



Legal Centre Lesvos Actions Report for 2020

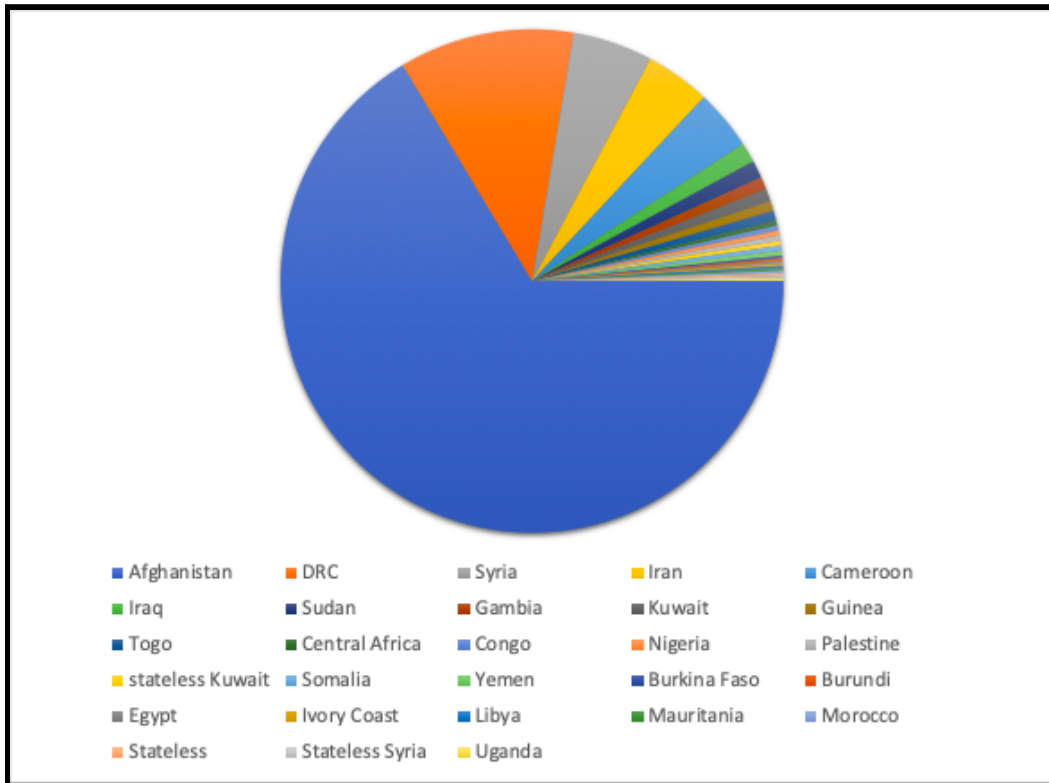
In 2020, Legal Centre Lesvos provided individualised legal information and assistance to 865 cases of individuals and families, relating to: preparation for admissibility and eligibility asylum interviews; understanding and appealing international protection rejection decisions; making subsequent applications for international protection; applications for reunification with family members in other European Union (EU) Member States under the Dublin III Regulation; referrals for safe housing, healthcare, psychological and psychosocial support; and defense in criminal proceedings. In addition, the Legal Centre Lesvos has continued to monitor and document human rights violations: publishing numerous reports; participating in advocacy initiatives; and bringing cases for litigation before the European Court of Human Rights.

Of the people using Legal Centre Lesvos' services in 2020, approximately 66% were nationals from Afghanistan, 11% were from the Democratic Republic of Congo and 5% were from Syria. The rest of the people accessing Legal Centre Lesvos' services in this period were from Iran, Cameroon, Iraq, Sudan, Gambia, Kuwait, Guinea, Togo, Central African Republic, Congo, Nigeria, Palestine, Stateless/Kurdistan, other Stateless peoples, Somalia, Yemen, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Uganda.

