



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 - November 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 135 evictions in 13 informal living sites



At least 51 sleeping bags and blankets stolen



At least 50 arrests during evictions



At least 38 bags stolen with personal belongings inside, including at least 2 backpacks



At least 68 unaccompanied children met**



At least 408 tents and tarps stolen, including 46 tents full of 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 testimonies of people claiming they were not informed/told of/about the existence 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. 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... These are some instances of violent intimidations perpetrated by the police against displaced people during evictions in november 2022. This armament is intimidating and disproportionate to the operations in question.

On the 3rd and 19th of November, a police officer whistled at displaced people in a living site that was being evicted, in order to make them leave more quickly. On the 5th of November, a police officer used his personal phone to take pictures of a living site. On the 5th of November, a displaced person who was sleeping in his living site was woken up, gradually surrounded by police officers and cleaning agents, and then evicted.

On the 5th, 20th and 30th of November, despite the presence of translators who are supposed to participate during any interaction between police officers and displaced persons, a police officer used hand gestures to pressure displaced persons to leave their living site. On the 7th, 11th and 20th of November, displaced persons were blocked by police officers and not allowed to return to their living site. On the 8th of November, during the eviction of an informal living site, a police officer rubbed his foot on the floor and commented on his act by "their carpet is nice".

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, 23 attempts of intimidations and/or obstacles were recorded. Among these, HRO members were filmed without being warned at least 10 times, including 3 times with personal phones, and had their identity checked 3 times.

On the 3rd and 5th of November, during the observation of an eviction, HRO was hooted at by a van of the *Compagnie républicaine de sécurité*. On the 5th of November, while they were observing an eviction operation, HRO members were surrounded by at least 7 police officers. On the 7th of November, a policeman asked to HRO observer to give him the name of our association and to show our badge "just out of curiosity". On the 11th of November, a policeman deliberately obstructed HRO camera's field of view in order to prevent us from documenting the seizures. On the 14th of November, two police officers yelled at HRO observers in order to get them away as soon as possible from the living site that was being evicted.

On the 14th of November, a police officer justified the identity check of a HRO member by the fact that she carried a foreign accent. On the 7th of November, during another identity check, the operation commander justified her action by "knowing who is following them." On the 25th of November, a HRO member was pushed by a police officer. On the 30th of November, police officers shouted with large gestures "move girls", "block the association" at the HRO members who were also referred to as "young girls".

** 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 November 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)