



Monthly report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord – April 2020

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 border¹.

Data collected during evictions of informal living sites



3 evictions from informal living sites



8 tents seized



8 sleeping bags/blankets seized



4 mobile phones seized



38 unaccompanied minors referred to legal authorities²



1 intimidation attempt³

The political strategy of avoiding ‘fixation points’ has led to weekly evictions in Grande-Synthe, with on average 3 to 5 evictions of displaced peoples’ living sites per week. All shelters, along with personal belongings and basic necessities are seized and destroyed by various means (with knives, chainsaws etc.). 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.



6 Covid-19 sheltering operations



~530 tents seized⁴

Since 6th April, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the prefecture of the North has put in place a special plan to provide shelter for displaced people living in Grande-Synthe. During 4 of these sheltering operations, people were forced by CRS (riot police) to get on buses and were unable to retrieve their personal belongings. Tents were torn down, blankets and food were thrown in to large skips.

Data collected during “sheltering operations”⁵



5 single men accommodated



4 families accommodated



7 unaccompanied minors referred to child services⁶



2 families turned away

During weekdays, people can go to a specified meeting point and request to be accommodated. This is done via a sheltering system provided by AFEJI (state mandated association).

¹ This data is based on our observations, and therefore not exhaustive.

² The number of referrals (*Signalements*) made is not representative of the actual number of unaccompanied minors at risk on all living sites, estimated at 90 at the beginning of the month.

³ 4 volunteers were arrested during a forced sheltering operation.

⁴ This number is provided by the association Roots.

⁵ This data is collected in collaboration with Refugee Women’s Centre.

⁶ No official data is available on the exact number of minors taken into charge.