



## Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord - December 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 border\*.

### Data collected during evictions of informal living sites



9 evictions of informal settlements



At least 724 tents seized



At least 2 arrests during evictions



114 unaccompanied children reported to the authorities\*\*

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 are currently being evicted on a regular basis 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.



Observers witnessed knives and hand saws used systematically on tents and tarps during all 9 evictions: on 4 occasions, people were still inside the tents. On 1 occasion, a tractor was attempting to move a tent with a person still inside it.



Dogs were present during 1 eviction.

On the 3rd December, it was reported to HRO that medicine was taken and thrown into the mud.

On the 8th December, it was reported to HRO that a displaced person's money was taken and torn in half by the eviction team, and observers witnessed the eviction team emptying bags and laughing at the contents.



During 3 evictions, people were forced onto buses: either by being threatened with arrest should they refuse, or by being blocked from leaving the perimeter.\*\*\*

### Harassment of human rights defenders during observations



#### 9 intimidation attempts:

Observers were arbitrarily threatened with arrest 1 time; subjected to identity checks 4 times; filmed and/or photographed with a police officer's personal and/or professional phone 3 times, once by an officer with a non-visible RIO; told to stop filming 1 time. On another occasion, a police officer told volunteers to stop speaking to each other, and that they were only allowed to speak French in France.

\* 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 December. 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).

\*\*\* All sheltering operations can be considered forced, due to the significant armed police presence and the fact that all forms of shelter (tents, tarps, etc.) are seized.