



Refugee  
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Support



MOBILE  
INFO TEAM

JULY 2024

When we arrived at Ritsona, it was very hot. For the first night we didn't have any clothes, we didn't have any blankets, bedsheets, anything. There is a psychologist but we can't communicate. My children go to school but at the same time, they live in the camp which is extremely difficult. We are about seven people sharing a container which is extremely difficult. I went a few times to the legal event to complain about the language very bad. I went to the administration to complain about the kitchen not working, like the kitchen not working. We were demeaned and spoken down to a lot by the administration. The conditions here are terrible, or the bathrooms. We were demeaned to a lot by the administration. My children go to the toilet alone, I have to accompany them.

# Voices from the Camps: Living Conditions and Access to Services in Refugee Camps on the Greek Mainland

Evidence of the failure to provide adequate material reception conditions to asylum seekers in Greece



**Mobile Info Team** is a Greece-based organisation that provides advice and assistance throughout all stages of the asylum procedure. We raise awareness and advocate for changes to the asylum system in Greece, and work to end pushbacks as part of the Border Violence Monitoring Network.

**Refugee Legal Support** works in solidarity with people who migrate. We promote and protect people's rights via direct legal casework, outreach, training, production of multilingual information materials and partnerships. We have projects in the UK, Northern France and in Greece, where we provide legal support for people seeking protection.

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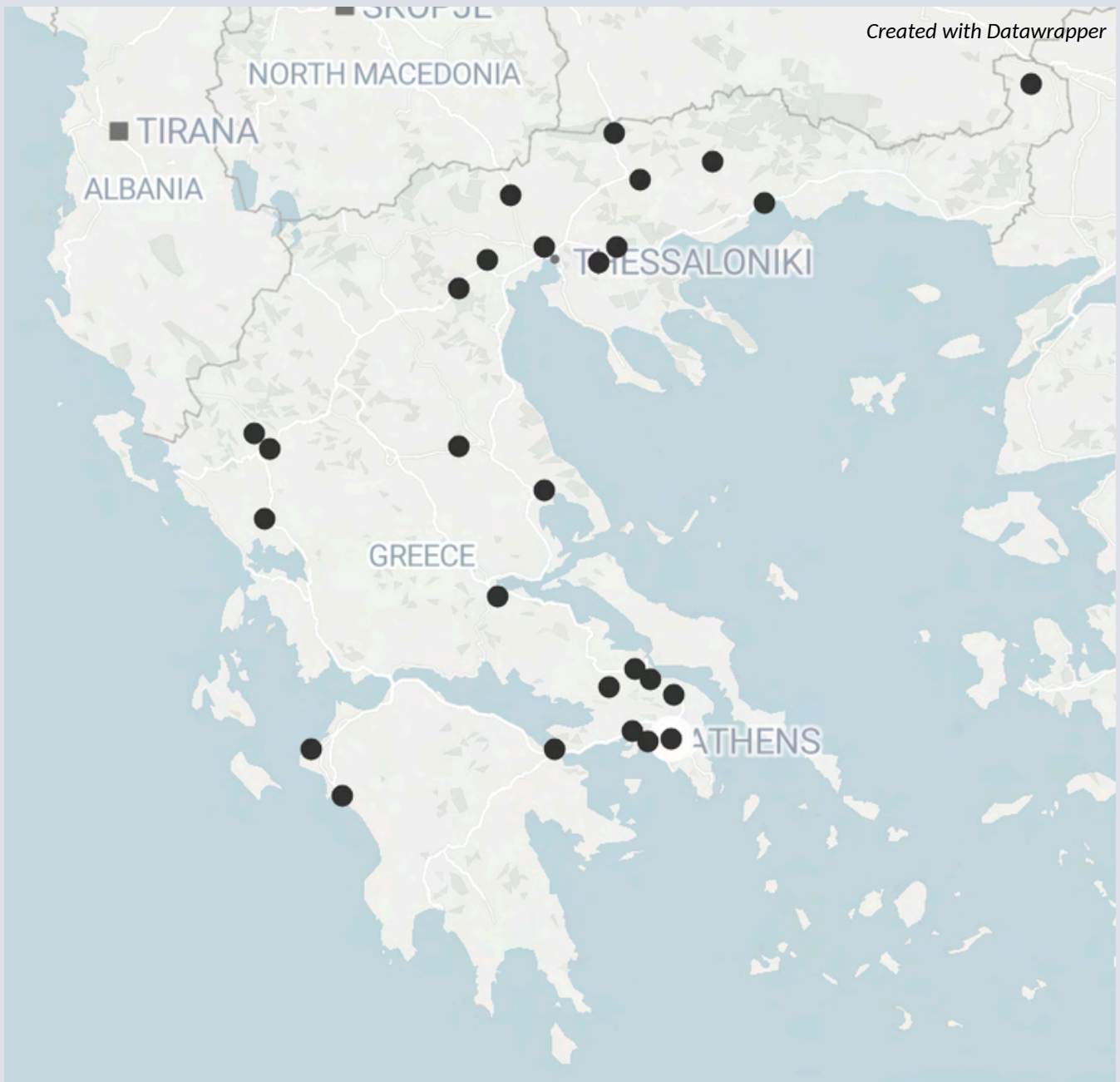
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## Refugee camps on the Greek mainland



The Greek Reception and Identification Service (RIS) administers 27 reception facilities for the accommodation of asylum seekers on the Greek mainland. These facilities hold around 15,500 people and are located on the outskirts of cities, in remote industrial and agricultural areas, disconnected from transportation links and essential services.

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# ACRONYMS AND TERMINOLOGY

CAFTAA	Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers
CCAC	Closed Control Access Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EODY	Greek Public Health Service
EUAA	European Union Asylum Agency
ESTIA	Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) programme
FRO	Fundamental Rights Officer of the Greek Ministry of Migration
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MIT	Mobile Info Team
MoMA	Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum
RIC	Reception and Identification Centre
RIS	Reception and Identification Service
RLS	Refugee Legal Support
RSA	Refugee Support Aegean
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



# ◇ SUMMARY

This report looks at living conditions and access to services for asylum seekers in Greece, drawing on interviews with people living in nine refugee camps on the mainland: Corinth, Katsikas, Kavala, Koutsochero, Lagkadikia, Malakasa, Oinofyta, Ritsona and Serres. With attention often directed to the inhumane, EU-funded Closed Controlled Access Centres on the Aegean islands, the findings of this research reveal a troubling picture of neglect and mismanagement on the mainland as well.

The only accommodation that the Greek state provides asylum seekers is in camps. Many of these facilities are located on former military bases in industrial or agricultural areas, far from cities and with limited or non-existent public transport connections.

The isolated locations of most camps and the lack of services provided inside them, has resulted in severe limitations on asylum seekers' access to social services, legal support, and healthcare. Gaps in the provision of interpretation and transportation are fundamental and create additional barriers to accessing essential services. Meanwhile, daily lives in the camps are characterised by constant surveillance, restricted movement and a fundamental lack of opportunities for learning, community-building and joy. Many people wait months or years in these conditions, struggling to meet their basic human needs, move on with their lives or integrate into society.

This report provides strong evidence that conditions in the mainland camps fall far short of Greece's legal obligation to provide reception conditions which protect the physical and mental health of people seeking international protection. Based on the findings of this report, we call on the Greek State to reintroduce housing programmes which accommodate applicants in apartments and houses in cities.

# ◆ KEY FINDINGS

**The remote location of mainland facilities has multiple negative impacts - preventing asylum seekers from integrating into Greek society, obstructing access to essential services, and hindering access to legal support**

**Financial and contractual mismanagement by the Greek authorities has resulted in gaps in essential services including interpretation and transportation, leaving people stranded and unable to connect and communicate**

**Applicants cannot survive on the monthly financial allowance, particularly given the costs of transportation and medicine as these are not consistently provided by the state**

**The physical conditions of facilities in mainland camps are often neglected and dilapidated, with necessary repairs not being carried out**

**Mainland camps are especially unsuitable for vulnerable people whose needs are not met by the physical environments of camps and the critical lack of access to support**

**Millions of euros have been spent on upgrading security infrastructure and surveillance systems, but people feel unsafe in camps and do not feel this technology is benefiting them**

**The lack of integration policies means that beneficiaries of international protection continue to reside in camps after receiving a positive decision but are not guaranteed access to basic support including food**



# KEY STATS FROM 30 INTERVIEWS

**72%** reported being housed in accommodation containers which were dilapidated, poorly maintained and in some cases requiring urgent repair works or missing basic appliances and furniture

**55%** reported that they had to pay for spare parts or repair works due to lack of maintenance carried out by the camp administration

**72%** reported that they did not have their basic health care needs met by medical teams operating inside camps

**62%** reported that they encountered significant difficulties in accessing treatment in hospitals

**33%** tried to access psychosocial support during their stay in the camp but were not able to

**59%** shared that shortages in interpretation services impacted their ability to communicate in the camp

**62%** reported that gaps in or lack of transportation resulted in restrictions on their ability to access basic rights, including the asylum procedure, legal support, and health care

**8** reported that they had a vulnerability, however all but one shared that their needs were not properly catered for during their stay in the camp

**79%** reported that they experienced non-payment or delays in payment of cash assistance

**93%** who were receiving cash assistance and were explicitly asked about this, reported that the amount provided was insufficient to cover their basic needs and living expenses

**76%** reported that they were dissatisfied with the quality and/or quantity of food provided in the camp but did not have the financial resources to cook their own food

# METHODOLOGY

This report is based on interviews conducted between April and June 2024 with 30 people resident in camps on the Greek mainland. Interviews took the form of semi-structured conversations conducted in community centres or over the phone, with interpreters as necessary. The interviews aimed to understand people's personal experiences of life within the camps, the material conditions and the extent to which they were able to access essential services. This data was analysed alongside official documents and statistical data published by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MoMA) and conversations with practitioners in the field. Our findings supplement two reports published this year by the Greek Ombudsperson<sup>1</sup> and Refugee Support Aegean (RSA)<sup>2</sup> on conditions in mainland camps.

Respondents were aged between 18-55 and came from the following countries of origin: Afghanistan (6), Iraq (6, including 2 Yazidi and 3 Kurdish), Palestine (3), Sierra Leone (3), Somalia (2), Syria (1), Yemen (2), Sudan (1), and Cameroon (1). Five respondents requested not to disclose their nationality. 12 identified as women and 18 as men. 13 respondents had minor children. On average respondents had been living in the camp for 7.8 months, with camp stays ranging from 1 month to 36 months.

In foregrounding the testimonies of people living in current day refugee camps in mainland Greece, we intend to bring visibility to daily life in isolated facilities which are largely hidden from the public eye and media scrutiny, and to highlight the stark contrast between the statements<sup>3</sup> of politicians on the conditions of the mainland facilities and the testimonies of people who live their daily lives in such places.

Interviews were not conducted with residents of every facility, therefore the findings do not present a comprehensive picture of present day conditions in the camps. However, they point to key themes of concern across facilities. Two thirds of interviewees were resident in camps in Northern Greece, a deliberate selection given the sparse monitoring and media coverage of facilities in the North, particularly compared to those located closer to Athens. Some structures which solely or primarily accommodate vulnerable people such as Pyrgos and Schisto were not included in the research. Notably, the report does not cover the living conditions for children specifically, including the critical issue of access to education in camps, although the damaging impacts of accommodating both accompanied and unaccompanied minors in camps has been noted by the Greek Ombudsperson<sup>4</sup> and civil society organisations (CSOs)<sup>5</sup>.

A number of challenges arose in relation to data collection. We did not interview people living in several of the most disconnected facilities<sup>6</sup>, precisely because of the severe isolation they face. Restrictions on access to camps presented an additional barrier: employees whose names are not included in the Ministry's official registry of NGOs are not allowed to access reception facilities under the responsibility of the Greek Reception and Identification Service (RIS). Given the

reported<sup>7</sup> burdensome requirements involved in officially registering as a CSO in Greece, in practice very few CSOs are permitted to officially operate inside camps. This reality significantly narrowed our possibilities both for interviewing practitioners with first hand experience working inside the mainland camps, and for recruiting interview participants via other organisations with better access. Rather, most interviewees had established relationships with organisations operating close to camps or had reached out to the Mobile Info Team hotlines.

Concerningly, we noted hesitancy and fear from a number of people living in camps regarding speaking out about poor conditions. Some preferred not to be interviewed, citing their concern that this might impact their asylum case (for instance by causing further delays), or their relationship with the camp management. One participant reported feeling persecuted by the camp management due to their contact with support groups in Athens. We heard from staff working for CSOs operating in camps that they took the strategic decision not to engage in public advocacy regarding camp conditions, due to concerns that being publicly critical of the Ministry's decisions would impact their ability to operate inside camps. In order to respondents' anonymity, we do not provide the real names of interview participants in this report.

Respondents offered different perspectives based on their age, gender, nationality and the stage of the asylum procedure in which they were at the time of interview (see table below). Several interviewees had been in the asylum procedure for years and some were previously living in private accommodation subsidised by the Greek state in cities under the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) programme (see page 14), thus offering insight into the human cost of changes in policy, removing asylum seekers from urban centres and confining them to camps.

Stage of asylum procedure of interview participants			
Recognised refugee	8	Rejected (currently outside asylum procedure) <sup>8</sup>	1
Registered, waiting for interview	8	Rejected, appealing	3
Waiting for decision	5	Subsequent application	5



# 1 - LEGAL FRAMEWORK



## (A) Access to material reception conditions

Persons who have expressed their will to apply for international protection are entitled to full reception conditions under European Union and Greek law. Applicants are entitled to reception conditions from the time they submit an asylum application and throughout the asylum procedure (Art. 59(1), 4939/2022 in conjunction with Art. 2(b), 2013/33/EU)<sup>9</sup>. Under Greek law access to food and cash assistance is terminated immediately following notification of a positive decision and if the person is resident in a camp, they should leave within 30 days (Art. 109(1), 4939/2022).

