

Reporting Period

February 2026 - April 2026



DCI GREECE

Defence for Children International – Greece remains committed to supporting and protecting vulnerable communities. As the number of asylum seekers is expected to increase with the implementation of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, our team continues to provide essential legal aid, reliable information, and tailored support to people seeking safety and stability in Greece.

For many years now, our Lesbos Legal Programme has played a key role in safeguarding asylum seekers' rights, offering trusted legal representation and guidance throughout the asylum process, including for those facing negative decisions.

We are especially grateful for our partnership with Flüchtlingshilfe Doro Blancke, whose continued support strengthens our efforts to promote justice, dignity, and human rights.

Our Target Population



FAMILIES

Nuclear and single-headed families



VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

Survivors of Human Trafficking, torture, and/or FGM



SINGLE MOTHERS SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING/FGM/TORTURE

with underage children



YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

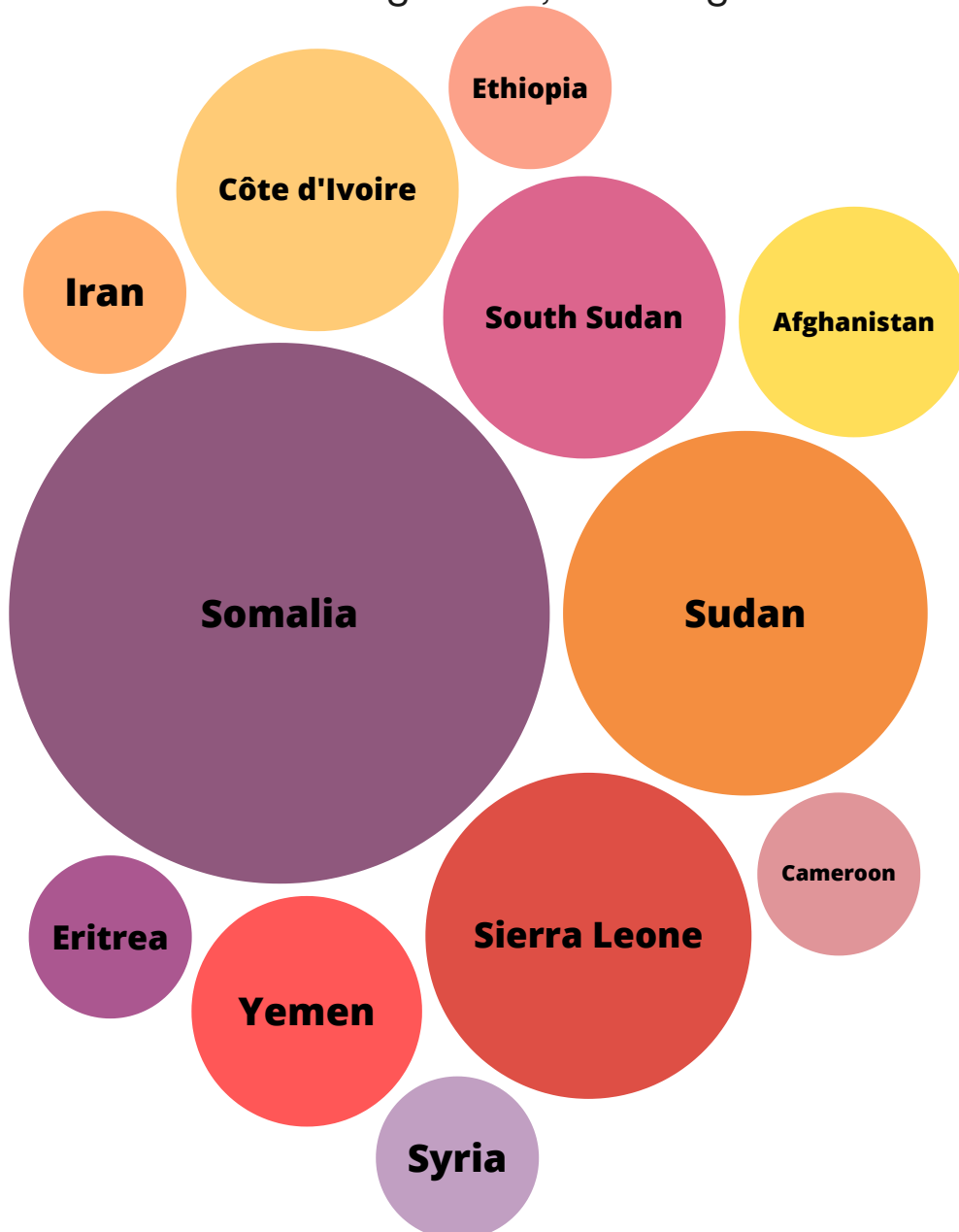


YOUNG ADULTS

REPORTING FIGURES

During the reporting period, DCI Greece provided legal assistance, information, and protection support to a total of 159 individuals through individualized case management and drop-in consultations. Beneficiaries came from diverse backgrounds, including Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Eritrea, Iran, Ethiopia, Yemen, and other countries.

They came from diverse backgrounds, including:



OUR INTERVENTION

These individuals

were supported by DCI-Greece with their asylum procedures.

for whom we conducted

NEEDS AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

aiming to detect any risk factor, need, and vulnerability of every individual.

Personalized Legal Support for Asylum Seekers

Each individual supported by DCI Greece received legal assistance tailored to their specific circumstances and protection needs. Our legal team conducted detailed case assessments, developed individualized legal strategies, and provided preparation and guidance throughout all stages of the asylum procedure, including interview preparation sessions.

For individuals facing negative asylum decisions, DCI Greece continued to provide legal support throughout the appeals process and, where relevant, assisted with subsequent applications and requests for re-examination.

Through this rights-based and person-centered approach, DCI Greece works to ensure meaningful access to asylum procedures and protection under national and international law.

for whom we drafted and submitted

TAILORED LEGAL MEMOS

in order to support our beneficiaries asylum claims both in the first and second degree.

At the same time, our team offered information and guidance on the asylum procedure to individuals through drop-in consultations. These sessions provided essential support and responded to a wide range of needs, including but not limited to:

1

