outreach teams met approximately **398 families**, representing **18%** of the total number of people encountered. In absolute terms, these family units accounted for **1,740 individuals**, including **801 accompanied children**, confirming the continued presence of children among newly arrived populations and the sustained need for family-sensitive protection responses. Among these families, **56 cases involved single parents travelling alone with their children**.



The majority of families originated from **Turkey (51%, 201 family units)**, primarily from Kurdish regions, confirming a trend observed in previous years.

This was followed by **Nepal (13%, 50 families)**, **Afghanistan (10%, 39 families)**, **Iraq (7%, 29 families)**, and **Syria (6%, 22 families)**.

Regarding **migration intentions**, family units in 2025 primarily reported plans to **move onward to other countries (41%)**, while a smaller share expressed the intention to **remain in Italy (22% declared in Trieste, 5% in other Italian cities)**. However, the non-response rate to the destination question remains relatively high, 32% of families did not disclose their intended destination, mainly due to language barriers and the rapid nature of transit.

Throughout 2025, IRC Italy field teams continued coordinating referrals to emergency overnight shelters in collaboration with local partners, prioritizing access for families, women and children.

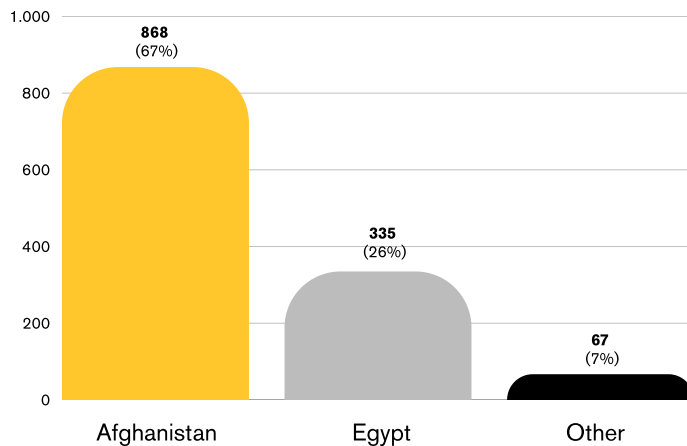


3.2.3 Unaccompanied children



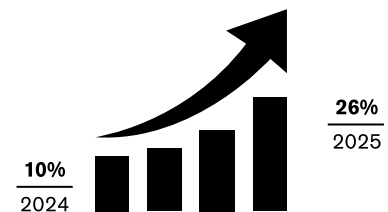
In 2025, IRC Italy reached **1,270 unaccompanied children**, representing **13% of newly arrived** individuals in Trieste. Although fewer in absolute numbers compared to 2024 (2,192 UAC met), children travelling alone continue to constitute a significant component of the caseload, requiring sustained child protection capacity and tailored responses.

Top countries of origin - unaccompanied children



The nationality profile of unaccompanied children in 2025 shows a strong concentration among two groups. **Afghan children remain the largest group, accounting for 868 cases (67%)**, continuing a trend observed in previous years.

At the same time, **a substantial increase in Egyptian unaccompanied children was recorded, with 335 cases (representing 26% of all cases)**. This marks a notable rise compared to 2024, when Egyptian UAC accounted for 219 cases, representing only 10% of the total.



Migration intentions among unaccompanied children in 2025 show a notable shift compared to previous trends. While most still reported **plans to move onward to other countries (56%)**, a notable **41% indicated Italy as their intended destination**, including 15% specifically mentioning Trieste and 26% other Italian cities. This change is largely influenced by the high number of **Egyptian unaccompanied children, 89% of whom reported intending to reach Milan**, often to join informal community networks or extended family connections.

