



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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## Letter from the Management Committee

2024 was another year of persistent challenges — for the people we serve, for those of us providing support, and for the systems in which we operate. But through it all, ASsIST remained grounded in solidarity, driven by our commitment to accessible, professional, and compassionate legal and information services for asylum seekers and refugees in Greece.

For many seeking protection, the journey did not end at Europe's borders. It continued through complicated procedures, policy shifts, and harsh conditions. Living in overcrowded Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs), often without cash assistance, people faced delays, limited legal access, and compromised health and hygiene. These burdens, combined with prior trauma and systemic neglect, weighed heavily on mental and physical well-being.

Even those who were granted refugee status encountered new forms of exclusion. Legal recognition did not translate to integration. Many faced unemployment, housing insecurity, and an absence of long-term support — exacerbated by shifting policies and shrinking resources.

At ASsIST, we adapted. We continued to build our Team of experienced volunteer Legal Advisors and dedicated interpreters, many of whom have been with us since 2019. All interpreters have lived experience as asylum seekers and now contribute essential linguistic and cultural insights to our work. They, alongside our lawyers and qualified legal volunteers, consistently responded with professionalism, urgency, and compassion — often on short notice.

Our Client Services Managers, all volunteering beyond the minimum required commitment, brought diverse expertise to a demanding role. Their careful coordination and attention to confidentiality strengthened our service delivery. We also improved internal systems for managing client records and enhanced our administrative systems.

Funding constraints forced us to suspend legal services for several weeks in March/April 2024 while our information and referral services continued. To reduce costs and maintain services, we later closed our Chios office and registered ASsIST as a legal entity in Switzerland. Our Team now works almost entirely remotely, using secure digital platforms to deliver services. This transition, first developed during the COVID-19 lockdowns, has proven not only viable but effective.

In fact, remote service delivery is now central to our model — and our clients have responded very positively. Most live in CCACs or are in detention, with limited means or mobility. By offering remote consultations, we reduce their burden and increase accessibility. Remote services are efficient, timely, and respectful — and have enabled us to establish and maintain relationships of trust with those we serve.

With limited funding and increasing demand, our new core team of Greek lawyers continued to deliver high-quality services. Despite fewer contracted hours, their dedication ensured that our impact remained measurable and meaningful – as confirmed by client feedback and case outcomes.

In 2024, we also began discussions with a major IT company to further improve how we manage data, safeguard privacy, and streamline case management records. These innovations are key to maintaining quality and continuity as resources decline.

Throughout this challenging year, our team held firm. All members of the Team showed professionalism and care, never losing sight of the human dignity at the heart of our work. It is because of this unwavering commitment of our Team members that we decided that 2025 will be ASsIST's Year of Solidarity. Solidarity is not a slogan – it is the foundation of our service, our structure, and our shared vision for justice.

Thank you to all who stood with us in 2024 – we invite you to join us 'in solidarity' throughout 2025.

Mary Wenker  
President



Rakel Sezer  
Secretary



Sheila Cross  
Treasurer



***# Please note: An audited Financial Statement will not be ready until August 2025. As soon as the audit is complete, it will be uploaded as the final page of this Report.***

# INTRODUCTION

At ASsIST, we are committed to upholding fundamental human rights. For over five years, through a holistic, trauma-informed approach to service delivery, we have been supporting asylum seekers and refugees across Greece.

We prioritise marginalised groups, recognising their vulnerability and respecting their autonomy, providing tailored support to overcome the many challenges that they face daily. Our partnerships extend beyond legal aid to offer access to other essential services for the well-being and integration of our clients

**Our Mission:** is to provide fair and just access to asylum and social integration procedures, assisting asylum seekers and refugees with legal and welfare issues.

**Our Vision:** is to be agents of hope and contribute to a better life for asylum seekers and refugees by adapting to change and making meaningful differences.

**Our Values:** At ASsIST, our work is grounded in both ethical and operational values.

Our core values — **justice, dignity, and solidarity** — guide our mission to serve asylum seekers and refugees with compassion and resolve, especially in times of great uncertainty.

Our operational values define how we work day to day:  
**Accountability** to clients, colleagues, and supporters  
**Care** in responding to trauma with kindness and respect  
**Fairness** in providing equitable access to legal support  
**Honesty and Diligence** in overcoming language, legal, and cultural barriers

Together, these values shape the way we respond to injustice — and support those who are too often forgotten.



Source: Aegean Boat Report archives

## ARRIVING FROM TURKIYE

Most asylum seekers arriving in Greece have crossed from Türkiye — often at night, in overcrowded and unseaworthy rubber dinghies. The sea is not always calm. The journey is always dangerous.

