



## 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 - January 2023

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 5 informal settlements	 At least 7 skips full of personal belongings destroyed
 At least 92 blankets and sleeping bags destroyed	 At least 31 unaccompanied children met**
 At least 122 tents and 56 tarps destroyed	 At least 2 power generators seized

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 sources 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 January 4, 12 and 26.** 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.



We observed **the use of heavy machinery, including backhoes and power shovels**, to destroy and empty the areas of the belongings of the displaced people. In addition, we observed the **destruction of vegetation (trees, shrubs, bushes...)** and **land (soil turned over by ploughing machines)**, totally preventing the displaced people from resettling. **The displaced people are forced to gather in one large living site** enclosed between fences, roads, a canal and a railroad.



During the eviction operations, **HRO members witnessed violence and intimidation against the displaced people.** Without claiming to be exhaustive, we document : **on January 4, at least 6 people were arrested by the border police.** During the other evictions, HRO did not observe any arrest, but the border police was present each time. **On January 12, a CRS urinated on an informal living site during an eviction.** **Law enforcement regularly interacted in French with non-French speaking displaced people without translators**, as observed by HRO on January 4 and 26.

### Harassment of observers during evictions :

#### Several intimidation attempts :



Obstacles to the observation of eviction operations are numerous. During the month of January, the HRO team was subjected to at least 13 identity checks. On January 4, intimidation by the police was reported, including an abusive vehicle check during which the identity of the observers was checked twice. HRO and the other associations present were imposed a perimeter 13 times in 3 evictions. On January 4 and 26, HRO was escorted by the police to wide perimeters that did not allow for proper observation of the operations. On January 4, a CRS yelled and grabbed a member of HRO by the shoulder.

\* 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 in January 2023. Here, contrary to Calais, no association 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)