

Since 2017, HRO's mission has been to observe, document and denounce the daily state violence perpetrated against people on the move at the Franco-British border* Due to recurring hindrances to our observation work, the following figures should be taken as an extreme minimum.

Numbers concerning evictions from informal living sites :



At least **13 police operations** led to **66 evictions** of **9 informal living sites**



At least **365 persons** were **evicted** from their informal living sites



At least **1 lifejacket** seized



At least **96 tents** seized, including **11 tents** emptied of their contents then seized



At least **19 tarps, 2 mattresses** et **1 sleeping bag** were seized



At least **14 people on the move** were **arrested** during the evictions

Occurrences of violence endured by people on the move recorded by HRO :

- In March, HRO documented **the arrest of 14 people during evictions**. This is **6 more arrests than in February**. These arrests appear to be random. From our position as an observer, nothing seemed to justify the arrest of these particular people rather than others.
- **On 12 March, the border police arrested 4 people, including 2 minors**. In the walkie-talkie of a CRS, HRO was able to hear "*we were able to intercept the two minors*", indicating that the police were aware that the two people were under 18. However, under French law, **an unaccompanied minor cannot be arrested simply because he or she is in an irregular situation**.
- **On 3 March**, a interpreter asked two people to empty their tents in order to seize them. These same people were subsequently arrested. On the same day, a interpreter asked another person who was in his tent to come out so that the cleaning company could seize it. Despite what HRO is told about operations to '*clean up abandoned objects*', **these are first and foremost thefts of essential goods belongings to people on the move**. The seizure of tents, the only means of providing some shelter, shows **the desire to put these people in an even more precarious situation**.
- **On 19 March**, the cleaning company **seized a lifejacket**. These lifejackets are the only objects that enable people on the move **to reduce the risk of death during crossings**. As well as making departures more precarious, these seizures endanger human lives.



Crédit Photo : @holzner.leonard

In March 2025, at least 5 exiles died at the Franco-British border **.

- **24 March** : A woman is found dead on the beach at Marck.
- **March 21**: A man is found dead in the Châtelet dunes in Tardinghen.
- **March 20**: A person dies off the coast of Gravelines after falling overboard while attempting to cross to the UK.
- **19 March**: One person dies off the coast of Equihen-Plage, after falling overboard while attempting to cross to the UK.
- **8 March**: A man died on board a boat attempting to cross to the UK.

This is 1 more death than in February, and 2 more than in January. Increased border security does more than deter people from crossing, **it actually increases the risk of death** when crossing into the UK. By making exiles' life more precarious and border crossings even more dangerous, **the french government is responsible for the increase in deaths** at the border.

Police violence against people on the move outside of evictions

- **On Saturday 1 March**, HRO received video footage of a volunteer from another association witnessing a heavy-handed arrest. In a supermarket car park, **2 exiles were searched, then pinned up against a sign to be arrested.** They were confused, as the police refused to explain in English why they had been arrested. They searched their bags and used a condescending tone when speaking to them in French. Another video shows the shop manager saying that the people had been stopped because they had come into the shop carrying rucksacks. The reason for the stop therefore appears to be **based on racist prejudice.** The altercation ended when a senior CRS officer arrived and tried to intimidate the volunteer into stopping the video-taking.
- In March, surveillance around bus stops and the station, as well as inside public transport vehicles and trains, continued. Although HRO has not documented any physical violence during these operations, **the constant surveillance of exiles in their daily lives** bears witness to **increasingly heavy-handed and frequent control policies.** This also contributes to the dehumanisation of the people targeted by these measures.

Such an altercation is **an illustration of the intimidation and abusive arrests suffered by people exiled at the border**, and the pressure that is put on association staff when they try to document these abuses.

Numbers concerning the obstruction and/or intimidation of the police toward HRO:

This month, HRO has recorded numerous attempts to obstruct its work and/or intimidate its team, including



On 10 occasions, observation was **totally blocked** by the police, who kept them at a distance from many police operations. **These perimeters hampered the work of documenting the evictions.**



The observers **were filmed** at least **9 times**, including **8 times without being informed.**

Occurrences of hindrance, intimidation and/or violence endured and recorded by HRO:

- **During the month of March**, HRO was **filmed almost systematically at every eviction**. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the use of pedestrian cameras is not notified, **contrary to the law**. Police officers have the right to use their pedestrian cameras, but **have a duty to notify** when they are switched on.
- **On 5 March**, CRS **pushed** observers away from the eviction operation. One member of the team **was even violently grabbed** by a CRS as he obeyed the order to leave the field. When HRO asked him to produce his RIO (identification number), as it was not visible, **he refused**. The commissioner in charge of the operation also refused to give the RIO of the CRS in question. **A police officer's RIO must always be visible** during an operation and the officer is **obliged to produce it** if requested. This altercation bears witness to the **sense of impunity and abuse of power** committed by the police at the border. On 19 March, another HRO member was pushed by a police officer who asked him to leave the area.
- **On 7 March**, another association was **prevented from going to a living space** to carry out a distribution because an eviction was in progress. All the associations that support exiles are **frequently intimidated or obstructed in their activities** by the police. Yet solidarity with exiles is neither a crime nor a misdemeanor.
- **On 17 March**, a CRS van swerved off the road, apparently **to pretend to run into the HRO car**. As well as being extremely dangerous, this kind of behaviour shows the **constant intimidation** suffered by HRO's observers and the pressure being brought to bear to prevent them from doing their documentation work.



Crédit Photo : @elio_j

- During the month of March, HRO also documented numerous instances of police behavior towards HRO, demonstrating the institution's **desire to prevent the documentation of evictions or to intimidate the association's staff**. Examples include the use of a condescending or even aggressive tone by the police, but also operation commanders who shout at HRO, and ever more remote "security" perimeters.