

## Six Months of the „Sans-Papiers“ Support Centre

In this short article, we aim to provide an overview of the individuals who visited the „Sans-Papiers“ support centre in the first half of the year and shed light on some of the challenges our community faces.

The data collected here only accounts for encounters that took place on Wednesday afternoons at the centre, excluding all conversations and cases handled elsewhere, such as the work of the mobile support centre in informal camps and support for criminalized Boat Drivers. We will try to share the stories of these people in the future.<sup>1</sup>

Over the first six months of the year, more than 300 individuals sought assistance at the centre, with 72% being male, 19% female, and the rest comprised of families.

Most of them come from West Africa, notably from Nigeria (27.5%)<sup>2</sup>, Gambia (19.2%), Ghana (17.5%), Cameroon (10.8%), and Senegal (10%). Another significant number of people comes from North Africa, including Tunisia (64%), Morocco (11.7%), Egypt (9.7%), Libya (7.8%), and Algeria (6.8%). Particularly noteworthy is the substantial increase in visitors from Tunisia<sup>3</sup> (66 individuals), approaching the total for the entire year 2022, which stood at 78 individuals. There were fewer arrivals from Asia and Western Europe. The number of Italian users remained stable during the concluded semester (12 compared to 24 last year)<sup>4</sup>. The majority of individuals from South America were from Peru (26%), while those originating from East Africa were mainly from Mauritius (71.4%).

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<sup>1</sup> You can now read the related articles on our website <https://arciporcorosso.it/blog/>.

<sup>2</sup> Like [Gambia](#), this country was recently added to the list of countries classified as "safe" by Italy, for which a special protection [framework](#) applies. For more details on the situation in Niger, see [this link](#).

<sup>3</sup> To learn more about the situation of people fleeing West Africa in Tunisia, visit the links: [On the consequences of the recent agreement between the EU and Tunisia, on the classification as a "safe country"](#) and on the [violence of the Tunisian coast guard](#).

<sup>4</sup> Compared to the previous year, more people registered for juridical reasons (50 %) than for reasons of housing need and socio-medical exclusion (16.6 % and 25 % respectively).

## **Encountered problems and co-constructed paths**

Over the years, the diversity of challenges our community must face remained constant. They are complex situations that are experienced in different ways, as they affect conditions at different levels that are often connected to each other. They have different causes, which are primarily structural and rooted in the nature of the Western social order. They often influence each other, as one area co-determines the other. Social conditions and legal status, for example, have a strong influence on a person's psychological and physical well-being.

During the conversations, we find that the greatest doubts and most frequent questions are related to the legalization of legal status and the obtaining of residence permits. These permits are essential for full access to one's rights and their exercise.

In comparison to previous years, nothing has changed in this regard. The current European and international migration policies not only have dramatic consequences and significant impacts on those affected, but on all people, as the current government actively focuses on restricting the freedoms of its citizens. One of the most evident examples of this is the decree enacted in response to the tragedy off the coast of Cutro.

The introduced innovations include changes to the residence permit for special protection (*protezione speciale*), an increase in detention and penalties for individuals accused of driving boats during border crossings, and the restriction of services and living conditions in reception centres.

Furthermore, the housing crisis in our city has become increasingly apparent over time. Whether one has been living in Italy for 3 days, 3 years, or 30 years, the combination of high unemployment in Sicily, other forms of oppression experienced by many community members, and limited institutional support contribute to severe discomfort and precarious living conditions for which there often are no solutions.

## **Where do the people we meet live?**

Most individuals live in independent houses or rooms. The seemingly low number of people residing in reception centres (CAS) (35) highlights issues, neglect, and malfunctions in the centres managed by the Prefecture, theoretically designed to support recently arrived migrants.

What kind of care does a centre offer when it forces people to seek support elsewhere to access their entitled rights, useful information, and experience a sense of community? At the very least, it would be appropriate to rename these non-places because the so-called CAS (Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria) have little to do with the Italian concept of "accoglienza", which implies hospitality, reception, and comfort.

For more information, please visit the articles published on our [blog](#).