

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.

Neither forgotten, nor forgiven

Sadly, the month of July ended with the **death of several people on the french-UK border**. In just one week, **6 people died following shipwrecks** on the coast and following **violent police interventions**. On Monday 27th of July, **2 bodies were found on the beaches** and on Thursday 29th of July, a boat was **shipwrecked on the beach of Hardelot** during the night. 1 person died following the shipwreck and 6 were brought to the hospital. During the same night, **80 people on the move were catted and violently harassed by police**. Cattling is a violent method consisting of police surrounding people and not allowing them to move or to leave. Utopia 56 was present there and observed the **use of 35 tear gas cannisters against the group of people**. 4 people were found under **cardiac arrest** and only one person was successfully reanimated.

These tragic deaths are directly linked to the **deadly policies** implemented here at the border and to **police violence**. While the **National Assembly** adopted on the 7th of July a law **guaranteeing a presumption of legitimate defense for police officers**, we fear that deadly police operations will cease to **increase** and the Franco-British border.

Two evictions on the day the CEP report was published

On **8 July**, the report of the **parliamentary committee of inquiry (CEP)** into the **consequences of the Touquet agreements** was published. Twenty-two years after the signing of the Touquet agreements and eight years after the signing of the Sandhurst Treaty between France and the UK, the CEP's objective was to **assess the impact of the migration agreements and the public policy measures implemented at the Franco-British border**.

The conclusion is clear: border control is **opaque and security-focused**, and the policies being implemented – including the **“zero fixed points” policy** – are **disastrous for human rights**. The state's security strategy amounts to **harassment** and drives people to seek refuge in places that are becoming increasingly inaccessible; given the volume of traffic, **it does not act as a dissuasive measure**.

The absurdity of the day ? On 8 July, the authorities carried out **two evictions during the day in Calais and Grande Synthe**. This morning, Hospital, Calais's largest living site, was evicted after almost two months without any intervention by the police. During the afternoon, the informal shops in Grande Synthe were dismantled, and several tents were seized.

source : Report by the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (CEP) on the consequences of the Touquet agreements ([available on the National Assembly's website](#))

Launch of the “Trial Monitoring” project

For the last few months, HRO has developed a **project of “trial monitoring”** which consists of **observing court cases** of people accused of **assisting the illegal entry, movement and residence** of people. In French law this crime is called AESI. The project is inspired by the “court watching” conducted by the organisation Captain Support, who observes the hearings of people accused of assisting the passage of people on the move by holding the steer of a small boat during a boat crossing in the Mediterranean.

As **repression on the northern coast is intensifying**, and at sea interceptions are more frequent, **more people are arrested and charged** for AESI. They are suspected either to have held the steer during a boat crossing attempt, or to transport nautical material or to be part of a people smuggler network. After an **arrest and detention of 24 to 48h**, they are directly presented to the judge for an **immediate hearing**. This type of procedure gives the accused very little time to meet their lawyer and prepare their defense.

Through this project, HRO aims to broaden its work to include **documenting the judicial repression of people on the move**. This involves observing trials and recording the sentences handed down, often **disproportionate**, and thereby documenting the **failure to respect the right to a fair trial**. In particular, this includes the **violation of the principle of equality of arms**, the guarantee that each party has the same rights and resources before the court.

This recent phenomenon on the Franco-British border demonstrates that **state violence also manifests itself through the judiciary system**, which is then becoming the new arena for the criminalisation of people on the move.

Since April, we have observed and documented the hearings of 19 individuals facing prosecution. Whilst we do not yet have sufficient data to begin constructing a comprehensive analysis of this judicial repression, we nevertheless believe it is relevant to share some of our preliminary findings.

We have documented the **convictions of 18 people**, all for AESI offences, with or without aggravating circumstances. Of these convictions, only **four had suspended sentences**; the other **14 received custodial sentences ranging from six months to four years**. These initial findings demonstrate the severity of this criminal crackdown, which could be considered **disproportionate**, particularly given the lack of evidence.

As we continue this work, we hope to be able to analyse the **difficulties that defendants face in accessing their rights** and the **principle of equality of arms**, particularly those arising from **comprehension and communication issues**, despite the presence of interpreters. We hope that this 'trial monitoring' project will not only ensure a **civic presence and observation** at AESI trials but also document the **political nature of this disproportionate repression**.

July in numbers in the Dunkirk area :

at least



13 evictions of informal living sites **6** dismantlings of informal shops during **5** police operations



50 seized tents



5 arrests of people on the move



369 persons evicted



42 m3 of belongings seized

Human rights emergency proceeding in Dunkirk: the sub-prefecture refuses to engage in dialogue on eviction orders

On 3 July, the organisations based in Dunkirk met once again with the local authorities; these meetings were arranged following the **référé-liberté** (human rights emergency proceeding) filed in November 2025¹. The discussion centred on the issues¹ for which the authorities had been condemned, which were mainly humanitarian in nature and related to the **emergency response to people's needs, such as hygiene, food and water**.

