

**REFUGEE RIGHTS
EUROPE**

TWELVE MONTHS ON

**FILLING INFORMATION GAPS RELATING TO REFUGEES
AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN NORTHERN FRANCE A YEAR
ON FROM THE DEMOLITION OF THE CALAIS CAMP**

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INTRODUCTION

October 2017 marks twelve months since the final eviction and demolition of the so-called 'Jungle' camp in Calais.

Following the violent demolition, an estimated 1,500 unaccompanied children were thought to have been transported to state-run accommodation centres across France or gone into hiding nearby. Many unaccompanied children were also thought to have simply disappeared in the midst of the tumult. Meanwhile, local charities estimated that some 2,000 residents, including both adults and children, left the camp ahead of its demolition to seek shelter elsewhere in northern France,

out of sight from the French authorities who were doing their utmost to disperse and remove people from the region altogether.¹

TWELVE MONTHS ON, A LARGE NUMBER OF DISPLACED PEOPLE – INCLUDING HUNDREDS OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN – ARE SLEEPING ROUGH IN CALAIS.

Twelve months on, a large number of displaced people – including hundreds of unaccompanied children – are sleeping rough in Calais, seeking shelter under improvised tarps and tents. Many still hope to one day make it to the UK.² While the situation remains unresolved, local aid groups and NGOs have raised continuous alerts about the complete lack of safety facing the displaced children in the Calais area and called for urgent action. Meanwhile, French and British authorities appear reluctant to address the situation in a meaningful manner in order to reach a more sustainable and humane solution to this crisis.

The displaced people in and around Calais have typically experienced repeated challenges throughout all stages of their displacement. Many have taken dangerous journeys to and across Europe which often lead to serious injuries or health problems – including the risk of fatalities.³ Spending long periods of time sleeping rough exacerbates these problems, leading not only to physical ailments but also serious mental health concerns. Without the security of a communal camp or an adequate reception centre, the displaced people in northern France are at high risk of sustained health problems, exploitation, violence and abuse.

In order to investigate the situation faced by displaced people in the aftermath of the demolition of the Calais camp, the Refugee Rights Europe (RRE) conducted research in Paris in January 2017,⁴ followed by an in-depth investigation of the Calais area in April 2017.⁵ There we found that adults and unaccompanied minors suffered from health problems due to the cold weather, frequently had their belongings taken, were moved on



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

¹ Ansems de Vries, L. and M. Welander (2016) 'Calais Demolition: Mission Accomplished,' <https://www.opendemocracy.net/mediterranean-journeys-in-hope/leonie-ansems-de-vries-marta-welander/calais-demolition-mission-accom>

² RRE (2016) 'Still Here', http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RRE_StillHere.pdf

³ UNICEF (2016) 'Danger Every Step of the Way', https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/childrenonthemove/files/Child_Alert_Final_PDF.pdf

⁴ Refugee Rights Europe (2017) 'Life on the Streets' http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RRE_LifeOnTheStreets.pdf

⁵ Refugee Rights Europe (2017) 'Six Months On' http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RRE_SixMonthsOn.pdf



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

from their sleeping spots, and experienced police violence and verbal abuse.⁶ Many had not applied for asylum in France as they hoped to do so in the UK. In the absence of accessible information and guidance, the large majority are left in an unsustainable and precarious situation.

IN THE ABSENCE OF ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, THE LARGE MAJORITY ARE LEFT IN AN UNSUSTAINABLE AND PRECARIOUS SITUATION.

In July 2017, Human Rights Watch published a landmark report based on extensive research in the area, which found that “*police conduct in and around Calais is an abuse of power, violating the prohibition on inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment as well as an unjustifiable interference with the migrants’ rights to food and water.*”⁷ As a response to this report, the French administration and security forces’ internal investigations departments

released a report on 23 October 2017, which contained further evidence of excessive police force and police abuses against child and adult refugees in Calais.⁸

Such reports have been rejected by authorities, including Vincent Berton, the Deputy Prefect for Calais, who said that “*these are allegations, individuals’ declarations, not based on fact.*”⁹ In this context, and following on from RRE’s Paris and Calais studies during the first part of 2017, we deployed a team of researchers to Calais and the surrounding area from 19 to 22 October 2017. RRE researchers sought to further document the untenable and violent situation faced by the estimated 700 displaced people currently circulating in the area.

THIS STUDY IS BASED ON A SURVEY OF 233 INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGES.

The research findings are outlined in this report, and paint a harrowing picture of the current situation. The treatment of refugees

and displaced people is characterised by excessive use of police force, a chronic lack of available information about asylum laws, substandard living conditions and an inadequate response to the safeguarding needs of unaccompanied minors in displacement.

This study is based on a survey of 233 individuals in their native languages, or approximately 33% of the estimated 700 refugees and displaced people thought to be residing in the Calais area.¹⁰ Among those interviewed were 94 children – or 40.7% of the research sample. As a result, this is one of the largest independent studies to be conducted in Calais since the demolition of the so-called ‘Jungle’ camp twelve months ago.

⁶. See footnote 4.

⁷. Human Rights Watch (2017) ‘Living Hell’ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/26/living-hell/police-abuses-against-child-and-adult-migrants-calais>

⁸. Human Rights Watch (2017) ‘France: Inquiry finds police abused migrants in Calais’ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/24/france-inquiry-finds-police-abused-migrants-calais>

⁹. See footnote 7.

¹⁰. The Guardian (2017) ‘Calais: hundreds of migrants remain a year after razing of camp’ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/23/calais-refugees-year-after-razing-of-camp>

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of our first-hand data collection is to provide policymakers, advocacy groups and the general public with an insight into the conditions faced by refugees and displaced people within European borders.

In contrast to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) who are responsible for demographic data collection in many of the state-run camps across Europe, our data and research are independently collected, with the aim of informing public debate and contributing to a long-term resolution to the current humanitarian crisis.

The data presented in this report was collected in Calais and the surrounding area from 19 to 22 October 2017. Over this period, seven RRE researchers conducted 233 surveys in English, Amharic, Arabic, Kurdish, Pashto, Persian and Tigrinya. The format was semi-structured and aimed to capture the lived experience of individuals ranging from 12 to 45. In total, 97% of respondents were men and 3% were women.

