

Monitoring closed controlled facilities on the Greek islands

October 2025 - This first monitoring update from the Aegean NGO Network (ANN) examines conditions in the EU-funded Closed Controlled Access Centres (C.C.A.C) on Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Kos and Leros. Based on reports from 11 independent organisations active on the islands, it documents systemic gaps in interpretation services, healthcare provision, and reception conditions. The update also reviews the situation of unaccompanied children in Samos following interim measures by the European Court of Human Rights.

Interpretation services on the islands

Interpretation services at all C.C.A.C.s on the Aegean islands had been outsourced to the NGO METAdrasi. After repeated delays in payments and contract renewals, the contract has now ended and there is currently no official interpretation provider. An inadequate patchwork solution, with the EUAA offering limited translation and ad-hoc measures, causes serious disruptions in asylum procedures, access to healthcare, and protection on all islands.

Avocats Sans Frontières France (ASFF) and another Aegean NGO Network member on **Samos** confirm that with little or no interpreter assistance, vulnerability assessments are disrupted or not conducted properly.

ASFF on **Samos** reports that the absence of interpretation in several languages (including Uzbek, Urdu, Swahili, and Wolof) has led to problems with the determination of nationality, postponed asylum interviews, delay in the notification of decisions and therefore delays in the appeals and subsequent applications.

Boat Refugee Foundation (BRF) reports several cases of people denied healthcare under the Hippocrates Programme on **Lesvos** due to a lack of interpretation. Fenix found that patients were asked to bring their own interpreters, compromising confidentiality.

Residents of the C.C.A.C. on **Chios** and **Kos** report to Medical Solidarity International (MSI) and Refugee Biriyani & Bananas (RBB) that interpretation is unavailable for asylum and other essential services.



Access to healthcare and protection

The EU-funded, IOM-implemented Hippocrates Programme, designed to provide healthcare to refugees in Greek reception facilities, received a last-minute no-cost extension after prolonged uncertainty about continuation in June 2025. The extension until the end of the year was positive on paper, with operating hours extended to a full working day, though this has not been consolidated in practice.

On all **Aegean islands**, the Hippocrates Programme failed to meet Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) recommendations of 1 doctor and 3 nurses per 500 residents during Q3, a safeguard to prevent inhumane and degrading treatment observed at the Samos and Kos C.C.A.C. in 2023-2024.

BRF service users on **Lesvos** complain that a doctor is sometimes unavailable for several consecutive days. On **Kos**, MSI received complaints that healthcare capacity is extremely limited, often with only one doctor or nurse present.

On **Lesvos** and **Kos**, patients report limited medication availability and difficulty obtaining prescribed medicines, sometimes paying out of pocket, particularly those with chronic conditions. BRF on **Lesvos** has recorded a rise in patients seeking diabetes medication, despite Hippocrates funding supposedly covering such costs.

Aegean NGO Network partners ASFF on **Samos** and Fenix on **Lesvos** warn that reduced UNHCR capacity will seriously affect protection cases and coordination. BRF warns that the Hippocrates Programme lacks sufficient capacity to take on protection.

Poor reception conditions on Chios, Kos, Leros and Lesvos

On **Chios**, RBB has received complaints of inconsistent electricity and water supply in parts of the C.C.A.C. NGO service provision is very limited and unable to meet demand.

On **Chios**, **Leros** and **Lesvos**, ANN partners have received reports of low-quality food and irregular bulk distributions that must last for an entire day or several days, with no safe or cool storage available.

On **Kos**, MSI service users report poor food quality, inadequate sanitation and WASH facilities, and a lack of essential non-food items such as shampoo, sunscreen, and baby clothing.

RBB reports that a physically disabled person on **Leros** has repeatedly requested a wheelchair without success and cannot access sanitary facilities as they are not adapted to their needs.



On **Lesvos**, Fenix received numerous complaints that, despite the low number of occupants at the C.C.A.C., people are still forced to share housing units at full capacity, leaving them without personal space or privacy.

Update on Samos unaccompanied children

The Human Rights Legal Project (HRLP) on **Samos** successfully applied for several interim measures at the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of unaccompanied children, obliging the Greek authorities to take immediate steps to prevent further violations.

Since then, **Samos** C.C.A.C. authorities have stopped providing any information about the “safe zone”, including the number of children there, and the organisation is effectively barred from accessing the children.

Boat Refugee Foundation reports that most children temporarily transferred from **Samos** to **Lesvos** were suffering from untreated infected scabies. Among them was a child with serious cardiac issues and another on antibiotic treatment for pneumonia.

Access to people on the move and obstruction of NGOs

The [Rule of Law report chapter on Greece](#) notes concerns expressed by ANN members about inflammatory statements directed at NGOs, though it omits serious concerns shared with the Commission about reduced access and monitoring by civil society on the Aegean islands.

HIAS Greece reports that the case at the Council of State (with Equal Rights Beyond Borders) seeking annulment of the heavily criticised NGO registration legislation has been pending for almost 3 years.

On **Samos** and **Lesvos**, Aegean Network partners report a lack of coordination and consultation from authorities, coinciding with the absence of constructive dialogue from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Boat Refugee Foundation, although fully registered with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, has been denied access to the **Chios** C.C.A.C. after applying to run a temporary healthcare project, without further legal justification.



On **Chios**, RBB reports that despite repeated requests from authorities and UNHCR to assist with food and NFI distribution, the organisation is barred from distributing inside the C.C.A.C. and must operate from a dirt road outside.

Transfers and evictions

On **Samos** and **Kos**, Aegean NGO Network members report strict enforcement of eviction orders, with recognised refugees given 30 days to leave the facility. Samos Volunteers (SV) reports that people are evicted as soon as they receive travel documents, often without accommodation or the means to leave the island. HIAS reports that no evictions have taken place on **Lesvos** during Q3.

On **Samos**, following a joint NGO complaint, the Greek Ombudsman urged the authorities to transfer vulnerable persons to mainland facilities without delay. No official transfers took place for months due to budget shortages. Transfers have resumed, though SV service users report last-minute notifications and uncertainty.

The Aegean NGO Network is a coalition of 11 independent organisations present on the Greek islands, some of whom contribute anonymously due to the challenging environment for civil society. The Aegean NGO Network is supported by Oxfam Novib.