



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord - September 2021

Since 2017, the aim of the Human Rights Observers project has been to observe and document the daily State violence against displaced people at the French-British border *.

Data collected during evictions of informal living sites :

	At least 4 evictions of informal settlements		At least 566 tents seized
	At least 5 strollers seized		At least 13 life jackets seized
	At least 5 backpacks seized		At least 104 sleeping bags and blankets seized
	At least 8 mattresses seized		At least 5 furnitures seized
	At least 36 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.



HRO has recorded an increase in large-scale dismantling operations since the 10th July 2020, concurrent with the appointment of Gerald Darmanin as Minister of the Interior.

On the 23/09, HRO observers documented a large-scale dismantling operation. All tents, furnitures and food supplies were seized and thrown away: on this day, around 500 tents were destroyed. The law enforcement representatives present to "guarantee the good progress of an eviction operation" contributed to increase the tension. Indeed, they formed a line and moved forward while there were personal belongings and people in front of them. The personal belongings were crushed and the people were forced to move back, without a translator to explain the situation. One of the backhoe drivers aiming to destroy the shelters was dangerous when driving inappropriately towards the displaced people. After this large-scale eviction, HRO members observed a forced displacement over several hundred meters with CRS armed with LBD.

Harassment of human rights observers during observations :



14 intimidation attempts :

HRO observers were subjected to arbitrary identity checks 12 times; on 09/09, a police officer was threatening, physically and verbally abusive to the observers; On the 23/09, during a forced displacement of exiled persons, one officer threatened an observer by saying "Don't move, if there is a problem, I have your identity"; On the same day, the officer said to his colleague who was doing the perimeter and blocking the observers : "if they are not a pain in the neck, let them pass".

* 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 September. 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).