As defined in the recast Reception Conditions Directive and Greek law (Art. 1, 4939/2022), material reception conditions encompass housing, food, clothing and a daily expenses allowance, which may be provided in kind, as a financial allowance or in vouchers. Material reception conditions should ensure an adequate standard of living for applicants, which guarantees their subsistence and protects their physical and mental health (Art. 59, 4939/2022; Art. 17, 2013/33/EU). Reception conditions are provided by the competent reception authority, in cooperation with relevant public bodies, international organisations or accredited social welfare organisations (Art. 59(1), 4939/2022).

Where housing is provided in kind to asylum seekers, this may take the form of premises located at the border or in transit zones, accommodation centres which guarantee an adequate standard of living, or appropriately adapted private premises such as apartments or houses (Art. 60, 4939/2022; Art. 18, 2013/33/EU). Applicants should have the possibility of freely communicating with relatives, legal advisers and certified non-governmental bodies, including through receiving visitors within the structure (Art. 60(2)(b), 4939/2022; Art. 18(2)(b), 2013/33/EU). Restrictions on communication or access to accommodation structures for the aforementioned persons may only be imposed on the grounds of security of the facility or applicants (Art. 60(2)(b), 4939/2022; Art. 18(2)(c), 2013/33/EU).

EU law provides that Member States 'shall ensure that applicants receive the necessary health care which shall include, at least, emergency care and essential treatment of illnesses and of serious mental disorders' (Art. 19(1), 2013/33/EU). This is transposed into Greek law in Article 59(2) which stipulates that applicants receive a health insurance number granting them access to healthcare services. Such health benefits are further defined in a ministerial decision and encompass access to preventive medicine, medical examinations, dental care, pharmaceutical care and treatment in hospitals, among other benefits<sup>10</sup>.



## **(B) Special reception conditions for vulnerable persons**

EU law states that the reception of 'persons with special reception needs should be a primary concern for national authorities in order to ensure that such reception is specifically designed to meet their special reception needs' (EU/33/2013, preamble para. 14). When implementing the recast Reception Conditions Directive, Member States must take into consideration the specific situation of vulnerable persons and ensure that vulnerability assessments take place within a reasonable time period following an application for international protection (Art. 21 and 22, EU/33/2013). This is transposed in Greek law which provides that the needs of vulnerable persons such as minors (accompanied and unaccompanied), people with disabilities, elderly people, single-parent households and pregnant women should be taken into account in the provision of reception conditions (Art. 62(1) of the Asylum Code; Art. 1(lc) provides a non-exhaustive list of recognised vulnerabilities<sup>11</sup>). However, neither EU nor Greek law lays out a detailed definition of special reception conditions (although Article 28 L. 4825/2021 specifically provides for distinct spaces within reception facilities appropriate for the accommodation of vulnerable persons). EU law additionally tasks Member States with providing 'necessary medical or other assistance to applicants who have special reception needs, including appropriate mental health care where needed' (EU/33/2013, Art. 19(2)), however this has not been transposed into Greek law.



## **(C) Jurisprudence of the ECtHR**

Multiple rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) have found Greece in violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment, based on failings to provide asylum seekers with adequate living conditions<sup>12</sup>.

The landmark 2011 *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece* ruling by the ECtHR found that the Greek Government violated Article 3 of the ECHR due to conditions in Greek detention facilities, the living conditions of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, and the lack of an effective remedy against expulsion due to deficiencies in the asylum procedure. Submissions by civil society in 2023<sup>13</sup> demonstrate that, despite twelve years passing, Greece had yet to fully implement the judgement. In its ongoing supervision of the case, the Council of Europe has requested further information<sup>14</sup> from the Greek authorities regarding the quality of services in mainland camps and general updates on the provision of accommodation, material aid and health and welfare services for asylum seekers, in addition to further information on the reception and living conditions of vulnerable persons.

## 2 - OVERVIEW:

# GREECE'S MAINLAND RECEPTION SYSTEM

There are currently 27 reception facilities on the mainland operated by the Greek Reception and Identification Service (RIS). These include three registration centres for processing new arrivals and unidentified asylum seekers (the mainland RICs of Diavata and Malakasa and Fylakio RIC at the Evros border with Turkey), and Attiko Alsos camp, which solely accommodates people undergoing so-called<sup>15</sup> assisted voluntary return programmes. The remaining 24 facilities are accommodation camps situated across the mainland, formally known as Controlled Access Facilities for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers (CAFTAAs). At the end of December 2023, 15,330 asylum seekers were resident in Greece's mainland refugee camps<sup>16</sup>. Whilst much attention has been placed on the reception facilities in the Aegean islands, where conditions have been widely denounced as inhuman and degrading by civil society organisations<sup>17</sup>, Members of the European Parliament<sup>18</sup>, and most recently by the Council of Europe<sup>18</sup>, relatively little is known about the conditions in mainland camps.

The majority of camps were erected as emergency structures from 2016 onwards, following the closure of the so-called Western Balkan route to Northern Europe, which led to the trapping<sup>20</sup> of approximately 50,000<sup>21</sup> people on the move in Greece, creating an unprecedented<sup>22</sup> strain on the reception system. These structures were not managed by the Greek State but by intermediaries including IOM and UNHCR who undertook site management support. In March 2020, all mainland camps were formally established as 'Temporary Reception Structures' through a ministerial decision<sup>23</sup>.

Due to the remoteness of camps and limited spaces within state-provided accommodation, many people seeking international protection in Greece since 2016 and before have lived in self-organised squats and camps, while homelessness and destitution have remained a reality<sup>24</sup> for both asylum seekers<sup>25</sup> and beneficiaries of international protection<sup>26</sup>. In recent years, squats have been consistently raided by police, leading to the breakup of communities and displacement of populations into remote camps where their access to services, support and society is highly limited. The violent eviction<sup>27</sup> of the self-organised Lavrio camp for Kurdish refugees in 2023 resulted in the forcible transfer of tens of people to remote camps almost 100 km from where they had lived for decades.

When the New Democracy party came to power in 2019, their rhetoric explicitly pledged to tighten controls and reduce material conditions for refugees, banishing them from Greece's cities<sup>28</sup>. In 2021 and 2022 respectively, the camps of Skaramangas and Eleonas located close to and inside Athens were cleared and closed<sup>29</sup>. Riot police were deployed to evict residents of Eleonas, which resulted in violent clashes and was instigated by government plans to develop the area in which the camp was situated<sup>30</sup>.



At the end of 2022, the Greek government terminated the EU-funded ESTIA housing programme, which accommodated vulnerable asylum seekers in apartments in cities. When operational, ESTIA was widely praised as a dignified way to accommodate asylum seekers which aided their integration into Greek society. The choice to terminate the programme was apparently political<sup>31</sup>, given the widespread support<sup>32</sup> for the scheme and the EU's commitment to extend funding<sup>33</sup> for the project. Camps are therefore now the only state-provided accommodation available to asylum seekers in Greece. A decision of the Ministry coming into effect in July 2021<sup>34</sup> then restricted financial aid (administered via a "cashcard") to people who can prove ongoing residence in a facility operated by the MoMA, effectively forcing people to live in camps in order to avoid destitution.

In the first half of 2023, IOM formally withdrew from the mainland camps, having provided site management support to the national authorities since 2016 under the EU-funded HARP programme<sup>35</sup>. As a result, during the past year the mainland's 27 reception facilities for asylum seekers have been entirely operated by the Greek state. The authorities outsource the provision of food, facilities management and security services in camps to private companies<sup>36</sup>. UNHCR monitors conditions through regular site visits to all mainland camps and, according to information provided in the context of the UNHCR National Protection Working Group, they have noted a significant deterioration in conditions within mainland reception sites in recent months, due to an accumulation of challenges relating to lack of interpretation services, transportation and limited psychosocial staff, especially in remote accommodation facilities<sup>37</sup>.

In recent years there has been a simultaneous reduction in the presence of non-governmental actors in the camps; lawyers, CSO workers and relatives of residents face restrictions on entry to the mainland camps, with reports from practitioners<sup>38</sup> that access to camps is frustrated by lengthy bureaucratic processes, delays in receiving approvals and perceived deliberate obstruction by camp administrations and security personnel. Restricted access for non-state actors is compounded by a lack of publicly available statistics since IOM ceased publishing monthly factsheets<sup>39</sup> on the mainland reception facilities in March 2022, leading to no effective oversight<sup>40</sup> of needs and capacities in the reception system. A consortium of CSOs called on the MoMA to resume regular publication of statistics on the mainland camps in a joint letter<sup>41</sup> in October 2023, however no proactive steps have been taken in this regard to date. Parliamentary scrutiny instigated by RSA has been the only way to secure detailed information on reception conditions<sup>42</sup>.

2024 has arguably seen unprecedented disruptions in the reception system, leading to disastrous restrictions on access to material reception conditions for applicants, including people with serious vulnerabilities. The effects of the policy changes outlined above and disruptions to key services are analysed in this report (see pages 25-41).



*Photo: Accommodation containers in Koutsochero camp, where residents report suffering from dusty and noisy conditions due to the facility's proximity to a marble quarry.*

### Mainland camps occupancy as of 31st Dec 2023<sup>43</sup>

Region	Camps	Number of residents
Attica	Attiko Alsos, Oinofyta, Elefsina, Ritsona, Schisto, Thiva, Malakasa	5,353
Epirus / Western Macedonia	Agia Eleni, Filippiada, Katsikas	1,790
Macedonia / Thrace	Sintiki, Drama, Diavata, Lagkadikia, Vagiochori, Veria, Alexandria, Kavala, Serres, Polykastro	6,567
Peloponnese / Western Greece	Kilini, Corinth, Pyrgos	1,191
Thessaly / Central Greece	Koutsochero, Volos, Thermopyles	429

# 3 - MAINLAND CAMP SITE PROFILES

This section provides an overview of nine mainland camps covered in this report, including key statistical information and brief histories of each facility.

## CORINTH CAMP



Official name:	Corinth Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας Αιτούντων Άσυλο Κορίνθου
Coordinates:	37.932159, 22.935732
Nominal capacity <sup>44</sup> :	896
Operational/actual capacity:	876
Residents:	706
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	524
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	75
Administrative staff:	15
Medical staff:	1
Ratio of medical staff to residents:	706:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>45</sup> :	1.2 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Corinth):	1.6 km

### History

Corinth camp is located on the outskirts of Corinth, 80 km west of Athens. It was originally opened in September 2019 as a transit camp<sup>46</sup> intended to accommodate people on a short term basis, prior to their transfer to other mainland sites or ESTIA apartments. However the site has operated similarly to other mainland camps and accommodates long term residents who have been evicted from squats in Athens or transferred from the islands. The facility is located adjacent to Corinth Pre-Removal Detention Centre<sup>47</sup>. Since opening it has been described by residents<sup>48</sup> as a place of unsafe conditions and frequent fights between residents<sup>49</sup>. In March 2023, half of the camp population had received a positive decision or been rejected, but continued to reside in the camp due to lack of other housing options<sup>50</sup>. Corinth is the only site on the mainland where all residents live in tent accommodation. At the time of the Ombudsperson's visit in March 2023 there was no health unit in operation at Corinth camp<sup>51</sup>.



# KAVALA CAMP



Official name:	Kavala Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας αιτούντων άσυλο Καβάλας
Coordinates:	40.945418, 24.427842
Nominal capacity <sup>52</sup> :	1134
Operational/actual capacity:	1039
Residents:	913
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	541
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	113
Administrative staff:	13
Medical staff:	7
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	130:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>53</sup> :	2 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Kavala):	3.8 km

## History

Kavala camp, also known as Asimakopoulou refugee camp, was established on a former military site in 2016. The camp is situated on the periphery of the city of Kavala, in Northern Greece. The first residents were transferred from a camp located in Chalkero, a short distance from Kavala, which had been established in 2015. During 2016 residents were accommodated in tents within a large warehouse inside the camp but after the camp was reopened in May 2017, accommodation took the form of housing in buildings. IOM was present offering management support between 2016 and July 2023<sup>54</sup>. In October 2019, the facility was expanded to double the capacity. In April 2022, 45 security and cleaning staff members were made redundant<sup>55</sup> due to a reduction in the camp's population. According to information provided by CSOs<sup>56</sup>, the camp's structure currently consists of approximately 201 rooms of differing capacities in buildings and a limited number of prefabricated containers. Residents are accommodated based on their nationality, language, religion, special characteristics or on the basis of family status. During a visit to the camp in March 2024, the then Minister of Migration and Asylum Dimitris Karidis emphasised<sup>57</sup> the significant contributions of camp residents to local industries. Similar statements<sup>58</sup> were made by the facility's manager in an interview in 2021. Conditions in Kavala camp are not covered in the Greek Ombudsperson's report on reception conditions published in April 2024<sup>59</sup>.