Each member of the research team had field experience of working with refugees and displaced people or similar groups. The researchers were recruited from RRE's pool of researchers and included native speakers of all key

languages. The study was guided by ethical checklists that were underpinned by data protection policies, child safeguarding policies and a robust risk register to ensure the security

THE STUDY WAS GUIDED BY ETHICAL CHECKLISTS THAT WERE UNDERPINNED BY DATA PROTECTION POLICIES, CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND A ROBUST RISK REGISTER TO ENSURE THE SECURITY AND DIGNITY OF ALL PARTICIPANTS.

and dignity of all participants. Researchers were expected to observe strict adherence to all RRE data protection policies, referral policies, child safeguarding and principles of full and informed consent.

In most cases, RRE adopts a methodology of random selection - using stratification and continuously monitoring the breakdown of demographic groups within the sample throughout its research studies, to ensure that the final data is representative of a given situation. In the current context of Calais, given the volatility of the situation and the

WE CIRCULATED BETWEEN SIX KEY RESEARCH LOCATIONS, ALL OF WHICH WERE USED AS DISTRIBUTION POINTS FOR FOOD, CLOTHING AND/OR OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT.

absence of any form of camp, it was necessary for RRE to be flexible in its approach. Rather than using stratification and random selection, we surveyed as many individuals as possible, comparing our sample every evening against the estimated number of individuals identified by partner organisations operating on the ground. This ensured we captured a strong and representative sample in accordance with

the demographic breakdown of the refugee population in Calais at the time of the study.

We circulated between six key research locations, all of which were used as distribution points for food, clothing and/or other forms of support. It is our understanding that the same population group moves constantly between these locations and that most individuals in the area would attend at least one of these points on a nearly daily basis. This led onto a path of so-called snowball sampling. As a result, selection bias could not always be avoided, and we were at times unable to steer the sample and stratification as much as we would ideally have liked.

THERE IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE EXACT POPULATION SIZE SINCE IT IS IN CONSTANT FLUX AND THERE IS NO OFFICIAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM.

There is uncertainty about the exact population size since it is in constant flux and there is no official registration system. This means it is not possible to determine exactly how large a sample we obtained, and how representative it is of the demographic groups in the area. However, having consulted a number of different organisations, including the headcount led by Auberge des Migrants and Help Refugees in September 2017 which estimated that 700 refugees and displaced people were in the area, we estimate having surveyed approximately a third of individuals in the area.

While our sample may demonstrate a slight over-representation of Sudanese respondents and a slight under-representation of Afghans, we believe the country and age groups have been represented with relatively good accuracy. This allows us to present a number of useful insights into the current situation on the ground in Calais, twelve months on from the demolition of the camp in October 2016.

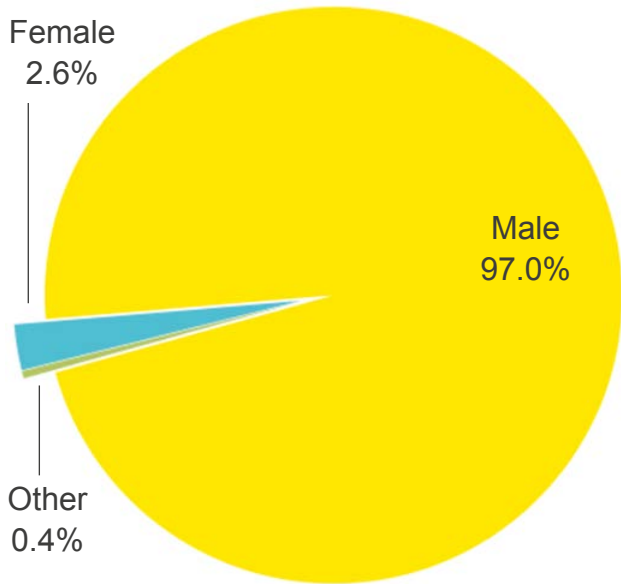


ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

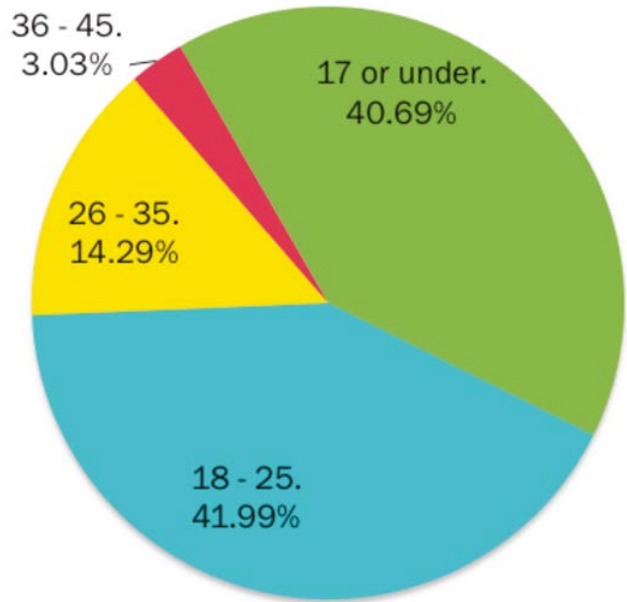
A total of 233 respondents took part in the study. 97% of them were men and boys, 2.6% were women and girls, and 0.4% identified as 'other'.

40.7% of the respondents said they were minors (17 and under), with the youngest respondent being as young as 12 years old.

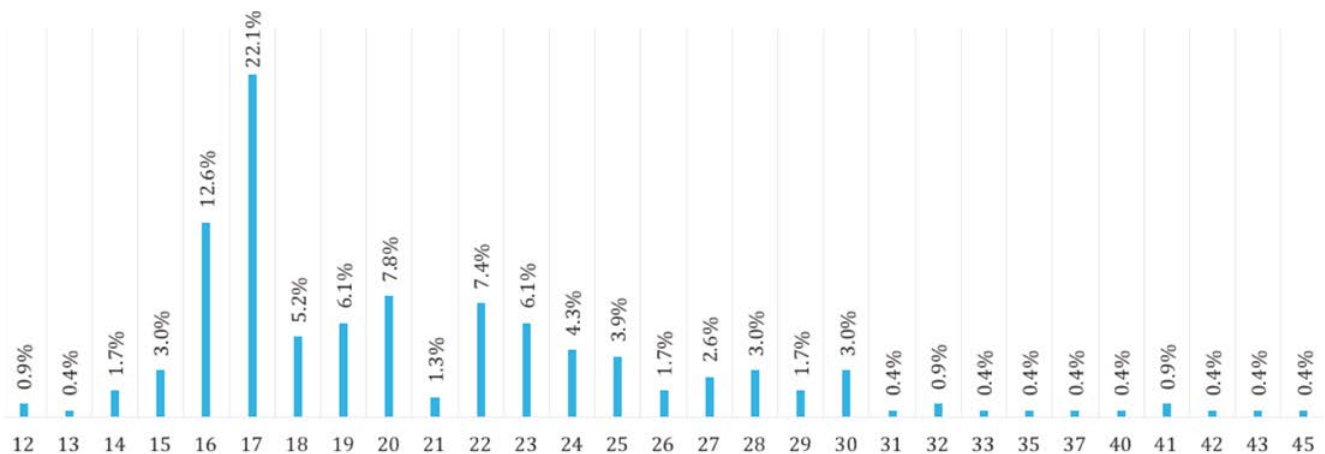
ARE YOU MALE OR FEMALE? ALL RESPONDENTS



HOW OLD ARE YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS, BY AGE GROUP



