

## **THEMIDA /ΘΕΜΙΔΑ - EMERGENCY LEGAL INTERVENTION FOR UASC / MORIA CAMP**

**Progress Report:** Dec 2019 - March 2020

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**Collaborators:**  **DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN  
INTERNATIONAL**

Since December 2019, Better Days has been leading a collaborative effort with the Minors Office of RIC in Moria, in order to identify, locate and re-register all of the UASCs in Moria, so that these highly vulnerable children are reinstated on a system, have access to the services they require and are able to access legal support. Following the identification of a high number of UASC applicable for family reunification with family members in other European countries, Better Days, in cooperation with Defence for Children International (DCI), launched the first phase of a legal intervention program for family reunification: Themida I. After assessing different vulnerability factors of over 700 children living in Moria and its surroundings, thirty-eight sensitive cases of family reunification have been identified and selected for the pilot phase of Themida. Themida Legal Intervention program acknowledges the invaluable support of Alexandra Tzanedaki and Myrto Anyfantaki - Dalakoura working for RIC and EASO respectively.

By March 2020, we had successfully obtained four positive answers for family reunification in Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Holland. Due to the lack of kinship evidence or the rigidity of certain European countries' Dublin policy, we fight rejections by Germany and the UK for a total of nine cases, requesting a DNA test. Without any guidance from official asylum actors, Better Days had to take on a complex and costly procedure of DNA buccal sampling for both UASC on Lesbos and their relatives in European countries. At the moment four UASC have concluded their DNA samples on Lesbos and we are currently arranging for their relatives to go through the same process and complete the procedure. Seven new tests are now pending, two of whom are represented by partner organizations.

Following the success of Themida I operations and the collaboration with relevant actors, we launched the second phase of 'Themida II' during the last week of February 2020, by identifying 36 new cases. Considering the hostile climate towards humanitarians escalating on Lesbos and the outbreak of violence in the last week of February 2020, the Themida team worked against all odds, to the day (2/3/2020) the international members of Better Days team had to be evacuated from the island to Athens.

Established temporarily in Athens, our team continued its actions, strengthening our collaboration with the legal team of DCI and adjusting our internal coordination mechanism to



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respond to the new challenges. Together with the support of DCI lawyers, BD's Farsi & Arabic interpreters (remote support), 2 community volunteers and 1 local volunteer nurse working with Alexandra Tzenadaki in Moria/Section A, our Themida Legal Officer Romane Bernet in Athens & Elena Moustaka on Lesvos we designed our own DNA-sampling process to bypass the lengthy and time consuming DNA process offered by the hospital. To ensure that Themida I cases are meeting their deadlines the Athens team was coordinating with UASC's relatives to gather documents proving their kinship. Better Days' PSS Director has been actively involved in preparing psycho-social assessment certificates for Themida cases, and providing information to support advocacy campaigns supporting children's legal right to family reunification.

In light of the pandemic outbreak of COVID-19 the asylum office announced the suspension (initially up to the 10/4/20) or reduction of their operational capacity. In the meantime, our team based in Athens was forced to self-confine and work from home to abide by national recommendation. If the latest events affected our program, such as the completion of new DNA sampling, they did not force us to cease operations. Themida team continues to work consistently to coordinate with partners on the ground and gather all information from the Themida I & II cases and their relatives to complete their legal files before the re-opening of the different asylum offices. WhatsApp groups were created to keep the minors informed and calm during these volatile and insecure times, and we are now preparing for the next round of DNA tests which will be again performed on Lesvos by Andrew Foley & Elena Moustaka. 38 DNA authorizations were acquired preliminarily by the Public Prosecutor thanks to invaluable support of Myrto, EASO/RIC Legal Officer. During this DNA round, five Themida cases (rejection from the German Dublin office) and an extra DNA (HAIAS case), will be performed next week.

	<b>Themida 1</b>	<b>Themida 2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Number of cases</b>	38	36	74
<b>Number of cases on hold*</b> <i>(cases which didn't show up to their legal appointment with DCI)</i>	3	0	3
<b>Number of positive case for Family Reunification/Relocation</b>	4	2	4
<b>Number of rejected cases for family reunification</b>	9	0	9
<b>Number of DNA test in process</b>	7	0	11
<b>Highest rate of rejection / ground of proving kinship</b>	Germany	Germany	na



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