# KATSIKAS CAMP



Official name:	Katsikas Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας αιτούντων άσυλο Κατσικά
Coordinates:	39.608329, 20.900944
Nominal capacity <sup>60</sup> :	1534
Operational/actual capacity:	1096
Residents:	940
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	661
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	108
Administrative staff:	12
Medical staff:	8
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	118:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>61</sup> :	11.7 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Ioannina):	8.4 km

## History

Katsikas camp is located 8 km from the city of Ioannina on the periphery of the small town of Katsikas and is the largest refugee reception facility in the Epirus region of Northern Greece. Like many mainland camps it was established in 2016<sup>62</sup> on a former military base, to accommodate refugees trapped in Greece following the closure of the so-called Western Balkan route. Despite the presence of small CSOs, Oxfam and IOM, conditions were reported<sup>63</sup> as inhumane and undignified within the first year of opening. In December 2020, numerous residents were subjected to violent evictions by police in order to make room for new arrivals, with reports<sup>64</sup> that tear gas was used. As of February 2024, the main nationalities held in the camp were Afghans, Somalis, Eritreans and Sierra Leoneans. Second Tree is currently the only grassroots CSO with a consistent presence in the facility. In spring 2024, local actors were reportedly informed of plans to expand the facility despite the already poor living conditions in Katsikas<sup>65</sup>. Containers in the facility are amongst the oldest in Greece, according to information provided by CSO practitioners, and have not been updated for several years. However security infrastructure has been developed, with a three metre high concrete wall erected around the facility in 2022<sup>66</sup>. The recent report of the Greek Ombudsperson on reception conditions<sup>67</sup> does not include information on conditions in Katsikas camp.

# KOUTSOCHERO CAMP



Official name:	Koutsochero Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας Αιτούντων Ασυλο Κουτσόχερου
Coordinates:	39.61556, 22.245057
Nominal capacity <sup>68</sup> :	1748
Operational/actual capacity:	1408
Residents:	0 (as per MoMA data referring to 31/12/23 <sup>69</sup> )
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	0
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	0
Administrative staff:	26
Medical staff:	16
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	0
Distance to nearest health services <sup>70</sup> :	15.8 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Larissa):	16.6km

## History

Koutsochero camp is situated in an isolated location 16.6 km from the city of Larissa, a city in Greece's central region of Thessaly. The facility was opened in March 2016 on a former military base. Conditions have been reported by residents as dusty and noisy<sup>71</sup> due to the camp's proximity to a marble quarry. Protests<sup>72</sup> including road blocks<sup>73</sup> started in 2016 in response to poor living conditions. Camp residents were interviewed by RSA in May 2019 and reported issues related to the camp's distance from services and hospitals. There is no public transport to Larissa servicing the village closest to the camp and residents are further isolated following the termination of IOM's transportation service in June 2023<sup>74</sup>. In January 2024, there were reportedly<sup>75</sup> 250 asylum seekers held in the camp along with 130 local Greek residents who were transferred<sup>76</sup> to the facility following the destruction of their homes after extensive flooding in September 2023. Approximately 900 camp residents - including children and vulnerable people - were moved<sup>77</sup> to camps further south at short notice<sup>78</sup> to accommodate flood victims. A resident in Koutsochero interviewed for this report reported that flood victims are accommodated in a separate area of the camp in conditions which he perceived to be better than those provided to the asylum seeker population. Staff shortages in the camp were noted<sup>79</sup> in October last year due to non-renewal of around 100 staff contracts including cleaning and security personnel.



# LAGKADIKIA CAMP



Official name:	Lagkadikia Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας Αιτούντων Ασυλο Ριτσώνας
Coordinates:	40.627579, 23.247886
Nominal capacity <sup>80</sup> :	654
Operational/actual capacity:	581
Residents:	503
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	156
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	57
Administrative staff:	7
Medical staff:	7
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	72:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>81</sup> :	34 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Thessaloniki):	34 km

## History

Lagkadikia camp was built on a military site close to the rural village of Lagkadikia in Northern Greece. The camp was opened in 2016 as an ad hoc structure managed jointly by the MoMA and UNHCR and intended to hold the population which was previously accommodated in self-organised camps<sup>82</sup> in Northern Greece. The facility promised better living conditions<sup>83</sup>, although some residents reported that the conditions were worse<sup>84</sup> compared with the self-organised camp at Idomeni. Following an inspection visit in March 2023, the Greek Ombudsperson noted the close proximity of the facility to schools<sup>85</sup>, which sets it apart from other mainland camps. The facility is surrounded by a high concrete wall and barbed wire fences separate the accommodation and services areas within the camp<sup>86</sup>.



# MALAKASA CAMP



Official name:	Malakasa Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας Αιτούντων Άσυλο Μαλακάσας
Coordinates:	38.239922, 23.779786
Nominal capacity :	3741 (data is combined for RIC and CAFTAA) <sup>87</sup>
Operational/actual capacity:	3021
Residents:	2565
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	2124
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	154
Administrative staff:	No data provided
Medical staff:	15
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	171:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>88</sup> :	13.2 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Athens):	40 km

## History

Malakasa camp is located in a remote setting 40 km from Athens. The site was established on a former military base, Gerakini, located in a remote mountainous location 50 km from Athens. It was established in March 2016<sup>89</sup> and expanded in 2020 with the construction of 'New Malakasa', a facility located 1 km from the (old) Malakasa camp which now operates as a Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) for screening and registration of new arrivals. An early visit to Malakasa camp in 2016 found<sup>90</sup> shocking conditions including undernourishment and limited access to even basic healthcare. Residents lived in fabric tents where snakes and scorpions were regularly found inside. Protests have occurred at the camp highlighting poor living conditions and flooding in the camp with residents demanding to be transferred to accommodation in cities<sup>91</sup>. In 2020<sup>92</sup> residents were accommodated in overheated shipping containers and tents and reported overcrowded conditions and limited access to health care<sup>93</sup>. Still in 2024, poor physical conditions were reported including containers without heating or cooling facilities<sup>94</sup>. Evacuations of residents between Ritsona and Malakasa<sup>95</sup> have occurred<sup>96</sup> in recent years during summer months as a result of fires in the vicinity of both camps, leading to cramped conditions and loss of belongings<sup>97</sup>.

# SERRES CAMP



Official name:	Serres Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας αιτούντων άσυλο Σερρών
Coordinates:	41.071824, 23.548974
Nominal capacity <sup>98</sup> :	1578
Operational/actual capacity:	1578
Residents:	1244
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	610
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	150
Administrative staff:	22
Medical staff:	9
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	138:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>99</sup> :	4.2 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Serres):	4 km

## History

Serres camp was established in 2016 with the support of IOM and is located on the south side of Serres, 100 km north of Thessaloniki. The camp's population has historically been dominated by Yazidis from northern Iraq, many of whom arrive spontaneously after having crossed the Evros land border and without having previously undergone registration procedures. Although this population is generally accepted into the camp and transferred to Diavata RIC for registration, in September 2022 approximately 120 Yazidis slept outside the camp for weeks after being refused entrance, reportedly due to capacity issues<sup>100</sup>. In 2022<sup>101</sup>, residents were reportedly forced to leave their accommodation containers<sup>102</sup> and move to a more dilapidated part of the camp, to make space for newly arrived Ukrainian nationals who hold Temporary Protection residence permits in Greece. Despite being hailed as a 'model' camp among the mainland structures<sup>103</sup>, living conditions have been described as undignified and the Greek Ombudsperson noted numerous deficiencies following a visit in December 2023: shortages of medicines, lack of heating in some accommodation for vulnerable persons, and lack of available Kurmanji interpreters for medical visits within the camp were noted in the follow up report<sup>104</sup>. In March 2023 the then Minister of Migration Dimitris Keridis visited<sup>105</sup> Serres camp, emphasising the facility's role in providing workers for the local economy and job opportunities in the region.



# OINOFYTA CAMP



Official name:	Oinofyta Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας Αιτούντων Άσυλο Οινοφύτων
Coordinates:	38.323366, 23.618922
Nominal capacity <sup>106</sup> :	412
Operational/actual capacity:	412
Residents:	314
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	91
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	23
Administrative staff:	5
Medical staff:	6
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	52:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>107</sup> :	10 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Chalkida):	20.4 km

## History

Oinofyta camp was established in April 2016 and is situated in an isolated industrial area approximately 60 km north of Athens. Residents are accommodated in a former industrial building within compartmented rooms. It was closed in November 2017 due to unlivable conditions<sup>108</sup> but reopened just four months later to accommodate new arrivals. However, conditions were reportedly even lower than before closure and in 2018 residents reported unsanitary and unsafe conditions<sup>109</sup>. Protests at the facility occurred throughout 2018 including a road block against living conditions and forced transfer from hotels to the camp<sup>110</sup>. In July 2023, 57 residents of the self-organised Kurdish Lavrio camp were forcibly evicted and transported approximately 100 km to Oinofyta camp<sup>111</sup>. Non-state actors rarely visit the facility due to its isolated location; the camp was not included in inspection visits<sup>112</sup> of the Greek Ombudsperson during 2022 and 2023.

# RITSONA CAMP



Official name:	Ritsona Controlled Access Facility for the Temporary Accommodation of Asylum Seekers / Ελεγχόμενη Δομή Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας Αιτούντων Άσυλο Ριτσώνας
Coordinates:	38.387297, 23.503803
Nominal capacity <sup>113</sup> :	1509
Operational/actual capacity:	1004
Residents:	872
Beneficiaries of reception conditions:	628
Beneficiaries of special reception conditions:	335
Administrative staff:	34
Medical staff:	9
Ratio of residents to medical staff:	97:1
Distance to nearest health services <sup>114</sup> :	10 km
Distance to nearest urban centre (Chalkida):	20.3 km

## History

Ritsona camp is located in a remote industrial area 75 km from Athens and is the largest reception facility in mainland Greece. Although technically open, the facility has been described as detention-like<sup>115</sup> considering the limited access to the outside world faced by residents and the fact that it is surrounded by walls and barbed wire. Ritsona camp has become renowned for violence between residents leading to deaths in some instances. In June 2024 the murder of a camp resident was reported including arrest of two other residents<sup>116</sup>, leading to CSOs highlighting that closed controlled accommodation centres do not equate to safer facilities, as prison-like conditions ‘can exacerbate tension and insecurity’<sup>117</sup>. Deaths of residents at Ritsona have previously been reported including of a two-month old baby who died in a taxi en route to hospital from the camp<sup>118</sup>. CSOs report serious deficiencies in vulnerability assessments, provision of medical care, and transportation from the camp<sup>119</sup> to urban centres. In January 2023, residents in Ritsona demanded adequate healthcare provision in the camp following the death of a 45 year old Congolese man<sup>120</sup> who was found dead in his shelter after requesting medical attention during the night. At this time the facility hosted an estimated 2,000 residents but did not have sufficient medical staff<sup>121</sup> to cater to their needs, following the withdrawal<sup>122</sup> of the Red Cross leaving just one first aid station operated by the Greek public health service (EODY). There is no separate area for accommodation of families and minors in Ritsona.



# 4 - LIVING CONDITIONS IN MAINLAND CAMPS



## (A) Physical conditions

- 72% of respondents reported inadequate conditions in their accommodation including dilapidated structures, dysfunctional appliances and poor hygiene
- 55% reported that they had to pay for spare parts or repair works due to lack of maintenance carried out by the camp administration

Lack of consistent maintenance of accommodation facilities is an issue across all mainland refugee camps run by the RIS<sup>123</sup>. As highlighted by the Greek Ombudsperson, contracts drawn up by the MoMA do not include fixed costs for the purchasing of spare parts and maintenance<sup>124</sup>. This has led to reduced actual capacity in camps, compared to nominal capacity, as many containers are in a state of disrepair which renders them unlivable. As evidenced in testimonies, even where accommodations are deemed decent enough to be provided to asylum seekers, conditions are frequently undignified, due to extreme dilapidation and missing parts. In order to secure an adequate standard of living as provided for in the law, residents are burdened with undertaking repair works themselves or paying for this service.

Most interviewees in camps were provided accommodation in one or two-room prefabricated containers, while respondents living in Corinth and Oinofyta resided in rub hall tents (Corinth) and rooms within an abandoned factory building (Oinofyta), both of which have been deemed as unsuitable for long-term living<sup>125</sup>. In 72% of interviews across all nine camps, conditions were reported to be inadequate, due to dysfunctional appliances and poor hygiene conditions. Dysfunctional air conditioning, broken showers and lighting, bed bug and cockroach infestations, and extensive mould (see image on page 27) were the most frequently reported problems. Large holes in ceilings and floors were also reported (see image on page 28), leading to flooding

*Photos: Communal cooking area in Corinth camp; back of accommodation rub halls in Corinth camp. Images shared by interview respondent. Date: June 2024.*





following heavy rain, demonstrating the extent of neglect of accommodation facilities. In Ritsona, one respondent reported that their container lacked basic items such as a bed, mattress and blankets on arrival, leading to her having to borrow items from other residents in the camp. Residents in the Lagkadikia, Malakasa and Serres camps additionally reported that their container was missing basic appliances such as a facility to heat up food. Across all camps it was common for interviewees to report that rooms inside containers were dirty on arrival and they had to undertake deep cleaning to make the environment comfortable and hygienic.

In Corinth camp, residents live in shared rub halls (large tents divided into rooms separated by thin plasterboard walls) which are 'entirely unsuitable for the dignified accommodation of residents' according to the Greek Ombudsperson<sup>126</sup>. Interviewees from Corinth reported cramped conditions inside the rub hall tents, and a lack of privacy and security due to the thin partition walls. Insect infestations were also noted, which persisted despite residents' attempts to spray rooms multiple times. In Oinofyta, accommodation takes the form of rooms in a repurposed old factory building, a type of accommodation deemed inadequate by the Ombudsperson due to health risks stemming from cramped conditions and the lack of ventilation in such buildings. A Kurdish family accommodated in Oinofyta reported that the air conditioning was not working in their room, leading to difficulties sleeping, in addition to infestations of insects within the accommodation.

Additional issues were reported regarding communal facilities in the camps. For instance, in Kavala there was reported to be just six washing machines shared between approximately 700 residents at the time of interview. In Oinofyta camp, the communal water point was reported not to be functional by a couple interviewed in June 2024. There was a complaint from several interviewees at Lagkadikia camp that outdoor areas in the camp were not frequently cleaned, leading to parents being reluctant to allow their children to play outside.

