

**REFUGEE RIGHTS
EUROPE**

In partnership with:



REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN NORTHERN FRANCE

**A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE HUMAN
RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE CALAIS AREA**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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And above all, sincere gratitude to the displaced people who took part in our field research. We will continue working tirelessly towards securing a future of safety, dignity and well-being for all.



Photo Credit 1

We believe that the information presented in the report is, to the best of our knowledge, trustworthy and accurate. However, we welcome feedback via email from French and British authorities should they wish to comment or contribute to any points. We moreover warmly welcome any additions to this report from volunteers and other experts on the ground, camp residents and others. You may contact us on: info@refugeerights.org.uk.

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INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of the two-year milestone since the demolition of the Calais 'Jungle' camp, this brief summary report was compiled by Refugee Rights Europe in order to highlight the human rights situation which has been unfolding in northern France over the past few decades. In addition to a desk review of news pieces and a number of academic articles, the report draws heavily on from-the-ground updates by Help Refugees, l'Auberge des Migrants and other organisations operating in Calais and Dunkirk, as well as several Refugee Rights Europe research reports published in 2016-2018.

This summary report also makes a number of recommendations in its final section. We believe that our recommendations would have the potential to contribute to the transformation of a cyclical and unsustainable state approach to the situation in northern France, characterised by violence, closed communication channels and widespread human rights infringements. We believe that a different reality can and must be possible.





PHASE ONE

BOTTLE-NECK SCENARIO AND SANGATTE CAMP 1994-2002

MAY 1994

The Channel Tunnel opens, linking Folkestone in the United Kingdom with Coquelles, Pas-de-Calais in northern France.

MAR 1995

The Schengen Area is created, which allows people to travel freely between an initial seven European countries, without any passport controls at the borders. The United Kingdom is granted an opt-out.

1998 - 1999

The number of displaced people sleeping in the streets of Calais and surrounding areas, with the hope of reaching the UK via the Eurotunnel and the Calais port, increases gradually.¹



Photo Credit 13

1999

The French government instructs the French Red Cross to open a warehouse and centre for refugees and displaced people in Sangatte, one mile from the Eurotunnel entrance, in response to the growing number of displaced people in the area.² It is envisaged that this camp could accommodate 600 people.

2001

The UK Refugee Council warns that the situation in Calais will continue for as long as differences between the French and British asylum systems prevail, and describes the widely criticised Sangatte centre as the "symptom rather than the cause".³

2002

A range of new security measures are put in place in the area, including a double fence, CCTV cameras and more police being instructed to patrol the area.

OCT 2002

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) establishes a permanent presence within the Sangatte centre, providing one-to-one legal counselling and advice.

AUTUMN 2002

The UNHCR and The Red Cross estimate a 'roving population' of more than 3,000 people, with an average of 1,700 individuals in the camp at any given time. They estimate that more than 80% originate from Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan, with approximately 100 new arrivals per day.

END 2002

Under pressure from the UK government, Nicolas Sarkozy, then minister for Home Affairs, announces the closure of the Sangatte centre. As part of a 'burdensharing agreement', the UK agrees to take around 1,000 Iraqi Kurds and 200 Afghans, while France takes responsibility for the remaining 300 Sangatte centre residents.



Photo Credit 11

¹ Reinisch, p. 515

² Reinisch, p. 515

³ https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/754_the_situation_at_the_sangatte_camp_in_france



PHASE TWO

ENCAMPMENTS, SQUATS AND EVICTIONS 2003-2014

2003

Displaced people 'move out of the spotlight' but are to remain in the area over the coming years, with a steady increase in numbers.



Photo Credit 14



Photo Credit 15

2009

A makeshift camp with 1,000 inhabitants is bulldozed and 190 people are arrested.¹⁰

2003

French president Nicolas Sarkozy signs the Treaty of Le Touquet with Britain, committing to halt irregular immigration to the United Kingdom via Calais. Through juxtaposed border controls, the agreement essentially means that authorities in both the UK and France are entitled to carry out immigration controls in each other's territory at the sea ports.⁸



Photo Credit 14

2003
ONWARDS

Squats and makeshift shelters are periodically erected and torn down again, locally known as 'the jungles'. Local volunteer groups continue to provide hot meals and dry clothes throughout this period. There are regular 'warnings' that the situation is deteriorating in the area. Two main positions take shape: the argument for giving displaced people shelter and basic care on the one hand, and the view that France ought to make conditions inhospitable so as to deter new arrivals on the other.⁹



Photo Credit 12

2008

L'Auberge des Migrants starts working with displaced people living in Calais, offering aid and support and defending their rights.

JAN 2009

France's immigration minister Eric Besson says that a new Sangatte is "out of the question" because a camp "would create a powerful invitation to new networks of illegal immigration."

⁸ <https://inews.co.uk/news/long-reads/le-touquet-treaty-affects-refugees-calais>

⁹ Reinisch, p. 516

¹⁰ <https://www.euronews.com/2016/10/24/purgatory-a-history-of-migrants-in-calais>

It would not be a solution to the humanitarian problem. It would be an extra humanitarian problem.”¹¹



Photo Credit 11

JUN 2009

European ‘no border’ activists set up a week-long protest camp in the area with the intention of confronting the authorities over their treatment of displaced people.¹²

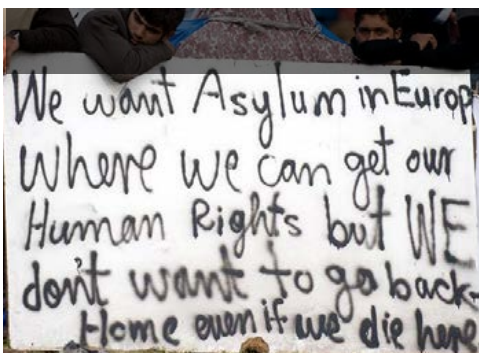


Photo Credit 9

JUL 2009

Calais Migrant Solidarity of the ‘no borders’ networks starts documenting and calling out human rights violations, highlight tragic deaths of displaced people. They organise regular protests, demonstrations and other forms of civic action.¹³

JUL 2009 - JUL 2012

UNHCR establishes a permanent presence in Calais, providing legal aid and counselling.