Legal Information Sessions: These sessions provide clear explanations of the asylum process, the rights of asylum seekers, and answers to common questions. We focus on the asylum interview - clarifying its purpose, what it involves, and why it is a crucial step in determining an individual's claim. Participants gain practical insights on how to prepare effectively and present their case confidently.

2

Referrals: We connect individuals with other relevant organizations, medical services, therapy, social activities, and additional support networks to ensure they receive comprehensive care.

3

Travel Document Guidance: We provide clear information to recognized refugees on how to apply for travel documents. This includes explaining eligibility requirements, outlining the application process, and supporting individuals in gathering the necessary documentation.

4

Family Reunification Support: We offer guidance to recognized refugees on how to initiate the family reunification process through the Asylum Service. This includes explaining the required steps, necessary documentation, and timelines involved, helping individuals understand their rights and navigate the process with clarity and support.

5

Appeal Support: We assist individuals in understanding negative asylum decisions and guide them through the appeals process. This includes help with filing appeal requests and identifying key issues - such as procedural errors or threats in Turkey or their country of origin- giving them a second chance to seek protection.

POSITIVE NEWS DELIVERY

These moments of good news are more than updates - they're milestones of safety, recognition, and hope.

I had passport yesterday 10:58

Thank you for helping me 10:59

3 year passport 10:59

I really appreciate you guys.
Thank you for helping and supporting me.

14:57



Thank You Billion times
I have successfully arrived at the building. It was quite difficult for me to get here on my own, but your support and guidance made it possible.
I sincerely appreciate your great help and kindness. I am now about to enter the office.
Thank you very much once again —I truly appreciate it.

12:10

You

I am glad to hear that you are doing good, what was the decision?

Blue document

14:53



Amazing news! We are so happy to hear this

14:54 ✓✓

You

Amazing news! We are so happy to hear this

Yes thank you

14:54

CURRENT CONTEXT - LESVOS

1. Living Conditions at Closed Controlled Mavrovouni Camp

Although winter has now come to an end, the bad weather persisted through to April, the camp has continued to be severely impacted by heavy rains and storms worsening already dire living conditions. Following extensive rainfall, flooding occurred around accommodation units in the camp. Residents are ill-prepared for the harsh weather, with inadequate clothing and no means to properly dry their belongings, leaving them often unable to have clean dry clothes. The storms force many to spend most of their time in overcrowded tents, including families. The showers often only provide cold water, and when the solar heaters do warm the water on sunny days, it's not enough for all residents.

