



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord - 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 4 evictions of informal settlements.



At least 444 tents and tarps seized.



All the blankets and sleeping bags were taken out of the tents and thrown to the ground.



At least 30 unaccompanied children met.**

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" has led to increasingly frequent evictions in Grande-Synthe. Some sheltering options, with buses, are forced, as those who resist are arrested by the Police aux Frontières. During these operations, all shelters, along with personal belongings and basic necessities, are seized and 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. These arbitrary ID checks and arrests are daily, outside the context of evictions as well.

The informal living sites in Grande-Synthe that were evicted 4 times on a regular basis this month are spread throughout a large wooded area. As such, what is counted as a single eviction operation actually affects upwards of 20 small living sites.

HRO registered an illegal eviction on the 16/04/2021. Indeed, the agents of the city who were not legally competent, obligated people to leave their living sites with their belongings and to move to another place which was chosen by the city. All personal effects of the displaced people were put in tractors to be brought in the new place.



Knives were systematically used to destroy tents and other belongings by the cleaning team. Tents continue to be lacerated by the cleaning team under the supervision of law enforcement : observers witnessed tents lacerated with people still inside at least 1 time. The cleaning team tractor rolled over personal belongings once. The cleaning team stepped on tents and broke tents so they could put them in the tractor once. The cleaning team's tractor rolled dangerously close to the inhabitants of the living site.

Harassment of human rights defenders during observations :



12 intimidation attempts :

Observers were subjected to 3 arbitrary ID checks ; observers were photographed and/or videoed by police officers with their professional and/or personal phone at least 4 times ; observers were mocked by police officers 1 time, observers were encircled by 11 law enforcement officers, observer were pushed by a law enforcement officers who tried to break her phone at least one time. One law enforcement officer said "ne me forcez pas à être méchant" to one of HRO member team, and one law enforcement said "dégagez-la" to HRO team.

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

** The number of reports made to authorities is below the actual number of unaccompanied children present and in danger in Grande-Synthe during April 2021. On this territory, contrary to Calais, no association that is not mandated by the State has any specific activity targeting UACs or is able to carry out this precise identification work. One observation remains: repeated evictions are a source of increased fragility and even disappearance of these children, both girls and boys, and therefore of increased risks of trafficking and exploitation (Source: Utopia 56).