



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord - March 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 6 evictions of informal settlements



At least 444 tents and tarps seized



All personal items, including sleeping bags and blankets, systematically taken out of tents and thrown on the ground

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.



A CRS shouted at a land occupant who was trying to communicate with him: "Yeah that's it, speak to me in your shitty language, I can't understand it." ("Ouais c'est ça, parle moi dans ta langue de merde là j'y comprends rien.") He then refused to show his RIO, saying "I'm not aggressive, I'm firm that's all." ("Je ne suis pas agressif, je suis ferme c'est tout.") The person who was insulted stepped forward to speak to him, and another officer started to say, "You want to fight?" He repeated this five times.

On March 11, a law enforcement officer shouted at land occupant, packing their belongings so they wouldn't be seized, saying "No! Don't do this! "

On the same day, a CRS gave a raw potato to an occupant, whose living space was being destroyed and who mentioned they were hungry, saying he could eat that if they were hungry.

On March 26, residents told us that they were pushed and prevented from collecting their belongings by the FDO.



On the 5th March, the cleaning team lacerated a tent with someone still inside, to force him to exit.

On the 11th of March, a digger was used to clear the zone of the remaining personal items, in front of the land occupants and owners of the affairs.

Harassment of human rights defenders during observations



20 intimidation attempts:

Observers were subjected to arbitrary identity checks 10 times; an observers' vehicle was checked 1 time; observers were threatened with arrest 1 time; observers were mocked 1 time; observers were photographed and/or filmed by police officers with their professional and/or personal phone; observers were prevented from filming by police officers 2 times; observers were threatened and/or followed throughout the whole eviction by police officers 3 times.

* 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 March. 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).