JUL 2012

UNHCR hands over responsibilities to the French non-governmental organisation France Terre d'Asile.



Photo Credit 16



Photo Credit 16

2013

The Dublin III Regulation enters into force. This updated regulation includes EU law stating that families have a right to stay together. This means that refugees legally have the right to join family in another country.¹⁴



Photo Credit 10

SEP 2014

During a visit to Britain, French interior minister Cazeneuve calls on the British to help financially with security at the Calais port. The mayor of Calais, Natacha Bouchart, threatens to block the port unless Britain “helps to deal” with the situation.¹⁵

¹¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7852621.stm>

¹² <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13621025.2013.780731?journalCode=ccst20>

¹³ <https://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com>

¹⁴ <https://openmigration.org/en/analyses/what-is-the-dublin-regulation>

¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/03/calais-mayor-threatens-block-port-uk-fails-help-migrants>

Bouchart and Cazeneuve agree on opening a day centre in Calais for displaced people, and a night shelter specifically for women and children. This decision will later result in the opening of 'Jules Ferry'.¹⁶

The Telegraph reports that there are up to 1,500 displaced people in Calais.¹⁷



Photo Credit 16

OCT 2014

The Guardian reports that there are more than 2,500 displaced people in Calais.¹⁸



Photo Credit 16

29 OCT 2014

The British Home Affairs Committee takes evidence from the Mayor of Calais, who tells the committee that part of the problem is the failure of the British government to reduce 'pull factors'.¹⁹

NOV 2014

Calais Migrant Solidarity releases a report detailing the human rights situation in Calais, highlighting the high levels of violence and precarity facing displaced people in the region. The report outlines a range of unmet fundamental needs (number of meals per day is limited to one, lack of drinking water and poor hygiene conditions) and the absence of descent accommodation, which forces people

to stay in makeshift camps and squats or to dwell in the streets. The report suggests that the structural and physical violence in Calais leads to physical and psychological exhaustion.²⁰



Photo Credit 16

DEC 2014

The European director of the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) describes the situation in Calais as shameful: "The conditions are totally unacceptable and are not consistent with the kind of values that a democratic society should have."²¹

Local charities and the UNHCR report that at least 15 people, including young women and teenagers, have died over the course of 2014.²²



Photo Credit 16

¹⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/03/calais-mayor-threatens-block-port-uk-fails-help-migrants>

¹⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11092376/Calais-migrants-becoming-more-violent-in-attempts-to-reach-Britain.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/28/calais-migrants-willing-to-die-britain-french-mayor-natacha-bouchart-uk-benefits-france>

¹⁹ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/141024-calais>

²⁰ <https://calaismigrantsolidarity.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/synthc3a8se-calais-2-ans-aprc3a8s.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/23/15-migrants-trying-enter-uk-die-shameful-calais-conditions>

²² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/23/15-migrants-trying-enter-uk-die-shameful-calais-conditions>



PHASE THREE

THE CALAIS 'JUNGLE' CAMP 2015-2016

JAN 2015

The French government sets up an official centre at 'Jules Ferry', a former children's holiday camp. The centre, run by La Vie Active, initially consists of three large tents, with the aim of later providing overnight accommodation for women and young children, as well as essential services such as food distribution, clean water, sanitation facilities and medical care.²³

MAR 2015

A total of 52 women and children move into the Jules Ferry centre run by La Vie Active.²⁴

Around 1,200 people are evicted from squats and camps around Calais, and moved to the site by the Jules Ferry centre. This is the site of the future 'Jungle camp'.²⁵

JUN 2015

French Housing Minister Sylvia Pinel announces that measures will be taken to improve the situation in the 'new Jungle', including street lighting and water points.²⁶

JUL 2015

The Telegraph reports that there are more than 3,000 people in the camp.²⁷

The first school in the camp is set up by volunteers and camp residents. It provides a space for camp residents to learn French, English, history and geography.²⁸



Photo Credit 7

AUG 2015

The #HelpCalais hashtag goes viral and a group of friends raise £50,000 in a week and partner with L'Auberge des Migrants to expand the aid operations in Calais. This is the beginning of Help Refugees.

The Jungle Books library is opened by a British individual teacher, and is then run by volunteers and camp residents.²⁹

SEP 2015

Final eviction of small squats and encampments in the area, sending more people to the Jungle camp.

Help Refugees and l'Auberge des Migrants start its build programme. They go on to build more than 1,500 shelters in the short time period of six months.



Photo Credit 8

**AUTUMN
2015**

Community leaders from each of the main country groups start working together to ensure peaceful relations between camp residents, local authorities and volunteers.

NOV 2015

The first fixed distribution point is set up to distribute donations from the l'Auberge des Migrants and Help Refugees warehouse inside the camp. Prior to this, only mobile van distributions were used.

