







## Monthly Report on observations of evictions by the Human Rights Observers, project supported by l'Auberge des Migrants, in Dunkirk and the surroundings, North - October 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 14 evictions of informal settlements		At least 3 gas bottles destroyed
	At least 24 displaced people were arrested during the evictions		At least 1 pushchair destroyed
	At least 148 tents and tarps destroyed		At least 59 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 evictions 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 the 4, 5, 11, 19, 20 of October. On two occasions the authorities repeated the eviction operation two days in a row, sometimes even on the same informal living site. 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 sites on the 4 and 20 of October, partially preventing displaced people from resettling.



During the eviction operations, HRO members witnessed violence and intimidation against the displaced people. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we document: On the 4th of October, the displaced people were all searched before leaving the informal living site. On the 11th of October, the displaced people were evicted on the road in the middle of traffic. On 20th October, on the same location, all the displaced people, except the families, were arrested by the border police.

### Harassment of human rights observers during evictions :



#### Several intimidation attempts :

Obstacles to the observation of eviction operations are numerous. On the 20 of October at an informal living site: before the eviction started, three people from the national police and an agent from the intelligence service came to HRO's car. They shined a torch in our faces, checked our identity and the vehicle's papers. In addition, the HRO members were ID checked 4 times during the month, they were imposed a perimeter 13 times in all the informal living sites and finally they were escorted out of the perimeters 7 times in order to stop our observations.

\* 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 October 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)