Following on from these issues, which are directly linked to the **Council of State's ruling**, we wished to address the question of the "upgrading of tents", a measure introduced by AFEJL a few months ago, as well as various **situations observed during evictions**.

1 : for further information, see the December and January monthly reports



The **comments and criticisms raised by HRO and the organisations present there** regarding these issues were largely ignored, or even constantly questioned by the sub-prefect. Similarly, **the authorities' assertions appear to be at odds with the reality observed by the organisations:**

→ Thus, when we pointed out that, for the tents to be upgraded, they would need to be spared from being **stepped on and/or mishandled** during the seizing of items during evictions, we were told that instructions had been issued and that these were, in fact, to be followed.

→ Similarly, when we raised the issue of the **difficulties faced by people on the move in recovering some of their belongings** — such as their mobile phones, wallets or identity documents — due to a lack of communication and the absence of a bailiff, we were told that our information was incorrect.

→ Finally, when we raised the **issue of the AFEJI's deliberate lack of communication** with the associations during eviction operations — in particular to enable them to inform the people on the move of the location of the buses heading for the CAES centers— our comments went unheard.





However, it is **people on the move who suffer the direct, daily consequences of these eviction policies**, particularly when **their tents and personal belongings are seized during these operations**. The organisations have highlighted the **absurdity of having to provide supplies to people after every eviction**. However, the discussion was quickly cut short by the sub-prefect, who merely stated that the CRS had been instructed to allow people to collect their belongings, thereby denying and disregarding the on-the-ground observations reported by the organisations active in Dunkirk. The issue of the **presence of mediators during evictions**, however, was not addressed, given that it did not fall within the scope of the court's orders in the referey-liberty / human rights emergency proceeding.

A reduction in the challenges involved in combating people-smuggling:

The sub-prefect thus narrows the debate down, in particular, to **the issue of combating people-smugglers** – which is used as a **pretext to justify ever-increasing police repression** – whilst helping to **obscure the violence associated with policies to evict people from their living sites**, in the name of a desire not to “facilitate” the work of people-smugglers.

Juillet in numbers in the Calais area :

At least



7 police operations resulting in the eviction of **8** living sites



43 tents seized



170 people evicted



22 m³ of personal items seized

Eviction of the largest living site in Calais

The month of July started by the **eviction of the largest living site in Calais**, the “Hospital Jungle” in the middle of a heatwave. This living site, inhabited by **more than 800 people**, was subjected to **2 police operations, two days in a row**, in order to enforce the eviction ruling from the Court of Boulogne sur Mer.

These first evictions after **a month of protests** were contested by activists who tempted to delay the destruction and confiscation of tents and belongings. The **police responded brutally and arrested 11 people**, who were later freed the same day without any charges.

Moreover, **activists and inhabitants** decided to build the **Merkez Alshabbab (a youth centre)** in the living site to create a gathering space. At the first signs of this construction, the living site was subjected to strong **police surveillance as well as the regular presence of drones**. This center, which allowed people to meet, discuss and potentially think for a few instances about something other than the precarity of their living conditions, was thus perceived by the authorities as real danger. By the middle of the month, the **youth center was evicted and destroyed**, making it impossible for any durable structure to exist and to stop any form of solidarity on the living site.



Towards the end of the month, as the court decision expired the 31st of July, **the “sous-prefecture”** once more ordered the **eviction of the Hospital Jungle** two days in a row in the middle of the heatwave. The inhabitants were thus forced to be **exposed in the sun, without shelter and with potentially difficult access to water**. These police operations demonstrate the **violent and repetitive repression** that the inhabitants are subjected to while at the same time being in precarious living conditions exacerbated by the heatwave.

The attempt to contest in court the eviction ruling

On **Thursday the 9th of July**, a court hearing was held at the Court of Boulogne sur Mer to **contest the 29th of April judicial order** authorizing the eviction of the living site “Hospital jungle”. This judicial order was taking on request of the landlord **without any consultation of the inhabitants** nor with the possibility of an adversarial debate, violating **the constitutional principal of the right to a fair trial** and the **right to the respect of the home protected by article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights**. The interim emergency proceeding, brought by HRO and **several associations** as well as **7 inhabitants** of the living site, had a goal to **recognize legally the presence of people on the living site**. Nonetheless, the main goal of the proceeding was to overrule the judicial order to **obtain a delay** before the next eviction.

Sadly, the **17th of July** ruling, following the hearing, **refused to overall the judicial order of the 29th of April** as well as the request to obtain a delay. Nonetheless, although this decision represents an important defeat in the attempt to stop or delay further evictions, the court still **recognized the association and inhabitants as having interests to bringing forth this proceeding thus making the proceeding admissible**.