

# THE SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the 4th edition of the Samos Legal Centre's newsletter! Our team wishes you, your family and friends good health, happiness and success in the New Year. Happy 2022! While our team is continuously adapting its support to provide its legal services, we are delighted to be able to share with you more in-depth information about the actions taken by the team for the asylum seekers on Samos, and an update on the context there.



## ONGOING MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS



In November's newsletter, we spoke about the movement restrictions which had been imposed on almost half of the camp residents in Samos, preventing them from leaving the camp except on medical grounds and visits with lawyers. With no sign of the restrictions ending, and no response received from the Greek authorities as to why the measures had been imposed, ASF France joined with the legal actors in Samos to write to the Greek Ombudsman in January and issue a further joint statement, calling for an end to the restrictions.

Testimony from our beneficiaries has highlighted the impact of the restrictions on their psychological well-being, as many feel removed from integration supports and basic services. As the Closed-Controlled facility is located in a remote part of the island, many beneficiaries expressed feelings of isolation and stress. For those who can exit, extensive security checks are carried out, with bags, clothing and personal items removed and checked.

*"It has affected me psychologically, as a person who feels that he is in a prison, and this way of thinking is slowly killing me. It's literally a prison for people who can't get out."*

*"There are many things that I cannot do now. I need to walk in the open. I am a human being. I don't feel free, I am very stressed."*

*"I don't understand why I can't leave. Before I could go out sometimes, I was studying at Alpha Centre. Now for weeks I haven't been able to go to school. I am stuck here with no information."*

## Meet the team!



Saïmi  
Caseworker

*"Being able to assist them individually and in a very concrete way is what I wanted the most."*

→ [Read the full interview here](#)



Ilaria  
Caseworker

*"Knowledge is power: being informed enables asylum seekers to exercise their rights."*

→ [Read the full interview here](#)

## 61 The number of the month

61 consultations took place in the Legal Centre Samos by the Avocats Sans Frontières France team members in December, with the team welcoming 7 new beneficiaries and preparing 12 people for their asylum interviews.

As interviews took place throughout December, the hotline remained active all month and over the holiday period, with 46 people receiving personal, detailed and timely responses to their questions in their language.

The team's Greek lawyers submitted 23 requests to the authorities, resulting in 3 beneficiaries receiving a lift of their geographical restrictions as a result, and being able to move off the island.



## An overview of the Workshops



ASF France regularly offers information workshops to asylum seekers and volunteers, in community centres on Samos and online. These workshops are an opportunity to widely disseminate information to camp residents about their rights, to promote empowerment, and to answer their questions about the procedures. Our team explains the steps in the procedure, the rights afforded to asylum seekers, and the criteria they will be assessed on. In January, a workshop in partnership with the NGO Samos Volunteers was organised to disseminate information to their community volunteers who could then spread awareness within the camp, particularly to those who could not exit owing to the ongoing movement restrictions. A workshop for women-only was also organised in January, to spread information in a confidential setting and focus on gender issues and their specific vulnerabilities.

ASF France also organizes regular online Zoom information workshops for international volunteers coming to Samos. These workshops aim to provide a basic understanding of the legal context for non-legal actors. They help raise awareness of the existence of the Legal Centre's services to promote referrals for those needing legal support, and encourage volunteers to manage the expectations of asylum seekers going through these complex proceedings.