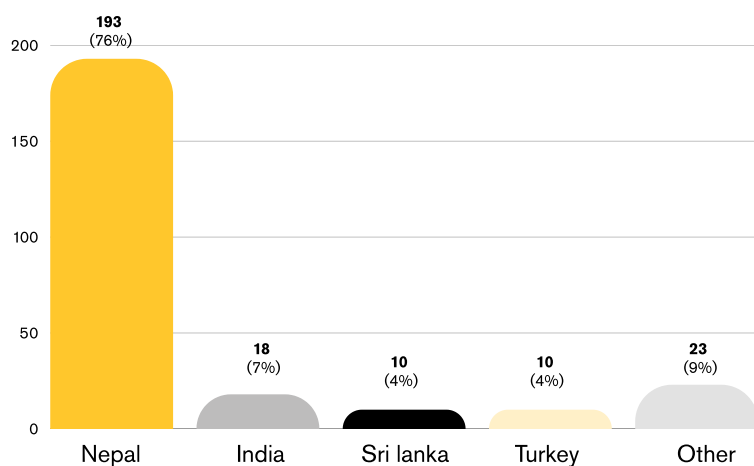


3.2.4 Single adult women



In 2025, **254 single adult women** were met in Trieste, representing **3% of the total number** of people encountered. Although smaller in proportion compared to previous years, single adult women continue to represent a group with distinct protection needs requiring targeted and gender-sensitive support.

Top countries of origin - single adult women



The nationality profile of single adult women in 2025 shows a strong concentration among South Asian countries. The majority were from **Nepal (76%, 193 women)**, followed by **India (7%, 18 women)**, **Sri Lanka (4%, 10 women)**, and **Turkey (4%, 10 women)**.

Migration intentions among single adult women in 2025 show a significant shift compared to transit-oriented patterns observed in previous years. **Nearly half (46%) declared Trieste as their intended destination**, while **7%** reported planning to settle in **other Italian cities**.



More than half of the single women met declared Italy as their country of destination

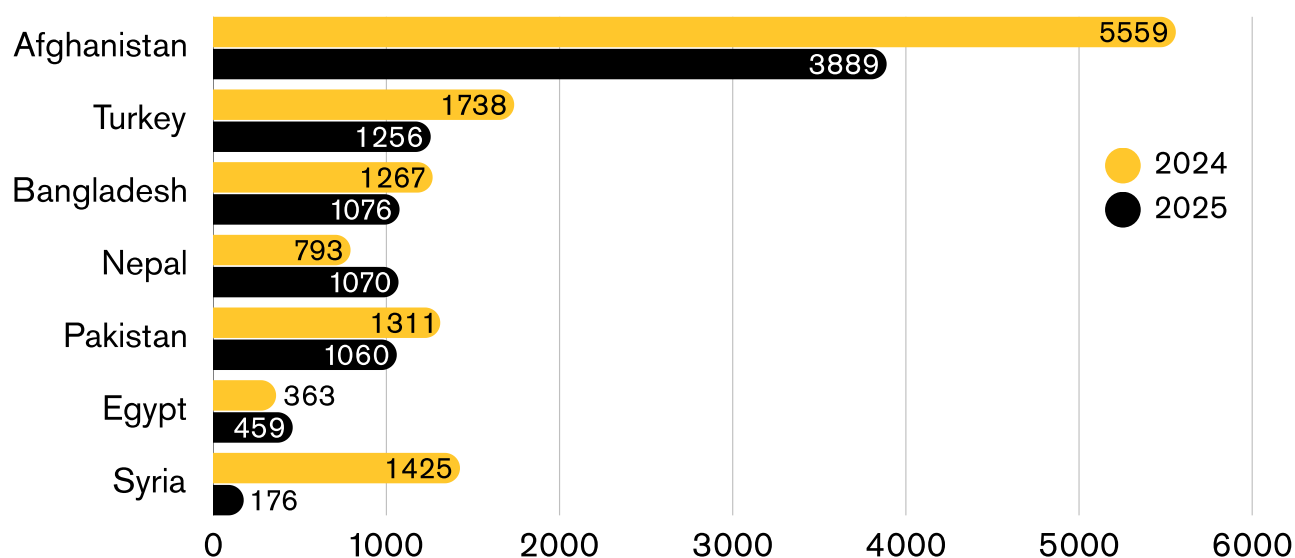
In contrast, **29% expressed an intention to move to other European countries (mainly Spain)**, and 17% did not disclose their intended destination.

