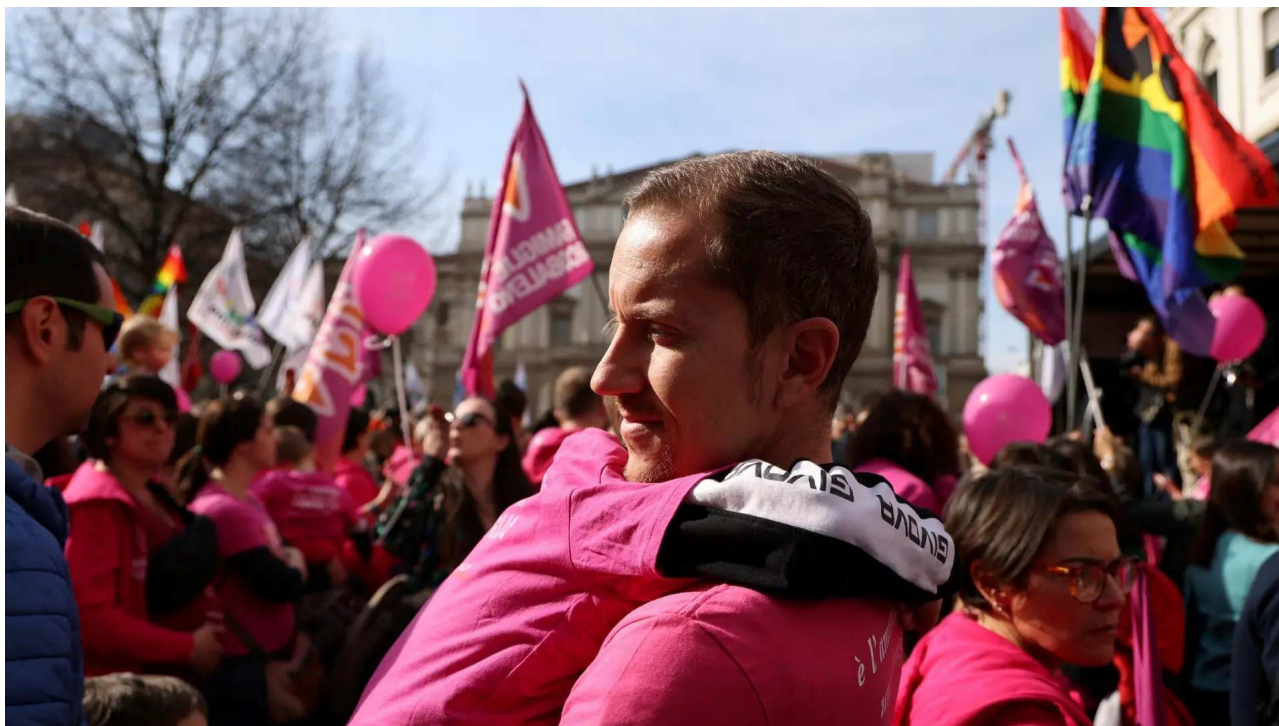


# World Report 2024



## Italy

### Events of 2023

*People gather to protest after Italy's right-wing government told Milan's city council to stop registering same-sex parents' children, in Milan, Italy, March 18, 2023.*

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- [English](#)
- [Italiano](#)

In 2023, the government intensified its efforts to deter migration through obstruction of nongovernmental rescue groups, migration cooperation with rights-abusing countries, and regressive asylum practices.

Authorities undermined the rights of same-sex parents. Gender-based violence and an inadequate state response remained serious concerns.

With one-fourth of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the government eliminated an important income support program.

International human rights bodies highlighted pressure on civil society organizations aiding migrants, racism and discrimination targeting Roma and people of African descent, and rule of law concerns.

## Migrants and Asylum Seekers

According to [government statistics](#), by mid-September, more than 127,200 people, including 11,630 unaccompanied children, reached Italy by sea, almost double the number in the same period in 2022. The government's failure to ensure adequate facilities and swift transfers to the mainland meant the reception center on Lampedusa island was at times [severely overcrowded](#).

The government obstructed rescues in the Mediterranean Sea by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). A [government decree, converted into law in February 2023](#), imposes new requirements, including an obligation on NGO vessels to go to an assigned port immediately following a rescue, effectively prohibiting multiple rescues on the same voyage. As of September, the government had [detained at port NGO vessels 8 times](#) for 20 days for violating the decree. [The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) and the [Expert Council on NGO Law of the Council of Europe](#) expressed serious concerns about the law. In July, five NGOs filed a [complaint with the European Commission](#) against Italy, alleging the law is incompatible with European Union and international law.

A new policy of assigning disembarkation ports in central and northern Italy rather than the closer ports of Sicily has meant that rescue organizations have less time and resources for rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. In June, an administrative court [upheld the government's distant port policy](#) when it rejected a complaint lodged by Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders, MSF).

A government [decree converted into law](#)—the “Cutro decree”—in May made it more difficult for people to obtain special protection—a temporary right to remain on humanitarian grounds—and increased the scope for detention under accelerated border asylum procedures, [among other changes](#) that undermine the rights of asylum seekers and migrants. In September, the government [increased detention pending deportation](#) from 3 to 18 months in certain cases. In October, [judges in Sicily ruled](#) in separate cases that the detention of Tunisian asylum seekers under provisions of the Cutro decree violated EU and national law and ordered their release; a [court in Florence blocked the deportation](#) of a Tunisian saying the government should revisit its determination of Tunisia as a safe country of origin. Positively, the government approved [significantly higher quotas for work visas](#) in various sectors of the economy for 2023-2025 compared to previous years.

