



From top left 'clock wise' Pictures of Moria, Mavrovouni and Vastria

LEGAL CENTRE LESVOS QUARTERLY REPORT JULY- SEPT 2022



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As the conditions worsen in Lesvos' Reception and Identification Center in Lesvos (known as Mavrovouni RIC), the new Closed Controlled Access Center (CCAC) in Vastria continues to be built with the full support of the European Commission, despite the multiple voices raised against its construction: away from sight in the middle of a forest. Vastria has come to represent the future policies of the European Union and Greek State; more construction, fences and walls for people, at the expense of nature. The wildfires that raged for nearly a week in Lesvos this summer and devastated the Vatera region of the island do not seem to concern those behind the rushed construction in Vastria camp, which is located in the middle of one of the biggest pine forests of the island. The transportation of construction materials for the camp often comes from mainland Greece in the night, under the guise of darkness, with a cohort of police overseeing their protection. It is evident that the State is very much aware of the thin ice it has been walking on, and the recent violent repression of demonstrations, protests, and even music concerts shows that the situation has reached a boiling point ahead of the upcoming national elections in Greece in 2023. From Moria to Mavrovouni, there were no improvements in the living conditions of these supposed reception and identification centers. On the contrary, the inhuman and undignified reality that camp residents face are inherent in camps whose purpose is to concentrate people in fenced off areas, based on their nationality and legal status, for the sole purpose of categorising those who are 'deserving' of international protection, and those who are not. In the light of the existing conditions on Mavrovouni RIC, one can easily predict the future of the CCAC in Vastria.

Legal Centre Lesvos' position against policies that restrict the right to freedom of movement has not changed. That position extends itself to the practice of pushbacks, as one of the most violent and callous forms of border maintenance. We continue not only to litigate cases before the European Court of Human Rights in representation of survivors of pushback operations, but also are providing (in coordination with organisation such as UNHCR and MSF) legal aid to migrants who have recently arrived to the island from Turkey, and are at risk of being illegally expelled in a pushback operation. Intervention by humanitarian and human rights actors in these situations is essential, not only in ensuring that newly arrived asylum seekers have access to asylum procedures in Greece, but also to ensure immediate medical and psychological care to a population that has likely experienced trauma in the dangerous sea crossing, and continues to experience fear and stress upon arrival to Greece due to the very real risk that they will be captured and abandoned at sea by the Hellenic Coast Guard. Above all, the intervention of these actors is essential in limiting the practical possibility of a violent act of pushbacks, which due to their clandestine illegal nature, occur only when no witnesses are present. Forensic Architecture, in collaboration with other actors including the Legal Centre Lesvos, published a detailed visual platform documenting thousands of cases of pushbacks in the Aegean by the Hellenic Coast Guard, demonstrating the widespread and systematic nature of this policy, which we have long denounced as constituting crimes against humanity.

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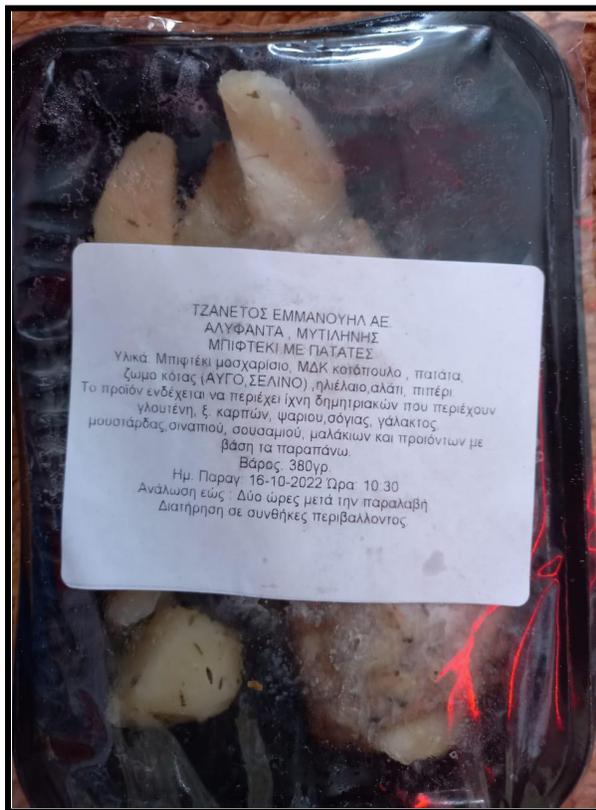
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1. Updates on the situation for migrants in Lesvos

➤ Updates on the living conditions in Camp

According to UNHCR, 1 330 asylum seekers were residing in Lesvos' Reception and Identification Centre in Karatepe ("Mavrovouni" RIC) in July 2022, out of a capacity of approximately 8 000¹. Despite being under 20% of the official capacity of the camp, conditions continue to worsen, as described in more detail below.

