

JULY 2022

THE SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the 10th edition of the Samos Legal Centre newsletter! This month, temperatures continued to rise in Samos as the number of new arrivals crossing by boat from Turkey increased. The team welcomed 55 new beneficiaries and celebrated more positive decisions, particularly a rare appeal success.

Read all about this and our new team members below!

Appeal success story



In Greece, obtaining international protection at the appeal stage is difficult. Once a person receives a rejection after their main asylum interview, they can request legal aid to fight this negative decision. In 2021, only 1 in 10 appeals were successful.

In Samos, the ASF France lawyers receive multiple requests each week for appeal support. The team is dedicated to ensuring high quality appeals are submitted, and that applicants are properly informed of the reasons for the rejection in a language they can understand. Although state lawyers are available to write appeals, beneficiaries attest that they often have limited capacity to actually meet their clients in person, and properly explain the reasons their asylum application was rejected.

V* is one such rare case, who received a positive decision on her appeal this month.

"It was such a surprise. I couldn't even eat, I was so happy! I waited in that camp for 9 months. After being rejected the first time, I was so so stressed. But because I trusted you, and many people said they felt safe with ASF, I was faithful- and in the end the result was good!"

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EU Turkey Deal- success story



"I'm very happy. I waited 4 months to learn if I passed the Turkey interview, but less than 2 for the Somali one. Maybe they understood Somalia can be dangerous. I'll work a lot now for my family at home."

Because of new legislation, M*, along with every Somali person who arrived in Greece after June 2021, did not originally have the chance to tell the Asylum Service about the dangers he faced in his own country. Instead, he first had to prove that he could not be safe in Turkey, a country he had transited through briefly in his attempts to seek safety.

When the Asylum Service accepted that he could not access medical treatment for his injuries in Turkey, only then was he called for an interview about Somalia. He contacted the Legal Centre for preparation support, and was accompanied on the day by an ASF France lawyer. She supported him in recounting the danger he faced and the persecution he was fleeing from.

This week, M* was granted international protection from Greece. His is a rare case. M* reports that of the 35 Somalis who arrived in his boat, only 2 received positive decisions from Greece.

Avocats sans Frontières France believes this new legislation is unfair and has called for its revocation.

Meet the team!



→ [Read the full interview here](#)



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55 The number of the month

278 consultations took place at the Samos Legal Centre during July. The team welcomed 55 new beneficiaries, reflecting the rising number of asylum seekers reaching Samos by boat from Turkey. According to figures from the Ministry of Migration, 106 new arrivals were registered in Samos this month, bringing the total camp population to 482 persons. Owing to the non-completion of administrative procedures, namely the vulnerability assessment required by law before the asylum interview, many applicants had their interviews postponed this month. The team worked hard to reschedule appointments and conducted 140 follow-up preparations and 'check-in' sessions to manage different cases. To our knowledge, at least 14 of ASF France's beneficiaries received positive decisions in July. At least 16 reported receiving rejections, and 4 of these were undertaken as appeal cases by ASF



Context update: Temperature and camp conditions



In July, temperatures continued to rise rapidly in Samos. Owing to the remote location of the Zervou 'Closed-Controlled' facility and the limited shaded areas inside, ASF France beneficiaries reported that life in the camp remains challenging. Additionally, ongoing movement restrictions limit who can exit and enter freely, leaving residents feeling 'stressed,' 'anxious' and 'marginalised.'

"The camp is stressful. It is great that they give us food twice a day, but it is boiling hot now. I go out of the camp as much as possible to volunteer with organisations, and interact with other people, to distract myself. I am afraid that if I get a negative decision, I won't be allowed to leave anymore." - S

"If you don't have appointments with lawyers, doctors or the asylum service, you stay in your room and think a lot. I don't meet so many people because I am scared to meet people from my country who will know my story. So I stay in my container alone." - M

ASF France continues to meet its beneficiaries outside the facility in its office in central Vathy. For applicants who cannot exit the camp, remote appointments by phone are conducted. The team is committed to ensuring independent legal support remains visible to asylum seekers in Samos.