The government intensified cooperation on migration with other countries without regard for human rights. On the heels of an EU-Tunisia deal to limit boat departures from that North African country, which Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni helped broker, the Italian government hosted leaders from the Middle East and North Africa for an [anti-migration summit in July](#). Italy's “Memorandum of Understanding” with Libya—the basis of bilateral migration cooperation—automatically renewed in February 2023 for three years. In November, Italy announced an agreement with Albania to detain in that country people, including asylum seekers, rescued at sea by Italian ships. The plan, which raises concerns about respect for the right to asylum, freedom from arbitrary detention, and the offshoring of responsibility, was awaiting parliamentary approval in both countries at time of writing.

In a [joint communication](#) sent to the government in February, three UN special rapporteurs expressed serious concern about due process violations and the criminalization of sea rescues in the ongoing trial of 21 people charged with facilitating unauthorized immigration in relation to rescues in 2016 and 2017. The accused, who face up to 20 years in prison, include four members of Iuventa, a rescue ship seized in 2017 by the Italian authorities, staff of two NGOs, and a shipping company.

The European Court of Human Rights [condemned Italy](#) in November for arbitrarily detaining unaccompanied children in inhuman and degrading conditions in 2017. The same month, parliament [rolled back safeguards for unaccompanied children](#) with respect to age determination, accommodation, and asylum.

## Discrimination and Intolerance

In August, the [UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) criticized Italy for its failure to collect disaggregated data, an incomplete definition in domestic law of racial discrimination, the lack of a fully independent national equality body, the use of racist political discourse by politicians and reports of racist hate incidents, persistent and widespread structural discrimination against Roma, Sinti, and Camminanti communities, and acts of violence, stigmatization, and harassment of people of African descent. Five Verona police officers were arrested in June on charges of torturing non-Italians, unhoused people, and other vulnerable people in the street; two of them were charged with the aggravating circumstance of racial bias.

## Poverty and Inequality

According to data published by the [national statistical institute ISTAT](#) in 2023, almost 10 percent of the [Italian population](#) lived in absolute poverty in 2022, an increase from 2021 attributed to the impact of inflation. Foreigners living in Italy were more than four times more likely to experience absolute poverty.

The government eliminated the “[citizen income](#)” anti-poverty measure in May and replaced it with more limited programs for different categories of individuals. Individuals defined as “employable” will receive lower monthly payments for a maximum of 12 months linked to a job training requirement, while those living in a family with children, anyone over 60 years old, and people with disabilities may apply to receive slightly higher monthly payments for up to 30 months. The government maintained its opposition to the introduction of a [statutory minimum wage](#).

An estimated 2.2 million households, including almost 1 million children, were unable to maintain adequate energy services at affordable costs, with a higher incidence in the south and among immigrant families. The government extended measures to counter rising energy costs, including income-based subsidies for domestic gas and electricity and reduced costs for households using electricity for medical equipment.

## Women’s Rights

The [Interior Ministry reported](#) that 61 women were killed by relatives or people they knew in the first 8 months of the year, 38 of them by a partner or ex-partner, a slight decrease from the same period last year.

In March, a [Florence court absolved two men of rape](#), arguing that they were not fully aware of the survivor’s lack of consent and stating that previous behavior by the victim justified the “misunderstanding.” There was [sensationalist media coverage](#) of a gang-rape by six men and one boy of a young woman in Palermo in July, including the circulation of videos and the publication of her name.

The government proposed [new measures to counter gender-based violence](#) following the June stabbing murder of a 29-year-old woman—seven months pregnant at the time—by her boyfriend. The draft law creates teams of specialized prosecutors, increases the use of electronic bracelets, increases prison sentences for recidivists, and allows for arrests based solely on video or photographic evidence within 48 hours of stalking, domestic violence, or violation of protection orders. [Women’s rights groups](#) criticized the bill for failing to include more preventive measures and sufficient financing. Following a June visit, the Council of Europe’s [Commissioner for Human Rights](#) expressed deep concern over the shortage of shelters and support services for women victims of gender-based violence.

In January, a senator from Prime Minister Meloni’s Brothers of Italy party tabled a [bill](#) to grant legal personhood from the moment of conception, which would effectively ban abortion. The bill had not yet been debated at time of writing.

# Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In March, a [Senate committee voted](#) against government support for a European Commission proposal for an EU directive to ensure cross-border recognition of same-sex parents. In January, the interior minister ordered all prefects to [annul transcriptions of births](#) identifying two gay or two lesbian parents, citing a December 2022 Supreme Court judgment and arguing that these couples must follow a particular adoption process. In June, a prosecutor in a city in northern Italy [ordered the cancellation](#) of 33 birth certificates of [lesbian couples' children](#). In July, the lower house of parliament approved a bill to make it a [crime to have a child via surrogacy](#) abroad (the practice is already illegal in Italy), punishable by up to two years in prison and up to a €1 million fine. At time of writing, the Senate had not yet voted on the bill.

An [online government survey](#) found that one-third of LGBT respondents reported experiencing a hostile working environment and 44 percent said they had been discriminated against. Italy remained [22nd out of 27 EU countries](#) in ILGA-Europe's annual ranking of respect for a range of rights of LGBT people. No official statistics on hate crimes against LGBT people were available.

## Rule of Law

In a report published in April, following a visit in 2022, the [Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture](#) expressed concern about overcrowding and conditions in Italian prisons (at 114 percent of official capacity when the committee visited), isolation regimes and the use of mechanical and chemical restraints in psychiatric facilities, and the de facto deprivation of liberty of older people in two social care establishments due to restrictions and lack of alternatives in the community. In its [yearly rule of law report](#), the European Commission noted an increase in lawsuits targeting journalists and narrowing of civic space and called on Italy to establish an independent human rights institution.