



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Calais, Pas-de-Calais - April 2021

Since 2017, the aim of the Human Rights Observers project has been to observe and document the daily human rights violations of displaced people at the French-British border. *

Data collected during evictions of informal living sites :

	At least 105 evictions of informal settlements.		At least 1113 tents seized.
	At least 16 arrests during evictions.		At least 101 unaccompanied children met.**
	At least 803 sleeping-bags and blankets seized.		Administrative documents were seized at least at least 5 times.
	Clothes were seized at least 11 times.		Wood were seized at least 8 times.
	Medicines were seized at least 2 times.		At least 100 backpacks and plastic bags seized.
	At least 8 phones, 2 l pads, 200 powerbank and 8 chargers seized.		At least 4 chairs seized.
	At least 4 bikes seized.		

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" has led to daily evictions in Calais, which mainly take place between 8am-11am. This involves displaced people being forced to move their tents and belongings, anywhere between 2 to 500 meters. Personal belongings and basic necessities are often seized and/or destroyed. These operations of harassment are also accompanied by often abusive identity checks (Cour de cassation, 25 avril 1985, n° de pourvoi 84-92916), followed by arbitrary arrests and illegal stays in administrative detention.

This month, 12 places of living sites located in Calais and its surroundings were evicted daily by the police. Up to 8 of these living sites were consecutively evicted by a police convoy during the same morning.

HRO has recorded an increase in eviction operations since July 10, 2020, in parallel with the appointment of Gérald Darmanin as Minister of the Interior. The 04/09/2021 and 04/27/2021, HRO recorded two large-scale eviction operations, during which inhabitants of the living sites were forced to get on buses and were taken outside of Calais. HRO documented the forced nature of the process of putting people on buses without their consent and without informing them of the buses direction. Indeed, the evicted people were surrounded by law enforcement during several hours before getting on the buses. HRO teams were able to observe 6 people running away to avoid getting on these buses. In addition, HRO has received testimonies from evicted people (including a minor) explaining that they did not want to board on these buses and that they had not been informed of their destination.

During these operations, personal belongings of evicted people were seized : on 04/09/2021, 61 tents and 128 blankets and sleeping-bags were seized ; and 04/27/2021, 208 tents and 503 blankets and duvets were seized.



HRO observed 4 cases of excessive use of force. A minor wishing to join his sick friend sitting on the ground was pushed by the police. A displaced person wishing to recover her personal effects was surrounded by 4 gendarmes and kept in the security perimeter until the arrival of the PAF (who proceeded to his identity check). After his identity check, he was authorized to recover some of these items but then, a PAF officer violently pushed him at least three times to make him move faster. A woman and a toddler were chased by two gendarmes while establishing the perimeter of security ; at least displaced people in exile, were also chased by gendarmes when they tried to remove their belongings from the expellable perimeter.

HRO can testify to at least 2 behaviors contrary to the Code of ethics of the national police and the national gendarmerie: the police have shaken and walked on tents while people were still in them; and two gendarmes played football with belongings belonging to evicted people.

Harassment of human rights defenders during observations



45 intimidation attempts:

HRO Observers have been subjected to insulting, threatening comments and mockery at least once ; the observers have undergone arbitrary identity checks 17 times ; the observers were called by their last name without having previously undergone an identity check twice ; the observers were photographed and/or filmed by law enforcement officers with their professional and/or personal phone 21 times ; the work of the observers has been prevented 28 times due to the establishment of an excessively large perimeter ; the observers were prevented from moving while any other vehicle and other person was allowed 1 time.

* This data is based on our observations, and is therefore not exhaustive.

** Number of self-declared UACs living in the streets, met by the associations (those not mandated by the State) in April 2021. This number is an under-representation of the number of children living on the streets because the associations marauds do not cover daily all places where UACs live; some children do not communicate with the associations; others have direct access to shelter via the mandated association and are therefore not included in this figure. One observation remains: repeated evictions are a source of increased fragility and even disappearance of these children, both girls and boys, and therefore increase the risk of trafficking and exploitation.