

On the Move – Latest migration news

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN FRANCE

10/05/2022-24/05/2022

- A volunteer of Calais Solidarity [called](#) the emergency housing number in Grand Synthe for a family who was on the street with a baby. He was told that there were no room unless the people were Ukrainians.
- On 13 May 2022, [350 migrants](#) settled in informal settlements in Calais were evacuated by the police. Local organizations denounced the use of force by authorities who also seized migrants' properties.

5/04/2022-10/05/2022

- The second part of the "Terra Fecundis case", named after the Spanish temporary employment company, that employed migrants in the south-east of France, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** The company and seven farms were convicted of concealed labour and the employment of undocumented migrants.

22/03/2022-05/04/2022

- Every year, France locks up families with children behind the barbed wire of detention centres. This practice condemned 8 times by the European Court of Human Rights recalls [La Cimade](#) in its last report.
- A report from Human Rights Observers revealed continued evictions and destruction of property of migrants in Grande Synthe and Calais says [ECRE](#). Frontex has deployed an aircraft to support France and Belgium in detecting "unauthorized" border crossings to the UK.

08/03/2022 – 22/03/2022

- In France, non-Ukrainian foreigners who have fled Ukraine are worried, writes [Le Monde](#). A government's instruction excludes temporary protection for refugees who can return to their country of origin, including many students from the Maghreb and West Africa.
- On 14 March 2022, several French organisations published a [press release](#) on discrimination in reception on the basis of nationality in northern France.
- In February 2022, Human Rights Observers [documented](#) 153 evictions from informal settlements in Calais, 306 tents and tarpaulins seized, and 12 arrests during evictions.

- On March 15, 2022, the organisation Utopia56 [received](#) 4 calls from boats in distress between France and the United Kingdom with more than a hundred women, men and children on board.
- As the visa application centre for Ukrainians fleeing war opens in Lille, Calais is organising to receive the people who [were pushed back](#) at the English border.

22/02/2022-08/03/2022

- An increasing number of migrants are [trying to cross](#) Spain-France border by passing through railway tunnels to avoid checks. Migrants attempt the crossing in both directions, and often they are pushed back by the authorities when they are found without papers. In 2021, about 12,865 migrants were turned back. The local population complains about the militarization of the border: the only response by the authorities seem to be adding barber wire, without providing assistance to people on the move who risk their lives by crossing irregularly.
- Crossborder Forum produced a [report](#) of a [conference](#) held in November 2021 titled “Deconstructing the border and building bridges: Towards a critical collective analysis of the French-British-Belgian border”. The report addressed four topics: a historical perspective on border controls and the externalisation of the British border; criminalisation and containment; funding the border and the delegation of control to non-state actors; pathways for action and advocacy.
- According to [Calais Food Collective](#), on 28 February 2022, a 20-year-old Sudanese person lost his life near Calais.

08/02/2022 - 22/02/2022

- The **UK** will [install](#) cameras in French municipalities along the coastline to monitor migrants’ crossings, as part of a project called *Terminus*.
- The French Coast Guard rescued [36 migrants](#) in the **English Channel** on 10 February 2022.
- Activists [occupied](#) a building in **Calais** to support migrants who live on the streets and are constantly exposed to evictions by the police.

25/01/2022 - 08/02/2022

- About 1,000 people, including minors, are currently living in informal settlements in the area of Calais. The number of [unaccompanied minors](#) has increased in the last years, but it is hard to monitor as many of them live in informal settlements that are evacuated via forced expulsions constantly. According to NGOs in the area, this strategy of “zero fixed

settlements" is making more and more young people become invisible and exposed to risks like sexual exploitation, petty crimes, smuggling etc.

