



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by Human Rights Observers in Grande-Synthe, Nord - January 2022

Since 2017, the aim of the Human Rights Observers project, supported by l'Auberge des Migrants, has been to observe, document and denounce 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 living sites		At least 234 tents and tarps destroyed
	At least 103 blankets and sleeping bags destroyed		At least 17 backpacks destroyed
	Clothes have been destroyed at least 20 times		At least 18 unaccompanied children met **

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" at the Franco-British border has led to increasingly frequent evictions in Grande Synthe. Often, sheltering options were not communicated to the inhabitants of the living sites. During these evictions, all shelters, essential supplies and personal belongings are seized and/or destroyed. These operations of harassment are also often accompanied by abusive identity checks (Cour de cassation, 25 avril 1985, n° de pourvoi 84-92916), followed by arbitrary arrests and illegal administrative detention. These arbitrary ID checks and arrests happen daily, outside the context of evictions as well.

As part of the harassment policy, the State carried out large-scale evictions in Grande Synthe on the 06/01, 13/01 and 19/01, affecting at least 400 people including families with children. During these operations, the personal belongings of the inhabitants (tents, documents, mobile phones, medicine, clothes, etc.) were destroyed and/or thrown into the skip, without allowing the owners to keep them. These illegal acts, (Art 322-1 and following of the Penal Code), were committed before the eyes of the bailiff in charge of the evictions.



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

Like the previous operations of evictions, all tents and shelters are destroyed by the cleaning team under the supervision of law enforcement and the state. The cleaning agents and/or law enforcements have been shaking tents to wake people up or to check if anyone still sleeps inside.

On the 06/01, people were prevented from entering their living sites to interact with AFEJI staff, supervising the sheltering of the evicted inhabitants.

On the 13/01, a CRS filmed and laughed at displaced people, including children, who had just been evicted, with his personal phone.



Observers witnessed the systematic use of heavy machinery, including excavators and diggers, to clear the zones of evicted people's personal belongings. Often, it happens whilst the proprietors are still present beside their belongings. ***

Harassment of human rights observers :



17 intimidation attempts:

In total, during both operations of evictions, observers have been ID checked 7 times, without any legal basis.

The "security perimeters" were arbitrarily established. As a result, the observations were greatly impeded : On the 06/01, observers were escorted away from the eviction operation about ten times. On the same day, CRS forced the observers to cross a slippery and dangerous ditch because they were "too close". Also, a CRS obstructed an observer's documentation by hitting her mobile phone. On 19/01, a CRS said "It's OK guys, we're paid for this" when he was escorting two observers away from the operation along with his 6 colleagues.

The observers were filmed by law enforcements with their personal phone at least 3 times, on the 13/01 and the 19/01.

* 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 January. 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, girls and boys, and therefore of increased risks of trafficking and exploitation (Source: Utopia 56).

*** Evidences shared on our social media (instagram: @Humanrightsobs, twitter: @HumanRightsObs).