Lack of maintenance carried out by the camp administration in all facilities created an additional financial burden on residents who had to purchase materials, basic utilities or pay for repair works in order to create more dignified living conditions. Dilapidated structures also caused safety concerns in terms of impact on residents' health, due to air conditioning requiring cleaning or extensive mould and bed bug infestations, resulting in allergic reactions and skin conditions which residents had to pay for medicines to treat (as was the case for residents in Ritsona and Kavala camps). Concerningly, a resident in Katsikas reported that three containers caught on fire during one month due to electrical problems, destroying the whole structure as well as belongings inside.

Residents in most camps reported that they complained on multiple occasions about urgent repair works but no follow up action was taken by the camp administration. In Katsikas, one respondent reported aggressive behaviour from the camp management when they complained about poor conditions in their accommodation container.

Photos: Cockroach infestation, bathroom and dilapidated door. All three depict conditions inside an accommodation container in Katsikas camp. Images shared by interview respondent. Date: May 2024.



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“I share with another family in one room, and [we have] shared utilities. I was not informed I would be sharing a room with others. There are problems with AC, kitchen, utilities but I went to complain to the office a few times and they kept saying they would come to check, [but] nobody came to fix or check. I feel as though they don't want to fix things to save electricity and money.”

Resident in Serres camp

“The room, it's not the best. The floor is broken. We keep telling them [the camp management] to remove the wood because whoever was living in the room before us, they used to spray the floor with water. So all the things are rotten. We asked them to remove it because it has a stinky smell.”

21 year old man,  
Kavala camp



Left images: Communal shower and kitchen facilities at Oinofyta camp. Images shared by interview respondent. Date: June 2024.

Bottom right image: Hole in floor of accommodation container in Lagkadikia camp. Image shared by interview respondent. Date: April 2024.



“

“I don't feel [the camp management] respect our views or take our views into consideration. For instance, we have had a problem with the bathroom water for weeks. We have been continuously going there to complain. We can't continue living in that situation. [...] [The staff] have reached a point where they're like: Leave, I don't want to see your face. Why are you coming here every time? If we wait, no one comes. So we go back again to remind them. Same situation again.”

Young woman from Somalia,  
Ritsona camp

“Whatever we say about issues we have, [the camp administration] just write them down and nothing happens in action. We were complaining about the time we can use washing machines, which is 15 minutes, not enough. All they did was write it down and did not do anything.”

26 year old woman from Afghanistan,  
Lagkadikia camp





## (B) Access to services



### (i) Interpretation

- **59% of respondents shared that shortages in interpretation services impacted their ability to communicate in the camp**

On 14th May 2024, the main provider of interpretation services to both the Asylum Service and the RIS, Metadrasi, announced the suspension of its services, citing nine months of delay in payment by the MoMA<sup>127</sup>. Due to delays in renewing contracts with Metadrasi, workers from the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA) have been deployed to cover interpretation gaps in camps for the month of July<sup>128</sup>, however to date there is no indication of how interpretation needs will be provided for in future. Although some interviews are currently conducted remotely in camps<sup>129</sup>, other applicants are expected to travel long distances from remote camps to asylum offices despite the high likelihood that interviews will be cancelled due to lack of interpreters.

Interviews conducted for this report indicate that there was a gap in interpretation provision following the withdrawal of Metadrasi, with respondents reporting periods of time when there were no interpretation services available in specific facilities (this was specifically mentioned by interviewees in the camps of Corinth, Koutsochero, Oinofyta, Malakasa, Serres, Lagkadikia, Kavala and Katsikas). This led to people in camps relying on fellow residents who speak English in order to communicate with the authorities, raising concerns about confidentiality and safety in communication between residents and camp administration. Additionally, for people interviewed before the withdrawal of Metadrasi, several reported that there were no translators for specific languages in camps (e.g. no Somali interpreters in Ritsona). In addition to the severe impact on access to medical services outlined below (see from page 31), lack of translators significantly impacted camp residents' ability to communicate their needs to the authorities and further isolated them from support.

**“[The camp administration] told us that we don't have translators for the past month because their contracts have finished. It has a lot of impact [...] For us it is disappointing and it is making our psychology very tired that we don't get support.”**

32 year old man,  
Koutsochero camp

**“Before there were interpreters [in the camp], but now unfortunately there's none anymore. The contracts of everyone have finished. Sometimes my friends in the camp call me to translate for them because I speak English, but sometimes I don't have time so they have to use their phones.”**

36 year old man from Palestine,  
Corinth camp





## (ii) Transportation

- **62% reported that gaps in or lack of transportation resulted in restrictions on their ability to access basic rights, including the asylum procedure, legal support, and healthcare**

The EASO guidelines on reception conditions specify that accommodation facilities should be located within a reasonable distance of health services, legal aid, education, asylum procedures and markets for food and goods<sup>130</sup>. Where public transport is necessary, travel times should be reasonable<sup>131</sup>. Greek Ombudsperson inspections conducted between June 2022 and December 2023 found that most facilities are located outside urban areas or are in very remote locations, leading to concrete challenges in terms of access to goods and services and fostering a sense of isolation<sup>132</sup>. According to UNHCR, interruptions to RIS transportation services have been frequent during 2023 and 2024, hampering access to nearby urban centres, as well as access to hospitals or to asylum offices for procedures requiring physical presence. These issues are especially pronounced for facilities that are either very remote or without any public transportation available nearby<sup>133</sup>. The combination of minimal service provision within facilities and lack of public transport to allow residents to easily reach basic and potentially life-saving services is of serious concern, as highlighted by civil society groups<sup>134</sup>. Moreover, in the absence of free transport services, camp residents are compelled to pay for bus fares or taxis using the extremely limited financial aid provided by the state (see section on cash assistance from page 38).

Interviews evidenced a number of challenges related to the isolated position of camps and the lack of transportation organised by the camp to allow residents to access essential services. In Ritsona, located 75 km from Athens with limited public transport connections, residents reported that there were frequent interruptions to the bus service organised by the camp, including for months on end. One resident reported that they paid 20 euros for a return bus ticket to Athens in order to attend an asylum appointment, amounting to almost a third of their monthly financial allowance. In Lagkadikia, although located close to a village with some amenities, no transport was reported to be provided for hospital or asylum appointments, or to transport children to school. One resident there reported that he could barely afford to pay for his two teenage children to attend school every day due to the low level of cash assistance received by the family. Several families in Lagkadikia had specifically requested a school bus be provided by the camp so their children did not have to walk to school by themselves, particularly due to the reported presence of snakes in the vicinity. In Kavala, respondents shared that travel costs to the nearest hospital were manageable, however not for asylum appointments: one resident reported having to pay 50 euros to travel to Alexandroupoli to submit his appeal. In Corinth, a respondent reported that the camp administration referred him to an CSO operating in the vicinity of the camp in order to get a ticket for the train to travel to Athens to submit his asylum appeal, due to lack of transport organised by the camp.

The combination of unreliable interpretation services inside facilities and lack of transportation to urban centres organised by camp authorities resulted in severe isolation for people resident in camps who struggled to access the support they needed.

“I have issues with how far the camp is from the city. My brother is in the centre of Athens and I have to travel every time to see him. It’s quite a difficult journey and we have to pay for it - even though the cash card is so little money. Sometimes there are some buses or cars coming in front of the camp and we can buy some groceries from them, but at least twice a month most of us go to Athens to see a lawyer, buy food or to meet people.”

23 year old man from Somalia,  
Malakasa camp

### (iii) Healthcare and psychosocial support

- 72% of respondents reported that they did not have their basic health care needs met by medical teams operating inside camps
- 62% reported that they encountered significant difficulties in accessing treatment in hospitals
- 33% of respondents tried to access psychosocial support during their stay in the camp but were not able to

Medical and psychosocial support units in mainland camps are responsible for medical screening, provision of primary health care, referral to secondary health care, identification of cases requiring immediate medical attention, recording of medical histories, and providing special medical care to children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, people with disabilities and those suffering from chronic diseases<sup>135</sup>. These units are staffed by public health employees of Greece’s national health organisation (EODY)<sup>136</sup>. According to guidelines of EASO, medical screenings should be conducted in an adequate and timely manner, arrangements should be in place to ensure that applicants can communicate with medical personnel, and any necessary follow-up actions should be taken following screening<sup>137</sup>.

At the end of June 2024, the MoMA terminated the working contracts of some 400 public health workers under the PHILOS programme<sup>138</sup>, which had provided health services in camps run by the RIS, prompting strikes<sup>139</sup> against precarious working conditions and temporary contracts. Although the Greek government has announced a new health provision programme, Hippokrates<sup>140</sup>, promising to provide protection activities, psychosocial services and monitoring of public health<sup>141</sup>, to date there has been no indication regarding a timeline for the programme’s implementation. Meanwhile, CSOs report<sup>142</sup> that health workers are being phased out in camps and residents are left without access to medical support. According to information provided by UNHCR in April 2024, there was a complete absence of medical services in Sintiki camp at this time, a facility located 6 km from the Greek-Bulgarian border with no public transport connections and 50 km away from the nearest hospital in Serres<sup>143</sup>. Chronic understaffing is widespread in the mainland structures, leading to the inability to provide dignified reception conditions, as highlighted by CSOs<sup>144</sup>.

As noted by the Ombudsperson<sup>145</sup>, healthcare and psychosocial support provided in Greece’s mainland camps falls far short of the authorities legal obligation to protect asylum seekers’ physical and mental health (Art. 59, 4939/2022; Art. 17, 2013/33/EU). Concerningly, interviewees

reported that in many cases they were not provided with necessary health care, in contravention of the law (Art. 19(1), 2013/33/EU). An analysis of data of the MoMA regarding presence of medical staff in camps at the end of December 2023 indicates that across 27 mainland reception facilities there were an average of 102 residents for every medical staff member<sup>146</sup>. According to the Ministry's data, in Corinth camp there were 706 residents for every medical staff member.

Interviews indicated that provision of primary healthcare was inadequate across all facilities due to a range of factors including lack of medical staff, lack of interpreters for medical appointments, medicine shortages and the financial burden of having to pay for prescriptions. Lack of sufficient numbers of medical staff led to severe restrictions on access to healthcare in Corinth and Ritsona camps. Residents reported relying on CSOs operating in the vicinity of the camps, to provide basic healthcare or facilitate appointments in hospitals (however see Methodology section regarding lack of CSOs operating close to the most remote camps). One respondent living in Corinth reported that there was no doctor in the facility whilst another stated that the doctor visited just two times per week, although they were unsure if this was a state- or CSO-provided doctor. In Katsikas camp one respondent reported that he had the impression there was no doctor on site.

In Lagkadikia and Kavala camps, medical personnel reportedly used Google Translate to communicate with camp residents, which did not facilitate effective communication between residents and health teams. At Oinofyta camp interviewees reported that there were two medical staff members but no interpreters. In Serres, there was no Kurmanji interpreter at the time of interviews (May-June 2024) despite this being the language of the majority of the camp population, a situation which was already noted by the Ombudsperson following their visit in December 2023<sup>147</sup>. Other key issues related to health provision in the camp were medicine shortages and the burden placed on residents to pay for prescriptions. One interviewee in Kavala reported that they relied on other families to share medicines as they could not afford to pay for them. Residents in Lagkadikia resorted to sharing the limited medicines they had due to the impossibility of buying them on the low financial assistance provided by the authorities.

Several respondents reported difficulties accessing secondary health care for more complex health conditions. As noted by the Ombudsperson<sup>148</sup>, health teams in camps do not generally include specialists, meaning residents have to book an appointment at a hospital to access follow up treatment. Hospital appointments were difficult to access for most respondents who needed them, due to long waiting times, lack of accessible transport options or lack of interpreters provided by the camp or hospital to translate during appointments. In some cases respondents indicated that staff in camp medical units were not proactive in helping them to book an appointment for specialist treatment in a hospital or clinic outside the camp. A 21 year old man in Kavala reported that he had not managed to get medical attention for severe back pain during his eight month stay in the camp, reportedly being told by the medical staff that it was not possible to book an appointment in a hospital. Another man in Kavala, from Sierra Leone, reported that he had not received treatment for a condition which impacted his mobility and caused severe pain, despite visiting the medical unit on several occasions and requesting an appointment in a hospital. One resident in Kavala camp reported that they developed a skin condition as a result of bed bugs in their container but were not supported by the medical unit to book a dermatologist appointment outside of the camp.

In Lagkadikia camp, many respondents shared that they had to wait several weeks or even months to get an appointment at a hospital in Thessaloniki and struggled to attend due to the financial costs of travelling there using public transportation, and lack of interpreters in the hospital. Despite the high number of families in the camp there was no paediatrician on site and respondents reported issues with long waiting times for vaccination appointments for their children. In Serres, the main activity of the medical team was making referrals to hospitals, according to interview participants. However, transportation to appointments was reportedly provided by the camp only on an ad hoc basis. One respondent reported that due to lack of interpreters in Serres hospital he chose to accompany a pregnant woman who was resident in the camp to an appointment. A 32 year old man in Koutsochero camp, one of the more isolated facilities, reported having to pay 40-50 euros to pay for a taxi to the hospital, in addition to the cost of medicines.

Despite the high proportion of interview respondents reporting that they experienced mental health challenges during their stay in a camp and required psychosocial support, only one respondent, in Kavala camp, reported that they received adequate psychosocial support from the medical unit in the camp. On the other hand, residents in Katsikas and Serres were not aware of any psychological support available on site, whilst a young woman in Ritsona camp reported that she was not able to access a psychologist in the camp and had to rely on a CSO to find one.