HOW OLD ARE YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS



27.9% of respondents were from Afghanistan, followed by 23.2% from Ethiopia, 22.8% from Eritrea and 18.9% from Sudan. This most likely constitutes an over-representation of Sudanese respondents and a slight under-representation of Afghans. However, we believe our sample is nonetheless relatively representative of the demographic composition of the people in Calais at the time of the study.

Other nationalities (7.3%) included small numbers of respondents from Libya, Syria, Palestine, Chad, South Sudan and Egypt.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM? ALL RESPONDENTS

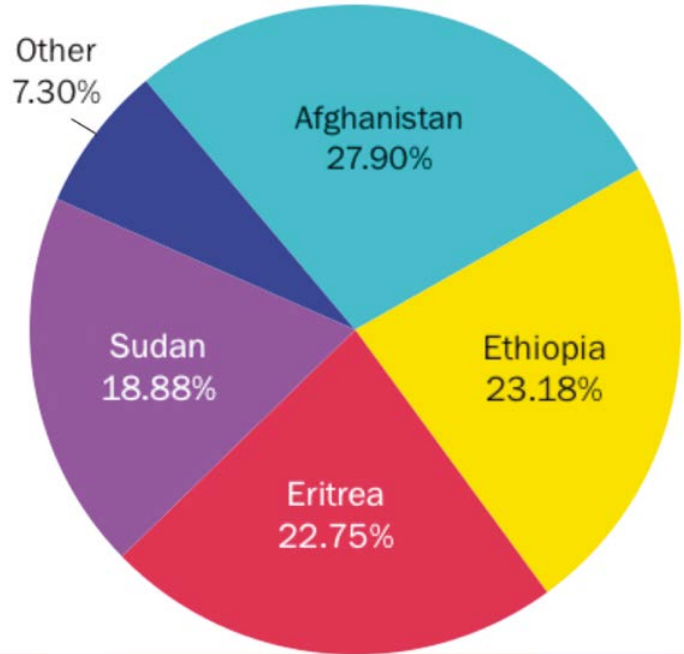


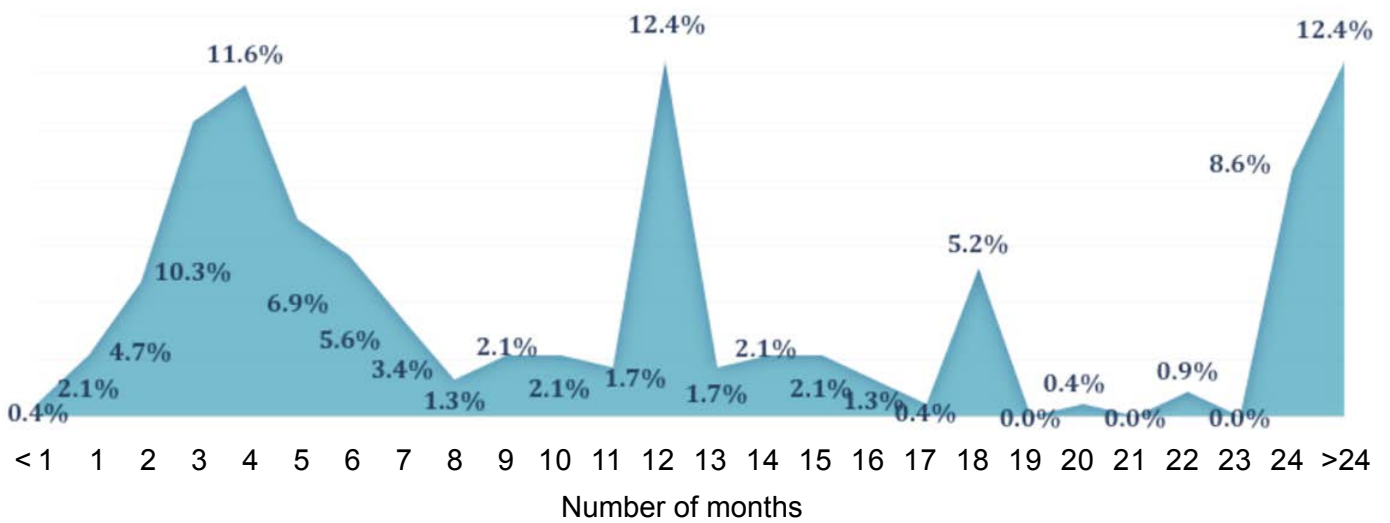
Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN DISPLACEMENT