It is very important to mention that with regards to mental health, it has been a particularly difficult period for many living in the camp. At the end of February 2026, a man who had been in Lesvos for 6 years, first in Moria and then in Mavrovouni camp, waiting for his decision, took his own life after receiving another rejection. This, of course, has had a significant impact.

Additionally, like in previous months, food provisions remain insufficient and of low quality, leaving residents hungry and exposed to health risks. Families have also reported a lack of appropriate food for their babies. Mice and cockroaches continue to infest the tents, worsening the already overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Intense security measures also remain the same, with the curfew still in place, preventing residents from entering the camp after 10:00 p.m.

In response, we remain deeply engaged with camp residents, conducting thorough risk assessments and actively gathering feedback on their living conditions. Through regular conversations, we gain valuable insights into the challenges they face, allowing us to better understand their immediate and long-term needs. This continuous dialogue not only strengthens our ability to advocate for their rights and improve their situation but also ensures that residents are linked with essential medical and humanitarian services. We are working closely with other NGOs to refer residents to additional services where we cannot directly meet their needs. Our team remains dedicated to advocating on their behalf to improve their living conditions and access to essential resources.

CURRENT CONTEXT - LESVOS

2. Arrivals and Demographics

Although the camp population has decreased in recent months significant protection and support needs remain. Organisations on the ground report growing difficulties in obtaining accurate and up-to-date figures due to limited cooperation from the camp administration, further complicating effective service provision and response planning.

Meanwhile, arrivals have started to rise again, with around 320 new arrivals recorded **in March compared to 197 in January**. This increase highlights the continued and evolving need for accessible legal aid, reliable information, and protection services for people arriving on the island.

Variable weather conditions and systematic border violence continue to make the journey extremely dangerous. Several reports of shipwrecks in the Northern Aegean persist. Notably, on the 3rd February 2026, an inflatable boat carrying 40 people approaching the island of Chios was intercepted by the Greek Coast Guard. The coast guard struck the vessel and shoved their own boat into it, throwing people into the sea. This pushback killed 15 people, including minors, making it one of the most lethal shipwrecks involving people on the move since the Pylos shipwreck in 2023.

Hostilities across the Middle East have triggered significant population movements. Overall, more than 330,000 people have been forcibly displaced, mostly within their own countries. Movements of people across borders remain within normal patterns so far, but the situation is extremely fluid. **In fact, reports which track movement trends towards Europe suggest that this geopolitical context paired with a lack of humanitarian funding could trigger large-scale movement to the EU, even at the level of 2015-2016.**

Our team remains deeply engaged with the current tense geopolitical situation, through our own research and also, through attending the monthly UNHCR Protection Working Group. We also regularly conduct Country of Origin research putting us in the best possible position to support our beneficiaries, understand their stories and offer them high quality advice to support them throughout the asylum process.



CURRENT CONTEXT - LESVOS

3. Pressure to Leave the Camp

Many residents are facing pressure to leave the camp shortly after receiving their decisions or passports. There have been reports of people actively getting evicted from the camp immediately after receiving a positive decision. This constant pressure adds to the uncertainty, especially as many do not have a place to go. As a result of this, there has been a rise in homelessness, creating an extremely distressing situation for many people. In addition to this, if they are forced to leave and go to Athens, people often find themselves without any support or resources.



As increasing numbers of individuals leave the island, in many cases even before submitting an appeal against a first-instance rejection, DCI Greece continues to provide legal support in Athens to ensure continuity of representation and guidance throughout the appeals and subsequent application procedures. Our team remains in close contact with beneficiaries through regular in-person meetings, ensuring ongoing legal assistance and support during this particularly critical stage of the asylum process.

Furthermore, for families who have arrived in Athens following a positive asylum decision, DCI Greece facilitates access to a broader range of support services aimed at promoting integration, empowerment, and long-term stability. Through continued guidance and practical support, our team assists beneficiaries in navigating the transition toward greater independence and rebuilding their lives in safety and dignity.



