



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 - July 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 126 evictions in 13 informal settlements



At least 48 sleeping bags and blankets stolen



At least 16 arrests during evictions



At least 25 bags stolen with personal belongings inside, including 1 backpack



At least 62 unaccompanied children met**



At least 212 tents and tarps stolen



At least one bike and one skateboard 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. ***. In Calais, a place for the recovery of belongings has been set up without people being systematically informed of its existence by members of the Prefecture or the police. HRO has received several testimonials from people who claim they were not made aware of the case of this recovery system.

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.



During the evictions operations, HRO members witnessed violent intimidation of displaced people. Our observations are non-exhaustive. These are some examples of instances of violent intimidation perpetrated by police against displaced people during evictions in July 2022;

On July 2, 8, 10, 20 and 22, members of the police forces shook people's tents to wake them up.

On July 8 and 10, a person who was arbitrarily arrested was handcuffed when he did not resist his arrest.

On July 8 and 30, people who arrived at their living site at the time of the eviction were prohibited from entering the perimeter. They couldn't recover their belongings which were stolen by the agents of the APC company.

On July 24, CRS shouted, whistled and clapped their hands to address the inhabitants of a living space to push them further than the usual perimeter. We observed that at least 3 CRS had their outing batons in a menacing manner, while an unaccompanied child reported to us at the end of the operation that he and others were threatened by an officer with a gas cannister in his hand, in order to force them to move away faster with their tents.



Harassment of observers during evictions :

Obstacles to observation are numerous. Without counting the perimeters arbitrarily deployed to prevent the observation of operations by members of HRO, 11 attempts at intimidation and/or obstacles were recorded. Among these, HRO members were filmed without their knowledge at least 7 times, including 4 times with personal phones, and had their identity checked 3 times.

On July 8, a CRS violently pushed HRO members 3 times, causing them to drop their phones. The officer was not wearing the obligatory identification number (RIO).

Regularly, aggressive remarks are addressed to the members of HRO. For example, on July 28, a member of the national police spoke to a CRS to tell him: "This association is really the worst, it's real shit".

* 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 July who were in a street situation. This number is an underrepresentation 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.

*** During each eviction operation, the personal belongings of displaced people are seized by agents of the private company APC, mandated by the State, under the supervision of the police.

Evidence shared on our social medias (instagram @Humanrightsobs, twitter @HumanRightsObs)