

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

This month in numbers

At least:

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|  | 10 evictions observed at 2 living sites |  | 116 tents seized |
|  | 495 people evicted |  | 8 mattresses seized |
|  | 12 blankets seized |  | 43 wooden planks intended for heating seized |

The eviction of Calais' largest camp continues



Last month, the Pas-de-Calais prefecture set itself the task of destroying the largest living space in Calais.

Since then, large-scale police operations have been taking place every ten days: dozens of riot police, police officers, and border police arrive early in the morning and order people to leave. Under the pretext of "providing shelter," we are witnessing **mass evictions** with their share of **arrests** and **loss of personal belongings**. Following the first eviction on January 30, we observed two more evictions on February 11 and 24, during which no fewer than **480 people** were evicted.



The eviction of Calais' largest camp continues

More than **900 people** survive on a daily basis in this living space, known as the “Hospital Jungle” by its inhabitants. Since the surrounding area has been emptied due to police harassment, it is one of the **last places where exiles can settle without being regularly evicted**. It is also a place where essential services provided by the state and associations are easily accessible. Sanitary facilities, water and food distribution, access to nearby healthcare... this site has facilities that residents would not necessarily find elsewhere. These operations therefore extend police harassment to a place that had previously been spared, and complicate access to fundamental rights for the people who live there.



These evictions, which take place without the residents being notified and without a proper social assessment being carried out, are justified by an order from the Boulogne-sur-Mer court and by the stated desire to “provide shelter” for exiled people. However, the majority of those evicted are not taken care of by the state services. During the evictions, three or four buses are chartered to take the residents to reception centers, when in fact around twenty would be needed to provide shelter for everyone. In reality, many people are simply left behind and end up returning to the same place for lack of alternatives.



The eviction of Calais' largest camp continues

In addition to the lack of concrete shelter, these evictions are **violent experiences** for those being exiled. They are woken up at 7:00 a.m. and have only a few minutes to gather their belongings and leave the living site. They often leave personal items behind, which are then seized or even destroyed by cleaning crews. HRO members have observed the confiscation of at least **113 tents, 17 blankets, and 8 mattresses**, as well as the **destruction of several tents**. This is a low estimate, as associations are often **prevented from filming** evictions and therefore cannot see everything. In addition to the material damage, several **arrests** have taken place. The prefecture announced that it had arrested 26 people by using the argument that they did not have the correct identity papers. As the majority of the inhabitants of the living site do not have the necessary documents to avoid this, these arrests reinforce the climate of stress already generated by the evictions.

Changing the landscape to make it uninhabitable

For several years, the city of Calais and the Calais Terres et Mers agglomeration have been **deforesting, barricading, fencing, and rock-filling land** to prevent people from settling there.

The eviction of the Hospital Jungle provided them with a new opportunity to alter the landscape to make it uninhabitable. As soon as the police intervened on January 30, work was announced. The aim is to **clear the copses and block access to this living space**.



Changing the landscape to make it uninhabitable

On February 2, several construction machines deforested the entire northern part of the land. Large rocks were then placed along Rue du Beaumarais to prevent entry. Shortly afterwards, the ground was completely turned over, rendering the place unrecognizable. Ironically, all that remains in this part of the living space are the toilets that the state had to install following an injunction from the Lille administrative court in 2017. The facility, set up to provide access to an essential service, is now located in the middle of an uninhabitable wasteland.

This destruction of the landscape illustrates the absurdity of this policy, which deprives exiled people of essential services and destroys the environment, without ever producing any concrete results.

Exiles are not the only victims of these efforts to make public spaces inaccessible. On February 13, the city of Calais had the doorway of a former store barricaded in order to force the person living there to leave. Under the pretext of preventing “misuse,” the municipality is rendering many places used as shelters by homeless people unusable.

Restrictions on the activities of associations

As government action in the Calais area is largely insufficient to meet the basic needs of exiled people, many associations are mobilizing to do this necessary work themselves. But instead of supporting their efforts, the prefecture is complicating them. An example of this policy was seen during the eviction on February 27. That same morning, Woodyard, which distributes firewood, had delivered wood to a living area. A few dozen minutes later, the police and cleaning crews arrived and immediately seized what had been provided by the association. The police thus undid the work that had just been done by the association. By depriving the residents of this wood delivery, they are preventing them from heating their homes and exposing them to the cold in the middle of winter.

As far as HRO is concerned, the police continue to obstruct observation work on a daily basis. During February, particularly large perimeters were set up to prevent observers from filming the evictions. They were escorted by the police on several occasions away from the living areas and kept away from the eviction in order to obstruct observation. The practice of police perimeters has appeared particularly absurd on several occasions, with law-enforcement forces allowing cyclists or even a journalist to enter the zone while denying access to HRO members.

