

JULY/ AUGUST 2024

SAMOS LEGAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the 31st Newsletter of the project!

While asylum seekers still have to contend with extremely difficult living conditions in the CCAC (inadequate or non-existent access to medical services, limited access to water, lack of interpretation service, etc), their asylum procedure is also affected by the slower pace of administration during the summer, which makes the procedure longer and more cumbersome.

Although there have been fewer arrivals than expected during this period on Samos, we can observe a growing number of arrivals on the neighbouring islands (Ikaria, Fourni, Kos, etc.) where the people who arrive there are transferred to other sites with a reception system for asylum seekers such as Samos.

The camp's population is changing slightly, most of the people are from Syria and Afghanistan, but more and more people are arriving from Somalia and Eritrea.



Our team continues to provide daily information in the office, online (via our WhatsApp line) and at general information sessions organized with our partners. In August, for example, we were able to organize one at skills factory and answer the questions of the service users they meet every day.

With the support of interpreters, we ensure that the information we provide is not just given, but properly understood.

OUR WORK IN FIGURES



5

sessions to provide legal information were organised over July & August

60

Asylum seekers attended to legal workshops

37

volunteers from non-legal organisation participated to our online workshop

Our team over the last period:



Project Manager



Legal and technical assistant



2 lawyers



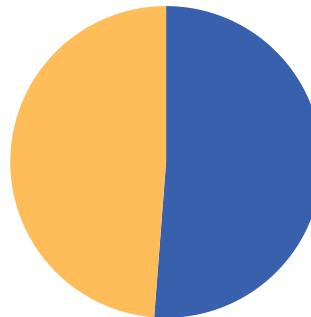
2 caseworkers



2 interpreters

People directly supported :

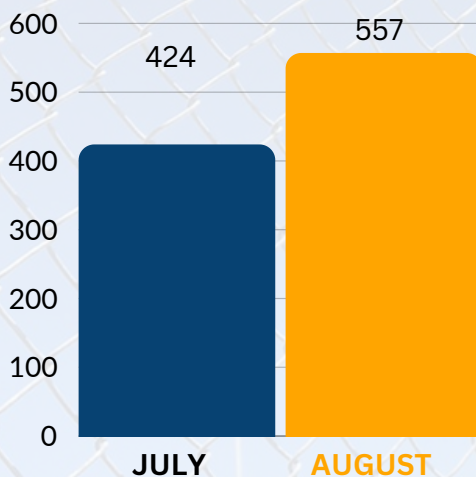
Women
48.8%



Men
51.2%

22.5% of the people we met have declared having survived from SGVB, human trafficking or inhuman treatment.

Number of arrivals* :



*Data from the Greek Ministry of Migration

40

individual preparations for asylum interviews

17

consultations on appeal stage

Delayed Asylum: The impact of the Exclusion Clause Test

In recent months, we have also had to prepare and guide several applicants from Afghanistan and Syria who have been subjected to an additional interview, the exclusion clause test. These interviews were suppose to clarify their role in conflict situations. However it creates a strange legal situation within the same family members. While the men await a decision on their asylum application, their wives and children, who have already received a decision, are at risk of being pressured by the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) to leave the CCAC.

WELCOME ALEXIA AND LOUISE!

Alexia, 24

Alexia has been involved in the defense of exiles for almost 8 years. After a master's degree in NGO and humanitarian law, she worked as a paralegal with unaccompanied minors and as a regional project manager at La Cimade Grand Est (in France) before settling in Samos for the next 6 months.



“ The Closed Controlled Access Centre in Samos, funded by the European Union, is a veritable laboratory for repressive policies on the reception of exiles in Europe. In a world where the rights of exiles are regularly called into question by increasingly repressive policies and laws, Samos seemed an obvious place to take action, at my level and as far as possible, against practices that are contrary to human rights.

It is also an opportunity for me to work as closely as possible with people in exile, offering them free, independent legal support, and to work with the network of solidarity that has been created here between a number of NGOs. ”



Louise, 25

Louise joined our team as part of her end-of-studies internship for the Master's degree she completed in Humanitarian Action and Rights. She will be working as a legal caseworker for the next months until the end of November.

“ My pasts-experiences reflect my desire to devote time to solidarity with exiled people, in particular by working for almost a year on the program led by the Alliance of Lawyers for Human Rights with children in migration, but also through volunteer experiences, taking part in legal advice in different associations during my free time.

