

SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Context update

As conditions in the Samos CCAC deteriorate and access to rights becomes ever more complicated, the work of the Samos Legal Centre team is all the more vital.

Since 14 May, there has been a major interpreting problem in the camp, leading to a breakdown in communication between the camp authorities and asylum seekers. This shortcoming is having an impact on the legal procedures, as the lack of interpreters means that a large number of interviews are being postponed, sometimes several times, with no indication of when they will be rescheduled, leaving asylum seekers in a state of incomprehension and our team having to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.



Apart from the strictly asylum-related aspects, living conditions in the camp are not improving, with very limited access to water (1.5 litres a day) despite rising temperatures, forcing people to queue for hours in the sun to receive food that will be difficult to keep for more than a day.

Focus on our activities



Workshops and Q&A

48

asylum seekers attended to legal workshops

43

non legal actors from other NGOs have been made aware of the Samos context and the asylum procedure

6

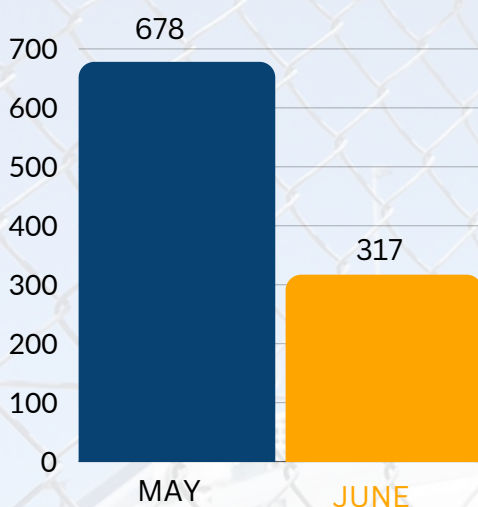
workshops were proposed, to asylum seekers and workers from other NGOs

Every month, ASF Samos team travels to the facilities of other partner organisations to give free presentations on the asylum procedure and answer questions for asylum seekers. These public information workshops are designed to reach a different audience from the clients already assisted by the legal centre.

Indeed, thanks to frequent workshops in the “AlphaLand” site of the Samos Volunteers association near the camp, ASF is able to reach out to people who do not have the financial means to take the bus (4 euros return fare) or the physical capacity or health to walk to the legal centre in town.

WORK IN FIGURES

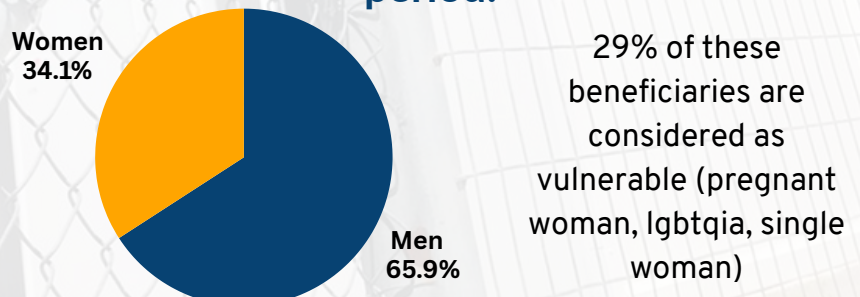
Number of arrivals over the last period:



Our team over the last period:



People directly supported over the last period:



70

individual preparations for asylum interviews

THANK YOU VALENTIN AND EMMA !



We wish them all the best in their future projects !

Welcome back Lucile!

We also very happy to welcome back in the team in June Lucile as the Project Manager of the Legal Centre.

She already has a knowledge of the Samos' context and the project, as she worked in the team as a Legal Officer at the end of last year.

Her previous experience across Greece will definitely be of great value to the team.

This newsletter is an opportunity for the team to warmly thank **Valentin** and **Emma** who have accompanied the project as legal caseworkers for the last 6 months between January and June.

Without their work and daily investment in the project with asylum seekers, the project would not have been able to pursue its objective of making the asylum procedure accessible and informing those concerned of their rights.

Valentin's professionalism, curiosity and ability to keep a close eye on the situation were highly beneficial both to the team and the applicants he met.

We should also mention the invaluable help he was able to provide thanks to his knowledge of Arabic.

Likewise, Emma's unfailing commitment, autonomy, empathy and rigorous approach to work enabled her to quickly gain the trust of the entire team, who enjoyed working with her.



Appeal & Research

As part of their work, the caseworkers support the work of the Greek lawyers by carrying out legal research on an ad hoc basis. This research is used, for example, when drafting appeals or memos after a negative decision.

Starting with the person's story, we have to find concordant elements in the law or news of the country concerned, in order to defend the legal argument raised in the appeal or memo.

Taking an appeal implements to ask for the folder of the person, read all the documents inside including the decision and the transcript, to prepare notes for the appointment with the person, to do the appointment (2-3 hours usually), to write the appeal and to submit it. In parallel, it is important to be aware of the date of hearing in order to ask and prepare the document in order send them to the appeals authority in time.



6

appeals case were followed in
the past two months

10

days is the average time spent
on an appeal case by the
lawyer

Advocacy

At the end of may, the Samos Legal Centre contributed to a joint complaint signed by many legal organisations in Greece. This complaint aimed to denounced the lack of interpreters in the camp since this situation make it harder for the asylum seekers to have access to information about the procedure and leave them without protection.

You can read the full joined complaint [here](#).

In addition, we are participating with I Have Rights and HRLP in addressing a complaint to the Greek Asylum Service on interviews being conducted remotely. This practice doesn't respect the law and has led in some cases to negative judgments of the decisions on the requests for asylum.

TESTIMONY - S*, 23, SIERRA LEONE

Living in a closed camp : social isolation and mental health deterioration

S. is from Sierra Leone and arrived in Greece in March 2023.

He was forced to leave his country of origin because of his political commitments. In particular, he was searched by the police because of his participation in demonstrations denouncing the government.

In search of safety, he illegally left Sierra Leone and travelled to another country. His journey was particularly dangerous and traumatic, as he was the victim of several acts of violence, including sexual violence.

Although he managed to escape and reach Samos, his time on the island was very difficult. S. had to live with other members of his community, and once they found out about his story, he suffered bullying and violent remarks from other people in the camp. The situation had become so unbearable that we had to refer him to MSF for psychological support.

Even after reporting his distress to the camp authorities and managing to place him in another container, the bullying did not stop.

MSF made several reports on his psychological distress and certified that he was suffering from mental disorders. We insisted by email that the medical reports be sent to the camp's first reception and to the UNHCR to guarantee his rights in terms of reception conditions.

S. was finally transferred to another camp on the mainland in August.

He was already in contact with us when he came to our office in April for help with his asylum case. Because of the complexity of his case and his particular vulnerability, one of our lawyers accompanied him to his interview. We then submitted a memo after the interview to provide additional information to support his case. It took over a year for the decision to come out

He was granted with a refugee status on June!