

MOVEMENT

No Borders Newsletter ★ noborders.org.uk



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THE CRISIS IN CALAIS CONTINUES

The migrants of Calais hope to find real sanctuary in the UK but the joint British-French border regime offers them a different version of reality. A brutal one that has become all the more sadistic and unrelenting, since 22nd September when Eric Besson, France's Immigration Minister, declared he was "closing the 'jungle' at Calais".

Even before the Pashtun "Jungle" [makeshift camp in the woods] closure migrants in Calais regularly experienced police raids, often late at night and early in the morning, suffering beatings, CS gassing in confined areas, multiple arrests and prolonged detention. There was also the targeting of migrants observing fasting during Ramadan by arresting them at nightfall and throwing away their food - preventing them from eating after a day of fasting. A form of cruelty all too common amongst Fortress Europe's brave border police.

The international public spectacle of bulldozing the Pashtun "Jungle" in front of the press resulted in the arrests of hundreds. Since then those released are

left to roam the streets, homeless, often targeted with further police harassment. Though Afghans may be being specifically racially targeted, away from the media focus the state targets all migrants. Calais' Eritrean House (a squat) has now been evicted and totally demolished. Then on 7th October, Paul Devot Dock was evicted under mass arrest and demolished. Since then the Sudanese camp has also been evicted.

Every day migrants are arrested and often taken to the police station only to be released in four to six hours, though occasionally they are held for as long as two days. Released - arrested - released - arrested, a cycle of intimidation. Intensified repression recently includes even more trigger-happy use of tear gas, including on pregnant women, and the destruction of personal belongings. Nothing but constant harassment - the European tactic of "clearing my back yard" so that others have to deal with the "problem". Calais authorities try to force migrants out of their town for others to "deal" with elsewhere. Now with

specially chartered, mass deportations straight to Afghanistan and Iraq - countries devastated by invasions from the West, the inhumane policies just get worse. Real solutions mean acceptance, help and cooperation, something unacceptable to the established elite of Europe.

Come to Calais! - Whether you have two days or more, here your help is concretely needed. Witness the other side of "civilised Europe", see the "solution" for yourself. Act autonomously, judge for yourself once you have met individual migrants callously treated by a false authority. Join other No Borders activists in consensus based direct action. People are needed, no special skills are required, but those with medical, legal or media skills will of course be useful. Most importantly come and show solidarity by meeting the migrants on the streets - nothing is needed but a desire to speak from one person to another.

calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com

MASS DEPORTATIONS, MASS RESISTANCE

As government leaders met at the EU Summit in Brussels last month, to consider financing joint European deportation charter flights, grassroots struggles against mass deportations seem to be gathering momentum across the continent.

Following the first-ever mass deportation flight to Baghdad from the UK on 15th October, the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees and the Stop Deportation Network organised public demonstrations in Parliament Square and outside the Home Office in London on 17th and 26th October.

The flight had already caused the Home Office considerable embarrassment as 34 of the 44 deportees were not admitted by the Iraqi authorities at Baghdad airport and had to be flown back to the UK. A number of them at Brook House and Colnbrook detention centres have since gone on hunger strike demanding their immediate release.

The Home Office has been deporting people to northern Iraq since 2005. It is estimated that, with monthly charter flights deporting 50 people at a time,



approximately 900 people have been forcibly deported to northern Iraq in the last four years. Other destination countries with regular or semi-regular mass deportation flights include Afghanistan, Nigeria and, more recently, DR Congo, Sri Lanka and Cameroon. In 2008, there were 66 mass deportation flights from the UK, deporting a total of 1,529 people. Both the frequency of such flights and their destinations have increased in 2009. stopdeportation.net

AIR ITALY ENDS DEPORTATIONS

Air Italy, the airline that carried some 40 Iraqi refugees to Baghdad last month in the first mass deportation to southern Iraq from the UK since the US-UK invasion in 2003, has said it will not undertake any more deportation flights in the future. An email by Cesari Francesco, the company's ground operation manager, sent to the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, said: "I inform you that, in the future, we will refuse to operate air transport with asylum seekers or refugees." ncadc.org.uk

UN CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT IN COPENHAGEN

The COP15 summit in Copenhagen, on 7th - 18th December 2009 will see a wide

variety of protests from a diverse number of groups and organisations (see nevertrustacop.org). This is a call out for action to international No Borders groups:

"If we don't start attacking climate change from its roots, and seeing that the system we are in cannot and never intended to solve climate change, then we will be doomed to even more repressive and oppressive regimes, and even a rollback on the rights that were worked so hard for by our comrades in the past and it is already happening! They have divided and conquered us for a long time! But now we have a chance to come together and fight this under the same banner to stop the revitalisation of capitalism and the borders in which it creates. See you on the barricades!"
- climate_no-borders09@lists.riseup.net



4-STAR HOTEL TO DETENTION CENTRE

On 6th October No Borders held a protest inside the Arora International Hotel near Heathrow airport against the company's plan to turn its 4-star 'Mercure' hotel at Gatwick airport into an immigration detention centre.

If planning permission is granted, the hotel will be converted into a secure prison and the 245 bedrooms into single and family cells. Gatwick airport already has two detention centres: Tinsley House, which holds 125 detainees, and Brook House, which holds 426. Both run by private security company G4S.

Thousands of innocent people are locked up in these centres for prolonged periods pending their forcible deportation. With few rights and no access to adequate legal representation, they are treated like criminals for daring to seek safety or a better life. The company will be targeted until plans are dropped.



