



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Calais, Pas-de-Calais - February 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 93 evictions of informal settlements		At least 312 tents and tarps seized
	At least 26 arrests during evictions		At least 178 unaccompanied children met **
	At least 276 sleeping bags and blankets seized		At least 48 bags seized
	At least 10 mattresses seized		Wood seized at least 3 times
	Clothes seized at least 54 times		Medicine seized at least 2 times
	At least 5 mobile phones and external batteries seized		At least 3 bicycles 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, 9 living sites, which are located in and around Calais, were targeted by law enforcement for these evictions. Up to 8 of these are evicted by a police convoy over the course of a single morning. The evictions continued every 48h despite the activation on 8th February of the "Plan Grand Froid" - a system of emergency shelter to respond to temperatures as low as -7°C (perceived temperatures reached -16°C).

HRO has recorded an increase in large-scale dismantling operations since the 10th July, concurrent with the appointment of Gerald Darmanin as Minister of the Interior. On the 25th February, HRO recorded two large-scale dismantling operations, during which inhabitants were systematically patted-down before being forced onto buses and transported out of the city. Testimonies from inhabitants attest to the forced nature of the sheltering operation: one video-call received by the HRO team showed people on the buses in distress asking to go back to Calais, before being left 15km away to return on foot. 21 people were arbitrarily arrested and taken to the Administrative Retention Centre. All tents, furniture and food supplies were seized and thrown away: at least 82 tents and 156 sleeping bags and blankets were seized.



4 instances of violence/excessive force against inhabitants were witnessed by observers: an inhabitant was pushed by a police officer 1 times; an inhabitant was chased and/or escorted out of their living space by excessive force 2 times.

Harassment of human rights defenders during observations



47 intimidation attempts:

Observers were subjected to insulting, discriminatory and/or threatening remarks, including being mocked, shouted and/or sworn at 6 times; an observer, who was mistaken for a person living in the place of life, was shouted at by a member of the eviction team 1 time; observers were subjected to arbitrary ID checks 9 times; observers were called by their family names without being ID checked 2 times; the observers' vehicle was visually checked by police officers without them present 1 time; the inside of an observers' vehicle was checked without them present by a private security guard and their dog 1 time; observers were photographed and/or videoed by police officers with their professional and/or personal phone 21 times, including once from less than a meter away; observers were pushed and/or escorted out of perimeter by law enforcement officers with excessive force 4 times; observers were encircled by law enforcement 2 times; observers were prevented from circulating whilst all other cars were allowed to move freely 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 February. 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.