

APRIL 2023

THE SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the 19th edition of the Samos Legal Centre Newsletter!

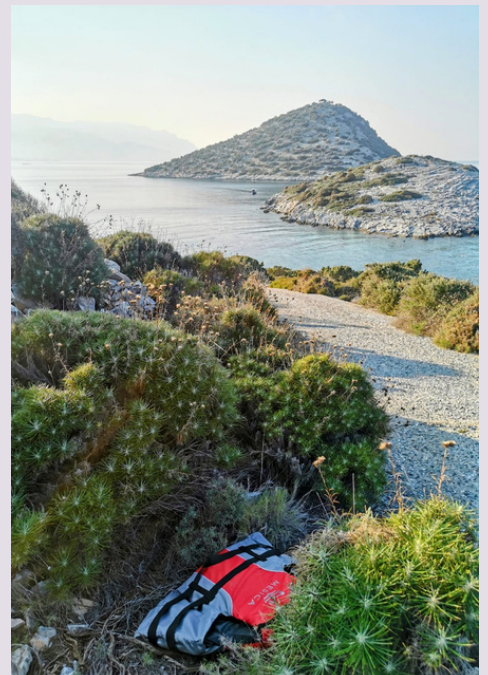


Read about a joint statement on deteriorating conditions in the Samos CCAC, further testimony of 'pushbacks' from Samos, a good news story, and context updates below!

'Pushback survivor'- testimony of K*, survivor of multiple pushbacks from Greece.

Seeking asylum is a human right, set out in international law. The majority of ASF France beneficiaries testify that they were violently expelled back from Greek land or sea territory, at least once, before finally managing to register their asylum claim in Samos. K* from Mali, a country experiencing deep insecurity and instability, is one such beneficiary. Here he recounts his multiple attempts to seek asylum in Greece.

"The first time, we were about 5 minutes away from landing on Samos. It was 2am. The coastguard appeared and took us into their big boat. They searched us, and took people's money and phones. They even beat some people. Then they put us back into our little boat and towed us out to sea, into Turkish waters. They left us floating there, and we saw that they had removed the engine from our boat. They left us with one phone, and because the sea was really rough and we were scared, we called the Turkish coastguard to help us. When the Turks arrived, they put us in prison for two weeks, and released us without giving us a chance to apply for asylum. So we tried again, and the exact same thing happened when we tried to cross the second time. On my third attempt, I made it into the bushes in Samos and eventually to the camp. This time they didn't push me back." Read on [here](#)



Good news story- E* receives refugee status in Samos

This month, at least 5 of ASF France beneficiaries received refugee status in Samos. Here E* explains in her own words about the asylum interview process:

"I was told by people in the camp, you must see this organization, you have to talk about your story. So that is why I came to you. When I received the decision, I was very emotional. Now I am going to be able to take care of myself. First, I want to take the time to take care of myself, to be healthy. Then I want to study. I want to work in an association to defend female victims of sexual violence, especially migrants."

Read the rest of E*'s feedback [here](#).



ASF France advocacy: Joint statement on deteriorating conditions in the Samos CCAC

Throughout the months of March and April, ASF France received multiple reports of deteriorating conditions in the Samos 'Closed-Controlled Access Centre.' Residents reported having their asylum interviews and medical appointments postponed multiple times owing to a lack of available interpreters in the CCAC. Issues surrounding the quantity and the quality of food served in the facility were highlighted, with ASF France receiving pictures of meals that had expiry dates from more than one year before.

With 4 local actors in Samos, it issued a joint statement, calling for the closure of the facility and requesting a more humane response to people seeking safety.

Read the full statement [here](#).



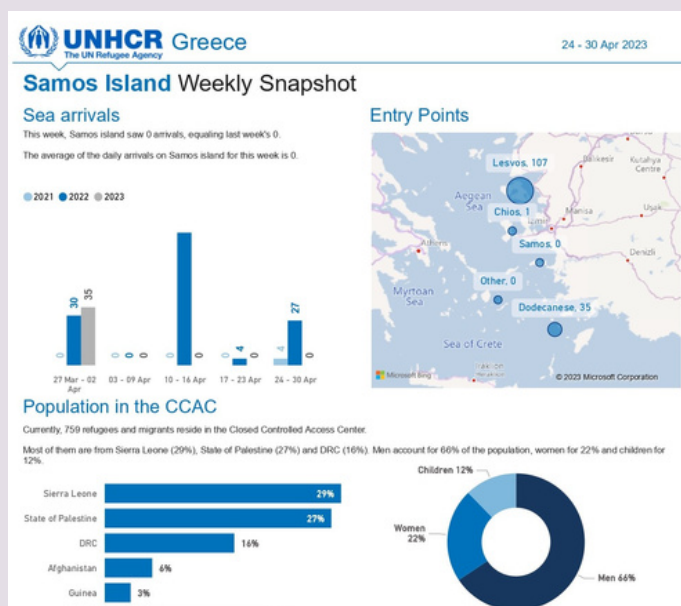
Context updates

The latest figures from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum state that 776 asylum seekers and refugees live in Samos, with 759 residing in the CCAC. 0 new arrivals were registered in Samos in April and more than 43 people were transferred from the island to facilities on the mainland.

UNHCR figures from 24-30 April estimate that:

- 29% of the camp population originate from Sierra Leone;
- 27% from Palestine;
- 16% from DRC;
- 6% from Afghanistan;
- 3% from Guinea;
- 19% from 'Other' unspecified countries.

It stated that men account for 66% of the population, women for 22% and children for 12%.



84

Number of the month

84 sessions to manage the asylum requests of ASF France beneficiaries were conducted in April. This month was challenging for asylum seekers in Samos, as interviews and appointments were continuously postponed owing to a lack of interpreters, and conditions in the camp deteriorated. These sessions ensure the team can inform applicants of developments in their cases, refer them to psycho-social supportive services, and monitor external context changes.

A total of 206 consultations took place at the Legal Centre in April, including 26 first consultations with new beneficiaries, 42 interview preparations, 37 requests to asylum and camp authorities, 4 interview accompaniments and 11 appeal appointments.