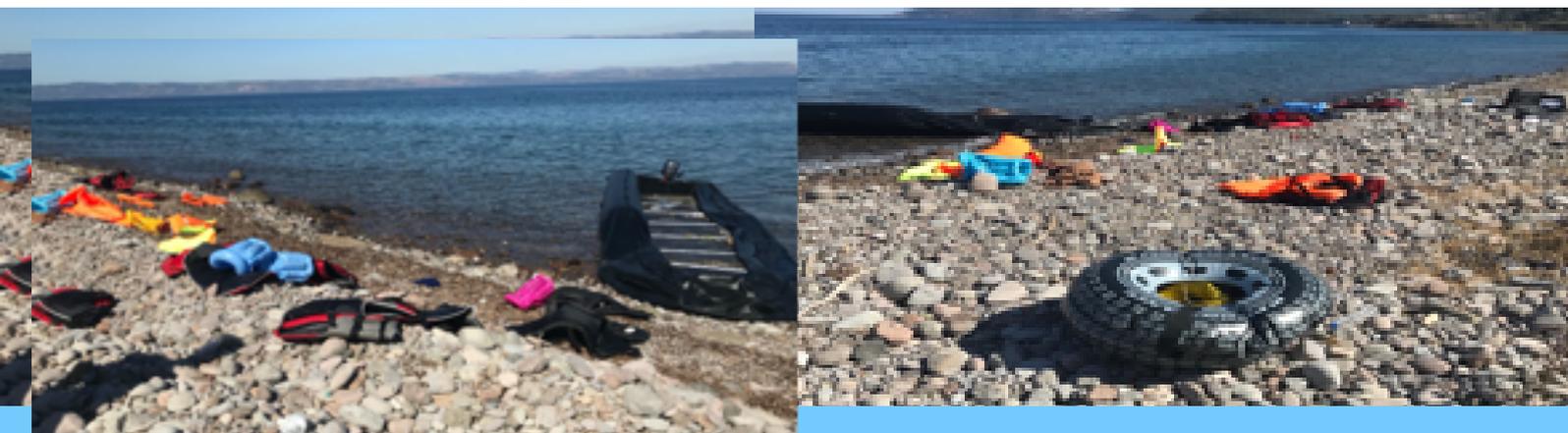
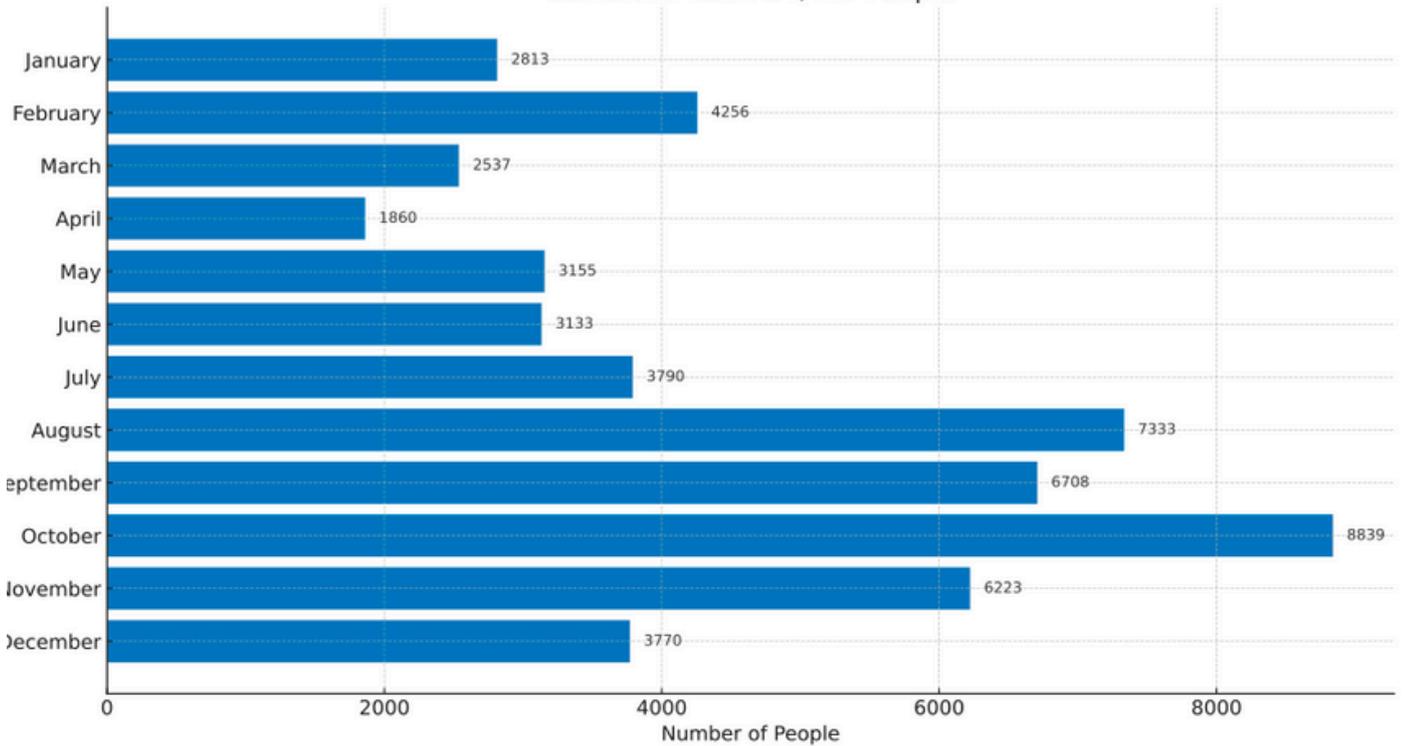
Many face the constant fear of arrest before departure, of being abandoned or capsized at sea, or of being violently pushed back by the Greek Coast Guard.

