



Monthly Report on observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers, project supported by l'Auberge des Migrants, in Dunkirk and the surroundings, North - August 2022

Since 2017, the aim of the Human Rights Observers project has been to observe, document and denounce the daily human rights violations against displaced people at the French-British border*.

Data collected during evictions of informal living sites :

 At least 2 evictions of informal settlements	 At least 1 blanket and sleeping bag destroyed
 At least 9 displaced people were arrested during the evictions	 At least 1 skip full of personal belongings destroyed
 At least 18 tents and tarps destroyed	 At least 58 unaccompanied children met**

In the informal settlement in which displaced people establish themselves, tensions regularly arise because of the precarious context in which they survive. The lack of access to vital resources (water, food), to which the associations try to respond, the harassment of the State through evictions, the securitisation of the border which pushes them to take more and more risks to cross the channel, are the source of these tensions.

Tensions sometimes escalate into violence, forcing us to limit our presence in the field for security reasons. In addition, obstructions by law enforcement agencies affect our ability to observe and document eviction operations. This monthly note reports on the information collected in this context.

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" has led to increasingly frequent and violent eviction in Dunkirk. Some sheltering options are not communicated to the inhabitants of the evicted places. During these operations, all shelters, necessities, and personal belongings are destroyed. These operations of harassment are accompanied by identity checks that are often abusive (Cour de Cassation, 25 avril, 1985, n° de pourvoi 84-92916) followed by arbitrary arrests and illegal stays in administrative detention centres. These arbitrary identity checks and arrests are a daily occurrence, even outside the context of evictions.

As part of the policy of harassment at the border, the State carried out large-scale evictions in Dunkirk on 31st of August. At each eviction, people's personal belongings (tents, blankets, bags, identity papers, mobile phones, medicines, clothes, etc.) were destroyed on the spot and/or thrown into the skip, without giving their owners the opportunity to take them back. These acts are unlawful (Art 322-1 and following of the French Criminal Code) and were committed in front of the bailiffs in charge of the eviction.



The HRO team observed systematic use of heavy machinery, including tractors and excavators, to destroy and empty the areas of the evictees' personal belongings. This is despite the fact that the owners of these belongings were often close by at the time. Like most evictions, all tents and shelters are destroyed by the company "Ramery", which is mandated by the State and under the supervision of the police on site.



During the eviction, HRO members observed violence and intimidation against the displaced people. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we documented on 31 August during an eviction : a member of the national police whistled at the displaced people to make them move aside in order to let cars pass, without a barrier to stop the traffic, leaving the displaced people in the middle of the cars. Moreover, no translators were present.

Harassment of human rights observers during evictions :

Several intimidation attempts :



There are many obstacles to the observation of eviction operations. During the expulsion of the 31st August, a CRS filmed the living space and the displaced people. After informing his superior (divisional commander) about the illegality of his practice, he replied: "it's not true? you know we're weird in the police", "I was good for the video, you know what your taxes are for". Moreover, the established system of identity checks is also evident this month, as observers were checked during the eviction on 31st of August.

* 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 Dunkirk and the surroundings during August 2022. On this territory, contrary to Calais, no association that is 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, both girls and boys, and therefore of increased risks of trafficking and exploitation (Source: Utopia 56).

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