Reduced food distribution: Not a day passes without news from Mavrovouni RIC regarding the precarious and worsening living conditions. Recently, the camp management reduced food distribution to only once per day at mid-day, rather than twice per day as it had been. Some residents of the camp have also reported that the amount of food delivered in has dropped to half what they used to receive. Compounding this problem, the quality of food continues to be of great concern, and we have received photos and reports showing that the food often arrives rotten, increasing the likelihood of food poisoning and related medical conditions.



Pictures of the food distributed in the Mavrovouni RIC on the 16.10.2022, taken by a camp resident

¹ Lesvos News, Δήμος Μυτιλήνης: θέλετε τον Καρά Τεπέ 8.000 θέσεων ή την Βάστρια 3.000 θέσεων, January 2022, Available at: <https://www.lesvosnews.net/articles/news-categories/politiki/dimos-mytilinis-thelete-ton-kara-tepe-8000-theseon-i-ti-n-bastria>.

Camp residents fear not being able to receive food, which leads many to get into the food queues hours earlier than they used to. Residents have also voiced concerns about being unable to express their complaints on the matter because it is unclear which entity is responsible for these recent changes.

Quarantined individuals denied food and basic services: The issues with food distribution are even worse for those confined to the quarantine zone - a fenced area within Mavrovouni RIC where both people who test positive for COVID-19 and newly arrived asylum seekers are detained. Residents have reported that some days there is no food distribution to the quarantine zone. Quarantined people often ask residents outside of the quarantine zone to throw food over the fence to them. Residents have reported to LCL that some residents were given fines for breaching quarantine by providing food to people detained in the quarantine zone.

In addition to the demeaning effect of having to receive food thrown over a fence, quarantining newly arrived asylum seekers continues to defy logic, as self quarantining upon arrival to Greece has discontinued for all other populations travelling to Greece. Additionally, newly arrived asylum seekers who might be particularly susceptible to the effects of COVID-19, such as the elderly, people with respiratory complications or people who have chronic illnesses are put into extreme danger by being detained upon arrival with people who tested positive for COVID-19.

Quarantined migrants also have no access to legal assistance during their stay in the quarantine zone and are rushed through registration of their asylum claim and their first asylum interview. All taking place within a few days of their release from the quarantine zone. Furthermore, no vulnerability assessment takes place while people are in quarantine, and frequently a vulnerability assessment only happens after people have completed their asylum interviews. This makes it incredibly difficult for people to support their asylum claims or demonstrate existing vulnerabilities with corroborating documentation from medical professionals.

Lack of access to health care: Complications and difficulties in accessing medical services continue to be an issue. Within the Mavrovouni RIC, the Hellenic National Public Health Organisation (EODY) has been criticised for its lack of capacity to meet the demands of camp residents. As has been the case since the “hotspots” were established in Greece in 2016, nongovernmental medical organisations work to fill this gap in services, including emergency medical services. Boat Refugee Foundation (BRF) currently provides emergency medical services from 17:00 - 00:00 daily; however, depending on the severity of the medical emergency, residents are often directed to the only hospital in Lesbos, Vostaneio General Hospital of Mytilene. Crisis Management Association (CMA) limits its care to patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or high blood pressure. They also operate a dental clinic, but, due to limited staffing capacity, many residents report that they have been unable to receive needed treatment in the last months. The only organisation that provides general medical services during the day is Kitrinis Healthcare, which also has limited capacity to meet the camp residents’ needs. Given the limited capacity of state and organisational medical care, it is particularly difficult for those who need the services to schedule and attend follow up appointments and receive needed care: i.e. those whose age or existing medical/psychosocial conditions makes it difficult to access services.

