



Monthly Report on observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers, project supported by l'Auberge des Migrants, in Dunkirk and the surroundings, North - September 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 9 evictions of informal settlements	 At least 5 gas bottles destroyed
 At least 91 displaced people were arrested during the evictions	 At least 1 skip full of personal belongings destroyed
 At least 100 tents and tarps destroyed	 At least 48 unaccompanied children met**

In the informal settlements in which exiled people establish themselves, tensions regularly arise because of the precarious context in which they survive. The lack of access to vital resources - to which the associations try to respond -, the harassment of the state through expulsions and the securitisation of the border, which pushes them to take more and more risks to cross the Channel, are the source of these tensions.

These tensions sometimes lead to violence, which forces us to limit our presence on the ground for security reasons. In addition to this, obstructions by the police impact 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 8, 15, 20, 27, 28 of September. 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 the systematic use of heavy machinery, including tractors and excavators, to destroy and empty the areas of the evictees' personal belongings. In addition, we observed the destruction of vegetation (trees, shrubs, bushes...) around one of the living areas on 28 September, partially preventing the displaced people from resettling. A concrete dam was also installed on 28 September separating the camp and preventing any vehicle passage in the camp (including emergency vehicles).



During the eviction operations, HRO members witnessed violence and intimidation against the displaced people. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we document: on the 8 of September, the police are heavily armed and refuse to allow people to collect their belongings from their place of residence after being evicted; on the 28 of September, Iraqi people are arrested in priority (one person was arrested just after specifying his nationality).

Harassment of human rights observers during evictions :



Several intimidation attempts :

Obstacles to the observation of eviction operations are numerous. On the 15 of September: several CRS tell us that the videos taken by HRO can be punished. During the same eviction an officer yelled at us: "Go there quickly because if you don't I'll take you into custody because you have no right to be here, now get back!". HRO members were checked for identity 6 times during the month. In addition, on the 15 of September a policeman tried to take a picture of one of our members' ID card with his personal phone, we reminded him that he had no right to do so. So he used his work phone.

* 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 September 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)