

APRIL 2022

# THE SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



*Welcome to the 7th edition of the Samos Legal Centre's newsletter! In April, more new arrivals were registered in Samos than in any previous month of 2022 or 2021. Our team has been busy with interview preparations, challenged by further movement restrictions on camp residents. Data regarding the current camp population demographics from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is included below.*



## ADDITIONAL MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS ON NEW ARRIVALS IN SAMOS

In April, a total of 178 new arrivals were registered in Samos camp, having made the dangerous crossing by boat from Turkey. Further movement restrictions were imposed by the authorities this month, limiting access to legal aid.



Since November 2021, extensive movement restrictions have been imposed on camp residents who do not possess a valid asylum seeker, who are not permitted to exit and re-enter the camp. In April, significant delays occurred in issuing asylum seeker cards to new arrivals, with many waiting 2 or more weeks to receive them. During this time, many received their interview dates, and their asylum interviews took place on either the same date their card was issued, or days before receiving their cards.

From the morning of 28th April, ASF France heard from its beneficiaries that they had been denied exit from the camp despite having appointments with lawyers, and informed that they must wait to receive their asylum cards to be allowed exit. For many, they were now faced with the prospect of undergoing their asylum interviews before ever having an opportunity to seek independent legal support outside the camp. No official decision from the authorities has been issued about this change in policy.

ASF France is currently trying a combination of remote preparations for those without, and in-person appointments for those with asylum seeker cards, sending audio guides to every beneficiary requesting support, and remaining flexible to ensure beneficiaries have access to legal support. A further submission to the Greek Ombudsman is planned as it is feared some arrivals could be detained beyond the 25 days permitted in law.

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## Meet the team!

*This month, two new caseworkers joined the Samos Legal Centre team*



**Caroline -Caseworker**  
*"The right to seek asylum cannot be ensured if applicants do not have all the information at their disposal to have any chance of being successful. Our main task is to try to fill this gap."*



[Read the full interview here](#)



**Jessica-Caseworker**  
*"If people could not come and get advice from organisations such as ASF France, I think that a lot of people who need international protection would not be granted it."*



[Read the full interview here](#)

## 70 The number of the month

In April, an average of 70 messages per day were sent on the ASF France hotline to support asylum seekers and refugees with information and advice.

This month, there was a significant increase in arrivals to Samos, with approximately 170 people being registered. The Legal Centre welcomed 57 new beneficiaries (36 men and 21 women), originating mainly from DRC, Cameroon and Sierra Leone.

The 'fast track' border procedure continued to be implemented, with the Greek asylum service calling several ASF France beneficiaries for interviews with less than 24 hours notice. The Centre's caseworkers had to adapt quickly and provide emergency preparation sessions for applicants due to have asylum interviews in a matter of hours. Group information sessions were conducted to ensure as many applicants as possible were informed of their rights. In total, 56 interview preparation appointments (lasting 2 hours each) were delivered in April.



**+ 178**

New arrivals in April



## Focus on the camp population

**412**

People living in the camp

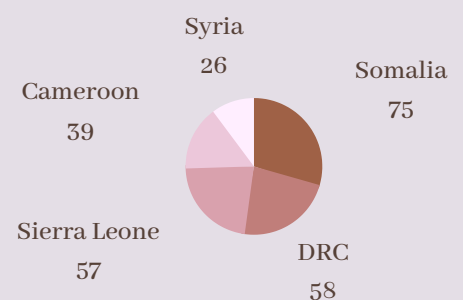
249 men

91 women

58 children



coming from :



\*141 people come from another country

**20** Unaccompanied minors live in the camp

Figures from the UNHCR