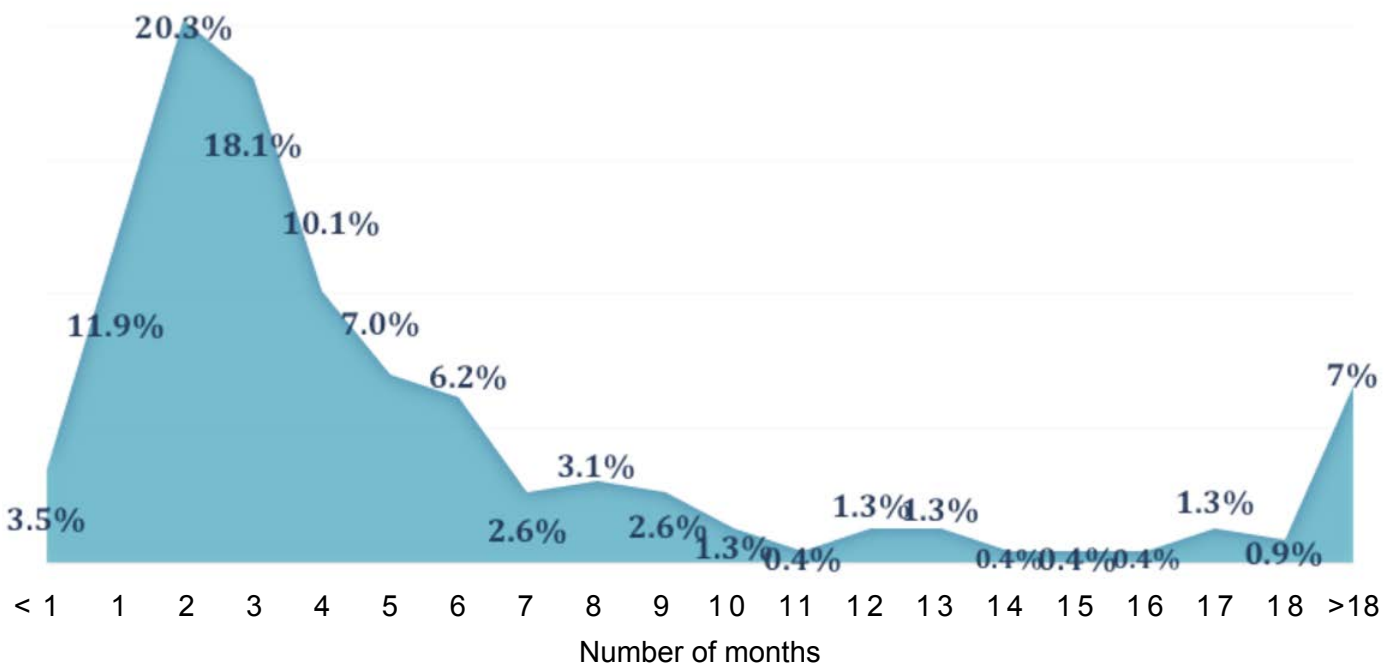
Many respondents had spent extended periods of time in displacement, with 64% having been in Europe for six months to more than two years.

29.1% had been in France for six months or longer. 41.9% had spent time living in Paris at some stage of their journey.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN EUROPE?
ALL RESPONDENTS



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN FRANCE?
MINORS ONLY



Some respondents had been living in limbo for extended periods of time. For instance, one Sudanese man first arrived in Greece in 2005 but wasn't able to obtain refugee status there, which eventually led him to relocate to France in August 2015, with the hope of continuing to the UK where he believes Sudanese people have a better chance to be granted asylum. Another respondent used to run his own restaurant in the former Calais camp, and has been sleeping rough in the forests of Calais since its demolition.

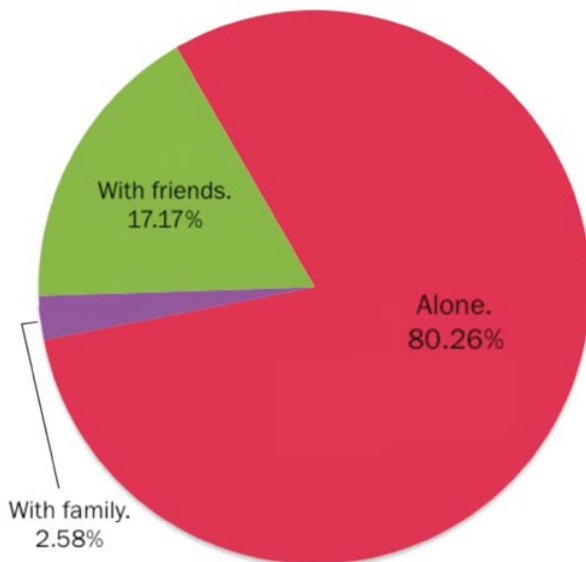


FAMILY RELATIONS

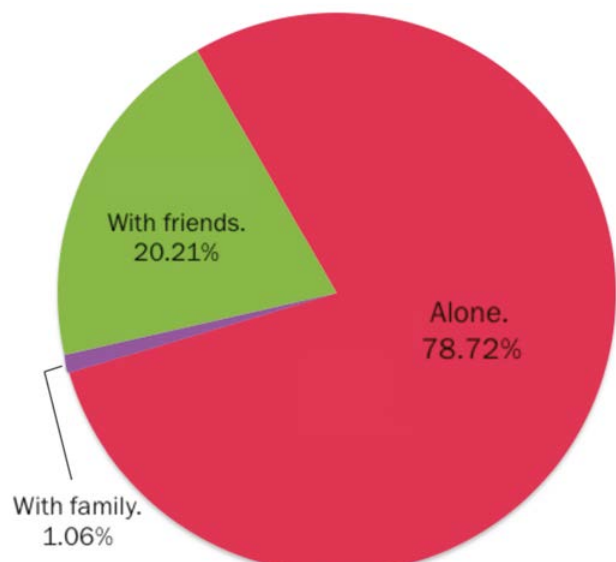
80.3% were in Calais on their own. 17.2% said they were there with friends, often seemingly referring to people they had met along their journey or in Calais. Only 2.6% said they were in Calais with a family member.

Meanwhile, 33% of respondents (39.1% of minors) said they had family elsewhere in Europe. 85.3% of these respondents said their family was in the UK.

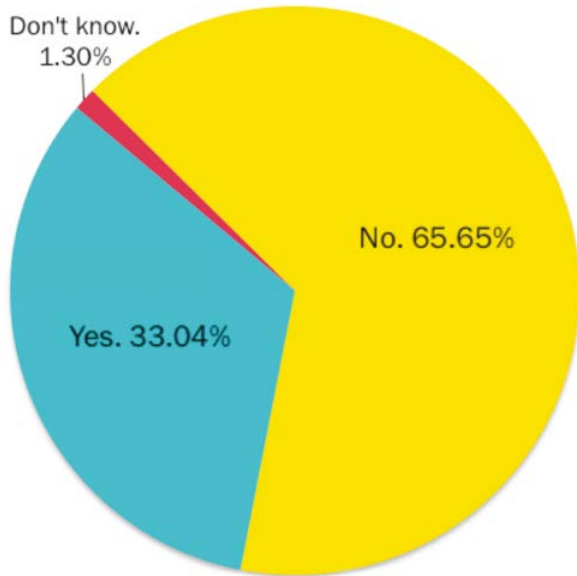
**WITH WHOM ARE YOU IN CALAIS?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