No one takes such risks lightly. These are not journeys of choice, but of necessity — made because remaining behind means greater danger. Seeking asylum is a right under international law, and each crossing reflects a plea for protection, safety, and a future lived in dignity.

## Ongoing Challenges Faced by Asylum Seekers in Greece

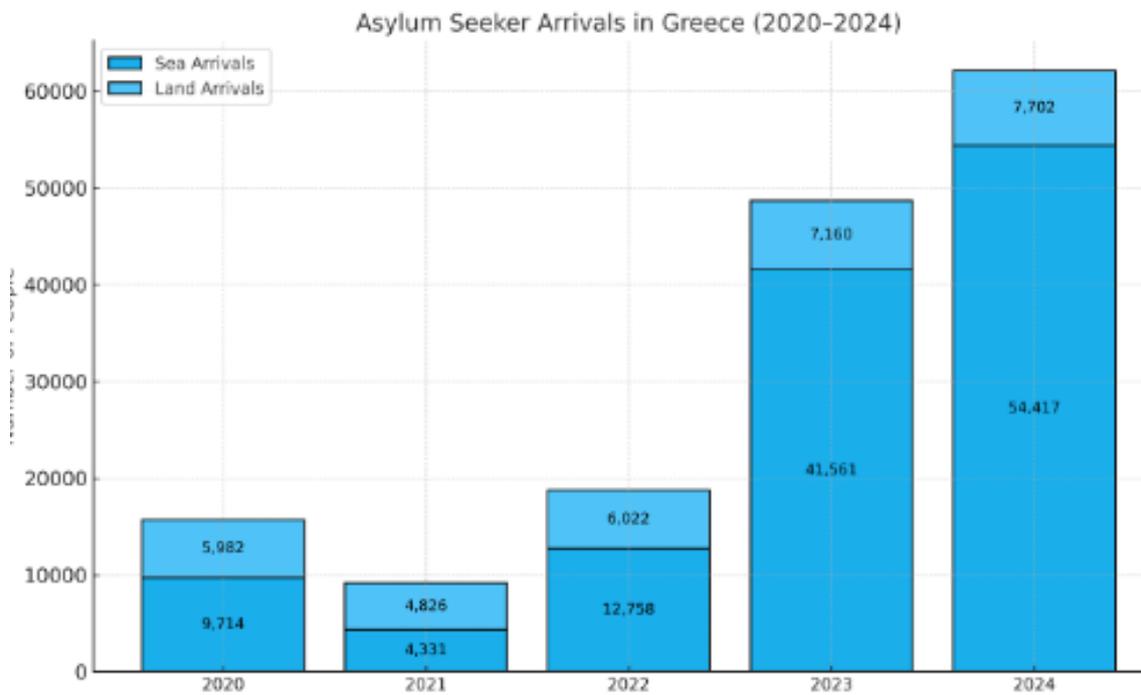
In 2024, the situation for asylum seekers in Greece remained critical, with a significant increase in new arrivals compared to previous years. According to official data, over 54,000 people arrived by sea, the highest number since 2019 – a sharp rise from just over 41,000 in 2023 and fewer than 13,000 in 2022 [1]. This surge placed renewed pressure on a system already struggling with chronic underfunding, procedural delays, and restrictive policies. As shown in the graph below Sea arrivals surged dramatically in 2023 and 2024, while arrivals at land borders remained relatively stable.

Sea Arrivals to the Aegean and Dodecanese Islands, Greece (2024)  
Corrected Total: 54,417 People



## CHALLENGES FACED BY ASYLUM SEEKERS (cont.)

Those arriving in Greece – and those still awaiting decisions from previous years – continue to face systemic neglect and worsening conditions, particularly in the Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs) and in administrative detention. Across both the islands and the mainland, asylum seekers report poor food quality, frequent shortages of basic essentials, and inadequate access to healthcare and psychosocial support, despite high levels of trauma and vulnerability.



A major failing of 2024 was the suspension of cash assistance for most of the year, in violation of both Greek and EU legal obligations. This left thousands without the means to cover basic needs, increasing dependency and hardship.

The asylum process itself remains deeply flawed. The state failed to contract sufficient interpreting services, leading to long delays in interviews and legal proceedings. Applicants were left in limbo, sometimes for months, without information or support. Legal aid providers reported growing procedural bottlenecks, undermining the fairness and accessibility of the asylum system.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY ASYLUM SEEKERS (cont.)

Conditions within CCACs also became more restrictive. Residents faced intensified surveillance and limits on freedom of movement, contributing to a sense of indefinite detention. At the same time, state expenditure remained focused on border control and deterrence, rather than the protection and integration of those already under Greece's responsibility.

Throughout the year, organisations including Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), Equal Legal Aid (ELA), Mobile Info Team (MIT), I Have Rights with Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) together with other Legal Aid Network members and the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) have consistently documented these failings. (For their Reports, please refer the Resources page on our website). They reported on the growing gap between Greece's legal obligations and the lived realities of asylum seekers – a gap that continues to widen as structural neglect becomes embedded in policy.