Now, I really want to understand more the realities and challenges of migration in the borders of the European Union, the way solidarity is organized between the different NGOs and the locals people, and especially to devote my time and energy to a subject that is important to me! ”

Referrals



Our project in Samos is part of an ecosystem made up of associations and structures that provide support to asylum seekers, in different field of activity, in order to fill the gaps left by the government and the European institutions.

Our support focuses mainly on the asylum procedure, from their arrival in the camp to the final stage of their application. We give access to information about the procedure and their rights, as asylum seekers.

However, the demands and needs sometimes exceed our area of expertise or capacity. We therefore work closely with other local actors, both legal and non-legal, to provide the service most appropriate to the person need.

We closely work with legal organisation (such as I Have Rights) that offer the same services as we do. This collaboration helps to avoid duplication in the treatment of the same cases and, conversely, to ensure that each person's case is followed up correctly.

We also exchange information and best practices.

We also have to refer people whose needs go beyond the scope of our activity to specialist players:

- For example, it is common practice to refer people who need support for their mental or physical health to MSF alone.
- We refer also people who have been victims of state-sponsored violence or need specific legal advice on criminalization, such as Human Rights Legal Project.
- It is also common practice to refer people to the relevant actors to receive essential items such as clothing, food and hygiene products.

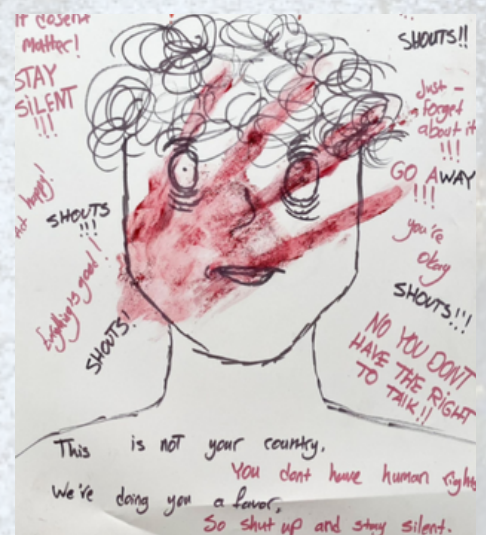


Advocacy

We can only recommend to read the [Amnesty report](#) published at the end of July **“Unlawful detention and sub- standard conditions in an EU-funded refugee centre”**

The report highlights the human rights situation in the Samos CCAC, focusing on the period between July 2023 and January 2024, when increased arrivals led to overcrowding and situations of inadequate conditions and unsatisfactory access to basic services, including water and healthcare. It documents how, through the so-called “restrictions of freedom” orders imposed by the authorities to new arrivals, residents are systematically subjected to unlawful and arbitrary detention.

An artwork, with an [online gallery](#) was created in parallel of the research with our Partner Samos volunteers as well as a podcast [“A place along the way”](#).



TESTIMONY - C**, 30, DRC

A dangerous journey before family reunification

In July, C* and her daughter, received refugee status, after a year of waiting!

Originally from Democratic Republic of the Congo, C* escaped her country in the urge to be reunited with her husband she did not see since 2018.

He was granted international protection in Greece in 2021 and applied for family reunification for C* and her daughter to safely join them. This process took longer than expected and put them in danger.

Her husband was an active member of opposition group against the former President Kabila. He took part to anti-government demonstrations and protests.

Arrested and taken to prison, he managed to escape from the detention and flee the country. This action had very important consequences on his family: both the applicant and her daughter and the rest of the family were persecuted by the authorities as a form of reprisal and in order to find him.

She has been the victim of *SGBV and several violent attacks, and in particular one day when she was on her way to the Embassy to finalise the family reunification procedure.

Natalia accompanied her during the interviews she had. Even if the events were very traumatic to remember, she was able to give all the relevant details of her story. The lawyer has also joined a memorandum with different proof she had to submit and complementary information regarding the situation on violence operating in DRC against member of opposition and the general state of violence. Affecting women even more, as it was the case for her.

The mother and her child were transferred to the mainland for additional medical care in July 2023 and we stayed in contact with them.

In July, she learned that she had received refugee status in Greece and will be finally able to set her new life with her family.

