

THE SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER

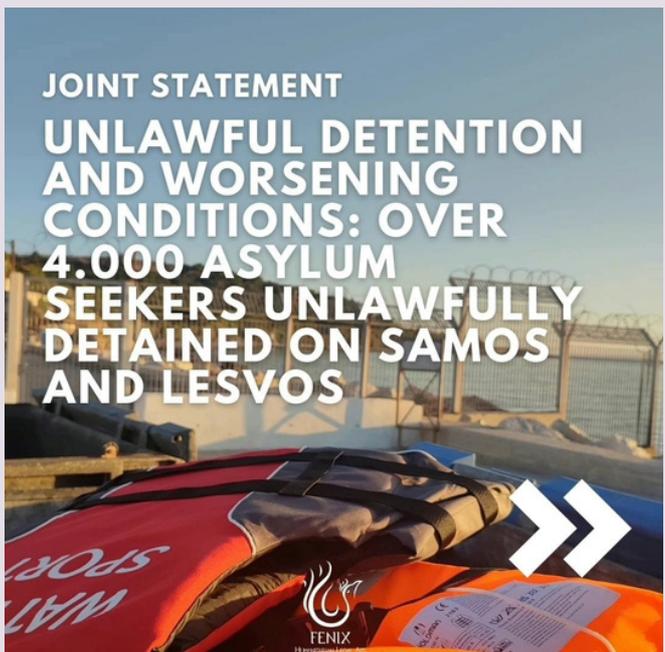


Welcome to the 24th edition of the Samos Legal Centre newsletter. The Closed-Controlled Access Centre reached over 200% of its capacity this month, as 3010 asylum seekers arrived at the island. As reception conditions in the facility worsened, actors in Samos and Greece joined together to call for an immediate end to arrival detention. Read more below!

ADVOCACY

Joint call from 22 organizations calling for an end to unlawful detention practices in Samos and Lesbos

As mentioned in August's newsletter, when asylum seekers arrive in Samos and Lesbos, they are placed en masse into unlawful detention in appalling conditions in the EU-funded Closed Controlled Access Centers (CCACs) while awaiting registration of their asylum requests. In September, the numbers in detention reached several hundred as waiting times for registrations began to exceed 3 weeks. During this period, applicants cannot leave the camp, **have no access to clean clothing, legal aid, and very limited medical support.** Their phones continue to be taken for the first 5-7 days, so they cannot inform their loved ones that they arrived safely. By 30 September, ASF France was in contact with more than 150 arrivals in quarantine detention, and MSF was describing the camp the conditions as 'extremely concerning', underlining "a lack of access to medical care, degrading hygiene conditions and limited access to basic services provisions."



On 18th September, ASF France, along with 21 other organizations in Greece, signed a joint statement, calling for an immediate end to the practice of illegal detention and highlighting the mass violations of the right to liberty under Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The statement showed how the practice risks infringing upon Article 3 of the ECHR's prohibition against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment and violates both Greek and EU law, which stipulate that detention should only be used as a last resort and be accompanied by an individualized detention order. Read more [here](#).

Complaint to the Greek Ombudsman

Following this joint statement, as its beneficiaries and incoming new arrivals continued to be detained for 25+ days, the ASF France team drafted a complaint to the Greek Ombudsman, an independent monitoring authority. It included 44 of its cases who were being illegally detained for more than 25 days (including unaccompanied minors, applicants with health conditions and single women). Two additional organisations, I Have Rights and Médecins Sans Frontières, added a further 19 cases to the submission. Additionally, the team wrote and called the First Reception on behalf of 89 applicants (including 5 unaccompanied minors being housed with adults) who were being illegally detained for more than 25 days, resulting in the faster registration of some, while others remain in detention awaiting registration. Audio guides are sent in 6 languages to applicants awaiting registration procedures and the team has adapted to ensure one person is responding to requests on the hotline continuously each day, to reduce the waiting time for applicants to receive answers to their information requests.