Given the relatively high number of women remaining in Trieste, the insufficient reception capacity creates growing pressure on the local reception system. Single adult women, together with families, continue to receive priority access to emergency dormitories through coordination with the city's shelter network, to reduce the risk of street homelessness for these groups. However, it is to be noted that single men without priority access may still face street homelessness and limited access to emergency accommodation.



3.3 Nationalities

Fig. 4 Main countries of origin of the people reached by IRC Italy and Diaconia Valdese in Trieste in 2025 compared to 2024



As shown in Figure 4, in 2025, the nationality profile of people arriving in Trieste remained broadly in line with previous years, with only few noteworthy variations.

> Afghanistan

Afghans remain the largest group of people arriving through the Slovenian–Italian border, accounting for **40% of the total caseload (3,889 individuals)**. However, despite remaining the predominant nationality, this reflects a continued proportional decline compared to 2024 (5,559 individuals, representing 41%) and a more pronounced decrease from 2023, when 10,929 Afghan nationals were recorded, accounting for 68% of all individuals encountered.



Over the four-year period (2022–2025), more than 27,000 Afghans have been met and supported in Trieste, confirming the structural nature of Afghan displacement along the Balkan route.

At the EU level, Afghans continue to rank among the top nationalities applying for asylum, accounting for around 14% of all applications in 2025, with a notable increase compared to the previous year. This rise, however, is driven in large part by applications lodged in a limited number of countries, particularly Germany, often by individuals already present in the EU submitting repeated claims. While Italy remains one of the main receiving countries overall, it is not a primary destination for Afghan applicants, who are more strongly concentrated in countries such as Germany. This suggests that, despite a growing share of individuals declaring Italy as their intended destination in 2025, Trieste continues to function largely as a transit hub rather than a final country of asylum.



> Turkey

Turkish nationals remained the **second-largest group (13%, 1,256 individuals)**, maintaining a similar proportional level to 2024. As in previous years, the majority originate from the Kurdish regions of Turkey, and a significant share travel as family units. The sustained presence of Turkish nationals in Trieste reflects broader EU-level dynamics, where Turkish citizens continue to rank among the top nationalities detected along the Western Balkan route and among the main applicants for international protection.

> South Asian nationals: Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan

A major development in 2025 is the consolidation of South Asian nationalities, which together account for approximately one third of all individuals met in Trieste.

- **Bangladesh – 11% (1,076 individuals)**
- **Nepal – 11% (1,070 individuals)**
- **Pakistan – 11% (1,060 individuals)**

Compared to 2024, Bangladeshi nationals increased slightly in share (from 9% to 11%), while Pakistani nationals stabilized after previous years of decline. **The most notable shift concerns Nepal**, which emerged as one of the top nationalities in 2025. Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals continue to consist almost exclusively of adult men travelling alone, while Nepali nationals show a more mixed profile, including a high proportion of single adult women.

At the EU level, Pakistan and Bangladesh continue to be among the main countries of origin of asylum applicants, although their overall share remains lower than that observed in Trieste.

> Egypt

In 2025, Egyptian nationals accounted for **5% of the total caseload (459 individuals)**. Although they were not among the top nationalities in previous years, their presence increased significantly in 2025, largely driven by the high number of unaccompanied Egyptian children.