Additional issues related to provision of health care for vulnerable groups were noted by interviewees and are covered below (from page 36).



*Photo: Employee containers at Corinth camp. Image shared by interview respondent. Date: June 2024.*



*Photo: Food distribution and administration building in Kavala camp. Image shared by interview respondent. Date: June 2024.*





*Photos shared by interview respondents:*

*Above: Shelter in Koutsochero camp, located in a remote part of central Greece and 16 km from the nearest health services. Date: June 2024.*

*Below: Accommodation tents and employee containers in Corinth camp. Date: June 2024. The facility had no on site doctor at the time of the Greek Ombudsperson's visit in March 2023.*

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“It has been three months since I requested an appointment at the hospital and I am still waiting. Once when my son was sick I took him to the doctor [in the camp]. They told us to go and buy medicines from the market. I told them we do not have money, but they said that no, we cannot give you any medicines.”

29 year old woman from Afghanistan,  
Kavala camp

“The doctor in the camp is only available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Whenever I go there I use my phone for translation. There is only one translator in the camp and they are not for these things, [they are working] at the administration.”

33 year old woman from Afghanistan,  
Lagkadikia camp

“I needed a doctor many times and haven't been able to access one. I have to take a taxi and go to the hospital, and I have to pay for it myself. There hasn't been anyone to translate when I've been to the hospital.”

Resident in Serres camp

“I don't really know if there are doctors in the camp. All I know is that any time I go there, they will make excuses, the doctors are not here today, we don't have space, come back another day.”

Young woman from Somalia,  
Ritsona camp

## (iv) Legal information and assistance

- **More than half of respondents reported that they did not have access to legal assistance during their stay in a camp**

According to legal provisions (Art. 47 of 4939/2022 and Art. 5 of EU/33/2013) the authorities are obligated to provide information on rights and obligations of asylum seekers in the reception system and to supply asylum seekers with contacts to organisations who provide legal and psycho-social assistance.

Respondents reported gaps in information and support from the camp administration regarding their asylum case. Administrative services reportedly did not proactively assist camp residents in interpreting decisions written in Greek or explaining appeal processes. In Kavala, one respondent reported that the camp management delayed communicating his rejection decision by three days without any apparent reason, and did not inform the respondent of the deadline for appeal. The practice of camp administration delivering rejection decisions late was raised as a concern by CSOs in both Kavala and Polykastro camps<sup>149</sup>.

Despite the provisions of the law (Art. 60(2)(b), 4939/2022; Art. 18(2)(b), 2013/33/EU), camp administrations are not generally proactive in facilitating access for lawyers to visit their clients. As reported by a CSO legal aid lawyer, access is only granted through a slow bureaucratic process which requires requesting an appointment in advance and camp authorities frequently take a long time to approve. Such restrictions on access to camps for lawyers further isolates people from support.

**“We have a lot of problems with legal support, if I need a lawyer I have to pay and it's not feasible. No one [in the camp] has provided one. I am unable to communicate or know the language to ask for one.”**

Resident in Serres camp

### Complaints mechanisms in camps

The EUAA guidelines on reception conditions specify the need for a standardised complaint and response mechanism which clearly specifies how such complaints can be made, who holds the responsibility of dealing with the complaint and the timeline for a response<sup>150</sup>. As laid out in the guidelines, information on the complaint and response mechanism should additionally be in several languages and accessible to applicants. However, no respondents had received information on their right to complain about camp conditions through the fundamental rights mechanism<sup>151</sup>. In some cases interviewees reported that they were fearful of complaining about conditions in case this could impact their asylum case or the treatment of the camp management and had not previously spoken out on these issues before the interview.



## (C) Lack of provision for vulnerable people

- **Eight respondents reported that they had a vulnerability, however all but one shared that their needs were not properly catered for during their stay in the camp**

At the end of December 2023, there were 1,986 people living in Greece's 27 mainland reception facilities whom the authorities deemed to be entitled to special reception conditions<sup>152</sup>. Greek law states that the needs of vulnerable persons such as minors (accompanied and unaccompanied), people with disabilities, elderly people, single-parent households and pregnant women should be taken into account in the provision of reception conditions (Art. 62(1) of the Asylum Code). However as noted by UNHCR<sup>153</sup>, during monitoring visits there were severe gaps in the provision of special reception conditions in most of the mainland accommodation facilities. Aside from addressing issues of physical mobility by providing ramps in some accommodation containers, many vulnerabilities are not adequately catered for in camps, for example survivors of trafficking, gender-based violence and torture, who reside in facilities without psychosocial staff due to shortages of EODY staff in conjunction with the remoteness of camps and lack of transportation. RSA similarly noted<sup>154</sup> that vulnerable applicants are mostly held in the same conditions as general camp populations without consideration of their specific support needs.

Eight interview respondents reported that they had a recognised vulnerability including one pregnant woman, one survivor of torture, four people with serious medical conditions, one survivor of female genital mutilation (FGM) and one survivor of sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV). Significantly, all but one of these people reported that they were not provided with additional support in the camp to cater to needs arising from their vulnerability. Additionally, the cases outlined below illustrate that vulnerable people experienced more extreme impacts stemming from lack of access to basic services such as healthcare:

- A Palestinian man suffering from cancer in **Katsikas** camp who had been living in the camp for five months reported multiple issues related to accessing essential healthcare services. One key barrier was lack of interpreters provided by the camp or the hospital, resulting in difficulties communicating with hospital staff and on one occasion being turned away as doctors refused to treat him without a translator. He additionally reported that he bought the wrong medication from a pharmacy due to lack of translation and had to rely on friends to accompany him to hospital where possible to translate, however this required paying for their bus fares. His entire financial allowance was spent on medicine and transportation to hospital appointments. Transport to hospital was only arranged on one occasion by the camp, whilst generally he had to take two buses or a taxi costing 13 euros each way. Navigating public transport was challenging given his unfamiliarity with technology. Concerningly, he shared that he wanted to stop his cancer treatment as he believed this was a reason for delays in his asylum process.



- A seven month pregnant woman with two minor children from Afghanistan in Lagkadikia camp reported that she had not undergone a vulnerability assessment and the camp administration were unresponsive when she asked for support. She was referred to Thessaloniki hospital for an appointment but had to travel herself using three buses and without a translator. She reported that she had previously had two miscarriages and was afraid of losing another child if she had to give birth in the camp. She additionally expressed concern at the lack of care for pregnant women on site and the unreliability of ambulances. After raising this concern with the camp management, she was reportedly told that being pregnant was not a reason to receive special treatment in the camp. She reported sharing a container with another family with young children, in cramped conditions.
- A 36 year old Kurdish Iraqi woman who is a single mother and survivor of SGBV was held in **Ritsona** camp without any specialised support. She had been living in the camp for 18 months. She reported being harassed by men in the camp and despite reporting this to the management was not provided with any support. As a result of not feeling safe she spent most of her time inside her container. She described the camp as like a prison in which she is isolated from social networks and support.

Photos showing a dilapidated container with extensive mould in Katsikas camp, used to accommodate a vulnerable person. Shared by interview respondent. Date: May 2024.



**I've been staying for four or five months in a caravan, the situation is very bad [...] it's very old, and [there are] insects coming out from everywhere. I'm still waiting [for my asylum decision] - every time I go to the office, they say: wait, wait, wait. And now I'm having stress, besides my sickness. I wanted to stop my treatment, because I thought all those treatments were the reason for the delay."**

55 year old man suffering from cancer,  
Katsikas camp

**"The camp is not a very ideal [place to give birth]. I was sick before and it took three hours for the ambulance to arrive. If the same situation happens again [when I give birth], I don't know what to do."**

33 year old pregnant woman from Afghanistan,  
Lagkadikia camp

**"It's very very difficult, life in the camp is very difficult. I begged them [the camp management] to move me to another place where I feel safe and to have privacy, not like here, and they promised but they are doing nothing."**

36 year old Kurdish Iraqi woman and survivor of SGBV,  
Ritsona camp





## (D) Cash assistance

- 79% of respondents reported that they experienced non-payment or delays in payment of cash assistance
- 93% of respondents who were receiving cash assistance and were explicitly asked about this, reported that the amount provided was insufficient to cover their basic needs and living expenses

Since July 2021, cash assistance is only available to asylum seekers who can prove their continued residence in a facility under the operation of the MoMA. Cash assistance amounts to €75 per month for single people or €210 for families of four or more as applicants are provided with catered accommodation<sup>155</sup>. As evidenced in testimonies, this policy shift has led to people having to rely on state-provided support which nonetheless fails to meet their most basic needs in a dignified manner.

Almost all respondents explicitly asked about this (93%) reported that the financial allowance provided was insufficient to meet basic living expenses such as transport to essential services and Non-Food Items (NFIs) which were generally not reliably provided by the camp.

Interruptions and delays were also frequently reported, including up to two months in which some respondents did not receive any money at all from the state. One respondent in Serres reported that he had received cash assistance once since arriving in Greece, six months prior to the interview, despite being in the asylum procedure the whole time. Residents in Ritsona and Katsikas camps who were compelled to spend extended periods of time away from camps in order to work reported that they were removed from the camp's administration system and stopped receiving cash assistance and food on their return.

**“For the first two months they did not give us any money. My husband was jobless. [...] I went to a garden and I started working and I was trying to buy some food and stuff like that for my kid.”**

29 year old woman from Afghanistan,  
Kavala camp

**“Sometimes [we received cash assistance]. One month, they gave it to me. For two months, I didn't receive it. I sent an email but nobody answered me.”**

45 year old man from Iraq,  
Lagkadikia camp



## (E) Food provided in camps

- **76% reported that they were dissatisfied with the quality and/or quantity of food provided in the camp but did not have the financial resources to cook their own food**

The low level of cash assistance meant that most interviewees relied on food provided in the camp. However there were recurring reports that pre-packaged meals provided to camp residents were lacking in variety, taste and nutritional value. The inability to choose what to eat - also according to respondents' own cultural norms and tastes - was a key complaint which attested to the lack of dignity afforded to people living in camps. A woman in Kavala with a medical condition requiring her not to consume salt reported that she could not eat the camp-provided meals and was not provided with an alternative. Several respondents across facilities reported that they threw out the food or attempted to re-cook it.

Additionally, NFIs were frequently not provided at all or only in very limited quantities by camp authorities. For instance, a family in Koutsochero camp had to buy their own items for a baby born in the facility, adding to the burden of travel costs and medication. According to information provided by UNHCR, NFIs are not provided systematically in camps<sup>156</sup>.

According to data from the MoMA, 35% of people resident in mainland refugee camps at the end of 2023 were not entitled to reception conditions<sup>157</sup>. This includes people who had received a rejection of their asylum claim or were recognised refugees, in addition to people whose claims were deemed inadmissible based on the concept of Turkey as a safe third country. A resident in Katsikas who had received a positive decision continued to receive food but reported that the camp management made it clear that he was not entitled to it, making him feel precarious. Others in a similar situation relied on CSOs to access food<sup>158</sup>. An illustrative example is a young woman in Ritsona who did not have access to cash assistance or food in the camp, and was forced to rely on other families to share their food with her, or to find leftovers thrown out in bins. Given that water is supplied in bottles rather than at a drinking point, she also had to rely on others to receive water, or drink unfiltered water from the tap.

*Photo left: Discarded pre-packaged meals provided in Kavala camp. Image shared by interview respondent. Date: April 2024.*

*Photo right: Rotten eggs given to residents in Koutsochero camp. Image shared by interview respondent. Date: June 2024.*



**“The quality of the food is very bad. For example, it’s either frozen or it smells bad. The egg smells very bad or the cucumbers are frozen and as soon as they are unfrozen, we need to throw them away because they go bad.”**

40 year old man from Afghanistan,  
Lagkadikia camp

**“Everyone who tastes the food, they just throw it away. It’s not edible at all. We complained for so long, but they never did anything about it. Sometimes it’s even expired.”**