CURRENT CONTEXT - LESVOS

4. Developments & Policy Shifts in Greek Asylum Procedures

Arrests Following Second-Instance Asylum Rejections

There continue to be concerning reports of people being invited to the asylum service for their second-instance decisions, only to be immediately arrested by the police if their application is rejected. In these cases, people face either a minimum of two years in prison or are forced to accept voluntary repatriation within just 14 days. While courts in Mytiline have generally imposed sentences of only one year, considering mitigating circumstances, this remains a deeply worrying development that severely restricts the right to seek asylum.

There has also been a report of police entering the camp and arresting someone in their tent immediately after they received a negative decision. In the particular case, the prosecutor proposed conviction but due to lack of intent (i.e., the applicant did not have time to do anything after the negative decision was issued), the defendant was ultimately acquitted pending the decision on his case. Even though the applicant has been acquitted for now, this report highlights a very concerning reality which could pose issue for many in the future. Our team remains dedicated to supporting applicants throughout the appeal process, ensuring their fundamental rights are upheld.

Asylum Procedures for Iranians:

Following the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, the Greek Asylum Service issued an order to freeze decisions for Iranians. This means that people from Iran who have already completed their interview and have not received their decision yet are stuck in limbo, not knowing when they will find out the outcome of their asylum application. In addition to this, even if recognised, they will go through additional screening due to security concerns. There have also been reports of the authorities even revoking statuses for older cases. There around 20 Iranians in the Lesvos CCAC at different stages of the asylum procedure. Further developments will need to be closely monitored. Our team is prepared to provide beneficiaries with legal updates, guidance on next steps, and support in responding to decisions, including assistance with appeals where necessary.



OUR LEGAL INTERVENTION THROUGH REAL-LIFE STORIES

I would not be able to see my future husband until the wedding. The marriage was like a sale.

I could not go to the police for help, my family would find out and kill me.

AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE CYCLE: A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER'S JOURNEY

Aisha and her daughter, Aliyah first came to us in February. They were both having a difficult time in the camp because they did not feel safe: they were not able to sleep and they were scared to leave their tent at night to go to the bathroom. This was especially difficult for Aisha who, due to medical reasons, needs to have regular access to a bathroom. When they first came to us they were very anxious about the interview - they had no idea what the asylum interview would entail and they were not aware of any of their rights as asylum seekers. Aisha in particular, was nervous about the prospect of having to recount the most traumatic events of her life and the physical response this could illicit for her.

Over a series of meetings, we worked with Aisha and Aliyah to help them feel more confident going into the interview. We built a relationship with them: we offered them a safe space, we formed a bond based on trust and as a result, they felt comfortable sharing with us. They told us their story and explained the reasons why they had to flee Sudan. Aisha has undergone FGM multiple times in her life, the first time was when she was a child. She was also forced to marry at the age of 13. Aisha wanted to protect her daughter from having the same experiences that she had gone through. When Aliyah turned 18, she started to face mounting pressure from family members to marry and subsequently, she was promised to a man 25 years older than her. Both mother and daughter had been stripped of their rights to live self-determined lives. The family started to threaten Aisha and Aliyah both verbally and physically and so, they decided to flee. They knew that they had to leave Sudan because wherever they went they would not feel safe from their family members who could track them down.

We carefully conducted a thorough risk assessment, taking into account the sensitive nature of this case and allowing Aisha and Aliyah to share their story in a safe environment at a pace which felt comfortable for them. We also ensured that they were supported by doing a referral so that they could receive psychological assistance.

A month after their interviews, Aisha and Aliyah came to see us with some good news which they were very excited share with us - they had received their positive decisions. They were relieved that they can now have a fresh start and they are currently rebuilding their lives in Lesbos.

OUR LEGAL INTERVENTION THROUGH REAL-LIFE STORIES

I would rather try again and die in the water than go back.

The police took everything from us. We were waiting for 2 hours until we were finally rescued.

BORDER VIOLENCE: THE REALITY OF CROSSING THE AEGEAN

Alimany and his pregnant wife Mariama, fled Sierra Leone since they feared for their lives, they wished to find a place they could call home where they no longer felt under constant threat. Following the death of his father, Alimany's uncle began to pressure him to join a secret society but Alimany refused. As a result, he was threatened and beaten up many times. One attack resulted in him losing a finger. The breaking point came when his brother was murdered by members of his uncle's secret society. He was told that him and his wife were next and so, they were forced to flee.