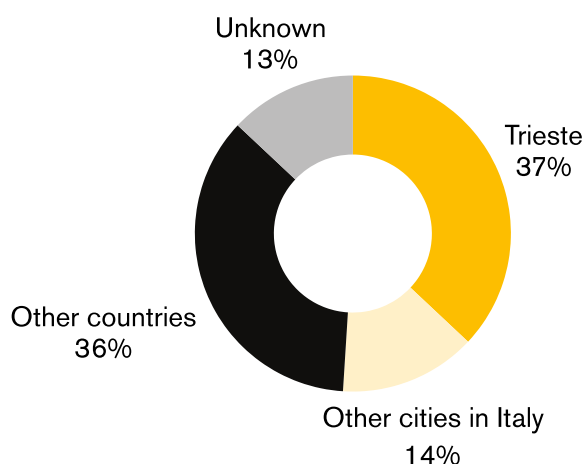
> Syria

A striking shift compared to 2024 concerns Syrian nationals. In 2024, Syrians represented 11% of all individuals met in Trieste (1,425 people), namely the third most common nationality. **In 2025, however, this figure dropped sharply to 176 individuals (2%)**. This decline aligns with [EUAA findings](#), which link reduced Syrian arrivals to recent political developments in Syria. Following the ousting of Bashar al-Assad in late 2024 and a temporary decrease in hostilities, many Syrians adopted a “wait-and-see” approach or remained in neighboring countries, leading to a sharp drop in EU+ asylum applications (**-72%**) and fewer detections along migration routes. However, EUAA notes that this trend reflects a temporary shift, as ongoing instability and renewed violence continue to generate protection needs.



3.3 Migratory intentions

Fig. 5 Share of stated migratory intention of people encountered by IRC Italy and Diaconia Valdese in Trieste in 2025



Migratory intentions in 2025 show a **significant shift** compared to previous years.



For the first time since the beginning of IRC's protection monitoring activities, more than half of the people interviewed (51%) indicated Italy as their intended final destination. This represents a substantial increase compared to 31% recorded in 2024.

As a result, **the proportion of individuals declaring another country as their destination decreased sharply, from 57% in 2024 (7,684 individuals) to 36% in 2025 (3,501 individuals)**. Germany, which in 2024 was the most frequently reported onward destination (32.9%), dropped significantly to 11.6% in 2025. Other countries such as France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom continued to be mentioned, but at lower levels.

This change can be linked to a recent shift toward more restrictive and hostile migration and asylum policies in other EU countries, whereby governments are increasing measures linked to deportations and returns, bilateral arrangements, tighter border controls, and reduced access to reception or asylum-related rights. For example, in 2025, Germany increased checks and refusals of entry at land-borders, suspended family reunification for people with subsidiary protection status, and abolished fast-tracked reunification; France increased the required duration of residence from 3 or 5 years to "at least 7 years" before applying for citizenship, and conducted nation-wide operations to detain and deport irregular migrants;⁶ and the UK launched its "one in, one out" agreement with France aimed at deterring people from crossing the English Channel.⁷

Overall, **37% of all people met expressed their intention to apply for asylum in Trieste**, an increase compared to 24% in 2024 and 14% in 2023. However, this figure should be interpreted with caution, as the share of individuals who ultimately remain in Trieste and manage to lodge their asylum application appears to be significantly lower.

⁶ As reported in Le Monde, 'French police launch nationwide crackdown on undocumented migrants', 20 June 2025.

⁷ The 'one in, one out' scheme is a bilateral agreement between the UK and France whereby the UK is able to deport migrants back to France within 3 months if their asylum claim in the UK is declared inadmissible. For each person returned to France, the UK will accept a person with a valid asylum application.



Migratory intentions are recorded during the first encounter with IRC Italy and Diaconia Valdese field staff. A substantial gap emerges when these declarations are compared with official asylum registration data. While IRC's monitoring indicates that **3,607** individuals expressed the intention to file their application in Trieste in 2025 (37%), data shared by the local Questura show that **fewer than 1,500 new asylum applications were formally registered** over the same period. This suggests that nearly two out of three people who initially declared their intention to seek asylum in Trieste did not ultimately file their application in the city, indicating a dropout rate of approximately 65%.