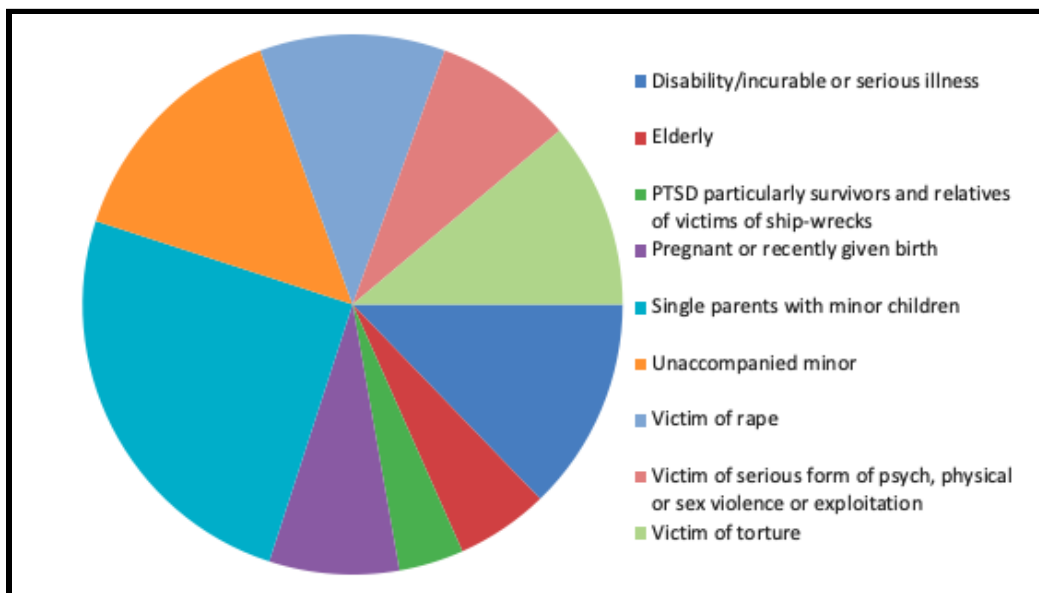
84% of these individuals were accommodated in Moria Reception and Identification Centre and, following its closure, Mavrovouni/Karatepe Temporary Reception and Identification Centre; 5% were accommodated in Karatepe Municipality-run family camp; 8% in private or other accommodation and 3% in accommodation by the organisation "Iliaktida". Individuals and families assisted by the Legal Centre Lesvos included unaccompanied minors, victims of torture, sexual assault, and people with serious mental and physical illnesses and disabilities.

The management of people's cases involved the work of interpreters, volunteer caseworkers, Greek lawyers, coordinators, and advocacy and communications workers.

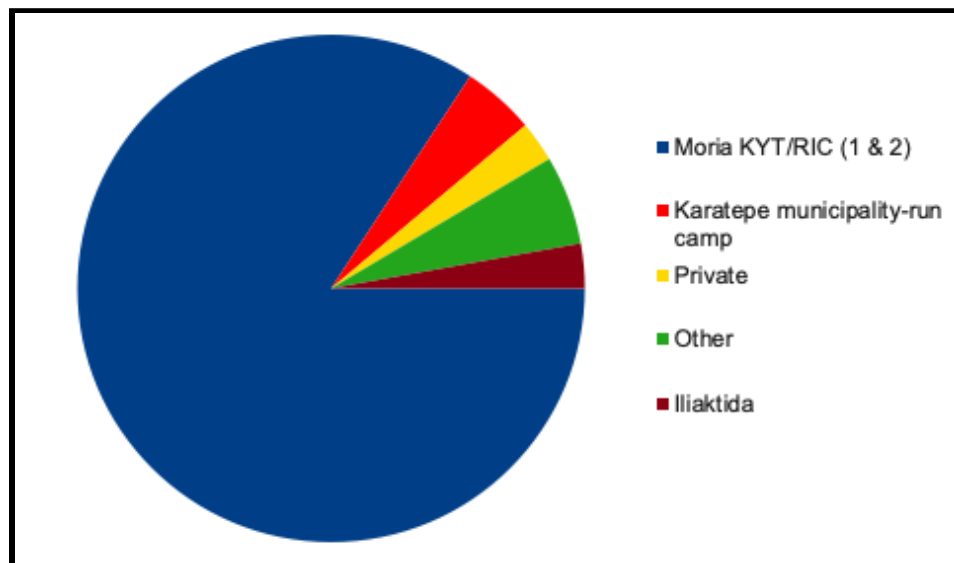
Cases by Nationality Breakdown 2020



Vulnerabilities breakdown 2020, of individuals whoreported/demonstrated vulnerabilities.



Accommodation breakdown 2020



1. Case Management and Legal Assistance

- In 2020, trained Legal Centre Lesvos volunteer caseworkers, in collaboration with four Greek lawyers, provided individualised legal information and assistance in 865 cases including 569 children and 583 women;
- Legal Centre Lesvos Greek lawyers represented, on average, 5 individuals per month in the asylum procedure by accompanying them to their asylum interviews and submitting legal memos;
- Legal Centre Lesvos assisted 65 families within family reunification procedures, and represented at least 37 of these in their applications in 2020. Many of these cases are still pending resolution, but at least 24 of the families represented by LCL had their applications approved after the intervention of Legal Centre Lesvos, leading to reunifications in 8 different EU Member States, namely France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Finland and the UK;
- Legal Centre Lesvos assisted over 282 cases on appeal in 2020, with this assistance ranging from preparation of legal documents, assisting in collecting documentation and relevant information by caseworkers, submission of legal memos, to Greek lawyers representing individuals;
- In 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions permitted, Legal Centre Lesvos held regular group information sessions which reached over 338 individuals. These information sessions were provided predominantly to new arrivals on Lesvos, enabling people to receive at least basic

information about their rights in the asylum procedure prior to their asylum interviews;

