



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 - August 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 146 evictions in 13 informal settlements



At least 11 arrests during evictions



At least 77 unaccompanied children met**



At least 212 tents and tarps stolen



At least 9 sleeping bags and 9 blankets stolen



At least 19 bags stolen with personal belongings inside, including 1 backpack



At least two bikes stolen

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" has led to daily evictions in the Calaisis area, which mainly take place between 8am and 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 often accompanied by 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 August 2022.

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

On 1 August, a displaced person was arbitrarily arrested by the PAF, he was grabbed by the left arm while did not resist his arrest. Another person was taken to the PAF van before being released. A third person was subjected to a body palpation. These police practices are intimidating and are intended to instil fear of violence. They are part of the State's policy of harassment and are an attack on the physical and psychological integrity of displaced people.

On August 7, 22, and 31, members of the security forces abused their powers by filming the faces of the inhabitants of the living areas with their personal phones.



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, 12 attempts at intimidation and/or obstacles were recorded. Among these, HRO members were filmed without their knowledge at least 13 times, including 6 times with personal phones, and had their identity checked 3 times.

Regularly, aggressive remarks are addressed to the members of HRO. For example, August 3, the divisional operation commander specified that our identities as well as the name of the association will be transmitted to the judicial and prefectural authorities via the operation report.

On August 14, a CRS shouts and threatens to take HRO to the station.

On August 17, the commander asks an HRO member to confirm her foreign nationality several times while she had this person's identity card in her hand.

On August 25 a CRS accuses us of « exciting migrants » and of « serving no purpose ».

* 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 August 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)