



Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers in Grande- Synthe and the surrounding cities - March 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 informal settlements



At least 183 tents and tarps destroyed



At least 5 shelters destroyed



At least 120 blankets destroyed



At least 2 water tanks destroyed



Wood destroyed at least 1 time

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" at the Franco-British border has led to increasingly violent evictions in Grande-Synthe surroundings. Often, sheltering options are 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 identity 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 03/03 and the 31/03. During these operations, the personal belongings of the inhabitants (tents, documents, phones, medicine, clothes, etc.) were destroyed and thrown into a skip, sometimes 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 bailiffs in charge of the evictions. In particular, on the 31/03 at least 300 residents of one place including families and children were forced to move and prevented from returning ; the land was turned over and most trees were cut down.



During the eviction operations, HRO members witnessed violent intimidation of the displaced people. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we have documented the following fact, among others. On 03/03 a member of the national police shouted that the operation was not finished at displaced people who were trying to return to the living sites.



The HRO team observed the systematic use of heavy machinery, including tractors and excavators, to destroy and thus empty the areas of the evictees' personal belongings. This is despite the fact that the owners of these belongings were often close to the operation. Like the previous evictions, all tents and shelters are destroyed by the company "Ramery" under the supervision of law enforcement and the State**.

Harassment of human rights observers during observations :



4 intimidation attempts :

On 03/03 the observers had their identities checked. Also, HRO members recorded several obstructions to the observations. They were filmed twice by the police, once with a personal phone. On the same day, a CRS put his hand in front of the phones to prevent them from documenting the operation. Arbitrarily defined perimeters were also set up to keep the observers away.

* This data is based on our observations, and is therefore not exhaustive. The evictions of the 03/03 were reported to us and we were able to see the destruction and the devices in the living quarters aimed at preventing the resettlement of people the following day.

** Ramery is a company mandated by the State in charge of seizing and destroying the belongings during the evictions.