

HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION FOR EXILED PEOPLE LIVING IN THE NORTHERN FRENCH COAST

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM PREVIOUS UPR CYCLES

During the third cycle of the UPR, France accepted the following recommendation from Sierra Leone:

"Establish coherent and long-term strategies to ensure access to drinking water and sanitation for migrants in Calais and northern France" [145.267]

Since 2018, despite the commitments made by France, the situation has deteriorated. Thus far, there is a total absence of a continuous, unconditional and secure access to water for exiled people in northern France. Their Human Rights are impeded on a daily basis and people are subjected to police harassment in the name of the French "no fixation point" public policy. This policy has been implemented since 2010 and combines an internal policy of non-reception and refoulement and a border closure.

The situation is against human rights regarding water and sanitation and is not in line with France's achievement of SDG 6.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

In France, the human right to safe drinking water is not recognized as such in the legislation. However, access to water and sanitation is indirectly linked to several French constitutional objectives [safeguarding human dignity, right to decent housing, protection of public health].

• Article L.210-1 of the Environment Code

The use of water belongs to all and everyone, for his food and hygiene, has the right to access drinking water in economically acceptable conditions to all. However, this provision only has a declarative character and is not opposable.

• Law n°2015-991 of August 7, 2015

Water and sanitation competencies are mandatorily attributed to communities of communes [local authorities] and agglomeration communities.

• Ordinance n° 2022-1611 of 22 December 2022 on access to and quality of water intended for human consumption, transposing the European "drinking water" Directive 2020/2184

Local authorities are also responsible for people who are not connected to the water network and must ensure access to a minimum quantity of water for all, including people in a vulnerable situation due to social, economic or environmental factors.

WATER



• INSUFFICIENT VOLUME AVAILABLE

- » **Calais** The volume of water distributed by the State-mandated association is inferior to the SPHERE humanitarian standards [15L/ Person/day]
- » **Dunkirk and Ouistreham areas** No service implemented by the competent authorities



• NON-CONTINUOUS ACCESS

- » **Calais** 2 public taps accessible 24/7 for 1150 people
- » **Dunkirk and Ouistreham** 0 public taps



• DISTANCE

- » **20 minutes** walking in average to access a water point [fix tap, distribution, supermarket, etc.]

TOILETS



• INSUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

- » **Calais** 22 public toilets for 1150 people
- » **Dunkirk area** 0 public toilet for 600 people
- » **Ouistreham** 1 public toilet for 50 people, not accessible 24/7



• LACK OF ACCEPTABILITY

- » Low cleaning and maintenance, infrastructure unsuitable regarding cultural habits and practices



• MENSTRUAL PRECARIOUSNESS

- » No sufficient access to feminine hygiene products [toilet paper, sanitary protections], no bins nor water points

WASTE



• NO REGULAR LITTER PICK SERVICES



• NO DISTRIBUTION OF BIN BAGS

CORPORAL HYGIENE



• INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF STATE-MANAGED INFRASTRUCTURES

- » **Calais** 20 showers for 1150 people, 5/7j, limited to 8 minutes per person
- » **Dunkirk** area 0 shower
- » **Ouistreham** 1 public shower on the beach



• INSUFFICIENT FREQUENCY OF SHOWERS

- » 1 shower per week in average for each person
- "My family has taken only one shower for the last two weeks"*
- Vanya (♀), her husband and their child of 3 yo, Loon-Plage**



• NO WATER POINTS ON THE LIVING SITES

- » Small hygiene practices and domestic hygiene are impossible [hands, teeths, face, clothes]
- "There is no means to wash hands because water is kept to drink"*
- Yassir (♂), 13yo, Calais**



Note: No improvement were proposed by the State during the COVID-19 pandemic

CONSEQUENCES

HEALTH

- **PHYSICAL HEALTH**
 - » 94% of the pathologies met by Médecins du Monde NGO in the Dunkirk area are linked to the living conditions, including:
 - **Dermatological diseases** 67% of the consultations result from scabies and sur-infected scabies
 - **Infectious diseases** Infected wounds, impetigo
 - **Urinary and kidney infections** 3rd reason for consultation
 - **MENTAL HEALTH**
 - » PTSD, depression, insomnia, increase of addictive behaviors, at least 2 cases of suicide in 2022
 - » Undermining the sense of dignity:
 - "He is very embarrassed by this situation and is ashamed of himself"
- Adnane (♂), 17 yo, Calais**