We should note that it is also difficult for migrants (both for those who live outside the camp and have no access to organisations operating inside and for residents of the RIC) to receive health care from Vostaneio General Hospital of Mytilene due to lack of interpretation, lack of guidance within the labyrinth of this

hospital, and reported xenophobic/racist treatment by some staff members. These combined problems can compound to deny access to healthcare for patients with migrant origin, often keeping them completely outside of the state-provided medical services.

Continued electricity cuts: Camp infrastructure continues to have problems, despite the camp being at less than half its capacity. There are currently electricity cuts from? At? 08:00 and 13:00 daily. Electricity is vital for residents for lighting, for cooking (residents must cook on electric stoves because open fires are banned within the camp and distributed food is inadequate and/or inedible), cooling/heating, charging electronic equipment (mainly phones and health-related hardware), and accessing stable internet connection.

Phones and a stable internet connection may be portrayed by some as a luxury, but for people confined at the RICs, they are the main source of information and connection to family and loved ones in the outside world. Additionally, access to the internet is necessary for asylum seekers to access and submit information within the asylum procedure. Certain information and documents are only accepted by the Regional Asylum Office (RAO) via emails, and replies/announcements to these processes are also done via email. Decisions in some cases are sent via email, and the “notification” date starts the clock for other deadlines. Missing a notification due to a lack of internet access could critically alter people’s asylum cases, including making them miss the deadline to appeal a negative decision.

Because of inadequate electrical infrastructure, the camp continues to see repeated electrical fires, such as the one in September 2022, where another ISOBOX burned to the ground. This fire was reportedly caused because the camp still draws its electricity from generators, rather than from the central electricity grid, and often these generators overload due to lack of capacity and cause fires.



Pictures of the ISO box that burnt on the 26.09.2022 taken by a camp resident

Bureaucratic obstacles in receiving assistance: All asylum seekers in Greece are eligible for cash assistance provided through a non-governmental organisation. However, in order to register for this assistance, people need to have a Greek SIM card, which is used as a security measure to verify the identity of the cash recipient. Because many asylum seekers arrive in Greece without phones, money, or both, they are delayed for months in registering for cash assistance because of paradoxically being forced to own items that have a financial cost before having access to financial assistance to purchase those items.

For individuals already granted international protection, the issuance of resident cards and travel documents also continues to be delayed. Processing these documents in Lesvos is done by a police special task force, which travels to Lesvos from mainland Greece only sporadically and for short periods inadequate to process all recognised refugee requests. While the processing of IDs and travel documents is sometimes faster in Athens or Thessaloniki, travel to those locations is not an option for those who do not have the financial means. This often delays issuance of resident permits and travel documents for months and increases camp resident frustration.

Limited Access to Sites of Worship: Another issue for migrants in Lesvos, one often overlooked, is the ability to practise their religion. While the majority of the migrant population in Lesvos over the last several years has been Muslim, the only current space that serves as a mosque on the island of Lesvos is in Mavrovouni RIC. The space was set up on the initiative of the Muslim community; a remarkable achievement in an over militarised camp that structurally obstructs self organisation and autonomy. This site, however, does not have any official status or allocation by camp management, meaning that its use is not guaranteed and could end on an arbitrary decision of camp authorities. *(See below the pictures of the mosque taken by a camp resident).*



Furthermore, because the site has no official status, the use of the space is being decided by the majority sect/community in the camp at the time, and religious minorities have no sites of worship. Because the demographics of the camp changes depending on the arrival and transfer of populations, tension can arise over the use of this religious space between communities. Bearing in mind that many asylum seekers have been persecuted due to sectarian violence in their home countries; allocation of sufficient religious spaces is essential both to avoid recreating these tensions and to allow all to practise their religion freely.

In the light of the above, Legal Centre Lesvos reminds the authorities that:

- Housing is a fundamental service that the Greek State is obligated to provide to asylum seekers adequately, humanely, and transparently, as stated by article 44 of the law 4939/2022 regarding the Obligations of administration during reception and identification procedures and article 17 of the reception Directive 2013/33/EU regarding the General rules on material reception conditions and health care.
- Adequate reception conditions for asylum seekers includes access to adequate food, shelter, health care, information, and adequate living conditions - all of which are being categorically denied and when compounded increase harm and mental anguish for residents.
- Given the Greek State's nearly seven years of experience with migrants in RICs, it is unacceptable to see housing conditions worsen. The failure to provide adequate reception conditions is not coincidental or temporary. It is also unrelated to the number of residents, which has decreased, or service providers, which has stayed relatively stable. It is part of broader systemic violence against migrants at Europe's borders.

