

RECENT STATISTICS REGARDING ERITREAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REGARDING ERITREA

*Compiled by The America Team for Displaced Eritreans
to January 25, 2024*

A. Eritrea's Rankings.

- In 2023, Eritrea was tied with North Korea as the fourth most “Not Free” country in the world. *Freedom House*.[\[1\]](#)
- In 2023, Eritrea had the world’s seventh highest number of jailed reporters, and the highest number in Africa. *Committee to Protect Journalists*.[\[2\]](#)
- In 2023, Eritrea was ranked 174th out of 180 countries for press freedom. *Reporters Without Borders*.[\[3\]](#)
- Eritrea ranked 176th out of 191 countries in the United Nations’ 2021-2022 Human Development Index. *United Nations Development Program*.[\[4\]](#)
- Eritrea ranked 162nd out of 180 countries in the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index. *Transparency International*.[\[5\]](#)
- Eritrea had the second highest prevalence of slavery in the world as of 2021 (following North Korea), according to the Global Slavery Index. *Walk Free*.[\[6\]](#)
- Eritrea ranked 171st out of 176 countries in the 2023 Index of Economic Freedom. *Heritage Foundation*.[\[7\]](#)

B. Worldwide Eritrean Refugee Population and Protection.[\[8\]](#)

- At the end of 2021, there were over 580,000 Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in the world. *Human Rights Watch*.[\[9\]](#) (Eritrea’s total population in-country was 3.8 million in 2023. *Worldometer*.[\[10\]](#) *World Population Review*.[\[11\]](#))
- In 2022, 37,357 Eritreans fled the country and applied for asylum elsewhere, amounting to 1% of Eritrea’s population. The most common destinations were Sudan, Egypt and Libya. *World Data*.[\[12\]](#) *UNHCR*.[\[13\]](#)
- As of December 31, 2023, 170,631 Eritrean refugees were living in Ethiopia. *UNHCR*. [\[14\]](#) In 2023, 126,000 Eritrean refugees lived in Sudan. *UNHCR*.[\[15\]](#) In 2020, approximately 13,000 lived in the UK. *Statista*.[\[16\]](#) In 2022, about 49,000 lived in Sweden. *Statista*.[\[17\]](#) In 2021, around 80,000 lived in Germany. *Wikipedia*, citing *Statista*.[\[18\]](#) In 2023, more than 40,000 lived in Switzerland. *SwissInfo.ch*.[\[19\]](#) In 2023, approximately 31,000 lived in Canada. *CTV News*.[\[20\]](#) In 2020, about 33,000 lived in Norway. *The [Norwegian] Municipality Profile*.[\[21\]](#)

C. U.S. Refugee Arrivals and Asylum Grants.

- Between 2012 and 2021, approximately 17,000 Eritrean refugees were admitted to and arrived in the U.S. through its regular immigration and resettlement process – the 9th largest contingent from any country. *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*.[\[22\]](#) Arrivals in recent years: 1763 (2013); 1445 (2014); 1576 (2015); 1924 (2016); 1912 (2017); 1260

(2018); 1750 (2019); 475 (2020); 185 (2021); 317 (2022). *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*.[\[23\]](#)

- Eritreans who had applied for asylum in the U.S. “defensively” (i.e., who were apprehended within the country as undocumented, or who had presented themselves at an American port of entry without an entry visa and had asked for asylum) were granted asylum in the following numbers: 233 (2013); 159 (2014); 138 (2015); 151 (2016); 238 (2017); 271 (2018); 320 (2019); 122 (2020); 72 (2021); 122 (2022). *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*.[\[24\]](#) Eritreans who had applied for asylum “affirmatively” (e.g., who had entered the U.S. with lawful documentation, such as a U.S. entry visa, and who later sought asylum) were granted asylum in the following numbers: 83 (2013); 147 (2014); 244 (2015); 257 (2016); 352 (2017); 328 (2018); 249 (2019); 171 (2020); 56 (2021); 92 (2022). *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*.[\[25\]](#) From October 1, 2022 to July 13, 2023, the U.S. granted asylum to 136 Eritreans, representing 79% of the asylum cases. *U.S. Executive Office for Immigration Review*.[\[26\]](#)

D. Other Numbers.

- **20,000+** – Deaths on the Central Mediterranean Route from 2014 through April 2023 (all nationalities). *International Organization for Migration*.[\[27\]](#)
- **2,500+** – Deaths on the Mediterranean (all routes, all nationalities), January through September 2023. *National Public Radio*.[\[28\]](#)
- **6** – The number of regional countries with which Eritrea has clashed militarily or in which it has interfered militarily under the current regime: Ethiopia (twice), Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Yemen (twice) and Democratic Republic of Congo. *Martin Plaut*.[\[29\]](#)
- **1** – The number of African countries in the United Nations General Assembly – solely Eritrea – which, on March 2, 2022, voted against a resolution condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. (The others voting against were Russia, Belarus, North Korea and Syria.)[\[30\]](#)

[1] https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/FIW_World_2023_DigitalPDF.pdf