SALUBRITY

- **PREVALENCE OF PESTS ON THE LIVING SITES**
 - » "At night, the rats arrive"
- Taiba and Sara (♀), 17 yo, Loon-Plage**
- **ACCUMULATION OF WASTE ON THE SITE**

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

- **CRIMINALIZATION OF SOLIDARITY**
- **PHYSICAL BARRIERS: BLOCKING OF ACCESS TO THE ASSOCIATIONS**
- **DEGRADATION, DESTRUCTION AND THEFT OF THE ASSOCIATIONS' INSTALLATIONS BY POLICE FORCES AND STATE SERVICES**
- **PRECARIOUS ACCESS TO HEALTH SYSTEM (DISTANCE WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURES, REFUSAL OF CARE)**

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FRANCE

IMPROVE ACCESS TO WATER

- **Develop free water access points in public spaces and public in the French North coast** in accordance with Ordinance No. 2022-1611 of December 22, 2022.
- **Ensure access to a volume of drinking water continuously and in a secured way** for all exiled people present on the French North coast in compliance with SDG 6.1.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO HYGIENE AND SANITATION

- **Ensure continuous, unconditional and safe access to sanitation facilities** (toilets) in sufficient number according to SPHERE humanitarian standards for all exiled people present on the French northern coast, in compliance with SDG 6.2.
- **Ensure unconditional and secure access to hygiene facilities** (showers and washing machines) for all exiled people present on the French northern coast, in compliance with SDG 6.2, while ensuring free drying of personal belongings.
- **Take measures to improve the sanitation of living areas on the French North coast** by implementing regular garbage collection to ensure the absence of waste.

IMPROVE COOPERATION

- **Ensure regular cooperation and communication between the State's services and associations** in the design and evaluation of the above-mentioned WASH solutions for exiled people on the French north coast.



SAFETY

- **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
 - » "We relieve ourselves outside and feel unsafe there"
- Taiba and Sara (♀), 17 yo, Loon Plage**
- » "I am afraid of being sexually assaulted when I relieve myself outside, my husband must accompany me systematically"
- N. (♀), 23 yo, Loon Plage**- **PHYSICAL RISKS**
 - » Use of alternative solutions: On August 10, 2022, a 22-year-old man drowned while washing himself in a canal in Loon Plage
 - » Unsecured route:
 - "The toilets are unsafe at night because the road is not lit and you have to go through a county road with no sidewalk"

Nebyat (♀), 23 yo and her 2 yo daughter, Calais

- **POLICE HARASSMENT**
 - » At least 1741 evictions of living sites in 2022 (Calais and Dunkirk areas)
 - » "We are scared from the police"

Yassir, (♂) 13yo, Calais

- **CONTROL AND UNEQUAL ACCESS**
 - » Monetization, monopolization by certain communities, dependence, exploitation, trafficking
 - » "Limited access to basic services such as water can lead to situations of monetization. Minors may find themselves in forms of dependency"

ECPAT Association

Note: the most vulnerable people (women, children, unaccompanied minors, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people...) are the most impacted by all these risks



ALTERNATIVE DANGEROUS SOLUTIONS

- **USE OF UNPROTECTED WATER SOURCES (CANALS, RIVERS, PUDDLES OF WATER)**
 - **100% PRACTICE OF OPEN DEFECATION IN LIVING AREAS:**
 - "When it rains, I don't go to the bathroom outside"
- Taiba and Sara (♀), 17 yo, Loon Plage**



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SOURCES

- **Redaction**
 - With the contributions of Calais Food Collective, Collective Aid, ECPAT-France, Médecins du Monde, No Border Medics, Project Play, Refugee Women Center, Roots, Salam, Secours Catholique, Utopia 56 Grande-Synthe, Vents Contraires; with the support of the Plateforme de Soutien aux Migrant.es.
- **Websites**
 - coalition-eau.org and solidarites.org/fr

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