➤ 25 August 2022, Updates on the construction of the new camp

Construction of the new European Commission funded Closed Controlled Access Center (CCAC) continues in Vastria. According to [recent reports](#), on 8 October, 12 new isoboxes and 6 new outposts were delivered to the port of Mytilene to be taken to the construction site, under the supervision of heavy police presence to protect against potential backlash or protest by residents of Lesvos. The aim of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum is to complete construction of the facility before late Winter to early Spring 2023. If the project is finalised and the new CCAC becomes operational, residents of Mavrovouni Temporary Reception and Identification Center (Mavrovouni RIC - the existing camp) will be relocated there and the existing facility will shut down².

Despite ongoing protests against the construction of the facility in Vastria, the Council of State has rejected the recently submitted “demand of temporary injunction by official institutions”, presented by the Municipality of North Aegean Region and the Lesvos communities of Komi and Nea Kydonia requesting that construction on the site be suspended. An annulment appeal has been submitted by the same entities and communities, which will be heard by the Council of State by January 2023. However, it is estimated that construction of the Closed Reception and Identification Center in Vastria will be complete or near completion by then. This matter has been received by locals and protesters with suspicion because this might mean not only that the appeal would practically moot, but also because completion of the long-anticipated facility in Vastria could be used as an “election investment” in Greece’s approaching national elections³.

² Stonisi, «Τρέχουν» για την ολοκλήρωση της δομής στη Βάστρια, 25 August 2022, available at: <https://www.stonisi.gr/post/44909/trechoyn-gia-thn-oloklhrwsh-ths-domhs-sth-vastria#.YwdM308FpmQ.facebook> ;

Stonisi, Με γοργούς ρυθμούς προχωρά η Βάστρια, 9 October 2022, available at: <https://stonisi.gr/post/46773/me-gorgoys-rythmoys-proxwra-h-vastria>.

³ Stonisi, Παράσταση διαμαρτυρίας για τη Βάστρια, August 2022, Available at : <https://www.stonisi.gr/post/44447/parastash-diamartyrias-gia-th-vastria-video>.



Picture from the Stonisi.gr on their article «Τρέχουν» για την ολοκλήρωση της δομής στη Βάστρια, from the 25.08.2022

While motives for opposition certainly differ, the construction of the new site has been opposed across the political spectrum for over two years. For migrants and those in solidarity with them, we do not expect conditions to improve in a new camp because conditions continue to deteriorate at Mavrovouni RIC including the persistent and continued denial of basic services and adequate living conditions. On the contrary, conditions will worsen. The controlled and remote nature of the facility will further shield the public from the treatment migrants would be subjected to in such a centre, which mirrors the notorious Pagani migrant detention centre whose horrendous conditions were exposed in 2009 during a coordinated campaign of protests from both inside and outside that prison's walls. Reports on the Multi-purposed Reception and Identification Center in Samos, which has now been operating for a year, confirm that the site is not only one of deprivation of liberty but of all basic human rights⁴. As Legal Centre, we will continue to oppose these prison-like camps where migrants are concentrated only based on their nationality and legal status.

⁴ Medecins Sans Frontieres, "We can only help our patients to survive" new camp on Samos, 17 September 2021, Available at: <<https://www.msf.org/we-can-only-help-refugees-survive-new-camp-greek-island>>; Infos Migrants, Conditions at Samos camp 'tragic', says Greek Refugee Council, November 2021, Available at: <<https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/36826/conditions-at-samos-camp-tragic-says-greek-refugee-council>>; Amnesty International, Asylum seekers being illegally detained in new EU-funded camp, December 2021, Available at: <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/12/greece-asylum-seekers-being-illegally-detained-in-new-eu-funded-camp/>>; I Have Rights, Conditions in the Closed Controlled Access Centre of Samos, March 2022, Available at: <<https://ihaverights.eu/conditions-in-the-closed-controlled-access-centre-of-samos/>>; I Have Rights, "A LIFE WITHOUT FREEDOM IS NOT A LIFE", 20 June 2022, Available at: <https://ihaverights.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2-Camp-Report-SAC-EMA_updated1.pdf>.

