













Monthly Report of observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers project supported by l'Auberge des Migrants in the Calais area, Pas-de-Calais - May 2022

Since 2017, the aim of the Human Rights Observers project 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 165 evictions of informal settlements		At least 3 large-scale evictions with sheltering operations unadapted for people's situation
	At least 13 arrests during evictions		At least 47 unaccompanied children met**
	At least 322 tents and tarps stolen		At least 172 sleeping bags and blankets stolen
	At least 37 bags stolen with personal belongings inside, including 2 backpacks		At least 7 mattresses stolen
	Some wood stolen at least 31 times		At least 12 chairs and one table stolen

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" has led to daily evictions in the Calais area, which mainly take place between 8am-7pm. This involves displaced people being forced to move their tents and belongings, anywhere between 2 to 500 meters. Personal belongings and basic necessities are often stolen and/ or 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.

On 6 May and 13 May, HRO observed large-scale eviction operations, during which displaced people were offered accommodation solutions that were unsuited to their situations and wishes, as the centres were too far from the border or in poor conditions. During these operations, all personal belongings are stolen, including for those who choose to stay in the Calais area.

On the 6th of May at least 21 tents, 3 tarps, 2 sleeping bags, 3 bags, 1 mattress, 3 chairs, 1 table, 15 pieces of firewood, 1 stroller, 1 barbecue grill, 1 stove, 2 pans, glasses and cups were stolen. On the same day, 6 toilets were removed and have still not been reinstalled although the people have returned to the place. Since that date, the association mandated by the State to provide meals does not come to the living site either***.

On the 13th of May, three major eviction operations took place at the same time, during which at least 103 tents were stolen, 89 blankets, 20 tarps, 27 sleeping bags, 3 bicycles, 9 bags, 5 mattresses, 9 chairs, clothes, 16 pieces of firewood, 50 cans of food, 4 tins of food, 2 pieces of metal used to build shelters, 1 pillow.

During the smaller-scale almost daily evictions, theft also occurs. HRO has received several testimonies from people who claim not to have been informed about the system of recovery of belongings. Also, on the 25th of May, HRO observers noted that torn tents obviously placed near the rubbish bins by displaced people were not taken by the APC cleaning staff, while during the rest of the operation of evictions they stole at least 15 tents still used by people****.



During the evictions operations, HRO members witnessed violent intimidation of the displaced people. While fully assuming the non-exhaustive character, we have documented the following facts, among others.

During all the operations, HRO noted the over-arming of the security forces, who are very often armed with LBDs, tear gas canisters, tonfas, shields, helmets... This armament is intimidating and disproportionate to the operation that is underway.

On the 11th of May, the commander asked to cut the music in a living space, adding the comment "Besides, it's not local". On the 13th of May, a CRS pushes a displaced person and a CRS van accelerates behind a resident of a field who was forced to run to escape. On the same day, a person is not allowed to collect his food even though he is on a special diet. Regularly, the police wake people up by shaking the tents (this was observed on the 23th and 27th of May). They are also often forced to cross ditches with their belongings on their backs.

Finally, HRO found on at least 22 occasions that the police expressed themselves without the help of the translators by gestures or in broken English, even though not all of the people evicted from their homes understood English.

Harassment of observers during evictions :



At least 47 attempts to intimidate and/or obstruct observation

Obstacles to observation are numerous. Not counting the arbitrary perimeters deployed to prevent the observation of the operations by HRO members, 47 attempts of intimidation and/or obstruction were recorded. Of these, members were filmed without their knowledge at least 21 times, including 6 times with personal phones, and had their identity checked on 4 occasions.

* Our data are based on our observations and are therefore not exhaustive.

** Number of self-reported unaccompanied children met by the ECPAT association (not mandated by the department) in May who were in a street situation. This number is an under-representation of the number of children living on the streets because outreach activities are not carried out daily in all living areas by these actors; some children do not communicate with the associations; others access shelter directly via the mandated association and are therefore not included in this figure. One observation remains: repeated dismantling operations are a source of increased fragility or even disappearance of these children, both girls and boys, and therefore of increased risks of trafficking and exploitation.

*** According to the findings of the non-state-mandated association Calais Food Collective, which tries to provide water and dry food when the state is absent.

**** During each eviction operation, the personal belongings of people in exile are seized by agents of the private company APC, mandated by the state, under the supervision of the police. Evidence shared on our social networks (instagram @Humanrightsobs, twitter @HumanRightsObs)