

THE SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the 17th edition of the Samos Legal Centre Newsletter! With 224 registered arrivals to the island and 77 new beneficiaries coming to the Legal Centre, February was a busy month for the ASF France team. Read a good news story, a team member introduction and context updates below!

Meet the team! -Anouck Soubeyran- Caseworker

With a masters degree in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and extensive experience of legal advising in France, Anouck's skills and expertise have been a valuable addition to the Legal Centre. Here she explains about her experience in Samos so far:

I joined the team because I want to become a fully committed and conscious lawyer, specialised in human rights. Being on the field, at Europe's borders, is the only way to truly understand how inhumane European migration policies are. Samos is one of the first frontiers of this EU fortress and a real battlefield between NGOs and the Greek authorities at times.



The relationship with beneficiaries is undoubtedly the most fulfilling part of working at the Legal Centre. Sometimes, being confronted by the cruelty of the Greek asylum system is difficult, but when I am in a preparation meeting with a beneficiary, and I can see that progressively they manage to talk to me, smile at me and speak up for themselves, I feel really useful. Because casework is not only about explaining the legal procedure and their rights, it's also about being supportive, trustworthy and listening to applicants.



[Read the full interview here](#)

Good news story- ASF France Arabic interpreter receives refugee status



This month, P* received refugee status in Samos. During his time on the island, he supported the Legal Centre with interpretation support to prepare applicants for their asylum interviews and appeal procedures. His kindness, empathy and diligence was recognized by all the team, and helped reassure anxious applicants and provide cultural mediation.

"This positive decision feels like victory. If you can imagine how it is to cross that water, that moment was so bad, terrifying. So receiving the decision is like succeeding. I am proud and very happy. The next step after receiving all the documents and being legal in Greece is looking for a job. I would like to stay here and enjoy life, and feel like a human being again." - P

The ASF France team extends its immense gratitude to P* for all his support, and best wishes for the future!

Context updates

Continued restrictions on NGOs accessing Closed- Controlled Access Centre

In February, NGOs continued to be barred from accessing the CCAC unless their staff had fulfilled complex registration procedures, meaning no recreation, educational or primary medical support was provided in the camp for a further month. S*, an ASF France beneficiary, highlighted the current atmosphere in the facility:

"Well, it's a camp, whatever about the buildings and the improved infrastructure. It feels like you're trapped. Because there are a lot of people inside, the environment is difficult and there are so many rumours. It's hard to know what information is true, and that's very stressful to deal with all the time. And now there is no doctor inside, and without the NGOs, there is nothing to do to distract yourself from the endless waiting to know if you have been accepted or not."



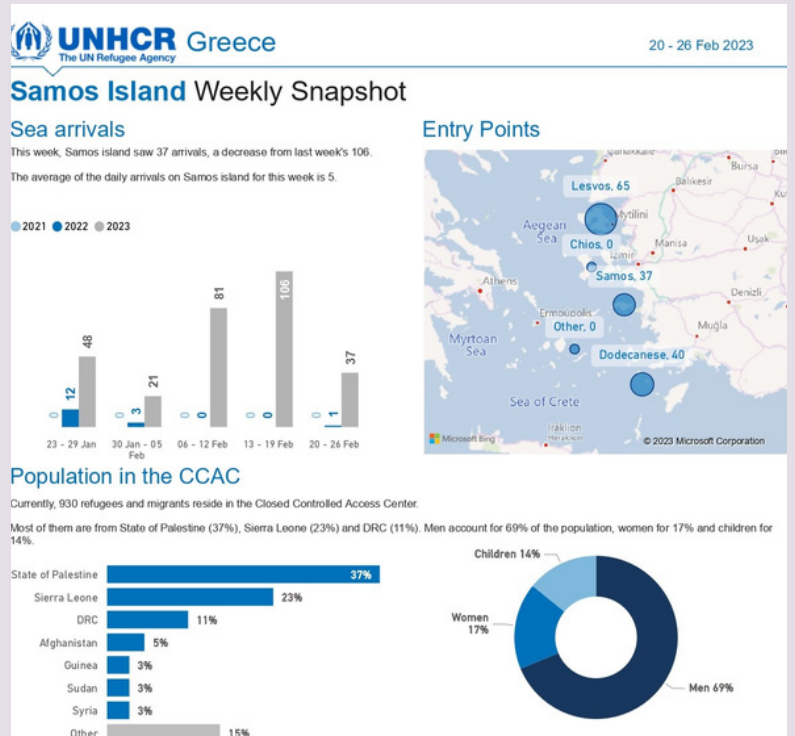
Camp population demographics

959 asylum seekers and refugees currently reside in the camp in Samos. 272 new arrivals were registered in Samos in February and more than 129 people were transferred from the island to facilities on the mainland.

UNHCR figures from 20-26 February estimate that:

- 37% of the population originate from the State of Palestine;
- 23% from Sierra Leone;
- 11% from DRC;
- 5% from Afghanistan;
- 3% from Guinea, 3% from Syria, 3% from Sudan;
- 15% from 'Other' unspecified countries.

Men account for 69% of the population, women for 17% and children for 14%.



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Number of the month

30 referrals were sent by the Samos Legal Centre team this month, primarily to request psychological support for its applicants. Newly arrived asylum seekers are interviewed very quickly in Samos. They face difficult questions and are expected to recount traumatic events, which renders them vulnerable to retraumatization. During interview preparation appointments, ASF France caseworkers identify vulnerabilities and ensure applicants are referred to supportive services, such as Médecins Sans Frontières.

77 new beneficiaries were welcomed to the Legal Centre this month, and 83 interview preparation appointments were conducted. The ASF France lawyers submitted 47 requests to the authorities to advocate for applicants and 71 sessions to manage ongoing cases were carried out.

This month, at least 5 beneficiaries received refugee status in Samos!

