



## Monthly report on observations of evictions documented by the Human Rights Observers, project supported by l'Auberge des Migrants, in Dunkirk and the surroundings, North - December 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 9 concrete blocks installed, blocking access to 1 informal living site
-  At least 13 tents and 6 tarps destroyed
-  At least 3 skips full of personal belongings destroyed
-  At least 70 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 7th of December. 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 evictions.

 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 7th of December, totally preventing displaced people from resettling. Fences around a bridge were also installed at the same time, further complicating the freedom of movement of displaced people.

 During the eviction operations, HRO members witnessed violence and intimidation against the displaced people. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we documented: on the 7th of December : at least 4 people were patted down by the police when leaving the living site, and 2 CRS urinated on the living site. In addition, the authorities in charge of the operation have installed concrete blocks at the entrance of the living site, rendering the site inaccessible for emergency services and hampering people's freedom to come and go. These blocks also hindered the NGOs from distributing inside the living site.

### Harassment of human rights observers during evictions :

#### Several intimidation attempts :

 Obstacles to the observation of eviction operations are numerous. On the 7th of December, HRO members were ID checked 2 times in the month, were blocked by a perimeter imposed on them 2 times in all the living places and finally were escorted out of the perimeters 2 times in order to stop our observations. On 7th of December, a policeman on a motorbike tried to take pictures of our identity cards with his personal phone. The same policeman said: "foreigners have a different right", because a HRO member is not French.

\* 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 December 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)