**WITH WHOM ARE YOU IN CALAIS?
MINORS ONLY**



DO YOU HAVE FAMILY IN EUROPE?
ALL RESPONDENTS



DO YOU HAVE FAMILY IN EUROPE?
MINORS ONLY

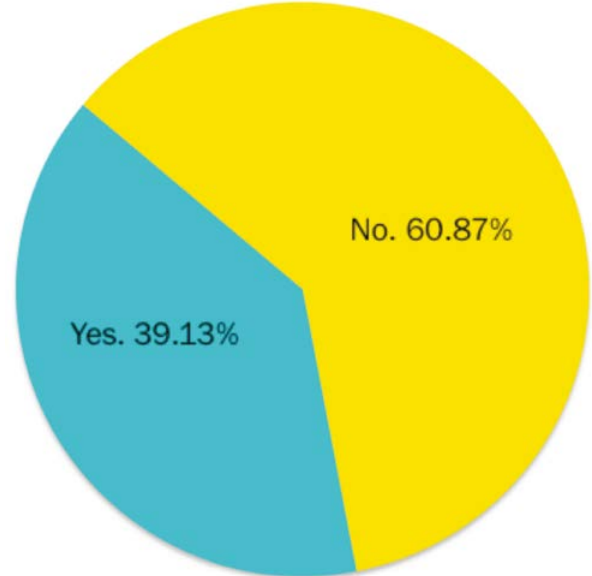
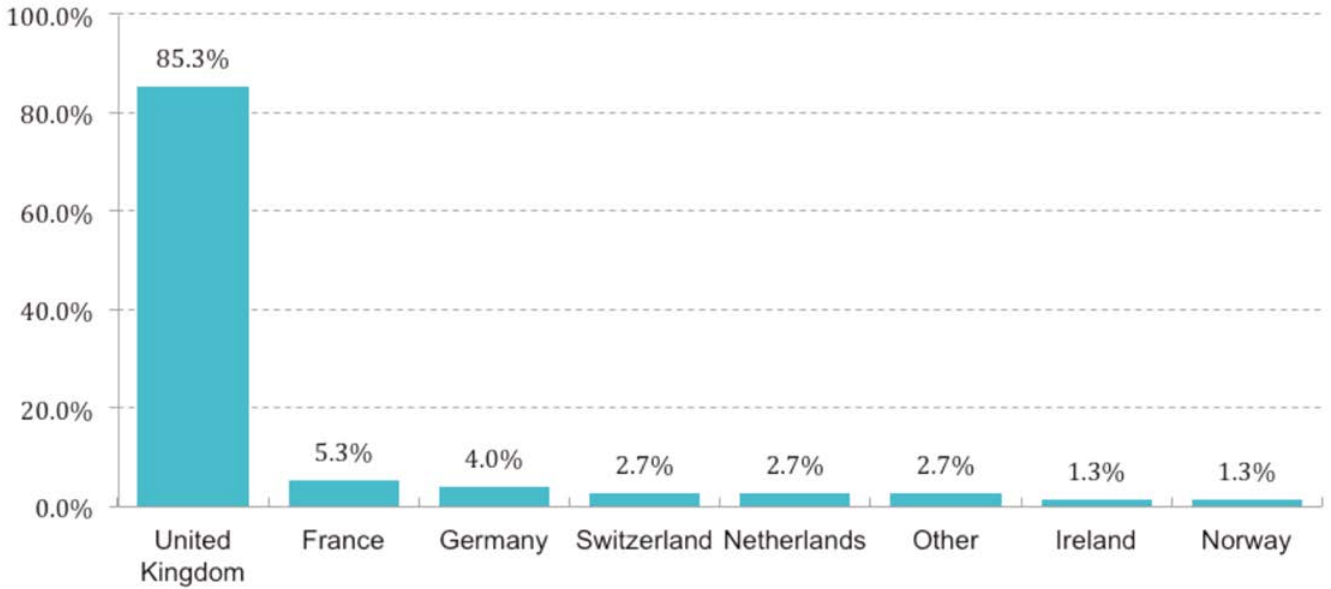
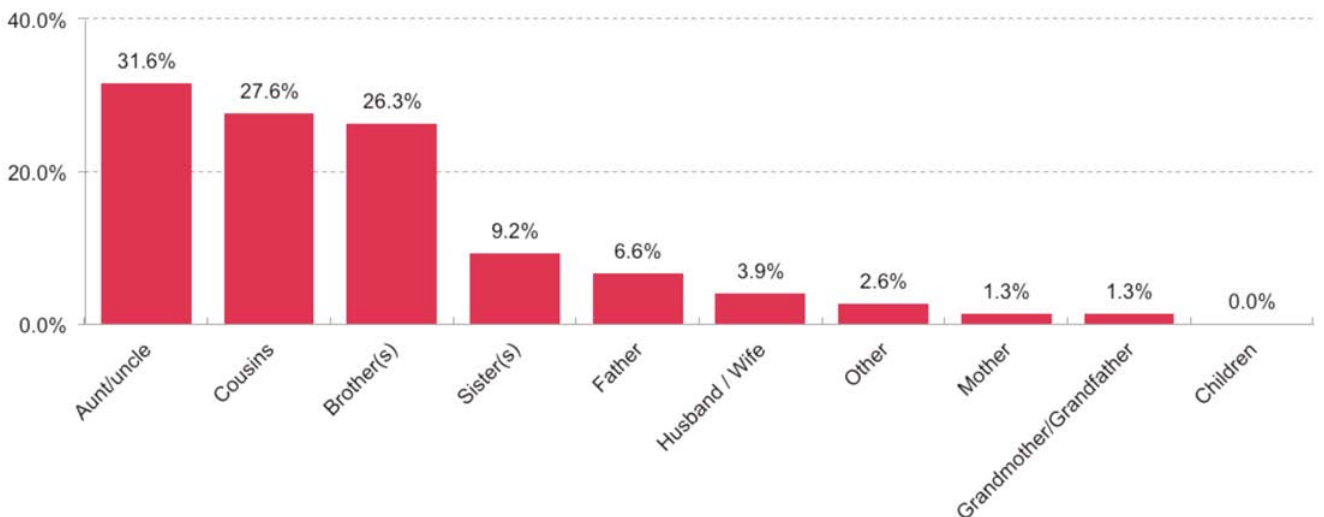


Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

**WHICH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DO YOU HAVE FAMILY IN?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



