

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:

 13 living sites evicted during 10 police operations	 37 tents seized
 145 people evicted	 50 mattresses seized
 131 blankets seized	 68 wooden planks intended for heating seized

March 15: Natacha Bouchart's re-election

- After the re-election of Natacha Bouchart, mayor of Calais, on the 15th of March, **the city's policies against people on the move has not change course.**
- The practices remain the same : **repeated evictions, destruction of the living sites and lack of dignified and sustainable solutions.**

A proven used of knives during an eviction in the largest living site of Calais

On 17 March, an eviction took place in the largest living site of Calais, called "Hospital Jungle" by the inhabitants. That morning, the eviction started at 7am and went on until 11:30.

HRO observed numerous seizures that day. **At least 36 tents, 131 blankets and 49 pallets were taken by the cleaning team, in addition to 3 backpacks and one portable battery.**

Before being confiscated, the tents were **emptied** directly onto the ground, leaving the personal belongings of the inhabitants – including important documents – lying in the mud.



HRO documented the use of various tools, including knives, pliers and hammers by the members of the cleaning team during the eviction, revealing a clear intention to render the exile's belongings unusable. Furthermore, on two occasions, mobile phones were thrown to the ground by members of the cleaning team, making them unusable as well. Law enforcement officers also punctured bicycle tyres, significantly reducing the exiles' ability to travel.



Beyond those thefts and the destruction of personal belongings, several testimonies point to serious negligence during this eviction. The authorities describe this type of operation as “placement in safe accommodation”, due to the buses deployed to transport people on the move to Reception and Assessment Centres (CAES). However, **these centres are reserved for people wishing to apply for asylum in France**. For many, this is not possible, particularly due to the Dublin Regulations, and they therefore quickly return to their place of residence. Furthermore, **this arrangement is not systematically offered to all those being evicted**.



On 17 March, one person reported having received **neither a translation nor an offer of accommodation**, and six other accounts confirm the absence of any such offer. **This situation highlights a glaring failure in access to this service.** Moreover, information regarding the buses' destinations often remains very vague. During the eviction on 17 March, **one inhabitant was forced to board a bus without knowing where they were being taken.**

It also happens that, **due to lack of places** in the department's reception centres, **people who have been put on buses are quickly left on the streets**, without any effective accommodation solution.



In the wake of this eviction, **the prefect of Calais** posted a press release on Facebook in which he stated that 'bags containing stones' had reportedly been seized during the operation to prevent 'any risk of violence against the police'.

- **This claim is based on unsubstantiated assumptions**, as the photo accompanying the post of the alleged bag is **neither dated nor sourced, making verification impossible.**
- Worse still, the statement portrays **displaced people as potential threat, whilst glossing over the violence perpetrated by the police.**
- This framing contributes to the **criminalisation of displaced people** and serves **to justify the coercive operations carried out against them.**

Living sites rendered unusable and uninhabitable

As part of **their so-called 'zero settlement' policy**, aiming at preventing displaced people from settling permanently on French soil, the authorities regularly clear vegetation, erect fences and place boulders to make certain areas inaccessible.

During March, two living sites near Fontinettes station underwent significant scenery changes. **These areas had previously been the subject of an eviction on the morning of 24 March.** During this eviction operation, several tents were seized and at least ten people were 'taken to shelter'. Immediately afterwards, a notice prohibiting access to the sites was put up, to enable 'clearing' works.

On 25 and 26 March, **deforestation operations were carried out on both sides of the bridge, accompanied by the installation of new fencing.**

These changes are part of a **deliberate strategy aiming at preventing any resettlement by rendering the area uninhabitable.** The destruction of natural shelters and the blocking of access points completely deprive people on the move of any space in which to settle, forcing them to live in even more precarious conditions. At the same time, **these interventions are causing an ecological disaster by destroying the trees and vegetation of these sites.** Under the pretext of 'securing the surrounding of the A16 motorway', the local council justifies this work, **once again without considering either the basic needs of displaced people or the considerable environmental impact of these operations.**