Alimany and Mariama made it to Turkey. Here, they hoped they would finally be able to enjoy freedom and safety but instead, they faced more danger and violence. Unable to obtain protection, they decided to make the journey to Greece. Whilst trying to cross, they were intercepted at sea. During the encounter, everyone's personal belongings were taken and their boat was rammed, causing people to fall into the water. Alimany and Mariama were left traumatised: they had seen some of their travel companions drown in front of their eyes. Yet, they had no other option but to try again. Alimany explained what they had already experienced he would rather risk his life again than go back.

On their second attempt, Alimany and Mariama successfully reached Greece. Once registered as asylum seekers by the authorities, our team helped them to prepare for their interviews by explaining their rights and the procedures, and the meaning of the interview. By working with us, Alimany and Mariama were able to gain confidence in speaking their truth. They felt calmer and more optimistic about the future.

OUR LEGAL INTERVENTION THROUGH REAL-LIFE STORIES

Because of what I experienced in Syria, everytime I hear a loud noise I get really scared.

As a Palestinian, I did not have rights. I was not treated like a normal citizen.

SEARCHING FOR A SAFE HOME

Mahmoud is a Palestinian young man who was born in Syria. He lived there until he was ten when the civil war started and the bombing in his area became very persistent and intense. As a result of the incredibly dangerous situation in Syria, his family was forced to flee to Lebanon where life became increasingly more difficult. As a Palestinian living in Lebanon, his rights were restricted and he faced major discrimination: he had to go to a specific school which was far away and not in a safe area, when he was old enough to work, he could get fired for no apparent reason without being paid a salary and also, he could not open a business in his name.

One year ago, when the war in Lebanon started, the Israeli bombings were occurring very close to his home, putting his life in immediate danger. He constantly felt frightened and unsafe. This was the final straw, he had to flee. But again, he faced more hardships when he reached Turkey. He was not permitted to apply for protection and instead, he was put in jail for three months. When he was released, he was just left in the street with nowhere to go. Mahmoud did not feel safe, he felt constantly watched by the police, they would ask him to come in every week so that they could take his fingerprint. Again, he reached a breaking point and so, he decided to make the difficult journey to Greece.

After applying for asylum in Greece, Mahmoud struggled whilst waiting for his decision, he was not coping with life in the camp and he was finding it difficult being told that he just had to wait. Our team had been closely monitoring and regularly checking in with him. We also had made sure that he was receiving care from a psychologist. **Following one of our recent check ups with him, Mahmoud sent us a message saying that he had got his decision that day, he had received refugee status.** It was a long and difficult journey to get to this point but Mahmoud told us that he now felt intense relief and he was happy to share his joy with us. When Mahmoud first came to us, he was hesitant, distrustful and he had no information on the interview process. We worked together to create a safe space so that we could provide him with the guidance he needed to go into the interview with confidence and gain the protection which he deserves.



ATHENS



What are the needs on the ground?

Current Context: Athens

Athens hosts a highly diverse displaced population, including newly arrived asylum seekers, people transferred from the islands, individuals with rejected asylum claims, and recognized refugees. At the same time, Greece's asylum and reception systems remain overstretched, while major gaps in integration and protection services persist.

In response, DCI Greece addresses urgent protection needs through its Stepping Stone Center in Athens, supporting people arriving from the islands, residents of mainland camps, and displaced individuals already living in the city. Referrals come through refugee communities, partner organisations, and individuals themselves, particularly from Schisto, Ritsona, and Malakasa camps. Many people supported by the center face severe insecurity, including homelessness, lack of access to services, and legal uncertainty.

Housing insecurity remains a critical concern. Once individuals receive a rejection or refugee status, they are required to leave camps or accommodation facilities with little or no transition support. In the absence of an effective national integration strategy for the ones received the status, many struggle to secure stable housing and are left at heightened risk of homelessness, exploitation, and ongoing vulnerability.