²³ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ch%C3%A9-ramsden/new-sangatte-rights-pushed-out-of-sight>

²⁴ <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/calais-les-femmes-et-les-enfants-migrants-arrivent-ce-ia33b48581n2731676>

²⁵ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ch%C3%A9-ramsden/new-sangatte-rights-pushed-out-of-sight>

²⁶ <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/migrants-de-calais-bientot-des-points-d-eau-de-ia33b0n2891692>

²⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/11694134/Calais-crisis-Illegal-immigrants-shut-down-all-Channel-traffic.html>

²⁸ <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/calais-dans-leur-camp-des-migrants-construisent-leur-ecole-ia33b48581n2940853>

²⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/aug/24/calais-migrant-camp-gets-makeshift-library-and-it-needs-more-books>

2015 - 2016

A wide array of organisations and initiatives emerge to fill the vital gap left behind by governments and traditional actors, including Calaid, Calais Action, Care4Calais, Refugee Youth Service, Refugee Info Bus, Refugee Community Kitchen, Refugee Women's Centre, The Hummingbird Project, Art Refuge UK, The Worldwide Tribe and the School Bus Project. These grassroots initiatives join the small number of larger organisations operating in the area (Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors of the World, ACTED and Secours Catholique) and the local French associations already present in Calais (l'Auberge des Migrants and Salam). Good Chance Theatre sets up the dome theatre space. London2Calais sends regular convoys of aid and support to Calais, the Jungle Canopy and Calais Builds bring caravans and shelters, and the Phone Credits for Refugees and Displaced People raises donations to help top up mobile phones.



Photo Credit 5

and camp residents manage to move most shelters away from the buffer zone prior to demolition.³⁰

Jeremy Corbyn visits the Calais and Dunkirk camps.³¹

The French authorities set up 125 white-painted shipping containers to accommodate up to 1,500 people next to Jules Ferry. The 'container camp' provides bunk beds, heaters, windows, toilets and showers. Many camp residents refuse to move into the fenced container camper, distrusting the handprint technology controlling access.³²



Photo Credit 5

FEB 2016

The UNHCR voices concerns about the conditions for displaced people in Calais and Dunkirk.³³

NOV - DEC 2015

People are evicted from their shelters to make space for a new state-run 'container camp' next to Jules Ferry; the Good Chance Theatre dome is relocated.



Photo Credit 5

12 FEB 2016

The Calais Prefecture announces plans to bulldoze the southern section of the camp, stating that this will affect 800-1000 refugees living in that zone. Organisations on the ground report that this is less than half of the actual population of the affected area, estimating that 3,000 people are living there, including 400 children, 300 of whom are unaccompanied.³⁴ They also highlight that three mosques, one Orthodox church, three schools, one library and one theatre, as well as hot food and aid distribution points, will be affected.³⁵

FEB 2016

A census by Help Refugees, the first ever of its kind, finds that the camp is home to a total of 5,497 residents, including 182 families, 205 women and 651 children, of whom 423 are unaccompanied. The census does not include the government-run facilities including Jules Ferry and the shipping containers which host approximately 1500 people.³⁶

JAN 2016

Bulldozers move in to clear a 100-meter-wide strip next to the highway that runs next to the camp, intended as a security measure. Volunteers

30. <https://www.dw.com/en/french-authorities-try-to-create-buffer-zone-at-calais-refugee-camp/a-18986588>

31. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/12117419/Mud-sweat-and-tears-as-Jeremy-Corbyn-visits-migrant-camp-in-northern-France.html>

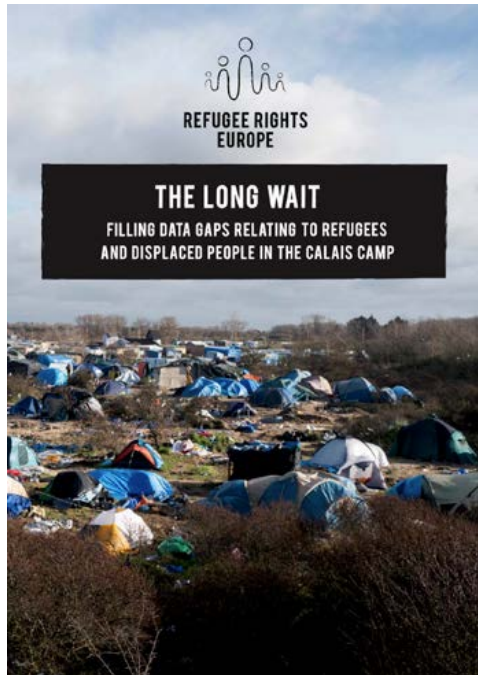
32. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-calais-idUSKCN0UP23R20160111>

33. <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2016/2/56b4ac916/unhcr-concerned-conditions-calais-dunkerque.html>

34. <https://helprefugees.org/news/calais-statement-our-concerns/>

35. <https://helprefugees.org/news/help-refugees-statement-on-calais-eviction>

36. <https://helprefugees.org/news/calais-camp-total-number-of-residents-revealed-for-the-first-time-423-unaccompanied-minors>



Refugee Rights Europe (then called the Refugee Rights Data Project) conducts a large-scale research study in the Calais camp, resulting in the report 'The Long Wait'. This is followed by a subsequent report specifically focusing on the situation for women, entitled 'Unsafe Borderlands'. The reports shed light on a wide range of human rights infringements facing camp residents, including lack of access to information and education, police and citizen violence and lack of access to adequate shelter, sanitation facilities, food and medical care.

Groups with special safeguarding needs, such as children, those with disabilities, LGBTIQ+, the elderly and women face especially difficult living situations within the camp.

Of the child respondents, the majority of whom are unaccompanied, 61.1% report that they 'never feel safe'. The reasons for this tend to mirror their adult peers – including police violence, citizen violence, fights within the camp, health issues and concerns that the camp could one day be demolished. Alarming, the number of children subjected to police violence (89.6%) is significantly higher than the same figure for adults (73.7%). Some 73% of women say that they feel unsafe in the Calais camp, reporting instances of harassment, threats and violence with alarming frequency.

The research finds that women are deeply concerned about facing sexual exploitation, particularly at the hands of people-smugglers.

Given these risks, it is of great concern that the majority of women are not able to lock their shelter securely at night. Another main point of concern is the provision made for women's reproductive health, a fundamental right of all women and girls, in the camp.

