

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:



15 evictions of living sites
over **4** police operations



3
92 m of personal belongings
seized



204 people evicted



101 tents sized



6 arrests



19 blankets seized and **5**
sleeping bags

Return to a weekly rhythm of evictions

While January saw a **sudden resumption of operations** after a hiatus linked to legal proceedings, February 2026 has seen a **return to normal eviction rates**. In Grande-Synthe, the lull observed in December now appears to be over.

HRO teams documented **at least four eviction operations targeting fifteen living spaces**. The **weekly harassment** of survivors in the Dunkirk area has started up again. This regularity has a cumulative effect: **exiled individuals no longer have the time to rebuild a shelter, stabilize a living space, or preserve their personal belongings before the next operation**.

In one month, **the number of people evicted doubled compared to January** (102 in January compared to at least 204 in February), while **the volume of belongings seized almost tripled** (31 m³ in January compared to at least 92 m³ in February). This quantitative intensification reflects a **qualitative hardening of practices**.

February did not simply repeat past patterns; it deepened **the strategy of making exiled people invisible**. By targeting remote living areas and tightening seizure methods in the middle of winter, **the French state is pursuing a policy of discouragement that borders on inhumanity**.

Evictions carried out out of sight

One of the notable facts about this February is the location of the operations. **The forces of disorder repeatedly targeted places of residence that were “closed to traffic” or difficult to access.**

This geography of eviction is not accidental: **it allows evictions to be carried out away from public view**, thus hindering the work of various associations in documenting them.

Those evicted find themselves alone in the face of the destruction of their shelters, **with no mediation or immediate legal remedy.**

Evictions and seizures during periods of extreme cold

February **saw snowfall and significant drops in temperature.**

During these periods of heightened vulnerability, the **ongoing seizure of equipment and personal belongings** is all the more reprehensible, putting the people living in these living sites at risk.

Contrary to the prefectural rhetoric advocating “sheltering,” **the reality on the ground shows a deliberate desire to eliminate the means of autonomous survival.** Seizing **101 tents and dozens of blankets** when the ground is frozen or muddy is a deliberate endangerment of human life.



Destruction and damage to property during operations

Our teams observed particularly violent acts of destruction:

Use of chainsaws : To dismantle makeshift shelters or wooden structures, state-mandated operators no longer hesitate to use thermal cutting tools, **leaving no chance of reconstruction.**

Laceration of tent fabric : Many tents were found **lacerated** on site, rendering them unusable even before being thrown away or taken away, echoing the practices that Louis Witter, a journalist for Blast, among others, had observed **more than five years ago in these same living areas.** Different period, same violence.

Abandoned in the mud : During the seizure of property necessary for survival, it was also noted that the belongings contained in the tents, mostly personal effects, were abandoned in the mud, **trampled on and abandoned when they were not seized by the cleaning teams.**



The illusion of rights: The mirage of recovering belongings

In January, we noted a timid and confused attempt by the state to respond to court rulings by posting eviction notices mentioning the possibility of recovering belongings. **In February, this measure proved to be a purely bureaucratic construct with no real effect.** The few people who have attempted to recover their belongings face insurmountable obstacles:

Distance : The storage facility is located in Marck, **more than 30 kilometers from Grande-Synthe**. For people without transportation and under constant police pressure, this journey is physically impossible.

Lack of inventory : How can you claim a tent or a bag without a tracking number or a verified inventory? **Belongings are thrown into 92 m³ dumpsters**, making any subsequent identification impossible.

Loss of vital documents : Again this month, people reported the **loss of their administrative documents** (asylum application receipts, medical records) and their phones during the operations. These items, which are essential for their legal proceedings and for maintaining family ties, **disappear in the chaos of the evictions with no possibility of recourse**.

Conclusion: a strategy of exhaustion

February 2026 symbolizes the **inhumanity** that dominates border management in Grande-Synthe. By doubling the number of people evicted and tripling the volume of belongings seized compared to the previous month, **the state is clearly demonstrating its desire to saturate public spaces with law enforcement officers in order to make life impossible for exiles.**

The use of **destructive methods** (chainsaws, lacerations) and the decision to target people **at the height of winter** radically contradict commitments to protect human dignity. HRO continues to denounce these practices which, under the guise of "cleaning up" or "providing shelter," **merely displace human distress a few hundred meters further away**, while exacerbating it through the systematic loss of means of survival.