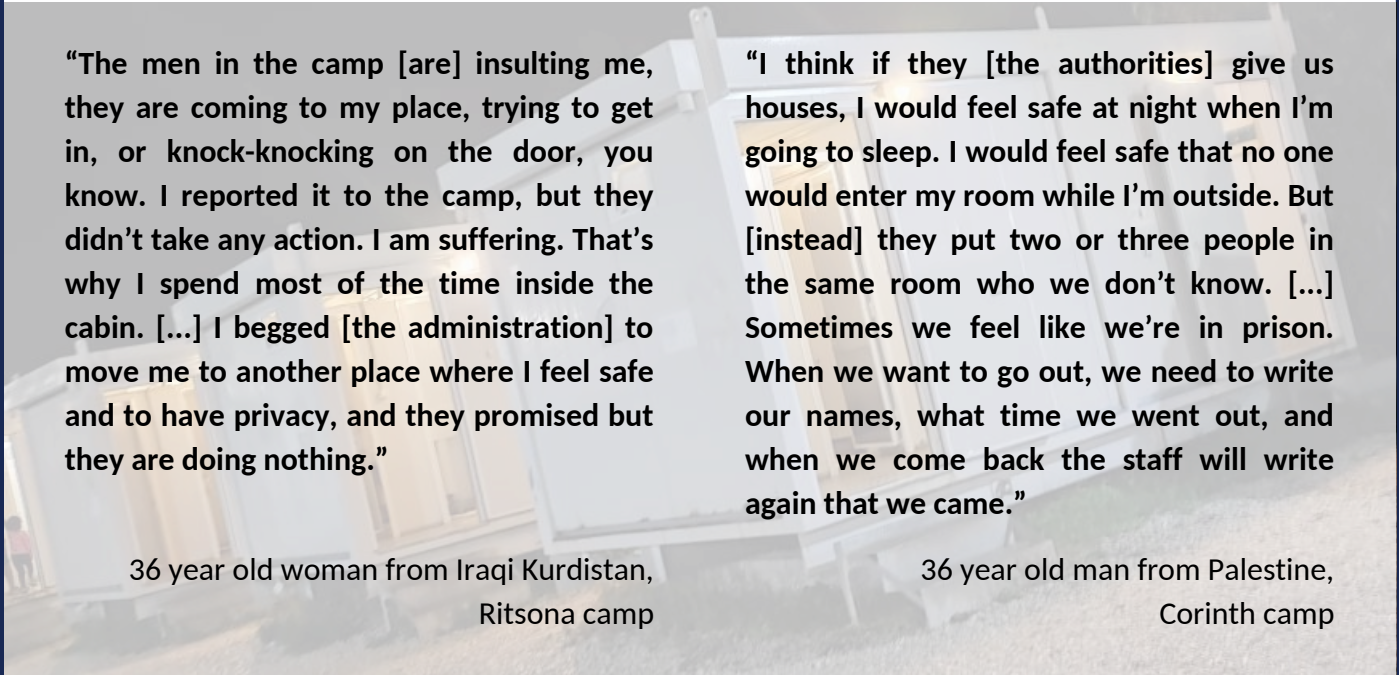
21 year old man,  
Kavala camp



## **(F) Safety**

Despite the presence of security infrastructure in all camps one third of respondents reported feelings of insecurity and fear. Moreover interviewees did not generally perceive security systems as benefiting them. In other cases people expressed that they did not have enough privacy in the camp or felt insecure in their accommodation, sometimes due to the mixing of people without a pre-existing relationship in containers. A woman with children in Oinofyta camp reported feeling unsafe due to the absence of locks in the accommodation. In Oinofyta, a disused factory building, many shower units could not be locked. In Corinth and Oinofyta where kitchen and bathroom facilities were reported to be shared, residents interviewed did not feel safe using these facilities. In Corinth, accommodation in rub hall tents was described as inherently lacking in privacy and engendering feelings of insecurity, with thin partition walls between rooms. One respondent described the perimeter wall as making him feel like he was in a prison. In Katsikas one respondent felt the security was more about control than safety.

EUAA guidelines specify that external reinforced security infrastructure should be proportionate to the aim of the reception facility. Controlled entry-exit systems and interactions with security personnel were a part of the daily lives in camps described by interview respondents. Security closed-circuit cameras were noted by residents in Malakasa, Ritsona, Kavala, Serres, Lagkadikia and Katsikas, however no respondents reported that they had been informed of the purpose of the cameras in a language they could understand. One resident in Serres reported the presence of security cameras everywhere inside the camp, including in the children’s playground. In Ritsona, cameras were reportedly present throughout the facility but one resident emphasised that this did not result in security personnel intervening in fights between residents. Despite security reportedly being on site 24/7 at Ritsona residents expressed feeling insecure, particularly as a result of tensions between residents and fights.



“The men in the camp [are] insulting me, they are coming to my place, trying to get in, or knock-knocking on the door, you know. I reported it to the camp, but they didn’t take any action. I am suffering. That’s why I spend most of the time inside the cabin. [...] I begged [the administration] to move me to another place where I feel safe and to have privacy, and they promised but they are doing nothing.”

36 year old woman from Iraqi Kurdistan,  
Ritsona camp

“I think if they [the authorities] give us houses, I would feel safe at night when I’m going to sleep. I would feel safe that no one would enter my room while I’m outside. But [instead] they put two or three people in the same room who we don’t know. [...] Sometimes we feel like we’re in prison. When we want to go out, we need to write our names, what time we went out, and when we come back the staff will write again that we came.”

36 year old man from Palestine,  
Corinth camp

## Security and surveillance in mainland camps

Whilst the initial structures established to accommodate asylum seekers in 2016 were more open in character, mainland camps in 2024 resemble the prison-like facilities for processing new arrivals which have become renowned on the Aegean islands. Work to transform mainland facilities into so-called Controlled Access Facilities has been branded by the government as a shift towards ‘modernised’ structures that provide security to both residents and surrounding non-migrant communities<sup>159</sup>. Contracts between the Ministry and the private company Space Hellas for the delivery of this work in southern<sup>160</sup> and northern<sup>161</sup> Greek refugee camps indicate that such ‘upgrades’ include the use of behavioural analysis surveillance systems designed to detect ‘dangerous’ behaviour, controlled entry-exit systems, and the use of drones to surveil camps. The MoMA has explicitly stated that it will continue to roll out controversial surveillance and security systems in mainland reception sites despite receiving a fine of €175,000 from the Greek Data Protection Agency for its failure to carry out adequate data protection risk assessments before implementing related programmes<sup>162</sup>. As highlighted by practitioners, the new camps have more internal fences<sup>163</sup>, limiting residents’ freedom of movement and creating cage-like environments within facilities, while the increase in security personnel is contrasted with understaffing of healthcare workers, interpreters and administrative support staff.



## 5 - VOICES FROM THE CAMPS



### Ismail, Lagkadikia camp

**Ismail** (not real name) is 45 years old and from Iraq. He lives in **Lagkadikia** camp with his two teenage children and his wife. The family has received two rejections on their asylum claims in Greece. They previously lived in an apartment in Thessaloniki provided under the ESTIA programme.

*"We were in ESTIA housing for four and a half years. At that time we didn't have a problem with anything. We were free to go and come back - [to see] your friends, your Greek family, they come to you and go to them. Not like here - here is like a prison. I think they gave us one week's notice, they told me: in one week you must leave the apartment and go to camp. I told them I can't leave because my children are going to school, they told me that's not my problem.*

*The problems started the first time we went to camp, we did not have a rest day or quiet day. Just problems inside the camp, inside the container, noises, problems.*

*The pay [financial assistance from the government] is not much; all [my] family, four people, we get 210 euro every month. This is not enough. Sometimes [we received cash assistance]. One month, they gave it to me. For two months, I didn't receive it. I sent an email but nobody answered me.*

*Six years of my life are lost. [For] six years, I have not done anything. My friends in Iraq, my friends in Germany - now they have cars, they have jobs, they have apartments or houses. They live normally. Me, sometimes I feel like a chicken. Chicken in the cage. Me and my family in the cage - we go outside to eat and come back to the container to sleep and sit down. 24 hours. I play, I see the news, I see something on social media. I don't feel I'm alive."*



### Fawziya, Serres camp

**Fawziya** (not real name), a Yazidi Iraqi woman, has been living in **Serres** camp with her children for 10 months. She has received a positive decision on her asylum claim, however her two daughters are still waiting. They lived in the camp for three months before they registered their asylum claims.



*"Some days I feel very uncomfortable [in the camp], but some days I just make it work. I've been here for 10 months so it's a lot.*

*[My husband and I] were told that we would receive cash assistance after we were registered, but we didn't receive any. Only my daughters receive cash assistance, but this is not enough for the whole family to live on. Before we received our decision we used to receive food from the camp, but now we get it from an NGO. We don't even receive water from the camp.*

*Since I arrived here, I've been struggling with psychological issues, but I haven't been able to access any services.*

*We don't have access to legal support or to translators who speak our language. When we travel to Thessaloniki, we have to cover the costs. Sometimes the camp provides transport but it hasn't been consistent - the ones before us did receive some assistance from the camp to go [to cities], but we did not, it differs from person to person.*

*Before we were sharing our container with nine people, we weren't comfortable at all. We had beds but they weren't clean. The kitchen facilities were not working, we had to buy our own burners. We went a few times to the administration to complain about things not working, like the kitchen not working or the bathrooms. We were demeaned and spoken down to a lot by the administration."*



## **Sabine, Kavala camp**

**Sabine** (not real name) is a 37 year old woman from Cameroon living in **Kavala** camp. She is waiting for a decision on her first asylum application and has a medical vulnerability. She has been living in the camp for almost three months, after being transferred from Samos CCAC where she lived for almost half a year.

*"When I arrived in the camp, I had a document from the doctor in Samos about my medical vulnerability. I gave it to the doctor in Kavala camp but they didn't really take it seriously. I waited around one month and then I got quite angry, and I decided to ask for the person in charge. Eventually they took it seriously.*

*The doctors on Samos told me to avoid salt in my meals, so I have to pay for every meal because I can't eat the meals from the camp. I'm skipping most meals from the camp. In Samos they took me to the hospital every day, but here I need to go [by myself]. I have to pay for transport to the hospital in Kavala. When they prescribe something, I have to go and buy it.*

*When I arrived, I was in a container which was really noisy, it wasn't possible for me, it was causing headaches. We were seven in one room. I asked the camp manager to change and he did it. Now we are three. For privacy it's okay because it's only women, but there's a baby and the mother takes two beds, I just have a small corner."*





## Ahmed, Katsikas camp

**Ahmed** (not real name) is a 24 year old Yemeni man who has been living in **Katsikas** camp for eight months, having been transferred from Samos CCAC where he lived for two months. He received his refugee status and is waiting for his travel documents so he can leave Greece.

*"I received cash assistance for just one month before I got my positive decision. I take one meal per day from the camp but every time they tell me I'm now allowed to take meals, because I don't have an asylum seeker card anymore. Sometimes I survive by asking people to bring me something.*

*The heater [in my container] wasn't working in the winter, I asked the camp management to fix it. Now in the warm, it's very crazy inside the containers, but when we ask them to fix it they say: 'we're going to chuck you out, because you don't have an ID, and you're not allowed to stay here.'*

*A friend of mine was kicked out of the camp after travelling to Athens and staying there for more than 15 days to find work. When he came back they didn't let him back in and he had to sleep outside the camp. I was sharing my food with him.*

*There is security in the doors. They don't check like drugs or if you have a cough or something dangerous, they focus only on people, if you are a recognised refugee you are not allowed to enter there. There is no security like about weapons, drugs, how to be safe, security is about not letting refugees get inside the camp."*



## Ali and Farida, Oinofyta camp

**Ali and Farida** (not real names) are a married couple in **Oinofyta** camp from Iraqi Kurdistan with two daughters aged 8 and 9. They had been in camp accommodation in Oinofyta and Malakasa for three years at the time of interview and were in the process of submitting a subsequent application for asylum after receiving a rejection. The family previously lived in housing provided under the ESTIA programme.

**Ali:** *"There is a psychologist here but the problem is we cannot communicate. I have tried to book an appointment with her but we cannot communicate because there are no interpreters. And I have documents that I want to show a psychologist but no interpreters."*

**Farida:** *"It's extremely difficult for my children because of the living conditions, also the type of people that we live with in the camp, it's a mixture of single people and families. My children go to school but at the same time, they live in the camp which is extremely difficult. I can't even let my children go to the toilet alone, I have to accompany them.*



*I am scared all the time. I go inside, I close the door. I can't say I lock the door because there are no locks on the doors. I am so scared when I want to wash my hair or something, I am terrified.*

*We have one room for the four of us, it's a bedroom, it's a living room, it's where the children's school clothes are, it's where the plates and utensils are. One room for everything.*

*I haven't been able to speak to or see the [camp] manager in months; the air-conditioning isn't working and we are suffocating here. My children are suffocating. They need a good sleep. This is like a very bad prison. All these holes, lots of insects come in from here. The conditions are terrible.*

*[The authorities] claim that they have put in a huge amount of funds to improve the property, to fix these rooms or buildings, but they haven't."*



## **Asha, Ritsona camp**

**Asha** is a young Somalian woman in **Ritsona** camp. She has received a rejection on her asylum claim and is currently submitting a subsequent application. She has been living in the camp since September 2023, after being transferred from Lesvos where she lived for one month.

*"Since I was transferred to Ritsona in September last year I haven't had access to cash or food in the camp, because my asylum claim was rejected. The family I'm sharing my container with share their food with me, that's how I am able to eat. Sometimes my only option is to go to the rubbish and get the food from there.*

*Everyone is mixed in Ritsona. We are about seven people sharing a container, we share a kitchen and bathroom. The other people are all old, there is one woman with mobility issues. It's crowded, it's noisy. I live with old women who are unwell, who need medical treatment. I feel like it's better to place all the old people in one place and all the other young adults or minors in another place, so that there won't be any conflicts. If it's too hot during summer, I'm not able to turn on the air conditioning because of living with old women. They are always telling me to turn it off because they feel very cold. So I have no choice but to respect them and turn it off."*

*When we arrived at Ritsona, it was very cold. For the first night we didn't have clothes, we didn't have mattresses, blankets, bedsheets, nothing. Other Somalis who lived in the camp provided us with those things."*







# CONCLUSION

**This report provides strong evidence of Greece's failure to provide dignified accommodation to people seeking international protection.**

**We are extremely concerned at the lack of dignity and adequate living standards afforded to people who come to Greece seeking international protection. We call on the Greek State to accommodate asylum seekers in apartments and houses in urban settings where they can access services, social networks and wider society. Where camp accommodation is necessary, the state should ensure it is used for short-term stays only and residents have full and unrestricted access to basic rights including healthcare, information and legal support. We further call for provision of regular and free transportation from camps to urban centres to facilitate residents' access to administrative and legal services as well as healthcare.**