The welfare and well-being of thousands of people is at risk and continues to deteriorate. Cash assistance must be restored, gaps in interpretation resolved and living conditions improved. These are not isolated oversights – they reflect deliberate policy choices. Accountability is needed at both national and EU levels.



# ON-GOING Challenges Faced by Recognised Refugees in Greece

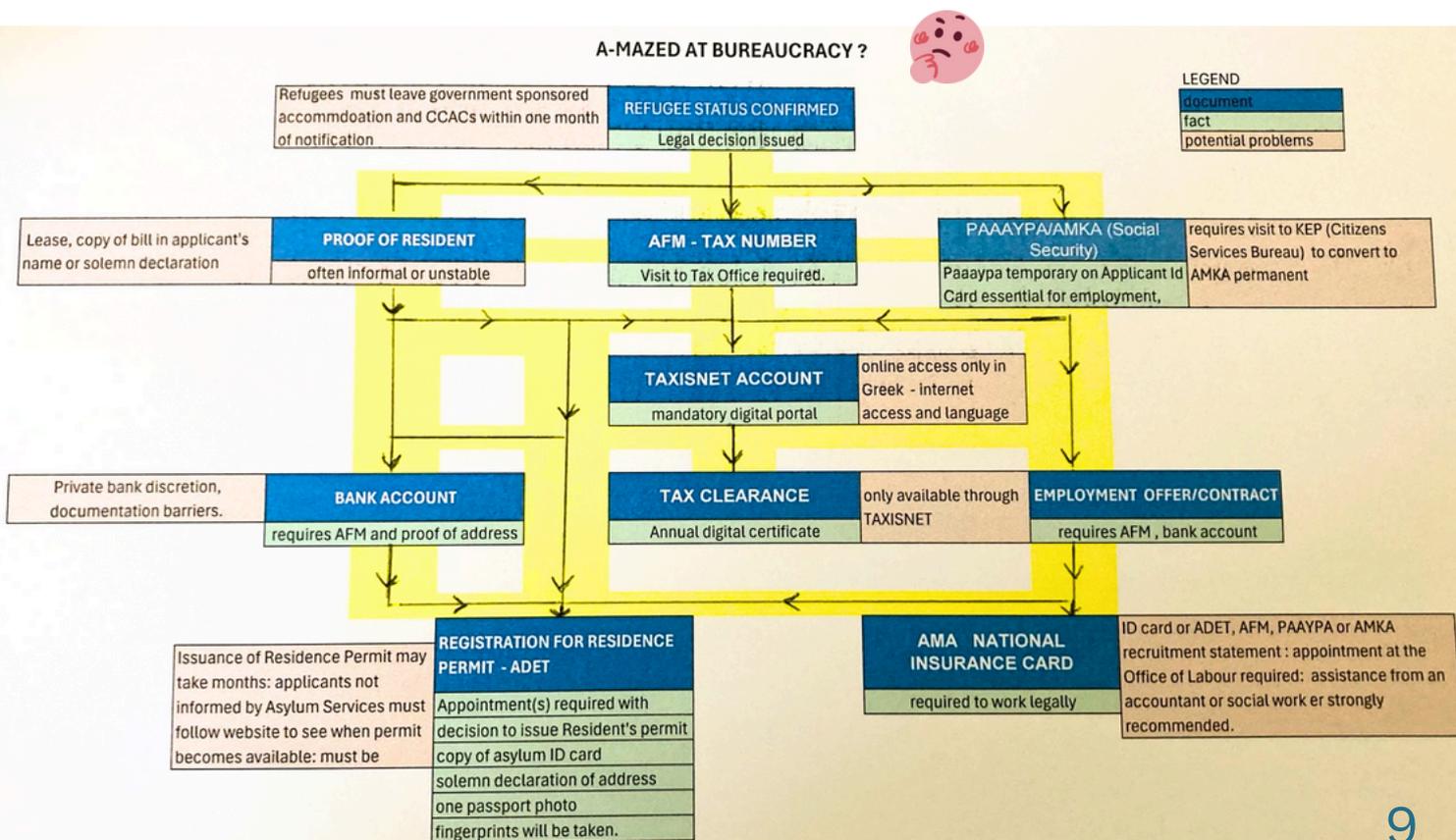
While asylum seekers in Greece face significant obstacles to accessing legal procedures and basic services, recognised refugees often confront a new set of challenges that are no less daunting. Recognition of status does not guarantee inclusion. In fact, for many, it marks the beginning of a new struggle – one defined by administrative complexity, systemic barriers, and the absence of sustained state support.

Accessing fundamental rights such as housing, employment, healthcare, and education depends on navigating a bureaucratic system that is both fragmented and uncoordinated. Refugees must obtain multiple documents – including a tax number (AFM), social security number (AMKA or PAAYPA), bank account, and Greek identity card – often in a specific order and from different authorities. Delays or errors in one step can prevent access to all others, effectively trapping people in limbo.

Employment is another major challenge. Formal work requires a registered address and a work contract, yet securing housing is nearly impossible without an income. Language remains a persistent barrier, as integration courses and Greek language programs are scarce, underfunded, or inconsistently available. Even highly motivated individuals face structural exclusion from stable employment and housing.