Photo Credit 6



A court in Lille approves the French government's request to evict the southern part of the camp.³⁷

Photo Credit 7



2 MAR 2016

Twelve Iranian camp residents start a hunger strike; a number of them sewing their lips together.³⁸

MAR 2016

The southern part of the camp is evicted.

La Linière camp in the Dunkirk area opens, with the capacity to shelter some 1,500 displaced people who have previously survived in deplorable conditions in an unofficial camp nearby.

The first unaccompanied minors, having previously been left in limbo in the Calais camp, are able to travel safely and legally to the UK to be reunited with their families through the provisions of the Dublin III Regulation.³⁹ Despite the treaty having been introduced in 2003,

³⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35663225>

³⁸ <https://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com/page/3/?s=calais>

³⁹ <https://helprefugees.org/news/first-children-arrive-in-uk-from-calais-jungle-through-safe-passage-legal-route>

these three cases are the first ever to be transferred from France to Britain.⁴⁰ Citizens UK have previously identified 150 children with similar claims.⁴¹



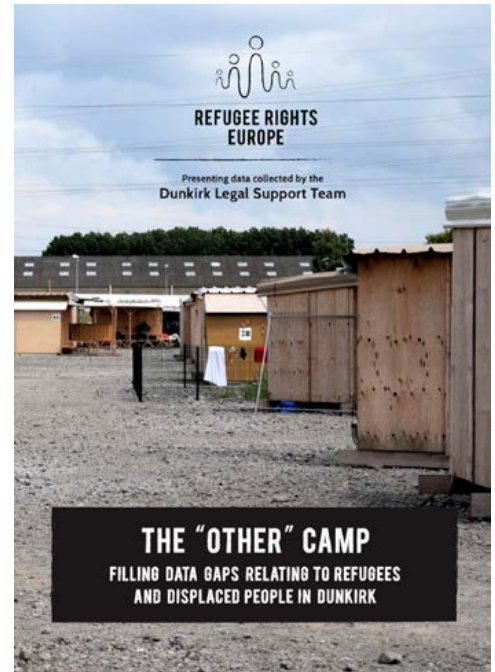
Photo Credit 6

APRIL 2016

A new census by Help Refugees raises concerns that 129 unaccompanied minors cannot be accounted for since the eviction of the southern section of the camp, highlighting the lack of needs assessment, monitoring and safeguarding by the French authorities. The census finds that 4,946 refugees are still living in the Calais camp, including 1,400 in the state-provided containers. 514 children are counted, of whom 294 are unaccompanied. The youngest unaccompanied child is eight years of age, with the average age of minors in the camp being 14.2 years.⁴²

MAY 2016

Refugee Rights Europe and Dunkirk Legal Support Team release a report regarding the situation in the Dunkirk camp, entitled 'The Other Camp'. While the experience of police violence reported by Dunkirk residents (42.3%) is lower than in Calais (75.9%), these figures nonetheless indicate a similarly endemic presence of this form of violence against refugees and displaced people in the region. In both camps, there is an alarming absence of asylum information, with 74.3% of Calais respondents reporting that they did not have access to this information compared to 54.4% in Dunkirk. The report warns that any future government decision to shut down the Dunkirk camp without providing a viable alternative is unlikely to be conducive to any sustainable solution for the displaced women, men and children dwelling there.⁴³



JULY 2016

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) denounces the decision by the government to deny entry to the Dunkirk camp to new adults travelling alone.⁴⁴



Photo Credit 3

JUL - AUG 2016

Refugee Rights Europe conducts the research for the report 'Still Waiting' in collaboration with the Refugee Info Bus. The report identifies that despite the tireless efforts of volunteer organisations in the Calais camp, thousands of displaced people are left without adequate access to information on their rights, immigration rules and possibilities to change their situation. This is especially worrisome for the large number of unaccompanied minors, of whom a significant number appear to have the legal right to be accepted in the UK but do not have access to legal channels or support.

The report also finds that many people, including minors, have been living in deplorable conditions

⁴⁰ <https://helprefugees.org/news/first-children-arrive-in-uk-from-calais-jungle-through-safe-passage-legal-route>

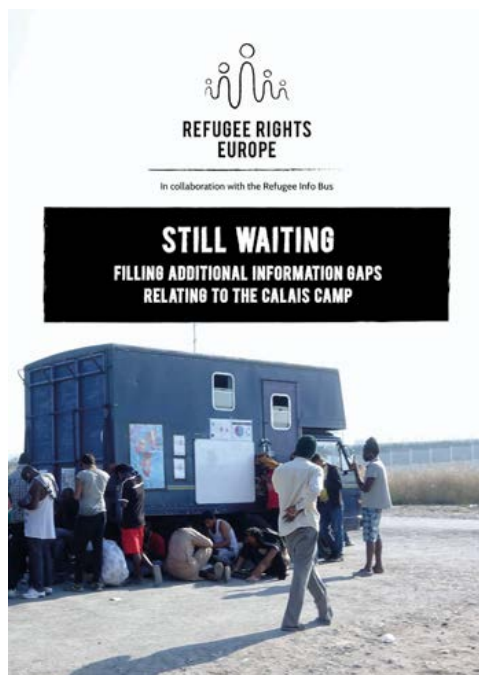
⁴¹ <https://helprefugees.org/news/first-children-arrive-in-uk-from-calais-jungle-through-safe-passage-legal-route>

⁴² <https://helprefugees.org/news/calais-breaking-news-129-unaccompanied-minors-unaccounted-for-since-demolition>

⁴³ http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RRE_TheOtherCamp.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://www.msf.org/france-msf-denounces-decision-condemning-dunkirk-refugee-camp-probable-closure>

inside the camp for over a year, and warns that even if the camp is to be demolished and its residents evicted, the quest to reach the UK and determination to stay in the area will not change for most respondents.