# ENDNOTES

1. See report from the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/el/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
2. See RSA. 2024. Refugee camps in mainland Greece. Available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/refugee-camps-in-mainland-greece/>
3. See pbnews. 2022. Ένας “Κένταυρος” για καλύτερη φύλαξη στη δομή φιλοξενίας προσφύγων του Κατσικά. Available at: <https://pbnews.gr/enas-kentavros-gia-kalyteri-fylaxi-sti-domi-filoxenias-prosfygon-tou-katsika/>
4. See report from the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/el/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
5. See AIDA/GCR. 2024. Greece: Access to Education. Available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education/>; RSA. 2022. On the termination of the ESTIA II housing programme for asylum applicants. Available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/termination-of-the-estia-ii-for-asylum-applicants/>; Greek Council for Refugees. 2022. Εξώσεις, αστεγία και πισωγύρισμα στην ένταξη. Available at: <https://www.gcr.gr/en/news/press-releases-announcements/item/2075-eksoseis-astegia-kai-pisogyrisma-stin-entaksi>; Human Rights Watch. 2021. Greece: Stop Denying Refugee Children an Education. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/29/greece-stop-denying-refugee-children-education>
6. For instance, we did not interview people from the following camps: Thermopyles, Thiva, Drama, Polykastro, Vagiochori and Filippiada. We consider these facilities to be particularly isolated based on a number of factors, including whether free transportation is provided by the RIS, the availability of alternative means of transportation such as public transport and the costs of tickets, as well as the distance to essential services. For example, in the camps of Pyrgos and Thermopyles, hospitals are in close proximity, however Asylum Offices are hundreds of kilometres away.
7. See HIAS. 2020. *Some thoughts on the new Joint Ministerial Decision, regulating the registration of migration-related NGOs in Greece*. Available at: [https://hias.org/wp-content/uploads/jmd\\_3063.2020\\_ngo\\_registry-version\\_4.pdf](https://hias.org/wp-content/uploads/jmd_3063.2020_ngo_registry-version_4.pdf)
8. People refused asylum may be outside the asylum procedure due to the high rates of rejection at appeal (see data provided by the Greek government at: <https://bit.ly/3zHNxLX>) and barriers to submitting a subsequent application. Following the booking of an appointment via the Ministry’s online platform to register a subsequent application, people remain undocumented and are vulnerable to detention. Greek law does not provide for access to reception conditions, including camp accommodation, for people waiting to register subsequent applications. However, individuals are often tolerated in camp structures, as noted at page 39. A 100 euro fee per person is payable, if submitting a second (or further) subsequent application (see declaration published by the Greek Council for Refugees at: <https://bit.ly/3Wo8z70>)
9. EU law is even more clear in stating that material reception conditions need to be available to applicants when they make the asylum application, i.e. from the point of expressing willingness to apply (Art. 17(1) of Directive 2013/33/EU). Both EU and Greek law state that an applicant is a person whose asylum application has not yet received a final decision. According to the Greek framework a final decision may be a first instance rejection which cannot be appealed anymore or a second instance rejection.
10. See Art. 3 of Ministerial Decision 605869/2022.
11. However, in practice, it is rare if not unheard of for a vulnerability not specified in the list to be formally recognised by the Greek authorities.
12. See: *Amadou v. Greece*, Application no. 37991/11, Judgement of 4 February 2016; *S.G. v. Greece*, Application no. 46558/12, Judgement of 18 May 2017; *A.D. v Greece*, Application no. 55363/19, Judgement of 4 April 2023; *A. I and others v. Greece*, Application no. 13958/16, Judgement of 18 January 2024.
13. See RSA & Stiftung PRO ASYL. 2022. The state of the Greek asylum system, twelve years since M.S.S.. Available at: [https://rsaegean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RSA\\_PRO-ASYL\\_MSS\\_2023\\_Submission.pdf](https://rsaegean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RSA_PRO-ASYL_MSS_2023_Submission.pdf)
14. See proceedings of the 1475th meeting of the Council of Europe, 19-21 September 2023. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3zIBbTZ>
15. See Gauci. 2020. The “voluntary” in assisted voluntary return. Available at: [https://sciabacaoruka.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Lagos-Paper-Final\\_Gauci\\_ENG.pdf](https://sciabacaoruka.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Lagos-Paper-Final_Gauci_ENG.pdf); Case of *N.A. v. Finland* at the European Court of Human Rights, available at: <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-198465%22%5D%7D>; EDAL. 2019. *N A v Finland: Decision to deport Iraqi national killed upon return to country of origin violated Art 2 and 3 ECHR*. Available at: <https://www.asylumlawdatabase.eu/en/content/n-v-finland-decision-deport-iraqi-national-killed-upon-return-country-origin-violated-art-2>
16. As reported in a communication from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum to the Greek Parliament, available at: <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/67715b2c-ec81-4f0c-ad6a-476a34d732bd/12516309.pdf>. This figure includes residents in 26 sites on the mainland including the RICs of Malakasa and Diavata. It does not include figures for the Fylakio RIC located close to the land border with Turkey, where applicants typically stay for a shorter period of time before being released or transferred to a mainland camp.
17. See I have Rights. 2022. One year since Greece opened new “prison-like” refugee camps, 22 NGOs call for a more humane approach. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3WodR6J>

18. See parliamentary question - E-002672/2022. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002672\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-002672_EN.html)
19. See the Report to the Greek Government on the visit to Greece carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 20 November to 1 December 2023. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680b0e4e1>
20. See Kingsley. 2016. Balkan countries shut borders as attention turns to new refugee routes. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/09/balkans-refugee-route-closed-say-european-leaders>
21. See AIDA. 2023. Country Report - Greece, 2023 Update. Available at: [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR_2023-Update.pdf)
22. See AIRE Centre and ECRE. 2016. With Greece: Recommendations for refugee protection. Available at: <https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/With-Greece.pdf>
23. JMD 2945/2020 on the 'Establishment of Temporary Reception Structures for Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons who have applied for international protection', Gov. Gazette 1016/B/24-3-2020.
24. See Mobile Info Team. 2021. The Living Conditions of Applicants and Beneficiaries of International Protection: Evidence of Greece's Failure to Provide Sustainable Accommodation Solutions. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4f0cXER>.
25. See Mobile Info Team. The "Abandoned Building": A Squat of Refuge in Thessaloniki. Available at: <https://www.mobileinfoteam.org/abandoned-building>
26. See Αγγελίδης. 2023. Ξανά στην πλατεία Βικτωρίας αβοήθητοι πρόσφυγες. Available at: [https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/408504\\_xana-stin-plateia-biktorias-aboithitoi-prosfyges](https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/408504_xana-stin-plateia-biktorias-aboithitoi-prosfyges)
27. See CrimethInc. 2023. Regarding the Eviction of the Self-Organized Refugee Camp in Lavrio, Greece. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4blsgPr>
28. See Greenwood. 2022. The Greek government wants a refugee-free capital by 2023. Available at: <https://hyphenonline.com/2022/12/02/the-greek-government-wants-a-refugee-free-capital-by-2023/>
29. Åkerstedt. 2021. Greece: Camp closures, rebuilds and transfers. Available at: <https://www.drapenhavet.no/en/greece-camp-closures-rebuilds-and-transfers/>
30. See euronews. 2022. Clashes as Greek riot police storm Athens camp to evict migrants. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2022/08/19/clashes-as-greek-riot-police-storm-athens-camp-to-evict-migrants>
31. See Ελευθερία. 2022. Σε ετοιμότητα η προσφυγική δομή στο Κουτσόχερο. Available at: <https://www.eleftheria.gr/%CE%BB%CE%AC%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%B1/item/309951.html>
32. See AIDA. 2023. Country Report - Greece, 2023 Update. Available at: [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR_2023-Update.pdf)
33. See Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid. 2022. Closure of ESTIA II: a political choice behind its closure. Available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/closure-of-estia-ii-a-political-choice-behind-its-closure>
34. See Ministerial Decision 115202/2021 op.cit and JMD 2857/2021 Amending JMD 2089/16-07-2021 on a 'Common Framework for Managing Programmes that are assigned to the Special Secretariat for the Coordination and Management of Programmes under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund and other resources and are not financed through National Programmes' (B' 3120), Gov. Gazette 4496/29-09-2021.
35. See more information on the IOM HARP (Harmonising Protection Practices in Greece) programme here: <https://greece.iom.int/harmonizing-protection-practices-greece>.
36. See for example the procurement tender for facilities management for all types of facilities (CAFTAA/RICs/CCACs), accessible here: <https://bit.ly/3Ls849V>
37. As discussed in the UNHCR National Protection Working Group meeting June 2024.
38. As discussed by anonymous CSO practitioners interviewed for this report. See also: <https://bit.ly/3LpOZW3>.
39. IOM factsheets on mainland camps up to March 2022 are accessible at: <https://greece.iom.int/sms-factsheets>
40. See AIDA. 2023. Country Report - Greece, 2023 Update. Available at: [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR_2023-Update.pdf)
41. "Lack of data published by the Greek Ministry of Migration". Available at: <https://refugeelegalsupport.org/news/joint-letter-lack-of-data-published-by-the-greek-ministry-of-migration/>
42. As discussed in the UNHCR National Protection Working Group meeting June 2024. The MoMA released statistics on camps in March 2024 in response to a parliamentary question posed by RSA, accessible here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>.
43. See MoMA statistics provided in response to a parliamentary question. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>.
44. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>.
45. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.
46. See RSA. 2019. "Neither here, nor there" | Refugees transferred to Corinth transit camp are left in precarious limbo. Available at: <https://rsaegan.org/en/refugees-transferred-to-corinth-transit-camp-are-left-in-precarious-limbo/>
47. A full history of the Corinth Pre-Removal Detention Centre is available on the Detention Landscapes platform: <https://detentionlandscapes.uwazi.io/en/entity/wkaeci4zd6h>



48. See Tutku Özcan. 2022. Identity, Discrimination, and Feelings of Safety among Vulnerable Residents in Corinth Refugee Camp. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3LqIq5q>.
49. See RSA. 2019. "Neither here, nor there" | Refugees transferred to Corinth transit camp are left in precarious limbo. Available at: <https://rsaegan.org/en/refugees-transferred-to-corinth-transit-camp-are-left-in-precarious-limbo/>
50. See page 59 of the report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/el/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>. As noted on page 17, the Ombudsperson visited the Corinth facility in March 2023.
51. See page 67 of the report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/el/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
52. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>
53. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.
54. See Προινή. 2023. Αποχώρησε από τη δομή του «Ασημακοπούλου» ο Δ.Ο.Μ. Available at: <https://www.proininews.gr/apochorise-apo-ti-domi-toy-asimakoroyloy-o-d-o-m/>
55. See KavalaNews. 2022. Το δρόμο της απόλυσης πήραν 45 εργαζόμενοι στη δομή Ασημακοπούλου Πρωταπλιτιάτικα. Available at: <https://www.kavalanews.gr/25882-dromo-apolysis-piran-45-ergazomenoi-domi-asimakoroyloy-protapriliatika.html>
56. Information shared anonymously by CSO practitioners for this research.
57. See Προινή. 2024. Στη δομή προσφύγων του Ασημακοπούλου ο Υπουργός Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής, Δημήτρης Καιρίδης. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3SbZG1U>
58. See KavalaPost. 2021. Καβάλα: Μια μέρα στην Ανοιχτή Δομή Φιλοξενίας Προσφύγων στο Ασημακοπούλου. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4d5e8kA>
59. See report from the Greek Ombudsperson Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
60. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>
61. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.
62. See Farrant. 2022. "Ashamed to be European": New book depicts life inside a Greek refugee camp. Accessible at: <https://bit.ly/46cvz0q>
63. See Banks. 2016. Compassion Fatigue: Inside the Refugee Camp We've Already Forgotten. Available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wndky9/inside-the-forgotten-refugee-camp-in-greece>
64. See Λάππας. 2020. TVXS Ρεπορτάζ: Μαρτυρίες για δακρυγόνα και πυροβολισμούς από την ΕΛ.ΑΣ σε κέντρο προσφύγων αλλά... σιωπή. Available at: <https://tvxs.gr/news/ellada/martyries-gia-dakrygona-kai-pyrobolismous-apo-tin-elas-se-kentro-prosfygon-alla-siopi/>
65. Information shared anonymously by practitioners in the field.
66. See pbnews. 2022. Ένας "Κένταυρος" για καλύτερη φύλαξη στη δομή φιλοξενίας προσφύγων του Κατσικά. Available at: <https://pbnews.gr/enas-kentavros-gia-kalyteri-fylaxi-sti-domi-filoxenias-prosfygon-tou-katsika/>
67. See report from the Greek Ombudsperson Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
68. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>
69. Data on Koutsochero camp provided by the Ministry indicates that there were no residents in the camp as of 31st December 2023 but 26 administrative staff and 16 medical staff were present. No explanation for these numbers is provided by the Ministry.
70. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.
71. See RSA's report on this camp, available at: <https://rsaegan.org/en/koutsochero-camp/>
72. See TrikalalDees. 2017. Νέα διαμαρτυρία από τους πρόσφυγες που έκλεισαν την ΕΟ Τρικάλων Λάρισας στο ύψος του Κουτσόχερο. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4f4oG5c>
73. See Newsbomb. 2017. Συγκέντρωση διαμαρτυρίας προσφύγων στην εθνική οδό Λάρισας - Τρικάλων. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4d7y9Hh>
74. See the Greek Council for Refugees report on Conditions in reception facilities, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/housing/conditions-reception-facilities/>
75. See Κακάρας. 2024. Μαζί πρόσφυγες και πλημμυροπαθείς στη δομή του Κουτσόχερου. Available at: <https://www.ifarsala.gr/2024/01/19/mazi-prosfyges-kai-plimmyropatheis-sti-domi-tou-koutsocherou/>
76. See Ελληνικό Συμβούλιο για τους Πρόσφυγες. 2023. Πλημμυροπαθείς και πρόσφυγες εκποτισμένοι στην ίδια μοίρα. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4fa423x>
77. See Κακαράς. 2024. Πρόσφυγες και πλημμυροπαθείς μαζί στη Δομή του Κουτσόχερου. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3WtCkIO>



78. See the Greek Council for Refugees report on Conditions in reception facilities, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/housing/conditions-reception-facilities/>

79. See Παπουτσή. 2023. Προβληματισμός για τη δομή του Κουτσόχερου - Ξεκινούν διαδικασίες για την πλήρωση θέσεων Διοικητών σε δομές προσφύγων. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3zIFNjN>

80. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>

81. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.