This discrepancy highlights that a significant proportion of individuals were unable to fully formalize their asylum claim in Trieste. In practice, this may be linked to several factors: many individuals only received an appointment for future formalization; others were transferred to reception centers for asylum seekers in other regions; some were relocated following eviction operations in the Old Port area; and others were unable to access the asylum procedure altogether and subsequently moved away.

This pattern reinforces serious concerns regarding effective access to the asylum procedure at the local Questura, as documented in the report [Accesso Negato](#). The report, published by IRC Italy together with local partner organizations, shows how in 2025 hundreds of individuals were unable to access the asylum procedure for weeks, and in some cases for months, due to practices appearing inconsistent with national and international legal standards. Coupled with long waiting times, the lack of immediate reception places, and limited access to emergency shelter, these barriers leave many asylum seekers homeless and effectively force them to leave Trieste before they are able to file their claim.

Below is a breakdown of migratory intentions among the five main nationalities served:

- **Afghanistan:** Most Afghan nationals (61%) reported intending to continue to other European countries, mainly France and Germany, while 31% indicated their intention to remain in Trieste and apply for asylum.
- **Turkey:** The majority of cases (61%) were recorded as unknown, largely due to language barriers encountered during the first interaction. Among those who provided an answer, 31% stated their intention to travel to other countries, with Germany as the main destination, while only 7% identified Italy as their final destination.
- **Bangladesh:** The vast majority of Bangladeshi nationals (91%) indicated their intention to remain in Italy, with a strong preference for Trieste (61%).
Pakistan: Similarly, most Pakistani nationals (89%) reported intending to stay in Italy, with a strong preference for Trieste (65%).
- **Nepal:** A large majority of Nepali nationals (78%) indicated Italy as their intended destination, with 73% specifically mentioning Trieste. This represents a significant shift compared to previous years, when most Nepali nationals reported onward travel to other countries, particularly Portugal and Spain.
- **Egypt:** Almost all Egyptian nationals (91%) reported intending to remain in Italy, with the vast majority (88%) identifying Milan as their final destination.



4. Access to asylum

In 2025, access to the asylum procedure in Trieste continued to be severely constrained by a set of **recurring practices** implemented by the Immigration Office of the Questura. Despite the clear obligation under Italian and EU law to promptly register a person's intention to seek protection, many individuals arriving in the city face substantial barriers in accessing the procedure.

Field monitoring shows that between 70 and 140 people typically gather outside the Questura on opening days in the early morning hours. However, only around a dozen individuals per day are allowed to enter the Immigration Office, and even among those admitted, several are not able to file their asylum claim. Indeed, many people are repeatedly turned away after waiting for hours, often without receiving any information about how or when they might be able to access the procedure in the future.

Access is not organized according to transparent or chronological criteria, meaning that individuals who are rejected must return and queue again on subsequent days without any priority. Consequently, **the registration of asylum applications takes place on average approximately three weeks after the first attempt**, with waiting times that may unpredictably extend up to two months.

Evidence collected by local organizations throughout the year indicates that these delays are reinforced by a **series of discretionary and unlawful practices that further restrict access to the procedure**. The above-mentioned report Accesso Negato, documents how access to the Questura is frequently governed by opaque and illegitimate selection criteria, creating a situation perceived by applicants as arbitrary and unpredictable. The **absence of an official waiting list** effectively turns access into a system regulated by chance rather than transparent administrative rules.



Additional obstacles arise from **informal requirements that have no legal basis**. Several asylum seekers report being denied access unless they possess identity documents, particularly passports. In many cases, individuals without documents are instructed to first file a report of loss or theft at another police office before attempting again to access the asylum procedure.

Other documented practices include **informal referrals to other police headquarters in different Italian cities**, often communicated verbally and without any written decision. Applicants are told to seek asylum elsewhere on the assumption that another office would be competent to process their claim, leaving them without clear procedural guidance or legal guarantees. Testimonies also indicate that immigration officials sometimes conduct **informal inspections of applicants' mobile phones in order to verify previous movements across Europe**. These checks are carried out without the procedural safeguards required by law, such as formal documentation, the presence of a cultural mediator, or judicial oversight.