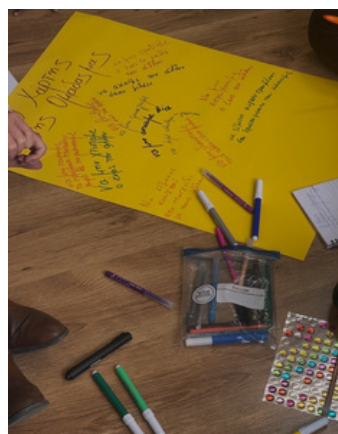
Access to essential services also remains particularly difficult for people living in remote camps, where limited and costly transportation restricts access to legal aid, psychosocial support, education, and vocational opportunities. These challenges are expected to intensify with the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which will place further pressure on Greece's already fragile reception system.



To respond to these growing challenges, DCI Greece continues to expand its mixed outreach approach, combining support at its Athens-based "Stepping Stone" Center with online legal guidance and regular visits to mainland camps.

The center provides legal assistance, psychosocial support, employability and empowerment activities, and referrals to vocational programmes, with a particular focus on young women and mothers. Children also benefit from psycho-educational activities that promote well-being, development, and access to education.

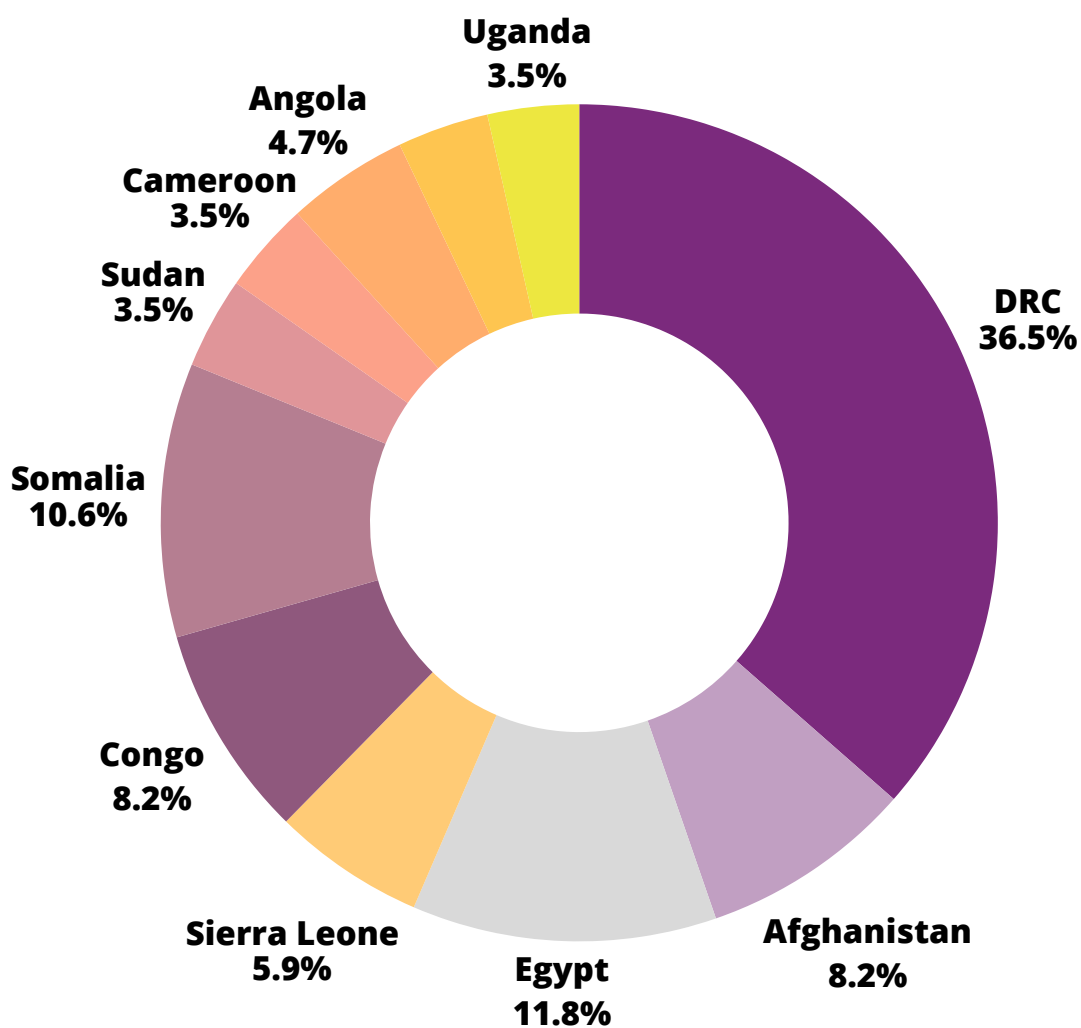
Many individuals first connect with DCI Greece on Lesbos through legal and case management support. As they relocate to the mainland, a continuity-based approach ensures ongoing assistance and smoother transitions.