BLOCKADE OF 2 DETENTION CENTRES IN BELGIUM

Early in the morning of Saturday, 31st October, some 120 activists from across

Europe staged two blockades of two immigration detention centres in Brugge and Vottem (Liege), with the aim of 'stopping deportations for today' and to protest against the 'inhumane character' of European immigration policies.

In a statement, the protesters said, *"The deportation machine is responsible for imprisoning thousands of people every year, to send them into death in the end, just because they do not have the right papers. This inhumane system has to stop!"*



COLNBROOK IRC BLOCKADE ARRESTS UNLAWFUL!

A magistrates judge has ruled that police acted unlawfully when arresting six anti-deportation campaigners who were blockading Colnbrook detention centre, near Heathrow airport, on 12th May 2009, to try and prevent Iraqi refugees from being forcibly deported to Iraqi Kurdistan on a specially chartered flight.

Sitting at the Uxbridge Magistrates Court, judge Jane Wright concluded that *"the exclusive aim"* of giving the order under Section 14 of the Public Order Act by the senior police officer present at the scene was *"to facilitate the deportation of a number of people to Iraq without further ado."*

POMPIDOU OCCUPATION

Over 4,200 Migrant workers in over forty workplaces in Paris have been on strike for over a month demanding regularisation. The fightback has even stretched to the occupation of part of the French capital's Pompidou arts centre by restaurant staff. *"to show that even behind the decor of chic Parisian restaurants, undocumented workers are running things behind the scenes"*.

CONFRONTING THE 'DEFENCE LEAGUES' ON THE STREETS

The reactionary 'Welsh Defence League' were overwhelmed at their planned rallies in South Wales on 17th and 24th October by militant opposition. No Borders took an active role in mobilising local people to intimidate the WDL off the streets. Once humiliated in Swansea, only 3 of the racist group attended the Newport event, the 'league' now appears non-existent.

Upcoming Events

November

7th - Public Forum against Deportations. 11.30m - 5pm at Room V221, Vernon Square Campus, SOAS, Penton Rise, London WC1X 9EW.

7th - How to organise an anti-deportation campaign. 11-4pm Kinning Park Complex, Cornwall Street, Glasgow G41 1AA

16th - Crawley Council consider permission for conversion of hotel into immigration prison. Protest at 7pm outside the Town Hall, The Boulevard, Crawley, RH10 1UZ

December

2nd - Virtual Borders. Library House, Brixton, London.

PROTEST AT BECKETT HOUSE

On Friday 9th October there was a protest at Beckett House immigration reporting centre at 60-68 St Thomas Street, London, SE1 3QU, demanding it's immediate closure

Beckett House is the UK Border Agency's immigration reporting centre and 'enforcement unit' base for south east London. Thousands of people subject to immigration controls are forced to come here on a regular basis (sometimes daily) to 'sign on' - finger-printing and re-activating their biometric ID cards.

The centre is run on behalf of the UK Border Agency (UKBA) by Group 4 Securicor (G4S), which also runs a number of privatised detention centres across the country and is the UKBA's main contractor for detainee escort services. Private contractors such as G4S make huge profits out of people's misery. G4S has been repeatedly criticised by the Chief Inspector of Prisons for "settled misery" in their detention centres.



PAGANI IMMIGRATION PRISON CLOSED

The Greek immigration authorities have announced the release of the last 130 refugees held in the notorious Pagani detention centre in Lesvos and newspaper reports said the centre was to be 'renovated', with the option that it might be closed down forever. New refugees arrested on arrival were being temporarily held at a hotel nearby until they were transferred to a detention centre on the Chios island.

A concerted campaign to close Pagani started in August this year during the No Border Camp in Lesvos. A number of revolts by detainees and a high-profile campaign by their supporters caused considerable embarrassment for the Greek authorities, which could not hide the horrible conditions at the notorious prison any more.

The Greek island of Lesvos, 10km off the coast of Turkey, is a frontier of Europe and a centre of repression by private paramilitary border police Frontex. lesvos09.antira.info



No Borders Network is made up of autonomous groups and individuals, if you wish to get involved please contact your nearest group. noborders.org.uk

→ Local Groups

Brighton: nobordersbrighton.blogspot.com

Bristol: bristolnoborders.wordpress.com

Calais: calaisnoborder.eu.org

Leeds: leedsnoborders@riseup.net

London: london.noborders.org.uk

→ Friends & Relations

Barbed Wire Britain: barbedwirebritain.org

Calais Migrant Solidarity: calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com

Campaign Against Immigration Controls: caic.org.uk

Close Campsfield: closecampsfield.org.uk

Indymedia UK - Migration: indymedia.org.uk/migration

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns: ncadc.org.uk

No One is Illegal: noii.org.uk

Stop Deportation Network: stopdeportation.net

Unity Centre Glasgow: unitycentreglasgow.org

Manchester: manchesternoborders.org.uk

North East: nobordersnortheast.org

Nottingham: nobordersnottingham.org.uk

Oxford: oxfordnoborders@lists.riseup.net

Scotland: nobordersscotland.org.uk

South Wales: noborderswales.org.uk

→ Other Print

SchNEWS: schnews.org.uk

Shift Magazine: shiftmag.co.uk

This newsletter is currently being produced by the local group in South Wales, please contact them for the editorial collective.