The lack of targeted integration support means that many refugees rely on overstretched NGOs for assistance well beyond the asylum process. Without a coordinated national integration strategy, and in the absence of social welfare mechanisms tailored to their needs, recognised refugees remain at risk of poverty, exploitation, and social isolation.

Recognition alone is not enough. Without the tools and support to build their lives in safety and dignity, the promise of protection remains unfulfilled. This section of our Report reflects the experiences of ASsIST legal aid teams and aligns with reports by Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), HIAS Greece, and other civil society actors monitoring refugee integration in Greece.



## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND THE ECONOMY

### Summary

In 2024, asylum seekers and refugees in Greece faced compounded challenges due to ongoing failures within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MoM). The Alkyoni database, essential for managing asylum procedures, remained only partially functional following its 2023 outage, causing severe delays in registrations, interviews, and document issuance. This disruption disproportionately affected vulnerable individuals with limited digital access and added strain on legal aid providers.

Critical services funded through the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) also broke down. Interpretation services, suspended in May due to delayed payments, had not resumed by year's end. Likewise, the cash assistance programme was interrupted from mid-2024 onward, leaving many without vital support. Public reporting on AMIF disbursements remained limited, raising transparency concerns.

While Greece received significant EU recovery funds under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), much of this funding remained unspent, and economic benefits were uneven. Youth unemployment remained high, inflation persisted, and the cost of living soared. Protests erupted nationwide as both Greek citizens and migrants alike struggled with economic instability, housing insecurity, and limited access to low-wage employment. The impact of these systemic pressures was deeply felt across all sectors of society, not only by displaced communities.



On November 20, 2024, thousands of workers participated in a 24-hour general strike organized by labor unions, leading to widespread disruptions in public services and transportation across the country. Approximately 15,000 people marched in Athens, with an additional 4,000 demonstrating in Thessaloniki, voicing concerns over inflation and stagnant wages. (SOURCE: Al Jazeera from AP)

## CHALLENGES FACED BY ASSIST

Due to funding constraints, in April 2024, ASsIST was forced to suspend our legal services. In May, we were able to contract the services of an Athens-based lawyer and also benefitted greatly from the continued services of a volunteer Greek lawyer. However the number of contracted hours of legal assistance was greatly reduced. The number of people receiving our legal services was therefore also significantly reduced. Nonetheless over 200 people received free legal aid and many more received legal and practical information to assist them in their understanding of the legal procedure and of practices required in the local context.

All Team members, the governing Committee and all volunteers: Client Service Managers on-call interpreters, EU training legal advisors (VLAs) and our Social Media Manager remained committed to working as a Team and to our mission. All were very supportive as ASsIST faced these challenges and some volunteers from previous years returned to support the Team.

Our long serving VLAs were ever ready to prepare clients for key interviews. Our volunteer Greek lawyer took on cases outside of working hours to assure services to as many clients as our capacity permitted. This required the on-going support of our Client Services Managers and on-call interpreters - all of whom worked together to maintain without interruption the information and referral services through our Helpline.

The outcome of ASsIST's legal work can be life changing through interview preparations, successful subsequent application, appeals and legal consults on a wide range of both asylum and some related civil matters (see Case Study on p. 13)

## OPERATIONS

ASsIST operates under the leadership of a volunteer governance Committee, which includes a President, Secretary, and Treasurer who also serves as the Team Manager. This leadership team is supported operationally by Client Services Managers, lawyers, and a dedicated pool of on-call interpreters and translators. Some team members have served since 2019, providing essential continuity and depth. Our volunteers, many of whom have firsthand experience in seeking asylum in Greece, enhance the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of our services, ensuring that clients receive support in languages they understand and insights into the culture as yet unfamiliar to them.

Our Team primarily delivers legal advice, multilingual information, and referrals via remote platforms, reflecting the reality of client needs and preferences. In-person support is also available in Athens when feasible. The Client Service Manager coordinates the day-to-day operations, working closely with the legal advisors, and interpreters to ensure consistent service delivery.

Strategic decisions are made collectively by the leadership team, ensuring transparency and accountability. Operational changes typically originate from team members, who submit their initiatives to the Committee for approval. The Team Manager is responsible for overseeing daily operations and maintaining clear communication with all team members. This structure ensures a flexible and responsive approach to service delivery while keeping our mission at the heart of all activities.

### Their Rights, Their Voice, Their Language



## ASsIST 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

### Improved Access: Information Provision and Legal Assistance Across Remote Locations and Detention Centres

In 2024, ASsIST provided vital remote and online legal assistance and information services to clients across 17 distinct locations in Greece. These clients came from 23 different nationalities, including 13 African countries, reflecting the diversity of those seeking protection and support.

### Access from Remote and Isolated Areas

ASsIST's remote and online services were a lifeline for clients in small towns on the mainland, remote islands, Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs), and detention facilities. Our support eliminated the need for clients to undertake costly and time-consuming journeys:

**Polykastro:** Located 63 km NNW of Thessaloniki.

**Veria:** 240 km SE of Athens, with a 7-hour train journey to the capital.

**Andros:** 172 km away, requiring a 4-hour road and ferry journey, with return ferry costs approaching €100.

By providing remote services, ASsIST ensured that clients in these distant locations received timely legal support without facing travel costs of €40 to €100 for return journeys.