In this period of time, in Athens, DCI-Greece supported:

84 beneficiaries

- **21 SINGLE MOTHERS**
with their underage children were supported throughout the asylum procedures
- **2 FAMILY**
- **12 YOUNG ADULTS UP TO 29 YEARS OLD**



Our Intervention

Athens

84 BENEFICIARIES

were supported legally by DCI-Greece

FOR ALL 37 ADULTS BUT ALSO THEIR CHILDREN WE CONDUCTED NEEDS AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

aiming to detect any risk factor, need, and vulnerability of every individual

TAILORED LEGAL MEMOS

submitted before the asylum authorities in order to support our beneficiaries' asylum claims both in the 1st and 2nd degree but also in their subsequent applications.

Out of whom:

9 INDIVIDUALS

received psychological support from our specialized psychologist (while 2 were referred to psychiatrist to address more complex mental health concerns requiring medical evaluation and potential pharmacological treatment).

14 INDIVIDUALS

were referred and supported with vocational training, while they were also linked to start English and Greek courses

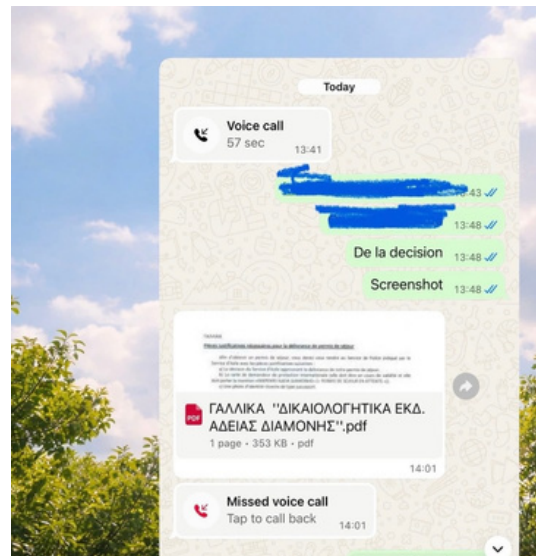
12 INDIVIDUALS

were referred to health clinics for medical support

49 INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING CHILDREN

participated in our empowerment, integration and educational group activities, aiming to foster resilience, provide emotional support, and help them regain a sense of agency as they worked on their life plans and navigated their new lives.

OUR LEGAL INTERVENTION THROUGH REAL-LIFE STORIES



“IS IT TRUE? IS IT REALLY OVER?”

A phone call we had been waiting for.

On the other end of the line was Abigail, who had spent years fighting to be safe.

A survivor of torture.

A woman whose asylum claim had already been rejected twice.

A woman who had almost lost hope that anyone would ever truly listen to her story.

When she first came to DCI Greece, she was exhausted by years of uncertainty and repeated legal procedures. She had been living in limbo, without stability, carrying the weight of trauma while trying simply to survive each day. Our legal team carefully reviewed her case from the beginning.

We identified critical elements and vulnerabilities that had not been properly assessed during the previous procedures. Together with her, we gathered documentation, prepared detailed legal submissions, and requested the reopening of her case. Throughout the process, our team stood by her side, explaining each step, preparing her for interviews, accompanying her through the procedure, and ensuring she had continuous psychosocial support during an extremely difficult period. She went through the asylum process once again.

And then she waited. For months. But while waiting for the decision, she refused to give up on herself and her future. With support and encouragement from our team, she completed vocational training in the hospitality sector and secured a job at a hotel, an important step toward rebuilding stability and independence. An one day the decision finally came.

She called us asking if the result was positive or negative.

She kept repeating:

“Is it true? Is it really over?”