82. See the report from Moving Europe on Lagkadikia, available at: <https://moving-europe.org/11-05-2016-lagkadikia/>

83. See the promotional video by the UNHCR available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-UnGsOWPCo&t=2s>

84. See the report from Moving Europe on Lagkadikia, available at: <https://moving-europe.org/11-05-2016-lagkadikia/>

85. See page 84 of the report of the Greek Ombudsperson. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>. As noted on page 19 the Ombudsperson visited Lagkadikia camp in March 2023.

86. See page 41 of the report of the Greek Ombudsperson. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

87. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. Statistics relating to Malakasa Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) and Malakasa CAFTAA are combined in the statistical tables provided. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>

88. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.

89. See RSA's report on this camp, available at: <https://rsaeean.org/en/malakasa-camp/>

90. See Statewatch. 2016. Detention condition in the Malakasa camp: fit for children?. Available at: <https://www.statewatch.org/news/2016/july/detention-condition-in-the-malakasa-camp-fit-for-children-22-7-16/>.

91. See RSA's report on this camp, available at: <https://rsaeean.org/en/malakasa-camp/>

92. See MacGregor. 2020. Life at a standstill in Malakasa migrant camp in Greece. Available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/26627/life-at-a-standstill-in-malakasa-migrant-camp-in-greece>.

93. See MacGregor. 2020. Malakasa camp: Inaction and uncertainty trap migrants despite end to lockdown. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3zHSvIB>

94. See Lavelle. 2024. Lost for Words: Lack of interpreters puts asylum seekers' lives on hold in Greece. Available at: <https://bit.ly/46cwZli>

95. See ekathimerini. 2021. Northern Athens migrant camp evacuated. Available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1165840/northern-athens-migrant-camp-evacuated/>

96. See CNN Greece. 2024. Ριτσώνα: Εκκενώνεται λόγω της πυρκαγιάς η δομή προσφύγων. Available at: <https://www.cnn.gr/ellada/story/426934/ritsona-ekkenonetai-logo-tis-pyrkagias-i-domi-prosphygon>

97. See Parliamentary question - P-003881/2021 at the European Parliament. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2021-003881\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2021-003881_EN.html)

98. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>

99. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.

100. See Euronews. 2022. More than a hundred Yazidis sleeping outside Greek refugee camp. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2022/09/08/more-than-a-hundred-yazidis-sleeping-outside-greek-refugee-camp>

101. See France24. 2022. Greece softens 'tough' migration policy for Ukrainians. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220410-greece-softens-tough-migration-policy-for-ukrainians>

102. See press release from Save the Children, available at: <https://bit.ly/468C4RE>

103. See XinhuaNet. 2017. Feature: At Greece's model refugee camp, Yazidis dream of better future, pray for those left behind. Available at: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/17/c\\_136372074.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/17/c_136372074.htm)

104. See pages 75, 33 and 77 of the report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

105. See Αναστασιάδης. 2024. Σέρρες: Δ. Καϊρίδης - "Αναβάθμιση των δομών φιλοξενίας σε συνεργασία με τις τοπικές κοινωνίες". Available at: <https://bit.ly/3W7UDRp>

106. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>

107. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.

108. See Are You Syrious?. 2019. AYS Special — The Case of Oinofyta: From one hell to another — island to mainland. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3W1GUeW>

109. See: RSA's report on Oinofyta, available at: <https://rsaeean.org/en/oinofyta-camp/> ; Are You Syrious?. 2018. Oinofyta Camp: The overwhelming sense of nothingness. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Wp4nrR>; Are You Syrious?. 2019. AYS Special — The Case of Oinofyta: From one hell to another — island to mainland. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3W1GUeW>

110. See Documento. 2019. Οινόφυτα: Ένταση και αντιδράσεις από μετανάστες που μεταφέρθηκαν σε κέντρο φιλοξενίας από ξενοδοχεία της Αθήνας. Available at: <https://www.documentonews.gr/article/oinofyta-entash-kai-antidraseis-apo-metanastes-poy-metaferthhkan-se-kentro-filoxenias-apo-xenodoxeia-ths-athhnas> ; Are You Syrious?. 2018. Oinofyta Camp: The overwhelming sense of nothingness. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Wp4nrR>; City Plaza Squat post in X, available at: <https://x.com/sol2refugees/status/1034149409091715072>.

111. See CrimethInc. 2023. Regarding the Eviction of the Self-Organized Refugee Camp in Lavrio, Greece. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4blsgPr>

112. See follow up report of the Greek Ombudsperson. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

113. Statistics in camp profiles are drawn from data provided by the MoMA in response to a parliamentary question and refer to the situation as of 31st December 2023. See here: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>

114. Health services here may be hospitals or general public health centres.

115. See Lavelle. 2024. Lost for Words: Lack of interpreters puts asylum seekers' lives on hold in Greece. Available at: <https://bit.ly/46cwZli>

116. See ekathimerini. 2024. Two men arrested for migrant's murder in refugee camp. Available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1242250/two-men-arrested-for-migrants-murder-in-refugee-camp/>

117. See Facebook post by CSO Lighthouse Relief, available at: <https://bit.ly/4fa89Nh>

118. See Dearden. 2017. Body of six-year-old refugee found on Spanish beach as children continue to die trying to reach Europe. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Lr1VL1>

119. See The Camp Network Group. 2024. Statement on the lack of transport between Greece's Ritsona Refugee Camp and the surrounding cities, leaving the camp's residents isolated and without access to their human rights or basic necessities. Available at: <https://khoracollective.org/khora-radio-podcasts-english>

120. See Το κουτί της Πανδώρας. 2023. Νεκρός πρόσφυγας στην δομή Ριτσώνας. Available at: <https://www.koutipandoras.gr/article/nekros-prosfygas-stin-domi-ritsonas/>

121. See the Greek Council for Refugees Country Report on Conditions in reception facilities, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/housing/conditions-reception-facilities/>

122. See Το κουτί της Πανδώρας. 2023. Νεκρός πρόσφυγας στην δομή Ριτσώνας. Available at: <https://www.koutipandoras.gr/article/nekros-prosfygas-stin-domi-ritsonas/>

123. As discussed in the UNHCR National Protection Working Group meeting June 2024.

124. See page 27 of the report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

125. See UNHCR. 2020. Reception Conditions. Available at: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/reception-conditions-34>; and Are You Syrious. 2019. AYS SPECIAL — THE CASE OF OINOFYTA: From one hell to another — island to mainland. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3W1GUeW>

126. See report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

127. See Facebook post from Metadras available at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=792859512946094&set=a.461882352710480&rdc=3&rd>

128. As discussed in the UNHCR National Protection Working Group meeting June 2024.

129. It is also observed by legal aid actors, that remote asylum interviews are not always conducted in the camp of residence. For instance, RLS notes that applicants are currently invited to asylum interviews at Malakasa RIC when they may live in another camp such as Ritsona, and transportation between camps is not provided by the Greek authorities in order to facilitate their attendance at this necessary appointment.

130. Standard 1, p. 14 of the EASO guidance on reception conditions. Available at: <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-conditions-standards-and-indicators>

131. Ibid, Standard 1, Indicator 1.2.(c), p. 14.

132. See report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

133. As discussed in the UNHCR National Protection Working Group meeting June 2024. Additional information was provided on lack of transportation creating occasions for racist behaviour (e.g., in Ritsona, bus drivers have refused to receive refugees in the bus).

134. See The Camp Network Group. 2024. Statement on the lack of transport between Greece's Ritsona Refugee Camp and the surrounding cities, leaving the camp's residents isolated and without access to their human rights or basic necessities. Available at: <https://khoracollective.org/khora-radio-podcasts-english>

135. See report from the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>

136. At the time when interviews were conducted, medical services in camps were provided under the PHILOS programme, however this is currently being phased out and replaced by a new programme, Hippocrates.

137. EASO guidelines on reception conditions, 2016, Standard 29, pp. 33-34. Available at: <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-conditions-standards-and-indicators>.
138. See Βεργου. 2024. Εργαζόμενοι και πρόσφυγες σε απόγνωση από κοινού. Available at: [https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/ygeia/437052\\_ergazomenoi-kai-prosfyges-se-apognosi-apo-koinou](https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/ygeia/437052_ergazomenoi-kai-prosfyges-se-apognosi-apo-koinou).
139. See Βερβερούλου. 2024. Εργαζόμενοι ΕΟΔΥ: “Απεργούμε 26 και 27 Ιουνίου για τη δουλειά και την αξιοπρέπεια μας”. Available at: <https://bit.ly/4d3OCMn>
140. In a press release available at: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/programma-ippokratis-gia-tin-anavathmisi-tis-ygeionomikis-kalypsis-ton-aitoynton-asylo-stin-ellada/>
141. Greek authorities note that ‘Hippocrates the successor of Philo will include also protection activities, psychosocial services and monitoring public health’, and that ‘there will be no gap in the provision of protection activities’ in the administration’s transition from PHILOS to Hippocrates (European Commission, Letter to civil society organisations, Ares(2024)613054, 26 January 2024). See RSA. 2024. Refugee camps in mainland Greece. Available at: <https://rsaeean.org/en/refugee-camps-in-mainland-greece/>
142. Updates shared by CSO practitioners in the Northern Greece Coordination Meeting June 2024.
143. Information provided by UNHCR in the northern Greece protection sub-working group meeting April 2024.
144. See Greek Council of Refugees. 2023. Reception of asylum seekers in Greece: the demand for humane conditions remains. Available at: <https://www.gcr.gr/en/news/press-releases-announcements/item/2216-reception-of-asylum-seekers-in-greece-the-demand-for-humane-conditions-remains>
145. See report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
146. This statistic refers to 27 mainland sites including the RICs of Malakasa, Diavata and Fylakio and 24 CAFTAAs. Data available at: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>
147. See page 77 of report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>. According to information provided by UNHCR in the context of the National Protection Working Group, a Kurmanji interpreter from the EUAA has been deployed in Serres camp for the month of July. However the Ministry is yet to announce a sustainable plan for interpretation services in mainland reception facilities.
148. See page 63 of report of the Greek Ombudsperson. 2024. Η Πρόκληση των Μεταναστευτικών Ροών και της Προστασίας των Προσφύγων - Συνθήκες και Διαδικασίες Υποδοχής. Available at: <https://www.synigoros.gr/en/category/default/post/ek8esh-or>
149. Information provided by CSOs in the Northern Greece Coordination meeting (February 2024).
150. See EUAA. 2024. Guidance on Reception: Operational standards and indicators, pp. 65-68. Available at: <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-operational-standards-and-indicators>.
151. Fundamental Rights Officer (Υπεύθυνος Προστασίας Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων) at the MoMA. Official website available here: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/fro-complaints/>; Complaints form available here: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/fro-complaints-form/>
152. See Question 131/2816 at the Greek Parliament. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3y1KEFi>
153. As discussed in the UNHCR National Protection Working Group meeting June 2024.
154. See RSA. 2024. Refugee Camps in Mainland Greece. Available at: [https://rsaeean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RSA\\_RefugeeCampsMainland.pdf](https://rsaeean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RSA_RefugeeCampsMainland.pdf)
155. See AIDA.2023. Country Report: Greece, page 178. Available at: [https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR\\_2023-Update.pdf](https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/AIDA-GR_2023-Update.pdf)
156. Information provided by UNHCR in the northern Greece protection sub-working group meeting April 2024.
157. See RSA. 2024. Refugee Camps in Mainland Greece. Available at: [https://rsaeean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RSA\\_RefugeeCampsMainland.pdf](https://rsaeean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RSA_RefugeeCampsMainland.pdf)
158. CSOs reported in the March 2024 Northern Greece Coordination meeting that they provided food to residents with rejections in Kavala camp who were cut off from food distribution.
159. See Misbach. 2021. “We call it ‘modernization’” – reception centers for migrants will be ‘closed’ facilities. Available at: <https://wearesolomon.com/mag/focus-area/migration/we-call-it-modernization-reception-centers-for-migrants-will-be-closed-facilities/>; and the Greek government report Ενοποιημένο Σχέδιο Κυβερνητικής Πολιτικής, 2023. Available at: [https://www.government.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%9A%CF%85%CE%A0\\_2023.pdf](https://www.government.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%9A%CF%85%CE%A0_2023.pdf)
160. Contract available in Greek here: [mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-3-south-Greece-structures-contract.pdf](https://mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-3-south-Greece-structures-contract.pdf) and translated by DeepL into English here: [mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-3-south-Greece-structures-contract-ENG.pdf](https://mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-3-south-Greece-structures-contract-ENG.pdf)
161. Contract available in Greek here: <https://mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-2-North-Greece-facilities-contract.pdf> and translated by DeepL into English here: [mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-2-North-Greece-facilities-contract-ENG.pdf](https://mobileinfoteam.org/s/Part-2-North-Greece-facilities-contract-ENG.pdf)
162. See the press release available here: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/dieykriniseis-gia-tin-epivoli-prostimoy-apo-tin-archi-prostasias-dedomenon-prosopikoy-charaktira/>
163. See Αγγελίδης. 2023. Επιστολή 32 Συντονιστών Εκπαίδευσης Προσφύγων για τις δομές-ανοιχτές φυλακές. Available at: [https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/389420\\_epistoli-32-syntoniston-ekpaideysis-prosfygon-gia-tis-domes-anoihtes-fylake](https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/389420_epistoli-32-syntoniston-ekpaideysis-prosfygon-gia-tis-domes-anoihtes-fylake)



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