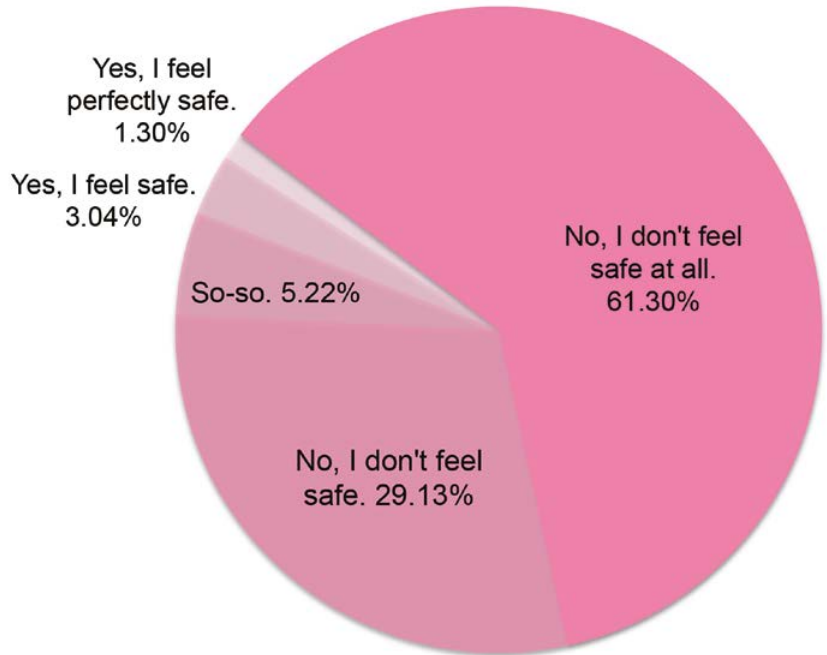
**WHICH FAMILY MEMBERS?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



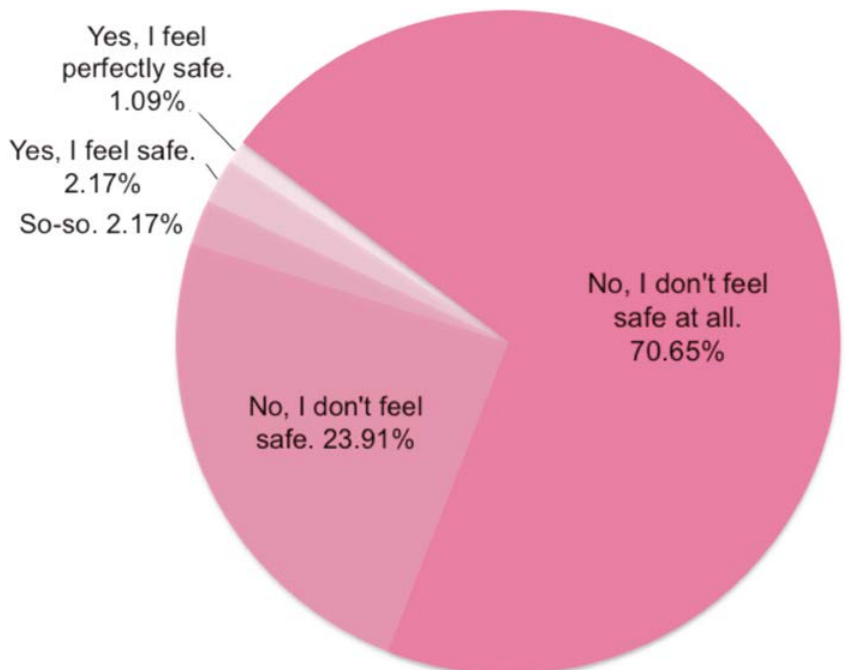
SAFETY AND SECURITY

90.4% of respondents (94.6% of minors) said they 'didn't feel safe' or 'didn't feel safe at all'.

DO YOU FEEL SAFE IN CALAIS? ALL RESPONDENTS



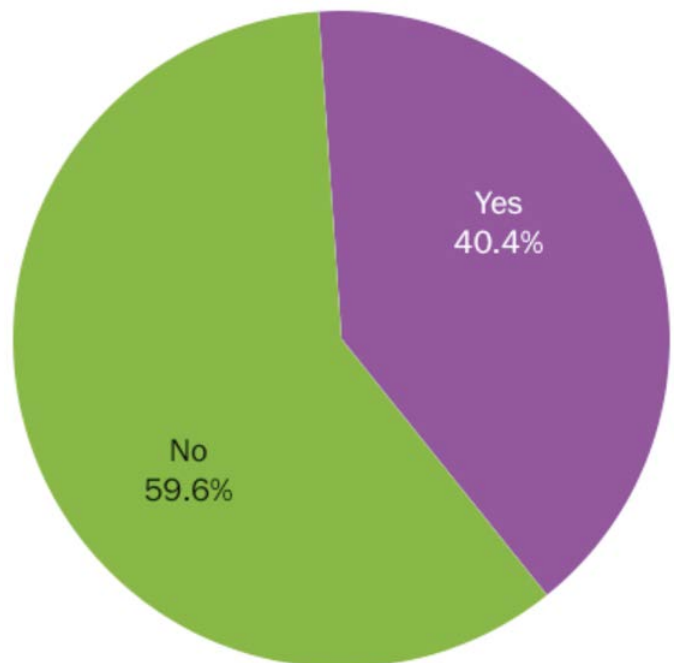
DO YOU FEEL SAFE IN CALAIS? MINORS ONLY





40.4% had experienced citizen violence, or 41.1% of minors. This includes both verbal and physical abuse.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE BY CITIZENS IN CALAIS?
ALL RESPONDENTS



82.4% described this violence as verbal abuse, such as making animal sounds, shouting racial slurs and giving the finger. One 29-year old Eritrean woman explained: *“On the road they always make monkey chants whenever they pass me by.”* A 29-year old Eritrean man reported separately: *“They shout monkey noises at me and give me the middle finger.”*