It was true. She was granted asylum.

After years of fear, instability, and waiting, she can finally begin rebuilding her life in safety and dignity, this time with hope, work, and the possibility of a future she can now look at with optimism.

OUR LEGAL INTERVENTION THROUGH REAL-LIFE STORIES



“WHEN MY ASYLUM CASE WAS REJECTED, I FELT THAT MY SON AND I HAD LOST EVERYTHING. WE WERE TERRIFIED OF BEING SENT BACK, HOMELESS, AND COMPLETELY ALONE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, SOMEONE LISTENED TO US, BELIEVED US, AND GAVE US HOPE THAT WE MIGHT STILL HAVE A FUTURE.”

When Nour, a Palestinian mother living in Athens with her young son, was referred to DCI Greece by another organisation, she was in an extremely vulnerable situation. Her asylum application in Greece had been rejected after the authorities examined her case solely in relation to Turkey, where she had previously resided, rather than assessing the risks connected to her Palestinian origin. Yet in Turkey, Nour had been living without legal documentation and faced serious barriers to accessing work, healthcare, and other essential services.

By the time she arrived at DCI Greece’s in Athens, Nour and her son had already experienced prolonged instability and severe psychological distress. Following the rejection of her asylum claim, she had been forced to leave the camp accommodation system and was left without secure housing or meaningful support. Deeply traumatized and fearful of return, Nour described living in constant anxiety about her family’s safety and future, while her young son was also showing significant signs of emotional distress linked to prolonged insecurity and displacement.

Following a legal and psychosocial assessment, DCI Greece supported Nour in filing an appeal against the negative asylum decision and prepared a detailed legal memorandum documenting her vulnerabilities and the protection risks associated with return to Turkey. As a result, Nour regained asylum seeker status pending the examination of her case at second instance, restoring temporary access to basic rights and safeguards.

At the same time, DCI Greece’s multidisciplinary team continues to support both mother and child. Nour regularly attends psychosocial support sessions, while her son participates in child-focused psychoeducational and recreational activities at the center. With continued support, Nour has also recently secured part-time employment, an important step toward rebuilding stability and independence, although the family continues to face profound uncertainty about the future.

OUR LEGAL INTERVENTION THROUGH REAL-LIFE STORIES



TODAY, DESPITE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES, WE FINALLY FEEL THAT THERE IS HOPE FOR OUR FAMILY'S FUTURE.

When Omar and Lina, a young couple living in Athens with their newborn baby, were referred to DCI Greece, they were facing profound uncertainty and instability. The couple had met during their displacement journey, and shortly after arriving in Greece, their child was born under extremely precarious conditions.

From the beginning, DCI Greece's multidisciplinary team conducted a comprehensive protection and risk assessment to identify the family's urgent legal, medical, and psychosocial needs. Living in unstable conditions and struggling to meet even basic daily necessities, the family was experiencing severe emotional stress while trying to care for their newborn child.

Our legal team supported the family throughout the asylum process, ensuring that their claims and vulnerabilities were properly documented and represented before the authorities. At the same time, DCI Greece linked the family with medical professionals and pediatric services to ensure that the baby could access the healthcare and follow-up support required during the first critical months of life.

Alongside legal assistance, both parents were integrated into psychosocial support services at the Stepping Stone Center. Omar and Lina regularly attend psychotherapy sessions to address the trauma and stress linked to displacement, insecurity, and parenthood under extremely difficult circumstances. Lina also participates in women's empowerment and support group sessions, helping her gradually rebuild confidence, social connections, and a sense of stability.

After months of uncertainty, the family recently received positive asylum decisions for Lina and the baby. However, the father's case remains pending, leaving the family in continued legal insecurity and emotional distress. DCI Greece continues to provide legal representation and accompaniment as we work to secure protection and family unity for all three family members.

While many challenges remain, the family continues to show remarkable resilience as they work toward building a safer and more stable future for their child.



#strongertogether

**FOR SECURITY REASONS,
THE NAMES AND PHOTOS
OF THE INDIVIDUALS IN
THE STORIES SHARED IN
THE REPORT DO NOT
CORRESPOND TO THE
ACTUAL INDIVIDUALS
AND THEIR NAMES IN THE
STORIES.**