- The Migrant Support Platform [published](#) a report that analyses the policy of deterrence that is being used against migrants on the France-British border. Since 1998, at least 1.28 billion EUR were spent on fences, barbed wire, video surveillance, private security etc., and all of this was constantly topped by daily harassment by the police. This approach can be summed up accordingly: "the objective of the state is to make exiles leave by pushing them to the limit"

11/01/2022 – 25/01/2022

- In Calais, conditions for migrants are rapidly [deteriorating](#) due to continuous evictions, freezing temperatures, and lack of access to basic services. Many are Afghans who fled the Taliban regime. Meanwhile, Channel crossings continue: on 14 January 2022, [32 people](#) attempted the crossing but one young Sudanese migrant died.
- On 13 January 2022, [150 people](#) were expelled from Grande-Synthe where they were living in informal settlements. Some of them took buses directed to the reception centers close by, but the majority had nowhere to go, they were left with nothing.
- In the beginning of January 2022, Fathallah Belafhail was [found](#) dead along the France-Italy border, in the area of Briançon.
- French newspaper Libération [shared](#) a call by multiple organisations to end widespread arbitrary detention of refugees at various borders in France but also external border in Europe. The organisations also denounce how the EU Pact intends to make the model of detention at the border even more widespread and systemic.
- In 2021, France repatriated about [5,000 individuals](#) through 'voluntary returns'.

14/12/2021 – 11/01/2022

- CSOs assisting migrants in Calais warn that about 2,000 people could be left without basic assistance as a charity [cut fundings](#) for organizations in the region.
- In the winter of 2021, approximately [1,200 people](#) every month attempted to cross from Italy to France via the Alps. The number is higher compared to previous years and the route is considerably dangerous given the low temperatures in the winter months.

- The 27 bodies of the victims of the 23rd of November 2021 shipwreck were identified and a [funeral](#) was held on 16 December 2021 for four of them. These were later repatriated to Afghanistan.

30/11/2021 – 14/12/2021

- Crossings of the Alpine route between Italy and France, in the area of [Briançon](#), have been increasing in the past weeks. Most of the people crossing are Afghans. Les Terrasses Solidaires, a reception centre run by a local association, demanded support to the State as it reached its capacity and people have nowhere else to stay. So far however, it seems that the only response from the authorities has been to step up border controls, while people remain on the streets in freezing temperatures.
- France [rejected](#) the UK government's proposal to carry out joint patrols in the area of Calais to prevent border crossings. French authorities stress how the proposal undermines French territorial sovereignty and they suggest the UK open legal channels for migration.
- On 9 December 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron [presented](#) the priorities of the upcoming French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. On migration, the priorities are: 1) reforming the Schengen space in order to better protect EU's borders; 2) work on a mechanism to face migratory 'crisis' at borders, by working with Frontex and allowing Member States to deploy border police forces in other Member States; 3) moving on with the EU Pact on Migration (focusing on cooperation with origin and transit countries, protect the EU's borders and harmonise the asylum system and secondary movements).

16/11/2021 – 29/11/2021

- The [first victim](#) of the shipwreck in the Channel to be identified is a 24-year-old Kurdish woman from northern Iraq, Maryam Nuri Mohamed Amin, who was trying to reach her husband in the UK. After the shipwreck of 27 people in the Channel, British and French government officials were supposed to hold a [meeting](#) in Calais. However, France cancelled the meeting with Priti Patel after Boris Johnson published a public letter asking France to take back the migrants crossing the Channel. The meeting still took place with officials of Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the European Commission, who agreed on boosting [cross-border](#) police operations and deploying a [Frontex](#) airplane to monitor the Channel. (Watch EuroMed Rights' interviews with [Al Jazeera](#) and [TV Canarias](#))
- On the 17th of November 2021, protestors in Calais ended the [hunger strike](#) that had started on the 11th of October. The activists reached an agreement with the government to end all unannounced evictions and open a dialogue between NGOs, migrants and the state.

- The 'Commission of Inquiry on Migration, Displacement of Populations and the Conditions of Life and Access to Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Stateless Persons' has published [its report](#) in which it denounces the conditions of life and violations against migrants and refugees at the various French borders. It puts forward some recommendations.