AUG 2016

A new census by Help Refugees and l'Auberge des Migrants finds that the number of residents in the Calais camp has risen to a staggering 9,106 people, including 865 children, of whom 78% are unaccompanied.⁴⁵



Photo Credit: 5

SEPT 2016

President Hollande declares that the rest of the camp will be dismantled by the end of the year.⁴⁶

Construction work begins on a UK-funded wall with estimated costs of £2.3m. The wall is planned to be a 4 meter (13ft) barrier, running for 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) along both sides of the main road to the Calais port.⁴⁷



Photo Credit: 7

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) denounces the government decision condemning the Dunkirk camp to probable closure in 2017, warning that "thousands of refugees and migrants will be made vulnerable to destitution and violence as winter approaches."⁴⁸



Photo Credit: 3

Help Refugees and l'Auberge des Migrants conduct another census, which finds that more than 10,000 people now live in the Calais camp. It also reveals that the number of unaccompanied minors has increased by 51% month-on-month – bringing to 1,179 the number of underage youths in the camp, of which 87% are unaccompanied. Of those surveyed for the census, 52% report issues in receiving accommodation, including waits of up to eight months to be offered even temporary shelter by local authorities.⁴⁹



Photo Credit: 5

⁴⁵ <https://helprefugees.org/news/latest-calais-census/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37469013>

⁴⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37421525>

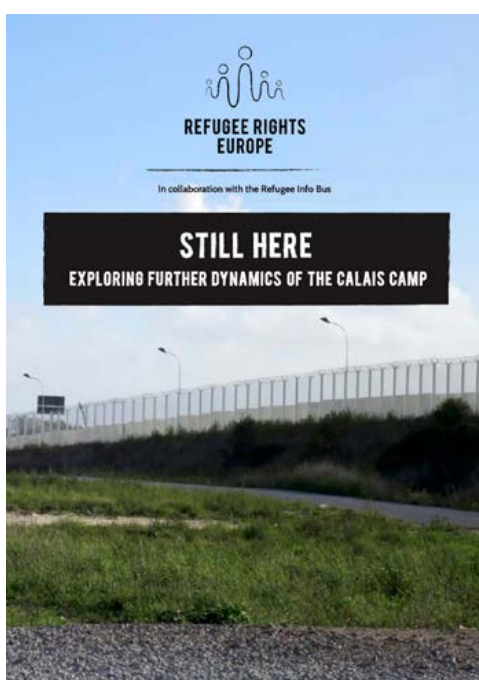
⁴⁸ <https://www.msf.org/france-msf-denounces-decision-condemning-dunkirk-refugee-camp-probable-closure>

⁴⁹ <https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/10000-people-now-live-calais-jungle-migrant-camp-1582103>

SEP - OCT
2016

Refugee Rights Europe carries out another field study in collaboration with the Refugee Info Bus, highlighting the complex dynamics at play in the Calais camp, where thousands of refugees and displaced people continue to live in squalid, inhumane conditions. The report, 'Still Here', finds that many residents have lived in the camp for one year or more - including around one-fifth of all minors surveyed - despite its unhealthy environment and a chronic absence of basic facilities and services.

It highlights that the majority of respondents say that they will remain in the Calais area if the camp is evicted - potentially sleeping out on the street. This suggests that demolishing the settlement without presenting a viable alternative will be detrimental both to its residents and to the surrounding local community.



The Calais camp is demolished in its entirety. Around 6,000 refugees and asylum seekers are sent to temporary reception centres. The remaining people leave and relocate to makeshift camps and informal settlements scattered across northern France. Many move to Paris, Caen, Rouen and Brussels, living in tents on the streets and hiding in parks and train stations.

Over 1,500 children are sent to the container camp during the eviction, where they stay until being taken to the Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation pour Mineurs Isolés Étrangers (CAOMIEs) one week after everyone else has left. There is no running water for the children, and a complete absence of official safeguarding measures. The Refugee Youth Service and other organisations deplore the abhorrent safeguarding gaps during the eviction: "Daily dangers to children ranged from poor sanitation conditions; food insecurity; poor access to health care, legal advice and information along with exposure to sexual exploitation and abuse, human trafficking and being subject to police violence".⁵⁰

Photo Credit 6



OCT 2016

Civil society groups and academics estimate that there are between 8,000 and 10,000 residents in the camp. Help Refugees estimate that the population is 8,143.

Photo Credit 6



Photo Credit 6



Refugee Youth Service reports that one-third of the 179 children tracked in October have gone missing since the demolition of the Calais camp.⁵¹

⁵⁰. <https://www.refugeeyouthservice.net/single-post/2017/10/24/On-This-Day-Unaccompanied-Children-in-Calais>

⁵¹. <https://helprefugees.org/news/third-children-missing-jungle-closure>



DISMANTLEMENTS, VIOLENCE AND HIDING

OCT 2016 - OCT 2018

NOV 2016

A Help Refugees report, detailing the situation of unaccompanied minors dispersed to Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation pour Mineurs Isolés Étrangers (CAOMIEs) after the demolition of the Calais camp, finds an apparent lack of psychological support and a lack of information or misinformation (for both minors and CAOMIE staff) from the Home Office regarding the transfer of minors to the UK. These gaps lead to exacerbated psychological distress and the wish to leave CAOMIEs.⁵²

More than 1,000 refugees, including 200 children, are sleeping rough on the streets and in wooded areas around Calais and Dunkirk. Only a small percentage are sporadically provided with accommodation.⁵⁶

MAR 2017

Calais mayor Natacha Bouchart announces a ban on food distribution in the region, forcing organisations to stop the essential provision of nutrition to refugees and displaced people surviving in the area. The ban is later suspended when found to be illegal by a tribunal in Lille.⁵⁷

**WINTER
2016 - 2017**

Displaced people return and form informal settlements in the Calais area. Help Refugees reports that since mid-January 2017 the numbers of refugees in Calais have increased drastically again, with between 500 and 1000 people, mostly unaccompanied minors, sleeping in forests and under bridges.⁵³



Photo Credit 1



Photo Credit 5

APR 2017

Refugee Rights Europe conducts a follow-up research study resulting in the report 'Six Months On', looking at the situation after the camp clearance. According to the research findings, the situation remains entirely unresolved six months after the demolition of the Calais camp, with a rapidly deteriorating living standards and a wide range of human rights infringements. The report specifically highlights the extent of child protection failures taking place in the Calais area, with the majority of minors being unaccompanied, exposed to frequent police violence including tear gas and beatings, and left without access to information, advice and support.