2. Overview of LCL work to defend the rights of migrants

LCL's lawyers and legal volunteers continued accompanying clients through their asylum procedure, including by providing support and representation.

Between July and September 2022, Legal Centre Lesvos' lawyers represented:

- ★ 14 individuals in the asylum procedure, including cases of family reunification;
- ★ 11 individuals on appeal of their asylum claims;
- ★ 10 detained individuals facing criminal charges.

Over the same time period, volunteer caseworkers, under the supervision of Greek attorneys, supported 25 new cases, and actively worked on over 83 cases over the course of three months.

Legal aid provided included:

- ★ 214 registered asylum claims in Lesvos, following the provision of legal assistance by LCL for newly arrived people to access the asylum procedures;
- ★ 286 individual legal consultations;
- ★ 46 interview preparations, and preparation of legal memos in 24 cases;
- ★ 10 referrals to alternative housing services or protection services;
- ★ 2 people attended information sessions on the asylum procedure and asylum interview.

People who received legal aid from the Legal Centre this quarter were mainly from Somalia, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone.

Between July and September 2022, 214 people who arrived to Lesvos from Turkey were registered in the RIC, and allowed to apply for asylum, after they or someone in the boat they arrived with contacted the LCL for legal assistance.

Out of the 25 asylum seekers represented in the asylum procedure and on appeal of their asylum claim included the following cases:

➤ Representation of LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers on appeal

In June and July, the Legal Centre represented three asylum seekers from Sierra Leone in appealing their rejections of their initial applications for asylum. All three individuals identify as gay or lesbian, yet they were rejected based on a finding by the Greek Asylum Office that they were not credible. In other words, they did not believe that these individuals were gay or lesbian. On appeal, the Legal Centre Greek attorneys countered the flawed assessment of credibility in each case, demonstrating that each individual had indeed met the eligibility requirements for asylum. In the course of this representation, the Legal Centre Greek attorneys has

also played a critical role in facilitating access to critical medical care for one of the asylum seekers, who suffered a serious injury on her journey from Sierra Leone to Greece. She was subsequently relocated to Athens for medical treatment.

Unfortunately, these cases are all too frequent. In August 2022, the LCL was one of 36 organisations who sent a [joint letter on the Situation for LGBTQI+ Asylum Seekers](#) in Greece to General Secretary of Reception of Asylum Seekers, Manos Logothetis, and to General Secretary of Migration Policy, Patroklos Georgiadis. The letter addresses procedural violations regarding the asylum process of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers, including prohibited lines of questioning, and scepticism and prejudice during asylum interviews, which are conducted more like an interrogation. The letter also included a detailed analysis of problems in accessing services, including health services within the RICs, due to stigmatisation and isolation.

➤ Minors victims of the excessively disproportionate delays in the age assessment

One unaccompanied minor from Syria, was registered as an adult upon arrival to Greece. Having already been rejected on the basis that Turkish is a Safe Third Country, he filed a subsequent application for asylum in December 2021, with support from the Legal Centre Lesbos, and requested an age assessment at that time. His asylum interview was held in early June 2022, during which time he reiterated that he was a minor. Nevertheless, he did not receive any communication about the age assessment procedure, and a month later, he was granted refugee status. While in his case, he received the welcome news that he had residency in Greece, in many cases minors whose age is not assessed, or who cannot prove their age with original national identity documents, are denied asylum, or the possibility of reunifying with family members under Dublin III Regulation.

Two other unaccompanied minors represented by LCL Greek attorneys were supported in the age assessment procedure and in the family reunification procedure. Both are Somali teenagers who were registered as minors when they arrived, but then were assessed to be adults following superficial age assessments. Both also presented certified, original birth certificates proving their status as minors that were rejected by Greek authorities. Both boys would be eligible for reunification with family members, if their minor status were recognised. While Greece has rejected their original documentation, LCL continues to represent the two in ongoing proceedings to be reunified with their family members in the United Kingdom and Germany.

