

## Country: Malta

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No. Asylum seekers 2007	No. of persons granted protection	No. of Ngos'/GOs' offering mental health services	No. of NGOs'/GOs' working with persons with broken family links	No. of NGOs'/GOs' working with survivors of torture	No. of NGOs'/GOs' working with the elderly and frail
1,379	627- temporary subsidiary status (7 were refugee status)	3 – JRS- Jesuit Refugee Service, OIWAS Malta Red Cross	1 (OIWAS – Organization for the Integration and Welfare of Asylum Seekers)	1	1

**Access to health system:** Basic medical support is provided in detention centres by a company called Medicare in the form of a daily surgery staffed by 4 Doctors and 1 or 2 Nurses. There is no pharmacist in detention which causes problems with medicine being delayed. (This service is currently being reviewed so it can be expanded as the detention population has grown).

**Legal Access to mental health care:** Medicin Sans Frontiere ist present in detention centres. This team offers Mental Health support by means of a Psychologist on their team otherwise I am unaware of any Psychology service in detention. Asylum Seekers in the community have access to Maltese national health service including the General Hospital and regional Community health services known as Polyclinics who can then refer clients on to any specialised service that might be required. Admissions to the local Mental Health hospital take place as required.

**Systematic assessment of mental health needs:** Yes, OIWAS team carries out an assessment of vulnerability of arrivals in detention. These include a typical list: Unaccompanied minors, Elderly, Disabled, Women. They have regular meetings to discuss cases. Their case load can also contain Asylum Seekers who are not in detention.

### Main stakeholders in the asylum system:

- REFCOM -Government Refugee Commission (1st instance)
- Refugee Appeals Board (2nd instance)
- Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (has to endorse RefCom recommendations)

### Country specific features: What drew my attention?

- Number of subsidiary protection is higher compared to those who have been granted refugee status
- Age is one factor of considering vulnerability
- Asylum Procedures (separated Interview) – exceptions are those who are considered vulnerable (those who are vulnerable because of age and elderly, pregnant women, victims of trauma and torture and physical and mental conditions ) and detention if possible is not allowed. For application to be given priority on grounds of vulnerability, you should make a special request to the Office of Refugee Commissioner and present a medical certificate describing your condition.

**Difficulties:** Very long detention after seeking for asylum (up to 12 months), in case of rejection, asylum seekers can be detained up to 18 months. This of course has a very negative impact on the mental health.