### Supporting Clients with Travel Restrictions and in Detention Centres

ASsIST extended legal assistance to clients in Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCACs) on the mainland (Ioannina, Kavala, and Larissa) and on islands (Chios and Lesbos), where travel restrictions are enforced. Our remote support also reached clients detained at the Amygdaleza Detention Centre to the north-east of Athens, in Attica.

This support enabled our clients to:

- Navigate the Ministry of Migration's website to complete applications, update contact information, and request application status.
- Register for international protection via e-services and prepare for registration interviews.
- Receive ongoing legal support, even when facing travel restrictions or detention.

### Balancing Efficiency and Human Connection

ASsIST's remote services are designed to be both efficient and people-centred. While some may argue that in-person services are superior, our experience demonstrates that remote support can be just as effective. Clients know they are communicating with a real person who responds promptly in a friendly, professional manner. This approach not only reduces costs but also builds trust that can be even more consistent than a single in-person opportunity.

## Overcoming Language Barriers

In 2024, our dedicated team of on-call interpreters/translators provided services in 13 languages: iAmharic, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, French, Kreo, Lingala, Luganda, Somali, Spanish, Twi, Urdu, and Wolof. This multilingual support ensured that clients from diverse backgrounds could communicate effectively and receive accurate legal guidance.

## Client Profile: Diverse Backgrounds and Situations

In 2024, our clients required interpreter/translation services in 13 languages other than English, represented 23 nationalities (13 from African countries):. While 70% of our clients were male and 30% female: 12% were family groups, 11% were single-parent families, 17% were couples, and 60% were single individuals.

## A Lifeline for the Most Vulnerable

No matter how remote or restricted a client's situation, ASsIST endeavours to help. Our remote and online services are not just an alternative—they are an essential means of ensuring access to justice for those who would otherwise be excluded.

## CASE STUDY

### Survivor of Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking

*The client was born and spent most of her life in a sub-Saharan African country. Her parents passed away when she was three years old, leaving her with no memory of them. After their deaths, she was taken in by a relative who cared for her for about eight years. During this time, she experienced mistreatment, prompting an uncle to adopt her at the age of 11. However, when she turned 15, her adoptive guardian informed her that she would be forced into prostitution to generate income. From that point onward, she was coerced into non-consensual sexual acts with numerous men, having no means to refuse. At the age of 19, she fled her home country.*

*Managing to escape, she was able to travel to Turkey using a false passport, which she handed over to another woman upon arrival. Unfortunately, the person who helped her escape was a trafficker, a fact that became evident when he did not request payment upfront. In Turkey, she spent approximately four years, during which she was confined to a house and forced into prostitution once again, experiencing severe abuse. Eventually, she found an opportunity to escape and reached Greece, where she has remained for the past year.*

*In late August 2024, she met with ASsIST's lawyer who prepared her for the key interview of the application process. She then participated in an interview with the Asylum Service, seeking asylum on the grounds of her experiences as a survivor of gender-based violence, human trafficking, and multiple instances of sexual exploitation. She has no support network in her home country, being unmarried, without parents or siblings, and has a history of exploitation due to her vulnerability.*

*In February 2025, she was granted refugee status.*

## INSIGHTS

This case highlights the critical importance of the approach taken by both legal counsel and all those who engage with survivors of trauma. Notably, during the first hour of her meeting with the ASsIST lawyer, the client did not disclose any of the circumstances that qualified her for international protection. This is a common challenge encountered by women from diverse cultural backgrounds, who often struggle not only to describe their experiences but also to acknowledge them. Prevailing emotions of shame, fear, and guilt can create significant barriers to disclosure, making it essential to provide legal, psychological, and social support.

It is highly likely that without her prior meeting with an ASsIST representative, the client would not have revealed the critical facts that ultimately led to her being recognized as a refugee. She would not have felt secure enough to share such sensitive information.

Asylum seekers are often expected to navigate extremely difficult and stressful conditions in Greece, where their futures may be determined by a single interview lasting just a few hours – an interview for which many are unprepared. This case further demonstrates that access to legal assistance is particularly vital for vulnerable individuals. Numerous cases show that asylum seekers without legal representation frequently have their claims rejected, while those who later secure legal support often achieve significantly different outcomes

## REFERRALS

**In-coming referrals:** ASsIST received 23 client referrals from diverse agencies and NGOs from both Islands and the mainland. The referral system is reviewed regularly and updated by the Team Manager and Client Services Managers.

**Out-going referrals:** ASsIST referred over 80 clients to other services, the majority were for accommodation, medical and psycho-social support. Many other clients were given helpline contacts and service contacts directly. We endeavour to follow up with clients to find out if they received services from the agency to whom they were referred or if they found services elsewhere. Our register of other services is up-dated on a regular basis.

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Our **Client Feedback form in six major community languages** is forwarded to clients after first instance interviews or when the legal procedure for which they are being assisted is deemed completed. Positive and negative comments received unsolicited are shared with the people (manager, lawyer and interpreter) responsible for operating the case. As in the past, positive comments are often received, and the few negative comments received often, but not always, reflect a lack of understanding of the lawyer's role or powers. Unsolicited feedback is also often received from clients on our WhatsApp Helpline - these too are shared within the Team.

## THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

In a year marked by increasing arrivals, service gaps, and institutional pressure, ASsIST remained a trusted source of information, legal guidance, and hope for people navigating the Greek asylum system.

We supported asylum seekers facing harsh and often degrading conditions – including food shortages, the suspension of cash assistance, and indefinite delays in asylum procedures. Our information and referral services connected individuals to essential support, while our legal guidance helped them understand their rights and obligations, prepare for interviews, and make informed decisions at every stage of the process. Through our remote helpline and outreach, we reached people in closed camps and isolated locations. We also supported individuals in administrative detention, providing information on their legal options and appealing detention when appropriate.

For recognised refugees, our impact was equally substantive. We assisted clients struggling with fragmented and inconsistent integration procedures – from application systems and appointment scheduling to ID and travel documents, paperwork for employment registration. These are processes rarely supported by state services, and without such guidance, many would remain excluded from work, healthcare, or even basic banking.

Despite the financial and administrative constraints we ourselves faced – including the inability to secure sustained legal staffing – ASsIST maintained service delivery through adaptability, commitment, and collaboration. Our model, grounded in low-cost operations and multilingual communication, enabled us to respond rapidly and effectively, even as legal and political conditions shifted.

The impact of our work is not measured solely in numbers, but in the direction people's lives take afterward. For many, receiving timely legal information – or simply knowing where to turn – altered what came next: access to safety, restored autonomy, and a meaningful step toward the future they hoped for. For some, our work has been life-changing.

## THE A-TEAM

In January 2024, A.Ss.I.S.T. welcomed a new volunteer Client Services Managers (CSM). Kristina von Kaehne. Kristina did an excellent job and, of her many tasks, she also managed to revise and produce a detailed Client Services Manager Handbook as a key training and reference document for future Client Service Managers. In June 2024, Yasser Reese, already a Team member interpreting and translating Arabic-English since late 2022, was appointed to the CSM role. He too did an excellent job. When he moved to greener pastures in November 2024 after handing over the CSM position to Katerina Stathaki who and will continue in this role into 2025. Yasser remains on the Team as an on-call interpreter/translator for Arabic-English.

To our star-studded cast of on-call interpreters, all of whom are or were asylum seekers themselves, we welcomed a new Team member to interpret for Tve together with a returnee who volunteered with ASsIST in 2019-2020 interpreting and translating Arabic. Skilled in Amharic, Arabic, Dari/Farsi, French, Kreo, Lingala, Pashto, Somali, Tigrinya, Tve and Urdu, their services are invaluable to our work. On occasions we have successfully accessed the services of interpreters of some more rarely required languages: Luganda, Portugese, Spanish and Wolof.

In May 2024, Ms. Christine Graikou, an Athens-based lawyer joined our Team. The on-going contributions from a long-term member of our Team, Mr. Dimitris Pavlidis, and those of our volunteer Legal Advisors are invaluable: they were ever willing to step in to provide emergency interview preparations as interviews were often brought forward without notice.

## NEW VOLUNTEERS

**Kristina von Kaehne**  
**Jauaray-May 2024**



Kristina is a law graduate from Scotland. She joined us in January, as a Client Services Manager (CSM), volunteering in our Chios office until May 2024.

**Katerina**



Katerina began her journey in the humanitarian field as a volunteer Greek language teacher for refugees—an experience that shaped her path. Since 2016, she has worked professionally as an educator and coordinator in refugee accommodation structures. Joining ASsIST in November 2024, she is proud to be part of a team rooted in solidarity, supporting individuals in vulnerable situations with dignity, inclusion, and collective responsibility.

## From our client feedback forms

*Thank you very much.  
I tell all young people  
who need help to  
contact you.  
(Original in Arabic)*

*Your service is  
excellent - and your  
lawyer is very good  
(Original in French)*

*The legal aid service  
is really very good for  
helping us immigrants  
(Original in Lingala)*

*I personally thank  
you very much for  
the help you give me  
(Original in Greek)*

*I really liked the way  
you worked with me  
from the first day -  
Truly wonderful.  
(Original in French)*

*I am really delighted  
with your services  
(original in French)*

## Some of our long-serving volunteers

### Marie Martin (2019 to the present)

A qualified lawyer with significant experience in Asylum and Migration Law, Marie volunteered with ASsIST on Chios at the end of 2019. She continues as a valued Team member responding to requests for information and to lead interview preparations on short notice and in emergencies.



### Dimitris Pavlidis (2020 to the present)

Dimitrios is a qualified lawyer with significant experience in Greek Asylum and Migration Law, first volunteered with ASsIST on Chios in 2020. He then served as a full-time Greek lawyer in 2023 and continues to provide *pro bono* legal assistance.