FEB 2017

UK Home Secretary Amber Rudd announces the end of the "Dubs scheme" after only 350 children have entered the UK through the procedure.⁵⁴

The Dunkirk Legal Support Team, represented by London-based law firm Bindmans, takes legal action against the Home Office, accusing it of "acting unfairly and irrationally by electing to settle only minors from the vast Calais camp that closed last October, ignoring the child refugees gathered in Dunkirk."⁵⁵

The Grande-Synthe camp burns down, and approximately 80% of the settlement is reportedly destroyed as a result.⁵⁸

⁵² <https://helprefugees.org/news/life-children-calais-jungle-post-eviction-uncertain-future>

⁵³ <https://helprefugees.org/news/refugees-heading-back-calais-need-help>

⁵⁴ https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/12/dunkirk-child-refugees-risk-sexual-violence?CMP=tw_t_gu

⁵⁵ https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/12/dunkirk-child-refugees-risk-sexual-violence?CMP=tw_t_gu

⁵⁶ <https://helprefugees.org/news/emergency-accommodation-failing-vulnerable>

⁵⁷ <https://helprefugees.org/news/tribunal-lille-suspended-inhumane-ban-distributing-food-refugees-deeming-illegal>

⁵⁸ <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2017/04/refugees-dunkirk-camp-fire-all-my-documents-burned-flames>

JUNE 2017

A civil society-led court case against the French state receives a positive ruling, stating that food distributions as well as access to sanitation facilities and essential amenities must be allowed.⁵⁹

JULY 2017

The Human Trafficking Foundation releases an independent inquiry into the situation of separated and unaccompanied minors in northern France and other parts of Europe. It finds that police violence has led to a widespread mistrust against the authorities, furthering their vulnerability for exploitation and falling into the hands of smugglers and traffickers.⁶⁰

France's Conseil d'état rejects an appeal by the French authorities, thus reinstating the obligation to provide water points, toilets, showers, daily outreach for minors and departures to accommodation centres from Calais.⁶¹

Human Rights Watch publishes a report on police violence in northern France. This highlights police abuse, the disruption of humanitarian assistance and the harassment of aid workers.⁶²



Photo Credit 1

AUG 2017

Help Refugees and l'Auberge des Migrants publish survey findings suggesting that refugees only get 3.5 hours of sleep per night and of the 76% who had their blankets taking away by the police said that this happens three times a week.

SEP 2017

The Refugee Women's Centre in Dunkirk reports that evictions have intensified (in frequency and violence) with the police threatening to arrest anyone trying to stay around the areas of the evicted camps.⁶³

OCT 2017

Refugee Rights Europe conducts a follow-up research study resulting in the report 'Twelve Months On', looking at the situation one year after the camp clearance. According to the findings, the situation remains unresolved and has, in many respects deteriorated further. The report finds an intensified level of police violence and a worsened overall perception of police treatment by respondents, and an overall breakdown of communication. The findings suggest that little, if anything, has been done to address the situation of the several hundred children circulating in the area. The absence of information and support structures for displaced people in the area appears to remain unchanged.

The Refugee Youth Service reports from Calais: "Children are facing poor sanitation conditions, food insecurity, poor access to health care, legal advice and information along with exposure to sexual exploitation and abuse, and human trafficking and being subject to police violence on a daily basis".⁶⁴

A ministry-ordered investigation confirms the report on police violence in northern France; highlighting the "abusive use of tear gas" and "disproportionate, even unjustified, use of force" by police in Calais and surrounding areas.⁶⁵



Photo Credit 1

NOV 2017

In its verdict on the Dubs case, the Royal Court of Justice rules against Help Refugees. Help Refugees announces to appeal the verdict.⁶⁶

JAN 2018

Theresa May announces that the UK will take more child refugees from Calais and spend £44.5m on additional security at the French port.⁶⁷

Theresa May and Emmanuel Macron meet in a UK-France Summit in Sandhurst to sign a new Border Treaty, following on from the Le Touquet

⁵⁹ <http://lille.tribunal-administratif.fr/content/download/104162/1042470/version/1/file/1705379.pdf>

⁶⁰ https://www.infomie.net/IMG/pdf/htf_separated_unaccompanied_minors_report_hi-res_.pdf

⁶¹ <https://helprefugees.org/news/calais-court-case-ngos-supreme-court-31-07-2017>

⁶² <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/26/living-hell/police-abuses-against-child-and-adult-migrants-calais>

⁶³ Refugee Women Centre Facebook post, 21 September 2017

⁶⁴ <https://www.refugeeyouthservice.net/single-post/2017/10/24/On-This-Day-Unaccompanied-Children-in-Calais>

⁶⁵ <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Publications/Rapports-de-l-IGA/Rapports-recents/Evaluation-de-l-action-des-forces-de-l-ordre-a-Calais-et-dans-le-Dunkerquois>

⁶⁶ Help Refugees Facebook page, 2 November 2017

⁶⁷ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/macron-may-talks-uk-france-visit-calais-refugees-help-stop-jungle-treatment-immigration-customs-a8166446.html>