[2] <https://cpj.org/reports/2024/01/2023-prison-census-jailed-journalist-numbers-near-record-high-israel-imprisonments-spike/> and <https://cpj.org/2024/01/israel-among-top-jailers-of-journalists-worldwide-as-imprisonments-globally-continue-unabated-cpj-finds/>

[3] <https://rsf.org/en/2023-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-threatened-fake-content-industry>

[4] https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf

[5] <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>

[6] <https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/>

[7] <https://www.heritage.org/index/ranking>

[8] No authoritative, comprehensive and fully explanatory source appears to exist for the numbers of Eritreans, or Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers, in the world and in various countries. The statistics that follow in Topic B appear to vary in (or often to be unclear about) their inclusion of different things: Eritreans who were born in Eritrea, ethnic Eritreans who were born in the country to which the statistics pertain, Eritreans who fled the country before its independence versus those who fled under the subsequent and current regime, family members and descendants of any of the foregoing, economic migrants in addition to refugees and asylum seekers, refugees who became citizens in their host country, refugees who have not registered as such with the United Nations. In addition, because the figures are drawn from a variety of sources, they likely were assembled by way of varying methodologies; so comparisons from one country to the next might not be fully appropriate. That is, the figures in Topic B are more indicative than absolute. The America Team has been unable to ascertain even an approximate figure for Eritreans living in the U.S. – of any of the above descriptions; but our colleagues in the Eritrean community here believe that the number, liberally inclusive, exceeds 100,000.

[9] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/eritrea#:~:text=There%20were%20over%20580%2C000%20Eritrean,of%20human%20rights%20in%20Eritrea> .

[10] <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/eritrea-population/>

[11] <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/eritrea-population> . The figure is uncertain, and estimates vary, as Eritrea does not conduct a census.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Eritrea#:~:text=Population-Sources%20disagree%20as%20to%20the%20current%20population%20of%20Eritrea%2C%20with,of%206.7%20million%20for%202019.

[12] <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/eritrea/asylum.php>

[13] <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022> , at p. 32

[14] <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/eth>

[15] [https://www.unhcr.org/in/countries/sudan#:~:text=Sudan%20hosts%201.1%20million%20refugees,126%2C000%20Eritrean%20refugees%20\(11%25\)](https://www.unhcr.org/in/countries/sudan#:~:text=Sudan%20hosts%201.1%20million%20refugees,126%2C000%20Eritrean%20refugees%20(11%25)) . The Sudan figure may have been calculated before Sudan fell into a period of intense internal violence in mid-2023, at which point many Eritrean refugees living there fled – primarily to Ethiopia, South Sudan and Egypt.

[16] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1253366/eritrea-population-in-united-kingdom/#:~:text=There%20were%20approximately%2013%20thousand,2017%20with%2035%20thousand%20nationals>.

[17] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/525889/sweden-number-of-african-immigrants-by-country-of-birth/>

[18] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eritrea%E2%80%93Germany_relations#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20just%20under%2080%2C000,six%20million%20in%20Eritrea%20itself.

[19] <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/society/explainer-the-flare-up-in-clashes-among-eritreans-in-switzerland/48784472#:~:text=Today%20the%20Eritrean%20Media%20Association,at%20the%20end%20of%202020>.

[20] <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/why-are-clashes-between-eritrean-groups-breaking-out-in-canada-and-across-the-globe-1.6552518#:~:text=There%20are%20around%2031%2C000%20Eritrean,came%20between%202016%20and%202021>.

[21] https://www.kommuneprofilen.no/Profil/Befolkning/DinRegion/bef_innvandrere_land_region.aspx

[22] https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/2022_0920_plcy_refugees_and_asylees_fy2021.pdf, at p. 5.

[23] <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/refugees-asylees> (see Refugees and Asylees Data Tables 2022 at Table 14d). The drop in numbers in the later years reflects the substantially more restrictive refugee admissions policies of the Trump administration (2017-2021) than the Obama administration (2009-2017), and the greatly reduced resettlement capacity that immediately followed the Trump years.

[24] <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/refugees-asylees> (see Refugees and Asylees Data Tables 2022 at Table 19d)

[25] <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/refugees-asylees> (see Refugees and Asylees Data Tables 2022 at Table 17d)

[26] <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1107366/download>

[27] <https://www.iom.int/news/deadliest-quarter-migrants-central-mediterranean-2017#:~:text=Geneva%2FBerlin%20%E2%80%93%20The%20International%20Organization,quarter%20on%20record%20since%202017>

[28] <https://www.npr.org/2023/09/29/1202560292/migrants-mediterranean-deaths-2023#:~:text=More%20than%202%2C500%20migrants%20died,according%20to%20the%20UNited%20Nations>

[29] <https://martinplaut.com/2017/07/09/eritreas-forgotten-wars>

[30] <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/figure-of-the-week-african-countries-votes-on-the-un-resolution-condemning-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/#:~:text=Eight%20African%20countries%2C%20including%20Cameroon,%2C%20North%20Korea%2C%20and%20Syria>