25/10/2021 – 15/11/2021

- On the 12th of November, France hosted an **international conference on Libya in Paris**. The conference was attended by Libya's head of the transitional presidency council Mohamed al-Menfi as well as Prime Minister Abdelhamid Dbeibah. The conference was co-chaired by France, Germany, Italy, Libya and the UN, and among the international actors present were US Vice President Kamala Harris and Egypt's President Al-Sisi. The main issue discussed were the December 24th elections and the departure of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. In the [Declaration](#) released after the conference, the "importance of providing technical assistance and capacity building to Libya" is stressed.

05/10/2021 – 25/10/2021

- The organisation La Cimade analyses the issue of [family reunification](#) of Afghan asylum seekers.
- Human Rights Watch [denounced](#) that the living conditions of migrants, including many children, around Calais, inflicted to them by French authorities, amount to degrading treatment. Around 2,000 migrants are staying around Calais by mid-2021.
- During a visit to the new migration camp in the Greek island of Samos, on 10 October 2021, French Interior Minister, Gerald Darmanin, has [praised](#) the "Greek model" of migration control and restated France's commitment to increase border controls during the upcoming French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

23/09/2021 – 05/10/2021

- On 29 September 2021, a Sudanese 16-year-old boy [died](#) in Calais, France, while trying to board a lorry to the UK.
- French police in Dunkirk shot [rubber bullets](#) at migrants trying to cross the Channel to the UK, by injuring two of them.
- On 28 September 2021, France [announced](#) the restriction of visas for three Maghreb countries, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as a result of their non-cooperation in readmitting their citizens returned from France, in a logic of negative conditionality (reduction of visas for non-cooperating on readmission) as present in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Many civil society organisations denounced this move ([La Cimade](#), [CRLDHT](#)).

While [Algeria](#) is banning French planes from flying over its territory, also in retaliation for the visa restrictions. [Tunisian President](#), Kais Saied, during a phone call with French President, Emmanuel Macron, regretted France's decision to restrict visas.

- On 27 September 2021, four Afghan asylum seekers have been [returned from France to Bulgaria](#), in the framework of the Dublin regulation. Lawyers fear that they could be deported back to Afghanistan given that Bulgaria has not suspended returns to Afghanistan.

6/09/2021 – 22/09/2021

- Increased obstacles for [Afghan refugees](#) in France for family reunification procedures.

19/08/2021 – 06/09/2021

- More than [1,000 people in distress](#), including about 100 children, are still waiting for a shelter in front of the Prefecture in Paris.
- Refugee Rights Europe published the [report](#) *Five years on. An analysis of the past and present situation at the UK-France border, five years after the peak of the Calais 'jungle' camp.*

27/07/2021 – 19/08/2021

- On 24 July 2021, French Interior Minister, Gérald Darmanin, [asked](#) Frontex to deploy an aerial operation off the coasts of Calais to increase controls at the border. At the same time, Pierre-Henri Dumont, a French Member of Parliament of the Calais region [declared](#) that the solution is to detain migrants in closed detention centres to examine their situation and see "whether or not the person is eligible for asylum in France".

5/07/2021 – 27/07/2021

- On 22 July 2021, the European Court of Human Rights [condemned](#) France – for the 8th times since 2012 – for violating Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, prohibiting inhumane and degrading treatment, by detaining families and children in migrant detention centres.
- Following a record-high number of people rescued on 19 July 2021 (430) who crossed the Channel from France to the UK, French and UK Interior Ministers [announced new measures](#) to prevent migrants from crossing. The [UK will pay France](#) EUR 62.7 million to increase police and border patrols along the French coast and equipment to securitize the border. So far in 2021, 6 600 migrants have been [intercepted](#) by UK authorities, while French authorities prevented 8 000 migrants to cross the Channel.

21/06/2021 – 05/07/2021

- On 2 July 2021, the Council of State [removed](#) three African countries (**Benin, Senegal** and **Ghana**) from the list of the so-called “safe” countries, in a decision motivated primarily by the need to protect LGBTIQ+ people and which will be retroactive according to local organisations. This controversial list, established by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), had not been changed since 2015 and comprises 16 countries.