➤ European Court of Human Rights recognises imminent risk of irreparable harm to LCL client denied health care

In September, interim measures filed under Rule 39 of the Court, by the Legal Centre on behalf of a client (H.A.) who suffers from a severe injury that requires medical treatment in Athens, were granted by the European Court of Human Rights. In granting the interim measures, the ECtHR must find that the applicant faces an imminent risk of serious harm. In this case, the Court ordered, in the interests of the parties and the proper conduct of the proceedings before it, to indicate to the Government of Greece, under Rule 39, to provide the applicant with adequate healthcare compatible with her state of health.

Because the individual's application for asylum was rejected, she is considered 'outside' of the asylum procedure, and as such was not considered for an official transfer to Athens, despite her need for urgent

medical treatment that is unavailable on the island. The Vulnerability Focal Point of the RIC in Lesvos, who is responsible for identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable residents of the camp, had failed to facilitate HA's transfer to Athens, despite ongoing advocacy of the LCL, and was only transferred to Athens following an order from the European Court.

HA's case is one of several successful cases filed by the Legal Centre Lesvos since last year, demonstrating the systematic denial of medical care, in particular for those without legal status in Greece. Four out of nineteen of these cases have now advanced and are being considered on the merits by the ECtHR, due to the demonstrated violation of the Applicants' right to adequate living conditions and health care in these cases. The Greek state sent its observations in June 2022 and Legal Centre Lesvos attorneys replied, asking for the Greek state to be held accountable for its violations. These violations caused our clients to suffer irreparable damages, caused in part by the conditions at Moria and the Mavrovouni RIC camps, and persistent denial of medical care. We hope that the Court will both recognise the failure of the Greek state to meet its obligations to all people within its jurisdiction, *regardless of legal status*, and that those who have already suffered violations of the state will finally have redress.

3. Continued efforts to fight criminalisation of migrants and human rights defenders

➤ 20 September 2022, Komotini Trial

On 20 and 21 September 2022, the Legal Centre Lesvos represented M.M., a seventeen year old Afghan teenager who arrived by boat to the Evros region of Northern Greece to seek asylum in March 2022. He was arrested immediately upon arrival, and following his arrest was accused of having smuggled 5 people across the border between Greece and Turkey for financial gain.

Following a hearing, prosecutors decided to charge M.M. with the felony of facilitating illegal entry to Greece of foreign nationals (human smuggling), and held in pretrial detention.

Given their past involvement defending the rights of alleged "boat drivers", the lawyers of the Legal Centre Lesvos undertook M.M.'s legal representation. With timely intervention, Legal Centre Lesvos managed to prove M.M. minor status, allowing him to be referred to a minor's court and be released from pre-trial detention.

M.M.'s freedom and recognition as a minor by the Komotini Court is welcome news in an otherwise bleak legal landscape, and we hope that the rule of law and reason will continue to prevail when M.M. is brought to trial in the future.

Details of the case can be found on our website, [here](#).

