



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*. Due to a simultaneous forced sheltering eviction in Calais and Grande-Synthe, HRO was unable to observe the eviction in Grande-Synthe this month. The figures reported here are therefore based on observations by other associations, and should be taken as an extreme minimum.

Figures on evictions from informal settlements :



At least 2 evictions from 2 informal living sites



At least 1 displaced person arrested during evictions



At least 126 Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) met by the associations**



The so-called "shops areas" were specifically targeted by these police operations; these meeting, commercial and social spaces were totally destroyed after the police had passed through.



Despite the eviction of people from these areas, no bus shelter has been offered as an alternative housing solution.

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 French state carried out evictions in the Dunkirk area on December 28. Personal belongings (tents, blankets, bags, identity papers, cell 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 are against the law (art 322-1 et seq. of the Penal Code).



During the eviction operations, the organizations 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 December 2023.

*As the forces of law and order deployed to the site of the evictions and proceeded to **arrests** (at least one person was arrested, according to Utopia56, present on site), the **people on the move ran to escape** this operation, which had no other aim than the **repression** of people seeking protection. The police then made **massive use of tear gas**, indiscriminately, while children were on the site. This is clearly a **disproportionate use of force**.*

During these operations, the associations noted the huge police force mobilized, including a convoy of several CRS vans and Police Nationale vehicles. The police regularly interact in French with non-French-speaking displaced persons, without translators.

Destruction of living sites :

Living spaces are often destroyed to make them uninhabitable and prevent displaced people from being resettled. In December, however, the evictions concerned only specific parts of the living spaces. For example, the December 28 eviction concerned the "shops", a space for socializing and trading, giving a semblance of "normal" life to people surviving in appalling conditions; these spaces are used by people on the move to sell a few food and hygiene products, to gather around a cup of tea, and to meet with medical, distribution and other support associations. Targeting these places during police operations is not only synonymous with material destruction, but also with destroying the bonds of solidarity that can be forged to cope with the difficulties posed by the border. The authorities in charge of these operations are well aware of this strategy.

Harassment of observers during evictions:

Although December's evictions were on a smaller scale than those of recent months, the fight against fixation points continues and the situation is not improving.

Living conditions in the living spaces are as precarious as ever. Access to water is only possible thanks to associations. On site, the State does not provide access to water, and the communes do not provide any sanitary services directly in the living spaces. Nor is there any provision for waste management, even though the associations working in the living spaces have repeatedly asked for a dumpster.

A 62-year-old volunteer working in the camps went on hunger strike on November 22 to denounce the conditions of forced survival resulting from a deliberately racist and mortifying policy. He is now hospitalized in Dunkirk.

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 October 2023. In this area, unlike Calais, no association mandated by the State has specific activities targeting UFM's 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).*