



Since 2017, the HRO project's mission has been to observe, document and denounce the daily state violence perpetrated against people in exile on the French-British border*.

Figures on evictions from informal settlements :



At least 3 evictions of 3 informal living sites



At least 14 displaced people arrested during evictions



At least 2 trucks full of tents seized.



At least ... Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) met by the associations**



At least 1 construction machine was used this month at the evicted homes to collect seized belongings, which were then thrown away and destroyed.



At least 2 30-cubic-metre skips filled with personal belongings seized.

The political strategy of avoiding "fixation points" is leading to increasingly frequent and violent evictions in the Dunkirk area. Some sheltering options are not communicated to the people living in the evicted areas. These evictions are accompanied by identity checks that are often abusive (Court of Cassation, 25 April 1985, appeal no. 84-92916) and lead to arrests and subsequent placement in administrative detention, which is illegal. These identity checks and arbitrary arrests are a daily occurrence, even outside the context of evictions.

As part of its policy of harassment at the border, the state carried out large-scale evictions in the Dunkirk area on 4, 5 and 30 May. At each eviction, 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 people the opportunity to recover them. These acts, which contravene the law (art. 322-1 et seq. of the French Criminal Code), were committed under the eyes of the bailiffs in charge of the evictions.



During the eviction operations, HRO members witnessed violent intimidation of displaced people. While fully accepting the non-exhaustive nature of this report, we have documented the following intimidation perpetrated by the police against displaced people during the evictions in August 2023.

On 8 August, between 450 and 500 people, including at least 15 women and 15 children, were woken up by the police and evicted from their living site. At least 14 people were arrested during this operation, which concerned the three main living areas between Mardyck and Loon-Plage, on land belonging to the Port Autonome de Dunkerque. HRO observed 8 Border Police vans present that morning.

The so-called "voluntary" sheltering by the police is in fact forced busing. Displaced people are given the choice of boarding a bus or being arrested by the border police.

On 8 August, HRO overheard a police officer say on the phone, "They don't want to get on the buses, they don't want to be rehoused because conditions are apparently favourable", and several times the police have said that people would not be forced to get on. Five buses were dispatched to take people to Centres d'Accueil et d'Etude des Situations (CAES) and around 150 people boarded them. Despite the voluntary nature of the sheltering, the buses were surrounded by law enforcement officers, and people were surrounded by police around the buses. Some were searched and patted down before boarding, while others were able to run away.

Destruction of living sites :



Living sites are often destroyed to make them uninhabitable and prevent displaced people from having to relocate. On some occasions, the destruction is carried out to make the living sites accessible to the construction machinery, which collects and seizes the personal belongings of the exiles. On the **8th of August**, for example, **at least one tree was felled** to clear the way for the cleaning team.

About legal basis of evictions :

Most of the displaced people between Loon-plage, Mardyck and Dunkerque live on land belonging to the Port Autonome de Dunkerque. The evictions are carried out by means of a court order, which the authorities reuse over several months, without any prior hearing and in an unpredictable manner. In addition to the precarious and unstable situation of the people living there, there is the risk of eviction every morning. HRO strongly condemns this practice which, in addition to the stress it places on people, prevents displaced people from gaining access to the courts and therefore from asserting their rights.

Our data are based on our observations and are therefore not exhaustive.

*** The number of reports made to the authorities is lower than the actual number of unaccompanied children present and at risk in Dunkirk and the surrounding area during the month of August 2023. In this area, unlike Calais, no association mandated by the State has specific activities targeting UAMs or is able to carry out this precise identification work. One fact remains: repeated expulsions are a source of increased fragility, or even disappearance, for these children, both girls and boys, and therefore of increased risks of trafficking and exploitation (Source: Utopia 56).*