Further concerns relate to the treatment of vulnerable individuals. IRC and partners documented cases in which **people with visible health conditions or other vulnerabilities were not granted priority access to the procedure**. Moreover, civil society organizations sent hundreds of formal notifications to the Questura in 2025 regarding individuals in vulnerable situations, yet these communications were rarely followed up.

Particularly alarming is the practice whereby **unaccompanied children are sometimes turned away on the basis of a visual assessment of their age** and asked to provide documentary proof of being underage before being granted access to assistance and the asylum procedure.

Finally, cases were reported in which individuals who explicitly expressed their intention to request asylum were instead issued expulsion orders.



5. Conclusions

The situation observed in Trieste in 2025 does not stem from isolated shortcomings, but rather reflects a set of **practices that continue to hinder access to fundamental rights**. Although the number of arrivals has decreased compared to previous years, the overall functioning of the system still prevents many individuals from effectively and timely accessing asylum, reception, and protection services. Migration management at the local level remains largely reactive. The structural challenges identified in earlier reports remain largely unresolved. In this context, humanitarian organizations continue to serve as the only source of support for thousands of newly arrived individuals, providing essential information, basic assistance, and support to those left without accommodation.

While in 2025 the local Prefecture has taken some steps to improve the management of access to reception for asylum seekers, including increasing transfers to reception facilities in other regions and expanding local reception capacity by around 100 places, these efforts have not addressed the **deeper gaps in the migration management system**. Many people are still forced to find temporary shelter in the abandoned areas of the Old Port and in other informal sites across the city, where living conditions are widely recognized as inhumane and degrading. Eviction operations targeting informal settlements in the Old Port area have continued to be used as a primary management tool and have increasingly become a standard operational response. Over the past few years, six eviction operations have been carried out. However, these measures have not been matched by the establishment of adequate low-threshold reception options for newly arrived individuals. As a result, the cycle of people spending days or weeks without access to shelter persists. Ensuring timely access to reception and preventing situations of homelessness is not only essential for the protection and dignity of people on the move, but also for the city and the wider community.

Access to asylum stands out as a central concern. Current practices and administrative arrangements create significant obstacles for individuals seeking protection, resulting in delays, uncertainty, and, in many cases, the inability to lodge an application. As a result, many individuals are left for days or weeks in a legal limbo, unable to regularize their status, access the rights and services linked to the asylum procedure, and exposed to protection risks. These barriers go beyond operational constraints and raise broader concerns regarding compliance with legal standards and the effective functioning of the protection system.

In light of these findings, it is imperative that Trieste's Questura brings its practices fully in line with the applicable legal framework and ensures immediate, effective, and non-discriminatory access to the asylum procedure. This requires strengthening administrative capacity, removing unlawful barriers, improving transparency in access modalities, and ensuring that all procedural safeguards are consistently upheld.

Without a decisive shift toward a rights-based and protection-centered approach, the current system will continue to produce exclusion, leaving a growing number of people without access to their rights and forced to live on the streets, and exposing individuals to unacceptable risks. Addressing these issues is a fundamental obligation to uphold the rule of law and ensure that people's rights are fully and effectively guaranteed in practice.





IRC ITALY

MONITORING REPORT 2025

People arriving to Trieste from the Balkan route

For any further information, email us at:

IRC ITALY TRIESTE AREA MANAGER

Alessandro Papes
alessandro.papes@rescue.org

IRC ITALY DIRECTOR

Susanna Zanfrini
susanna.zanfrini@rescue.org

PHOTOS

International Rescue Committee

Fondazione International Rescue Committee Italy

Via Giulio e Corrado Venini 57
20127 Milano (MI) Italia
+39 02 84131399
[Rescue.org/eu/country/italy](https://rescue.org/eu/country/italy).

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