Treaty of 2003.⁶⁸ Eight organisations publish an open letter voicing their concern about the widespread human rights infringements against refugees and displaced people in northern France. Youth in Calais are exposed, as well as the many avoidable deaths occurring at the border.⁶⁹

FEB 2018

Help Refugees is granted permission to appeal the judgment on our judicial review, challenging the Home Office's interpretation and implementation of the Dubs Amendment.⁷⁰

MAR 2018

The French state is taking over food provision in Calais, contracting La Vie Active. While organisations like Refugee Community Kitchens (RCK) and Utopia 56 honour this new approach by temporarily pausing their daytime hot food distributions, displaced people refuse the government-funded food. An informal survey conducted by volunteers based at the l'Auberge des Migrants and Help Refugees warehouse finds that 68% of respondents refuse the food because it comes from the same authorities that legitimise violence against them. 42% say that they are frightened by excessive police presence at the distribution sites.⁷¹



Photo Credit 1

APR 2018

Three UN Special Rapporteurs call out the French government on "inhuman" conditions in Northern France. The experts also call for a ction to end harassment and intimidation of volunteers and members of NGOs providing humanitarian aid.⁷²

The Refugee Youth Service (RYS) reports that minors in northern France, sleeping rough in woodlands, continue to face poor sanitation conditions and poor access to health care, legal

advice and information. RYS raises alarm bells regarding exposure to sexual exploitation and abuse, human trafficking and minors being subjected to police violence on a daily basis. According to their estimates, the displaced population in the area has remained stable, with around 600 individuals, including an estimated 100 unaccompanied minors. Interventions from the French state have increased, with a frequent clearing of camps, destruction of tents and the use of tear gas - including against sleeping minors.⁷³



Photo Credit 1

France's National Assembly passes a controversial immigration reform law, establishing that people found to have entered France unlawfully could face up to one year in prison, while asylum seekers will have just two weeks to appeal the decision on their case if their claim is rejected.⁷⁴

Following lobbying led by Safe Passage campaigners, 201 members of the House of Lords vote in favour of Lord Dubs' amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill, against 181 who voted as 'Not Content'.

MAY 2018

According to the Refugee Info Bus, forced evictions take place 3-5 times a week. Personal belongings, tents, medication and other items are confiscated, often without the presentation of a 'réquisition' (a document to validate the police operation).⁷⁵

The Refugee Info Bus reports an incident of police in Calais stealing a single shoe from each member of a group of young refugee men.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ <https://www.france24.com/en/20180118-france-uk-migrants-calais-sandhurst-treaty-britain-france-agree-new-deal-border-security>

⁶⁹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/macron-may-talks-uk-france-visit-calais-refugees-help-stop-jungle-treatment-immigration-customs-a8166446.html>

⁷⁰ <https://helprefugees.org/news/dubs-appeal>

⁷¹ <https://helprefugees.org/news/calais-state-food-distribution>

⁷² https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22917&LangID=E&utm_source=NEWS&utm_medium=email&utm_content=The%20Refugee%20Brief%20-%20External%20Subscribers&utm_campaign=HQ_EN_therefugeebrief_external_180404

⁷³ <https://mailchi.mp/ababb70750c0/refugee-youth-service-newsletter-april-2018>

⁷⁴ <https://helprefugees.org/news/how-macrons-new-immigration-bill-affects-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

⁷⁵ Refugee Info Bus Facebook page, 29 May 2018

⁷⁶ Refugee Info Bus Facebook page, 24 May 2018

JUN 2018

The Refugee Info Bus documents an incident of CRS officers refusing to comment on why they are not wearing their identification (RIO) numbers, despite a supposed legal obligation to do so.⁷⁷

The Refugee Info Bus reports that French authorities have been consistently blocking access to water for displaced people in the area during the previous three months.⁷⁸



Photo Credit 4

JUL 2018

Volunteers of the Refugee Women's Centre in Dunkirk are retained by the police for four hours. They further report that the police operating in and around the camp have barred access to "foreign volunteers" and express their concerns about a deteriorating relationship with the police and authorities in Dunkirk.⁷⁹

L'Auberge des Migrants, Plateforme de Services aux Migrants (PSM) and others lead a court case against the French state regarding access to water and sanitation facilities. The Calais Prefecture increases this access just a few hours prior to the hearing.⁸⁰

The Refugee Women's Centre in Dunkirk reports that the number of displaced people settled in Grande-Synthe has grown to almost 500, with nearly 40 families living in the forest.⁸¹

AUG 2018

L'Auberge des Migrants, Help Refugees, Utopia 56 and Refugee Info Bus release a report regarding the widespread and multifaceted harassment and intimidation of volunteers and aid workers in Calais and Dunkirk.⁸²

Displaced women in the Grande-Synthe camp organise and stage a protest against the scheduled upcoming eviction and for

28 AUG 2018

the provision of suitable and adequate accommodation that is allocated in a dignified and respectful manner, and which does not involve the destruction of people's belongings.⁸³

The Salam warehouse in Grande-Synthe, from which the Refugee Women's Centre operates, is burnt down, destroying all stock and storage space.⁸⁴

SEP 2018

Eviction of the Grande-Synthe camp. Help Refugees reports that over 400 people, including 60 families and nearly 100 children, are taken onto buses destined for accommodation. According to reports, two of these buses return to Grande-Synthe later due to a lack of space in the accommodation centres. Many people are left on the streets without accommodation. One person on the bus tells aid workers that they have been driven around for eight hours with no access to food and water before being told to get off the bus.⁸⁵ The mayor of Grande-Synthe calls for the establishment of temporary reception centres on-site.⁸⁶

The Refugee Women's Centre in Dunkirk reports that there are 600 people, including 18 families, sleeping around the area of the recently evicted camp without access to water or basic sanitation, except when provided by aid workers.⁸⁷

