



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 - October 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 129 evictions in 14 informal living sites



At least 76 sleeping bags and blankets stolen



At least 14 arrests during evictions



At least 11 bags stolen with personal belongings inside, including at least 2 backpacks



At least 58 unaccompanied children met**



At least 317 tents and tarps stolen, including 97 tents full with personal belongings.

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" has led to daily eviction operations in Calais 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 intimidations of displaced people. Our observations are non-exhaustive. These are some instances of violent intimidations perpetrated by the police against displaced people during evictions in October 2022. During all the operations, HRO noted the over-armament 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 the 6th of October, a displaced person informed HRO that CRS had taken several photos of them and their living space without their consent. On the 7th and the 12th of October, because of the perimeter established by the CRS, displaced persons were not able to retrieve their belongings, even though they were only a few meters away from them. On the 11th of October, two policemen shouted at inhabitants who wanted to return to their living place. On the 13th of October, no translator was present when the border police arrested and body-searched a displaced person. On the 18th of October, police agents were shouting "get out of there" while evicting a living place. On the 22th of October, a CRS present in a living place being evicted threatened to burst a soccer ball belonging to displaced persons. On the 25th of October, a large-scale eviction took place. Despite what the prefecture said, this eviction was not announced beforehand and on the day of the eviction, the displaced persons were unable to collect their belongings. On the 26th of October, people who were evicted reported that the APC agents, agents who are mandated by the prefecture, had deliberately broken several tents.

Harassment of observers during evictions :



Obstacles to observation are numerous. Without counting the perimeters arbitrarily deployed to prevent the observation of operations by HRO members, 16 attempts of intimidations and/or obstacles were recorded. Among these, HRO members were filmed without knowing it at least 12 times, including 5 times with personal phones, and had their identity checked 3 times.

On the October 12, a CRS filmed a HRO member with his personal phone. The CRS, who justified his act by the fact that the HRO member is beautiful and charming, refused to give his RIO and offered his phone number instead. His supervisor, who is present at that moment, labeled this exchange as "ridiculous.". On the 14th of October, during the observation of an eviction operation, a CRS told a HRO member: "You remind me of my dog because you follow us everywhere". On the 25th of October, at another living site, a CRS repeatedly yelled "get out!" at our HRO members.

During the month of October, 70 arbitrary and abusive perimeters were deployed to prevent observations of eviction operations by HRO members. On the 22th and the 24th October, in addition to an already established perimeter, a CRS voluntarily positioned himself in front of our camera in order to once again obstruct our observation.

** 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 October 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 networks (Instagram @HumanRightsObs, twitter @HumanRightsObs)