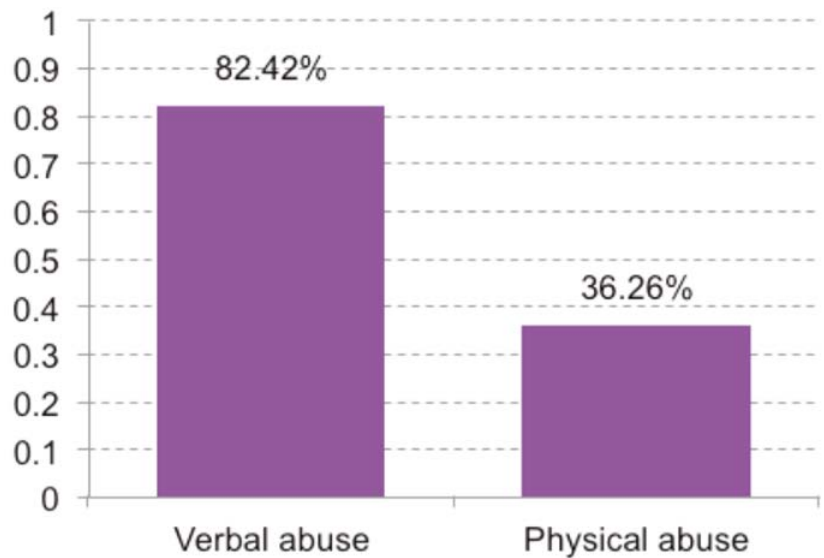
A 17-YEAR OLD ERITREAN SAID HE HAD BEEN ABDUCTED BY A GANG OF WHAT HE CALLED “RACISTS”, WHO HAD TAKEN HIM IN A VAN AND DRIVEN FOR ABOUT AN HOUR, THEN BEAT HIM UP AND LEFT HIM THERE.

Meanwhile, 36.3% of respondents had experienced physical violence. Such incidents included throwing of glass bottles from moving vehicles, spitting and throwing things from houses. A 20-year old man from Afghanistan said: *“They throw stuff at us from the window. Once someone threw a flower pot at me.”*

Alarming, several attempts to run into refugees with cars on the main road were also reported. One 19-year old respondent from Eritrea explained that some French citizens on the road had tried to hit him with their car. He recounted that there was *“a bunch of them”*. Another time, they managed to capture him, forced him into their van and handed him over to the police where he was detained for four days.

One 17-year old boy from Ethiopia explained: *“While I was in town, I was threatened with a*

**WHAT TYPE OF CITIZEN VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN CALAIS?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



“WHILE I WAS IN TOWN, I WAS THREATENED WITH A KNIFE”

17-year-old Ethiopian boy

knife.” A 15-year old Ethiopian boy said he had similarly been threatened with a knife when he walked past someone’s home. Meanwhile, a 19-year old Eritrean respondent explained that there was a group of French citizens circulating in the area with a lug wrench (a heavy-duty tool) as a way to intimidate refugees in the area. A 17-year old Eritrean said he had been

abducted by a gang of what he called “racists”, who had taken him in a van and driven for about an hour, then beat him up and left him there so that he had to find his own way back to Calais.

A 12-year old Afghan boy added: *“They don’t react to us like we are human beings. People come on motorcycles to where we are sleeping and shout bad things.”* A 17-year old Eritrean boy said: *“They just throw their middle finger at me and call me ‘black’”.*



**“THEY DON’T REACT TO
US LIKE WE ARE HUMAN
BEINGS. PEOPLE COME ON
MOTORCYCLES TO WHERE
WE ARE SLEEPING AND
SHOUT BAD THINGS”**

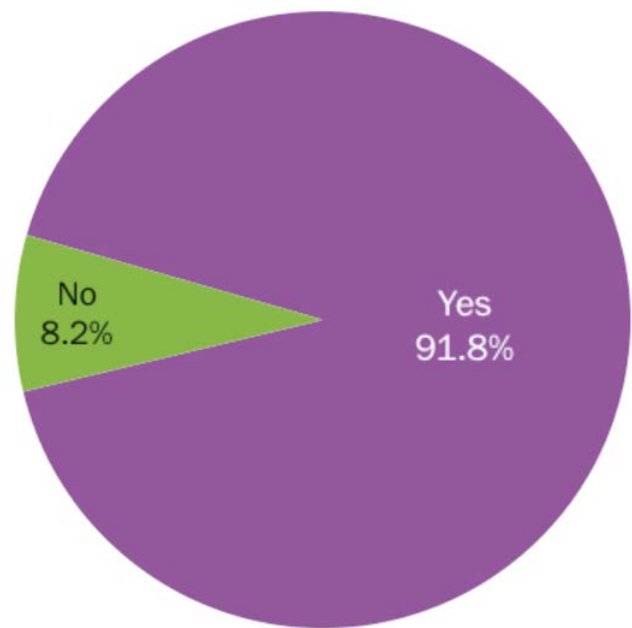
12-year-old Afghan boy



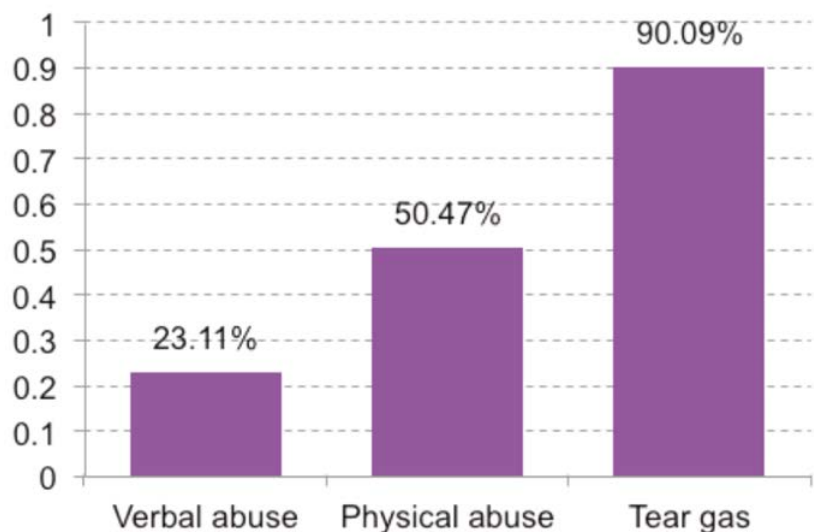
POLICE TREATMENT

A staggering 91.8% had experienced police violence. This is an even higher percentage than during the time of the Calais camp (75.9%)¹¹ and during RRE's research in April 2017 (89.2%)¹². Of these respondents, 50.5% said that the violence had taken the form of physical violence while 23.1% described it as verbal abuse and 90.1% tear gas or pepper spray.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF POLICE VIOLENCE IN FRANCE? ALL RESPONDENTS



