Applications for protection in 2024 decrease by half compared to last year

In 2024, the Directorate of Immigration received 1,944 applications for international protection, representing a 50% decrease from the previous year (4,168 applications).

The majority of applicants were Ukrainian citizens (1,235), followed by Venezuelans (193)—a notable 90% drop from 2023 (1,592). Other significant applicant groups included individuals from Palestine (115), Nigeria (52), and Afghanistan (43). Applicants came from 60 different countries, and 100 applications were submitted by individuals reapplying for protection in Iceland.

Applications were submitted by 1,565 adults and 379 children, with a nearly even gender split: 991 male and 953 female applicants.

Figures of applications processed

The Directorate of Immigration processed 3,416 applications, slightly fewer than the previous year (3,915). Of these:

3,098 decisions were issued.
284 applications were withdrawn.
34 repeat applications were rejected without further review.

Figures on protection

309 individuals received refugee status, subsidiary protection, or humanitarian leave following substantive review.

Most were from Venezuela (81), Palestine (61), Iran (29), and Afghanistan (27).

An additional 1,133 individuals—primarily Ukrainians—received humanitarian permits under collective protection due to mass displacement.

Protection permits are typically valid for two to three years, while humanitarian permits are valid for one year, all renewable if conditions persist.

Rejections and non-substantive decisions

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1,251 applicants were denied protection after substantive review, with the highest numbers from:

Venezuela (983)
Somalia (50)
Colombia (41)
Nigeria (36)

404 applications were not reviewed on the merits, primarily due to existing protection or residence in other countries. The main nationalities in this category were:

Venezuela (133)
Nigeria (54)
Palestine (53)
Ukraine (47)

Processing times

Applications due to mass displacement from Ukraine were typically processed within 3 days.
The overall average processing time was 259 days, with substantive cases averaging 305 days.
This was significantly impacted by the backlog of Venezuelan cases.
By Q4-2024 , the average processing time had improved to 249 days.
Non-substantive cases averaged 113 days, while applications from safe countries of origin were typically resolved in 11 days.

Figures on voluntary return

The Directorate assisted 1,227 individuals with voluntary repatriation after their applications were rejected or withdrawn, more than double the 495 assisted in 2023. Venezuelan nationals accounted for the majority (993 individuals).

Source(s)

- Directorate of Immigration | Útlendingastofnun (30 January, 2025), Umsóknir um vernd helmingi færri en á síðasta ári [Applications for protection halved as low as last year], https://island.is/s/utlendingastofnun/frett/umsoknir-um-vernd-helmingi-faerri-en-a-sidasta-ari

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