Second anniversary of the 'Closed-Controlled Access Centre'



On 18th September, the ASF France team partnered with I Have Rights to mark the second anniversary of the opening of the Closed-Controlled Access Centre in Samos. The teams contrasted the promises made by the Ministry of Migration for 'safe' and 'dignified' accommodation for asylum seekers at the Centre, versus the reality seen today.

See the comparison [here](#) and [here](#).

CONTEXT

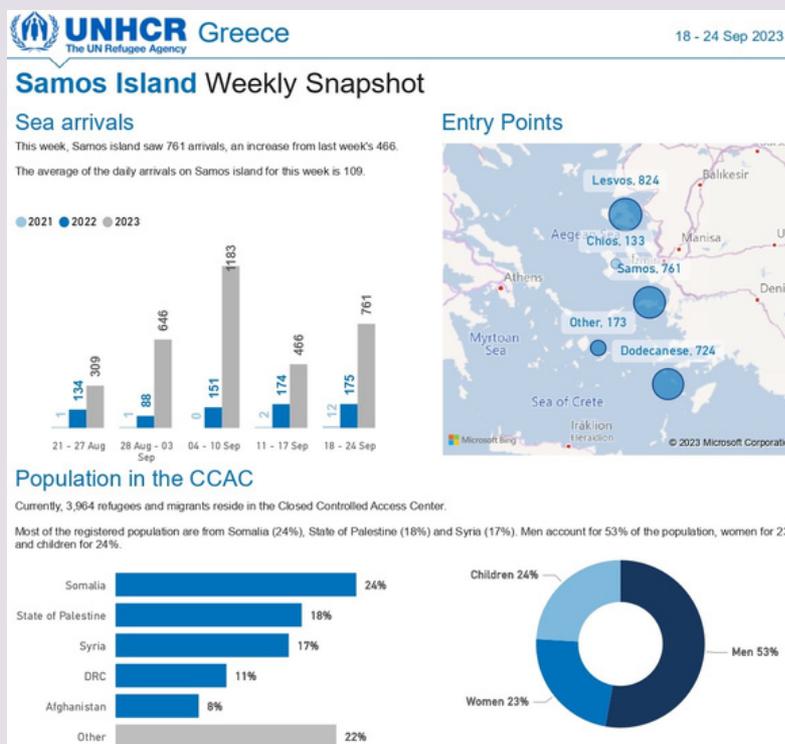
Samos 'Closed-Controlled Access Centre' population updates

The latest figures from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum state that 4264 asylum seekers and refugees live in Samos, a significant increase from last month's 1864 and July's 599. 4250 reside in the CCAC, with the facility now over 200% of its original capacity for 2040 persons. 3010 new arrivals were registered in Samos in September and more than 746 people were transferred from the island to facilities on the mainland, including 66 of ASF France's beneficiaries.

UNHCR figures from 18-24 September estimated that :

- 24% of the camp population originate from Somalia;
- 18% from Palestine;
- 17% from Syria;
- 11% from DRC,
- 8% from Afghanistan;
- 22% from 'Other' unspecified countries.

It stated that men account for 53% of the population, women for 23% and children for 24%. At the Coordination meeting on 27th September, MSF advised that 84 babies less than 1 years old resided in the CCAC, while 665 children aged 1-12 years old had been registered.



Number of the month

In September, the Closed-Controlled Access Centre in Samos reached over 200% of its capacity, as 3010 new arrivals were registered on the island and the total camp population reached over 4200. All new arrivals are placed into illegal 'de facto' detention, sometimes lasting 3-4 weeks. The Samos Legal Centre team submitted a complaint to the Greek Ombudsman, an independent monitoring authority, to highlight 44 vulnerable cases whose detention had exceeded 25 days and was illegal under national law. In addition to its ongoing cases, the team supported 89 asylum seekers, who had arrived on Samos and were awaiting registration of their asylum requests. 46 new beneficiaries were welcomed for interview preparation support, and 73 preparation sessions were conducted. This month, 4 ASF France beneficiaries reported receiving a positive decision and were granted refugee status in Samos !

