



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord - January 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



At least 7 evictions of informal settlements



At least 197 tents seized



At least 33 tarps seized



All clothes, blankets and sleeping bags inside the tents were removed and thrown into the mud

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.

This month, security perimeters established by law enforcement were significantly larger than last month. As a result, HRO team was unable to carry out observations properly.



Law enforcement officers posed for "souvenir" photographs in the middle of evictions on 4 different occasions.

A law enforcement officer shouted at a displaced person to "Dégage avec ta tente de m****." (Get out of here with your piece of s*** tent).

A law enforcement officer told a displaced person "Shut the f*** up." in Arabic.

A law enforcement officer was also witnessed snatching a tent out of a displaced person's hand.



Observers witnessed the use of knives to lacerate tents during 3 evictions. On two occasions, tents were cut with people still inside.

Harassment of human rights defenders during observations



16 intimidation attempts:

Observers were subjected to 7 arbitrary ID checks, three of which were abusive ; observers were subjected to a vehicle check 1 time; observers were encircled by law enforcement 1 time; the observers were deliberately separated and isolated from each other 1 time; observers were pushed 1 time; observers were mocked 2 times; observers were photographed and/or videoed by a law enforcement officer with their personal and/or professional mobile 1 time.

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