### Molly Pugh-Jones (2023 to present)

Molly joined ASsIST as Operations Manager in Chios from June-August 2023. She brings experience in the charity sector. She supported the management team in fundraising, social media and recruitment. She continues as a valuable Team member to the present



**Some of our long-serving volunteers**  
**On-call interpreters/translators**



**YONEIL GEBRESLASSIE**

**Amharic and Tigrinya joined the Team in 2019**



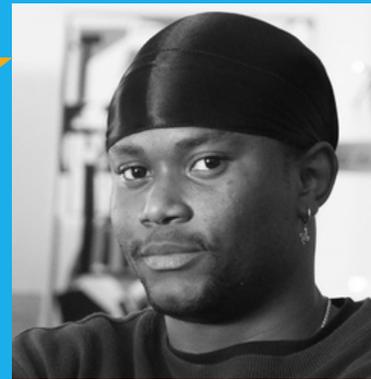
**Sayed Rafi Sadat**

**Farsi/Dari - joined the Team in 2021**



**MOSTAFA HAZZAA**

**Arabic - joined the Team in 2022**



**IBRAHIM BARRIE**

**KRIO - joined the Team in 2022**



**HOSSEIN**

**Somali - joined the Team in 2023**



**NAEL AHMADULLAH**

**Persion, Pashto and Urdu - joined the Team in 2022**

## Acknowledging Our Supporters and Reaffirming Our Values

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who stood by ASsIST during difficult times in 2024. In particular, we acknowledge the ongoing support of ForRefugees, both financial and moral. We are especially grateful for the encouragement of its CEO, Ms. Amber Bauer, whose presence and backing have been deeply valued. Alongside ForRefugees, our work this year was made possible through Global Giving, several generous donor groups, and numerous individual donors – many of whom have asked to remain anonymous. Some supporters organised fundraising events on our behalf, and to them, we offer our thanks twice over.

As we reflect on the many difficulties of the year, we are reminded of the resilience of those we serve, and of the urgency of the work we do together. ASsIST walks with those we support – neither leading nor being led – and commits to assisting people navigating exclusion and injustice, as well as those who genuinely uphold our mission.

We do not frame our work as “charity.” We believe in relationships rooted in mutual trust, shared responsibility, and principled collaboration. We strive to understand, not simply to assist. To accept difference, not impose conditions. And to remain steadfast in our purpose – even when it would be easier to retreat.

This is what we mean by transformative solidarity: not an act of giving, but a practice of walking together. Not control disguised as care, but a willingness to engage humbly, honestly, and with purpose.

We remain committed to this approach. We will not participate in transactional arrangements that undermine trust, instrumentalised funding, or reducing collaboration to control. Solidarity – when it is authentic – starts with listening, builds mutual respect, and avoids acting from a place of control or superiority.

As we look ahead to 2025, we reaffirm this commitment: to keep walking with those who seek our services, and to remain true to the values that brought us here.

# THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS

## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025

In 2025, ASsIST will continue to serve asylum seekers and refugees in Greece – adapting our services to meet evolving needs while staying true to our mission of accessible, rights-based legal support.

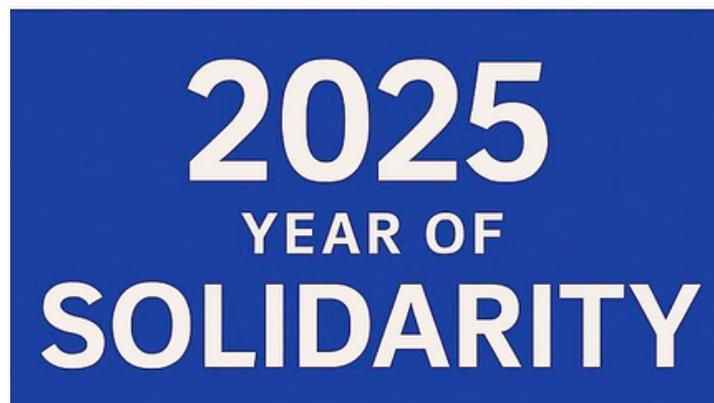
We will maintain and strengthen our WhatsApp helpline and remote service model, which have proven successful in reaching individuals in closed camps, administrative detention and isolated locations. At the same time, we aim to enhance internal coordination and team continuity to ensure consistent legal guidance, even under resource constraints.

We recognise the continued exclusion faced by recognised refugees, particularly in accessing health services, on-line tax accounts, housing and employment registration. We will continue to provide our services in collaboration with trusted partners wherever possible.

A central goal in 2025 will be to secure core funding of €70,000, which would allow us to cover all essential operational costs and contract the full-time services of a qualified Greek lawyer. This would significantly expand our capacity, enabling us to serve more clients directly, respond more quickly to urgent legal needs, and strengthen our in-house expertise across both asylum and integration procedures.

Internally, we will finalise our Swiss registration process, strengthen administrative and financial oversight, streamline reporting mechanisms and improve our social media presence – without compromising the flexibility and people-centred approach that defines our work.

Above all, we remain committed to being consistent in our presence, honest in our practice, and steadfast in our values – providing clarity, dignity, and walking in solidarity with people navigating one of the most complicated asylum systems in Europe.



## A Note of Appreciation



Sheila (Sandy) Cross

As a member of ASsIST's Committee and Team Manager, I extend my sincere thanks to each and every member of our current Team. I would especially like to acknowledge our long-term volunteers who, though not individually named in this Report, have made exceptional contributions: our Volunteer Legal Advisors, whose expertise has been invaluable, and our on-call women interpreters, who have supported our lawyers with some of the most sensitive cases.

I feel privileged to work alongside such dedicated and compassionate people. In 2025, we are continuing to serve in solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees.