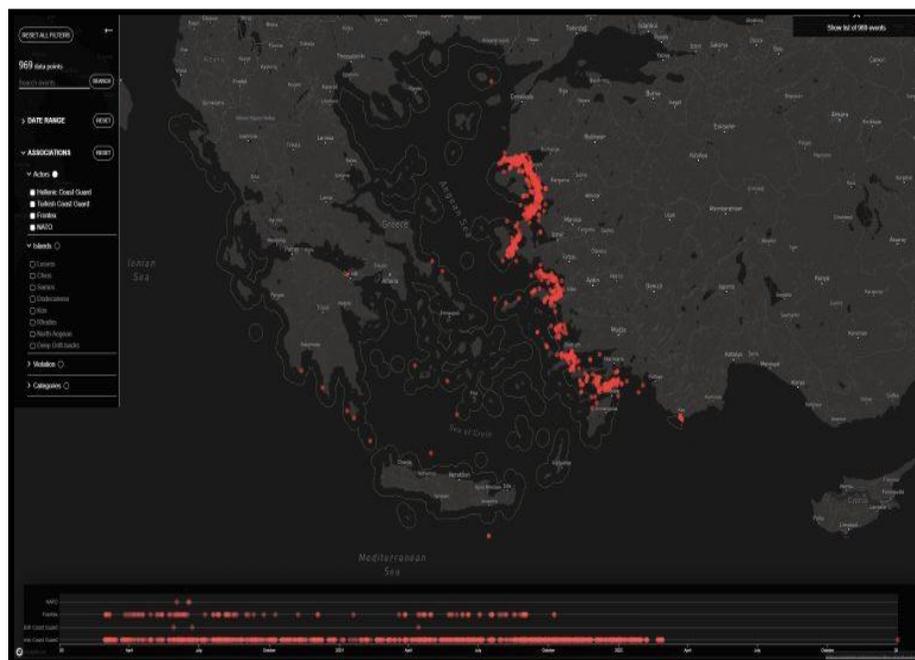
4. Updates on fight to end pushbacks

➤ 15 July 2022, Forensic Architecture report: Drift-backs in the Aegean Sea

Forensic Architecture together with Forensis, along with the collaborations of many other actors including Legal Centre Lesvos, published its latest report on pushbacks under “Drift-Backs in the Aegean Sea”.

In an attempt to challenge the ongoing narrative of the Greek State, FRONTEX, EU and respective counterparts on “denying the practice of pushbacks”, the report details and visualises 1.018 acts of “drift-backs” which have affected 27.464 people. Through interviews with survivors and their relatives, data gathered by NGOs and other monitoring actors, FRONTEX's public database and Turkish Coast Guard's official statements, and cross-checking landmarks and people, the report stands to be one of the most extensive reports that portrays the human rights violations that have been happening in the Aegean Sea. “Today, the scale and severity of the practice continues to increase, (...)” the report suggests, adding “with ‘drift-backs’ reported from the coast of the Greek mainland, and as far south as Crete.

Defining the Aegean as “the archipelago of obscurity”, the report underlines not only the existing violent practices of pushbacks that are taking place in the Aegean Sea, but also the strategic pathway that the authorities have chosen to obscure such violence. Forensic Architecture highlights the key aspects of this strategy in the report; “Entire maritime zones, militarised islets and uninhabited rocks remain off-limits to civilian access and oversight, and are exclusively navigated and managed by the military and Coast Guard. Rescuers, activists and journalists who operate in the region and report on human rights violations have been repeatedly criminalised and intimidated by authorities. Migrants who are intercepted there have their phones taken and destroyed before they themselves are made to disappear.”



Map extract of the platform of Forensic Architecture exposing and mapping the modus operandi of drift-backs and attributing responsibility to specific Hellenic Coast Guard and FRONTEX vessels. (2022)

Finalised data of the report statistically shows that 386 of the 1.018 reported incidents came from Lesbos, making Lesbos the stage with the highest number of “drift-backs” within the sample used. The Legal Centre Lesbos is one of several organisations that has regularly documented and denounced the practice of pushbacks in the Aegean since 2020, and was a collaborating partner in this publication.

The complete report can be found on the official Forensic Architecture website, [here](#).

➤ 7 July 2022 - European Court of Human Rights condemns Greece for shipwreck that killed 11 in 2014, in *Safi and others v. Greece*

On 7 July 2022, the ECtHR condemned the Greek state, for the first time, for an operation at sea by the Hellenic Coast Guard. While the decision in *Safi v. Greece* comes eight years after the tragic shipwreck that was the subject of the case, the decision by the Court was issued at a moment of increased international scrutiny of Greece’s current pushback policy, and we hope this decision is the start of a new trend of accountability for Greece’s violent policy that has until now been practised with impunity.

In January 2014, 11 people were killed at sea, after suffering a shipwreck which survivors claim was caused by the Hellenic Coast Guard during an attempted pushback operation, with details all too similar to the pushback operations carried out systematically today.

In a case brought by survivors and relatives of the 11 victims, the Court condemned the Greek state for violating the right to life, and prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment; Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. While the Court refrained from ruling on Greece’ culpability in the causing of the shipwreck, it found that Greece’ failure to investigate the cause of the shipwreck, and their treatment of the survivors in the aftermath of the shipwreck amounted to violations of the Convention. More details on the case can be found in the European Council on Refugees and Asylees’s report, [here](#).

The Legal Centre Lesbos filed five cases on similar grounds in 2020-2021. [Two of those cases](#) have been communicated to Greece and we could receive decisions from the Court within a few months. The *Safi* case gives us hope that the ECtHR will continue to hold Greece accountable for its cruel and violent border and migration policies. We hope in future decisions the Court will go further to denounce the practice of pushbacks itself, so as to set a precedent against the crimes against humanity being committed against migrants at Greece’ and Europe’s borders.