- In 2020, the Legal Centre Lesvos provided legal assistance in the asylum procedure to approximately 20 individuals who were detained. They were predominantly held in the PROKEKA detention centre (inside Moria RIC) until it was destroyed in the September 2020 Moria fire, in addition to Mytilene police station and other detention centres on the Greek mainland. In a number of cases Greek lawyers filed objections to detention;
- Legal Centre Lesvos referred hundreds of people who use its services to alternative accommodation in Mytilene and on the mainland, as well as to medical or other support services.

2. Advocacy and Strategic Litigation

- In February 2020, Legal Centre Lesvos joined other legal actors in bringing a criminal complaint to the Public Prosecutor following the death of an Iranian man in Moria detention centre, regarding the issue of insufficient medical and psychological support for detainees;
- In March 2020, Legal Centre Lesvos documented and denounced the situation for migrants arriving to the island following Greece's one month suspension of the right to asylum, including informal detention in sites such as busses, ports, and ships;
- Since March 2020, Legal Centre Lesvos has been documenting and denouncing collective expulsions at the Aegean sea border:
 - In July 2020 Legal Centre Lesvos released a comprehensive report on collective expulsions at the Aegean Sea border, which was also submitted to the National Human Rights Commission in Greece;
 - Legal Centre Lesvos submitted 3 separate applications, on behalf of 19 individuals, to the European Court of Human Rights, all concerning incidents of collective expulsions and claiming violations of Article 2, 3, 5, 8, and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- In October 2020, Legal Centre Lesvos notified the Greek Ombudsperson of the prolonged detention of vulnerable individuals, including unaccompanied minors and persons with chronic health issues, in COVID-19 quarantine sites upon arrival to Greece;
- In December 2020, Legal Centre Lesvos filed a complaint with the Greek Ombudsperson regarding the European Asylum Support Office's practices in Lesvos, raising serious concerns about their compliance with provisions of Greek and European law;
- Legal Centre Lesvos took on ad hoc representation on a variety of issues including:

- Representation in a custody hearing for a transgender man, to gain guardianship of his unaccompanied 14 year old brother;
 - Representation of migrants in contesting fines issued for alleged violations of COVID-19 restrictions;
 - Representation of residents of Moria camp and the new Mavrovouni/Karatepe Temporary Reception and Identification Centre who were targeted for having taken photos and videos of conditions inside the camp;
 - Representation of victims and witnesses of violent attacks within Moria camp to defend their rights as witnesses to and survivors of violence;
 - Representation of individuals arbitrarily arrested and accused of arson in pretrial stage;
- Throughout 2020, the Legal Centre Lesvos: took part in joint advocacy actions, including those initiated by other legal actors and NGOs; participated in numerous panel discussions; and gave regular comment to the press on a range of issues related to migrants rights and the situation in Lesvos. For example:
 - Participation of representatives from the Legal Centre Lesvos [on panels in webinars](#) hosted by Goldsmiths, University of London; World Without Walls – Europe; European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights and the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers; Permanent People’s Tribunal – Berlin; Centre on Law and Social Transformation; and Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung
 - Legal Centre Lesvos participation in “Hearing regarding the Migration and Asylum Pakt”, organised by MEP Cornelia Ernst, 23rd October, 2020
 - Legal Centre Lesvos and 20 organisations, ‘[Greece: Move Asylum Seekers, Migrants to Safety Immediate Hotspot Decongestion Needed to Address COVID-19](#)’ (joint statement, 24 March 2020);
 - Legal Centre Lesvos, quoted in “[Greece ready to welcome tourists as refugees stay locked down in Lesbos](#)” (Katy Fallon, The Guardian, 27 May 2020);
 - Legal Centre Lesvos and others, ‘[Fire in Moria Camp: Call for urgent evacuation and radical change](#)’ (co-signed petition, first published 14 September 2020);
 - The Legal Centre Lesvos continues to regularly publish statements, reports and updates [on its our website](#).

Conclusion: Our actions in this operational period demonstrate that Legal Centre Lesvos AMKE continues to work in a manner that is true to its statutory purposes.