A former volunteer of l'Auberge des Migrants is convicted by the French state of defamation for posting a critical photo of French police with a sarcastic comment on Twitter. Organisations on the ground as well as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch voice strong concerns about the unprecedented intimidation of aid workers and volunteers.⁸⁸



Photo Credit 1

⁷⁷ Refugee Info Bus Facebook page, 28 June 2018

⁷⁸ Refugee Info Bus Facebook page, 4 June 2018

⁷⁹ Refugee Women's Centre Facebook page, 6 July 2018

⁸⁰ https://gisti.org/IMG/pdf/jur_ta-lille_2018-07-31.pdf

⁸¹ Refugee Women's Centre Facebook page, 17 July 2018

⁸² <https://helprefugees.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Police-Harassment-of-Volunteers-in-Calais-1.pdf>

⁸³ Refugee Women's Centre Facebook page, 26 August 2018

⁸⁴ <https://www.dunkirkrefugeewomenscentre.com/single-post/2018/08/30/Warehouse-fire-emergency-donations-callout>

⁸⁵ <https://helprefugees.org/news/dunkirk-evictions/>

⁸⁶ L'Auberge des Migrants Facebook page, 6 September 2018

⁸⁷ Refugee Women's Centre Facebook page, 13 September 2018

⁸⁸ <https://helprefugees.org/news/lauberge-volunteer-calais-convicted-tweet>

3 OCT 2018

The body of a displaced person is found in the Calais port. The death has reportedly been caused by drowning in an attempt to cross the channel to reach Britain. L'Auberge des Migrants subsequently report that 60 displaced individuals have lost their lives at the border since 2015.⁸⁹

The Court of Appeal in Britain rules that the British government acted unlawfully by not giving reasons to children refused entry to Britain under the Dubs Amendment. The judgement is the result of a two-year-long legal action taken by charity Help Refugees, represented by Leigh Day, to ensure that children considered for transfer under the Dubs scheme are treated fairly.⁹⁰

OCT 2018

In an update from the ground, the Refugee Women's Centre reports that the municipal police counted 1,300 displaced people in Grande-Synthe, constituting the biggest increase since the destruction of the La Linière camp during April 2017.⁹¹

Mobile Refugee Support reports that there are continuously rising numbers of displaced people in the Dunkirk area, finding over 350 tents, some sheltering families with children as young as one-year-old, spread over the patch of woodland of just two square kilometres. They further report increased police presence and surveillance suggesting that upcoming dismantlements may be planned.⁹²

L'Auberge des Migrants reports that there are approximately 500 people in Calais, with an increase in recent weeks.⁹³

Help Refugees report that the conditions in the Grande-Synthe area is "as bad as ever". They report that French police fired chemical agents into the nature reserve during a food distribution on 17 October, forcing mothers with babies as young as three-months-old to flee.⁹⁴

Photo Credit 4



Two years on from the demolition of the Calais 'Jungle' camp, Refugee Rights Europe returns to Calais to investigate the status quo, and finds that the situation is deteriorating at rapid pace, with no plausible resolution in sight. Local groups report the sustained decline in people's mental health, witnessing that many now appear to have reached the point of exhaustion. Precarity and destitution is the norm, with volunteers and aid organisations working relentlessly to fill critical gaps and alleviate human suffering.

Photo Credit 1



89. L'Auberge des Migrants Facebook page, 11 October 2018

90. <https://helprefugees.org/news/dubs-court-case-ruling-home-office-october-2018>

91. Refugee Women's Centre Facebook page, 3 October 2018

92. Mobile Refugee Support Facebook page, 7 October 2018

93. L'Auberge des Migrants Facebook page, 16 October 2018

94. <https://helprefugees.org/volunteer-blog/some-would-call-this-hell-conditions-for-refugees-in-grande-synthe-are-as-bad-as-ever/?fbclid=IwAR3gOX9tmRUUqmCtHgQJkbDw4UV2E7ozh32yeZfKE5Q8ZU17hY9QP7mY1eE>



CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For many years, a bottle-neck scenario has been unfolding in Northern France, characterised by precarity, rough-sleeping, dangerous and unauthorised border-crossings, and excessive police violence which often takes the shape of dangerous interventions. Refugees and displaced people report arbitrary arrests and detentions, where they allegedly oftentimes experience further violence and may be left without access to food or water, raising serious concerns that the rights of displaced people may be violated whilst held in detention. The use of tear gas and intimidation tactics, as well as what would appear to amount to intentional sleep deprivation, appears to be part of a conscious tactic by the French state to create a hostile environment for refugees and asylum seekers in Northern France.

Such an approach - combined with an undeniable failure on part of the British government to meaningfully facilitate safe and legal passage for prospective asylum-seekers and those looking to be reunited with family in Britain - directly hinders an effective resolution to a detrimental and decades-long situation.



Photo Credit 1



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After decades of encampments and evictions, and two years on from the demolition of the Calais 'Jungle' camp, it is evident that the state approach tried so far is simply not working. It is high time for meaningful change. In light of this, Refugee Rights Europe and Help Refugees urgently call on the French and British governments to find new, constructive solutions, including:

- A non-violent approach adopted as the default position by French authorities, and a de-escalation of the tense situation for refugees and displaced people in Northern France.
- The urgent provision of adequate shelter, food, water and sanitation, as well as accessible information and legal guidance.
- An increased presence of social workers, interpreters, medical staff and psychologists in northern France, and assurance that such services are available without discrimination based on immigration status.
- An end to the harassment and intimidation of volunteers and charities providing displaced people with humanitarian aid.
- Expanded safe and legal pathways to Britain, through which asylum applications, Dublin Regulation family reunification applications and Dubs cases can be processed.



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