**CHALLENGES FACED BY THOSE A.Ss.I.S.T. AIMS TO SERVCE**

All persons who arrive in Greece seeking international protection; those who are recognised as refugees or have the protection of the State and those who are under threat of deportation.

According to UNHCR statistics from 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8060 people seeking asylum arrived by boat from Turkey on the north Aegean and Dodecanese Islands, of whom 784 arrived on Chios Island (Source: UNHCR).

Many others arrive via overland routes, but, to our knowledge, no reliable statistics are available for this period.

With 9501 people arriving on the Islands from Turkey in the first 13 weeks of 2024, the total of people arriving 17,561 arrived on the Islands. These UNHCR sourced statistics appear to counter the Greek governments claim that they have significantly reduced the number of arrivals. The number of those ‘push-backed’ and/or lost at sea will never to known.

All persons seeking international protection in Greece must navigate **a complex, opaque legal system,** facing **language and cultural barriers** and **continued hardship created by poor living conditions, pre-existing trauma exacerbated by limited welfare services, by incertitude and imposed detention.** Beneficiaries of international protection also face socio-economic and bureaucratic barriers to settling in Greece or in other European Union countries. Those whose legal options are exhausted are in limbo: subject to inhumane treatment and little understanding of what they may face when deported. Asylum seekers and refugees more generally face cultural and linguistic barriers as well as intersecting challenges like trauma, stigma, discrimination, disability, ill-health, and gender-based violence.

During this reporting period, **lack of reliable interpreter services** resulted in postponements of key interviews for many and, for some, sudden short notice of interviews brought forward. The latter often results in the applicant being unable to seek legal advice prior to the interview. Metadrassi, the Greek NGO, contracted to provide interpreter services, faced difficulties with funds, and has not paid interpreters for some months. Many interpreters were only part paid and still await payment of the full contract amount. There were suggestions that others would take over the provision of these services, but this has not happened as of end-June 2024.

**E-services through the Ministry of Migration were not operating optimally** as people are not receiving the automated certificates confirming receipt of their emails or email responses. Refugees are facing issues with their application for residence cards and travel documents, as they are being asked to prove their address and many cannot do so. Their name is not on the lease or the bills of the accommodation where they stay, or they cannot get a statutory declaration from the lease holder.

Furthermore, there are problems with **transitioning the PAYPAA**, the temporary social services number on the applicant card, **to AMKA,** which is the unique and permanent social service number.

**To learn more of the challenges faced by asylum seekers in Greece**, on June 23, 2024, Refugees Support Aegean and ProAsyl published a Report on the ‘*Refugee Camps in Mainland Greece*” which is available [here.](https://rsaegean.org/en/refugee-camps-in-mainland-greece/)

***Extract: Refugee Support Aegean (RSA) presents its new report on the living conditions in the refugee camps of the mainland, CCACs or “Camps are currently the only form of reception offered to asylum seekers in Greece, underpinned by inadequate reception conditions in sites isolated from urban centres and with difficult access thereto. It also presents serious issues regarding the protection of asylum seekers’ physical and mental health, compounded by severe staffing shortages, failure to disburse financial allowances to the majority of applicants and the absence of appropriate measures to assist the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the broader society.”***

To learn more about [**Detention and Reception Conditions**](https://rsaegean.org/en/category/topics/detention-and-reception-conditions/) [Facts and figures](https://rsaegean.org/en/category/publications/facts-and-figures/) published by RSA on 20 May 2024.

*Refugees arbitrarily deprived of their liberty despite unfeasible deportations*.

Also in June 2024, several main stream media published reports drawing attention to the horrors of ‘pushbacks’, short-hard term for forcing people to return to Turkey by diverse unsafe or violent *means, a practice that has been in place for at least two years.*

*(*[*BBC*](https://ecre.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8e3ebd297b1510becc6d6d690&id=b921c11c7a&e=39ab74a59c)*)****Greek coastguard threw migrants overboard to their deaths, witnesses say****– The United Nations’ refugee and migration agencies on Friday [14 June] criticized Greece’s failure over the past year to shed light on one of the worst migrant shipwrecks in the Mediterranean Sea that left hundreds dead.  (*[*Guardian*](https://ecre.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8e3ebd297b1510becc6d6d690&id=7c1b15b66f&e=39ab74a59c)*)****Greek coastguard’s treatment of migrants ‘clearly illegal’, says ex-officer****– A former Greek coastguard officer has described as “clearly illegal” the actions of colleagues who abandoned nine migrants at sea in one of 15 alleged pushbacks from Greek islands or territorial waters that reportedly killed dozens of people.*

*(*[*BBC*](https://ecre.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8e3ebd297b1510becc6d6d690&id=5339c3a6ce&e=39ab74a59c)*)****Greek opposition urges investigation after BBC migrant deaths report****– Greece's main opposition party is demanding an investigation after a BBC report which found the coastguard had caused dozens of migrant deaths over three years, according to witnesses.*

***GREECE****(*[*AP*](https://ecre.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8e3ebd297b1510becc6d6d690&id=3bd43a473d&e=39ab74a59c)*)****UN agencies urge Greece to shed light on migrant shipwreck that killed hundreds one year ago****– The United Nations’ refugee and migration agencies on Friday [14 June] criticised Greece’s failure over the past year to shed light on one of the worst migrant shipwrecks in the Mediterranean Sea that left hundreds dead.*

*(*[*Reuters*](https://ecre.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8e3ebd297b1510becc6d6d690&id=86fe3b0bd0&e=39ab74a59c)*)****Protesters rally for justice a year after Greece migrant boat disaster****– Hundreds of demonstrators rallied in Athens on Friday [14 June] to mark the one-year anniversary of a shipwreck that killed hundreds of migrants off Greece, demanding answers about the causes of the disaster and the fate of relatives.  (source: ECRE AIDA News Bulletin).*

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