

CALAIS APPEAL LEGAL CENTRE
HINDERING THE MISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

« They would not all die but all were stricken »



Copyright: Maître Orsane Broisin (Calais' Appeal Legal Centre Lawyer)

Today, March 17th 2016, just prior to 6 p.m., an arson attack was committed against the wooden cabin occupied by the Calais Appeal Legal Centre. This wooden cabin, built by Carpenters Without Borders through **crowd funding**, was entirely burnt down.

We, the Calais' Appeal Legal Centre, express our indignation towards this attack against the only legal one stop shop available to migrants within the Calais Jungle. After the burning down of their homes, the dismantlement of the theatre and the forced relocation of the Women and Children's Centre, today our Legal Centre, resisting dismantlement up to now, is burning as well. The team, however, is determined to pursue its mission within the Jungle, with or without a cabin. Consisting in European Lawyers and Jurists, this centre represents a formidable call for unity in defending the migrants access to their fundamental rights within the Calais Jungle.

Facing dismantlement, the Legal Centre was expressly protected by a judicial ordinance of the Lille Judge in Chambers back on February 25th 2016. Since its creation on January 11th 2016, the lawyers and jurists of the centre have received at least 600 migrants, of which over 200 are minors. The centre has also registered 250 victims and assisted some of them to file

complaints against instances of police and civil violence they have been subjected to. The majority of these cases are currently being investigated by the Inspection Générale de la Police Nationale (IGPN), the Police of the Police.

The dismantlement of the Southern area of the Calais Jungle, the destruction of all homes, has gutted the « places to live » that were supposedly protected by the judicial ordinance. The dismantlement broke the close ties that existed between those places and the people who attended them, an essential prerequisite to the building and existing of a social bond. The dismantlement forced people to flee from the Southern zone of the Calais Jungle to the Northern part of the slum and to other slums in the region. According to the latest associative census, few of them have found shelter in the newly built government housings, in the containers (1500 spots) or the Centres d'Accueil et d'Orientation (CAO).

This arson comes after the Press Conference of March 16th 2016, organised by the Legal Centre, which was held to:

- Expose the social desert created around the living places protected by the judicial ordinance of the Lille Judge in Chambers and blow the whistle on the ridiculously absurd and restrictive definition that was given, including only the offering of « social or cultural services » without any homes qualifying as « places to live »;
- Ask the French and UK governments to keep their promises, expressed during the Amiens summit of March 3rd 2016, to proceed with family reunification of isolated minors and adults present in the Calais Jungle who have family in the UK, and support these commitments with written guarantees on delays, applicable criteria and procedures;
- Announce that the Legal Centre defends the interests of the 9 Iranians holding a hunger strike since March 2nd, on behalf of whom one of our lawyers is currently negotiating with the French authorities;
- Denounce the resurgence of civilian and police violence against migrants, which had previously immediately ceased after the Legal Centre's previous Press Conference on February 12th;
- Expose the gap between the French authorities' promises and the concrete application of those commitments. Mister Bernard Cazeneuve, Minister of Interior (Home Office), had promised last February 19th, in a letter addressed to the associations, to proceed to a gradual dismantling and search for individual and adequate solutions for each expelled migrant. In reality, the dismantling was carried out brutally and hastily, in under ten days, with the help of excavators, arrests and harassment of migrants and volunteers;
- To note the insufficient presence of OFII, OFPRA and State mandated associations (for example: <https://vimeo.com/158183028>)

This arson also comes after a series of intimidations against the Legal Centre by police forces and racist groups:

- On February 12th, following a Press Conference denouncing the impunity enjoyed by civilians and police conducting violent acts against migrants (notably that of kidnapping, torture and mock executions on minors), instances of incitement to hate

and murder were published on social media against Marianne Humbertsot, head of mission, and Raymond Blet, honorary lawyer of the Legal Centre, with supporting evidence.

- On Friday March 11th, Marianne Humbertsot questioned the Sub-Prefet and the police commissioner about the obvious illegality with which the police forces under their command had been acting whilst they accompanied the company hired to dismantle the last standing restaurants in the southern zone. Indeed, she noticed that the CRS (anti riot police) were used to exercise their mandate without any visible regimental number. The bearing of such numbers is a legal obligation since a decree of December 24th 2013. Whilst she was filming this, the anti riot police physically assaulted her and tried to destroy her cell phone. A video was posted online that very day on social media. Since the video was released, new calls for the murder of Marianne Humbertsot were posted, with supporting evidence. You may visit the Polyvalence website.

Here : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Z2Pldk3fYo&index=32&list=PLppspEuAPzkmZ5GOKBCH_jG7UmJVqPapA

Here : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEXpA5Cb_Os&index=33&list=PLppspEuAPzkmZ5GOKBCH_jG7UmJVqPapA

- That same Friday, March 11th, an hour after the altercation between Marianne Humbertsot and the Sub-Prefet of Pas-de-Calais, a great fire decimated the last standing restaurants in the southern zone, considerably accelerating the dismantlement's progression. Whilst the cabin was located outside of the fire's perimeter, over 500 meters away, the CRS asked us to evacuate the premises. Concerned by the CRS' orders, we took the precaution to take all working documents and files home to safety that very night.
 - During the night from Friday March 11th to Saturday March 12th, the lock installed on our cabin's door was professionally severed, and since then, has been so 4 separate times. Our Legal Centre has subsequently been visited and looted several times, which had never happened in over three months of existence.
 - On Saturday March 12th, at about 1:00 PM, the CRS prevented migrants from accessing the Centre for over an hour. It was only after Marianne Humbertsot phoned the Préfecture that this action ceased. However, from around 2:00 PM, and for the proceeding hour, a group of CRS positioned themselves close to the Legal Centre. After asking them the reasons for their presence there, they explained their mission was to ensure the security of the premises, whilst not even an attempt to enter the cabin without our permission was even made in 3 months of our presence. This operation clearly dissuaded the migrants to come to the Legal Centre for the rest of the day.
 - Finally, this Thursday March 17th, just after our team left the premises locked, a fire broke out from inside the Legal Centre, without anything knowingly having been present inside the cabin which could have provoked its igniting.
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We, the Legal Centre, declare that:

- We shall not give in to threats and terror;
- We believe this fire to be arson, evidenced by the fire breaking out from inside the cabin;
- We consider this to be an attack against the members of the Legal Centre, Human rights defenders and volunteer citizens who will not accept the lack of access to fundamental rights on their own territory;
- We express our support to the structures still standing in the southern zone of the Jungle and salute the actions of independent associations working in the slum;
- We ask for an independent parliamentary inquest on the treatment of migrants by the French authorities with respect to the French, European and International applicable legal dispositions;
- The Legal Centre will continue its mission in the Calais Jungle as of today, with or without a standing cabin.

To make a donation or for other ways to help us: <https://www.leetchi.com/c/solidarite-appeldecalais>

Translation: Maître Elodie Journeau