WHAT KIND OF POLICE VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN FRANCE? ALL RESPONDENTS

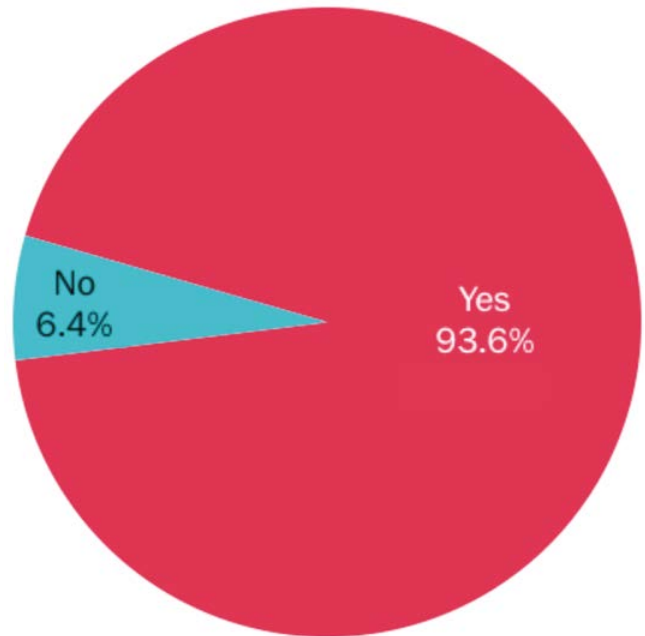


¹¹. Refugee Rights Europe (2016) 'The Long Wait' <http://refugeerights.org.uk/reports/the-long-wait/>

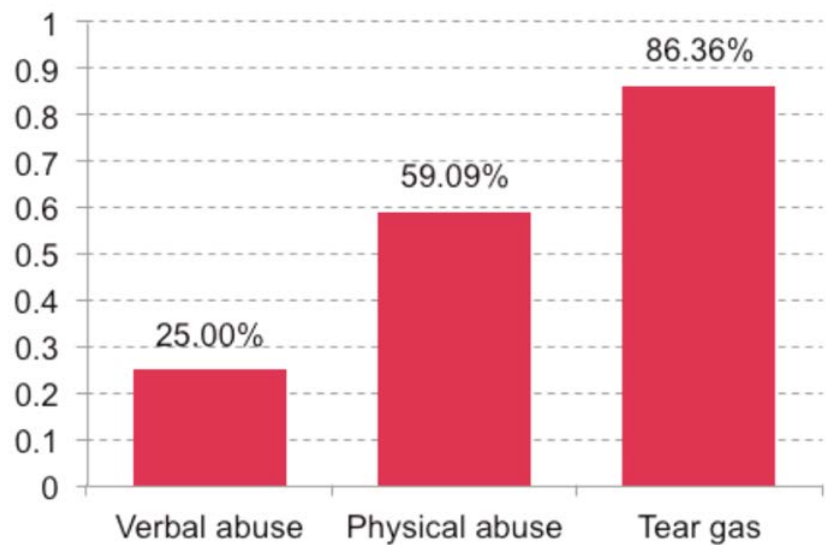
¹². Refugee Rights Europe (2017) 'Six Months On' http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RRE_SixMonthsOn.pdf

Among minors, the figure was even higher, with 93.6% having experienced some form of police violence.

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF POLICE VIOLENCE IN FRANCE?
MINORS ONLY**



**WHAT KIND OF POLICE VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN FRANCE?
MINORS ONLY**



One 16-year old Ethiopian boy explained: *"I've experienced police violence around the place where I sleep and the place where we try to get on the trucks. I have experienced physical violence and sprays on several occasions. They have even taken me on a van and dropped me four hours from here and had to walk back. It's a struggle!"* Meanwhile, a 17-year old Eritrean boy recounted: *"They threw me down from the top of a truck and because of that I sustained some injuries."* Another Eritrean respondent explained that when the police stopped him trying to jump on a lorry, they had searched him and taken his phone away. He asked for his phone back but the police refused to return it.

**A NUMBER OF
ACCOUNTS SUGGEST
THAT POLICE VIOLENCE
IN THE AREA CAN TAKE
DISPROPORTIONATE
AND LIFE-THREATENING
FORMS.**

When asked about his experience with police in Calais, a 17-year old boy from Eritrea responded: *"I would like to thank you for this opportunity. I don't know where to begin about the police violence in Calais. The sprays and the beating has happened to me so many times while sleeping and while on the road. I hope you can report what is happening here to the right authorities, they need to do something."* Meanwhile, a 17-year old boy from South Sudan explained: *"The police beat me with a baton, which gave me cuts across the hands and chipped my front tooth. They also sprayed tear gas into my eyes".*

**"THE POLICE ONCE RELEASED A DOG.
I WAS VERY SCARED. THEN THEY
BROKE TWO PEOPLE'S PHONES."**

27-year-old Sudanese man

**"THERE IS NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T
EXPERIENCED WITH REGARD TO
POLICE VIOLENCE. I SUSPECT I HAVE
DEVELOPED EYE PROBLEMS AS A
CONSEQUENCE OF THE VIOLENCE.
THERE ARE NO HUMAN RIGHTS HERE!"**

19-year-old Eritrean man

**"I WITNESSED AN ERITREAN
KID GET BEATEN UP WITH A
POLICE BATON. HE WAS INJURED
ON HIS HEAD."**

19-year-old Eritrean man

**"I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO
BEGIN ABOUT THE POLICE
VIOLENCE IN CALAIS.
THE SPRAYS AND THE BEATING
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AND WHILE ON THE ROAD.
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NEED TO DO SOMETHING."**

17-year-old Eritrean boy

**"THE POLICE BEAT ME WITH
A BATON, WHICH GAVE ME
CUTS ACROSS THE HANDS AND
CHIPPED MY FRONT TOOTH.
THEY ALSO SPRAYED TEAR
GAS INTO MY EYES."**

17-year-old South Sudanese boy



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

A number of accounts suggest that police violence in the area can take disproportionate and life-threatening forms. A 16-year old Eritrean boy told the research team about an incident he had witnessed: *"This didn't happen to me, but I witnessed an Eritrean kid get beaten up with a police baton. He was injured on his head. I didn't think he would survive, to be honest, the kid didn't look physically strong."*

Another 16-year old from Eritrea reported separately: *"When I tried to get on a truck, the police found me and started punching me in the face and as you can see the injuries are still fresh, my lips are swollen and two of my front teeth are loose because of the physical abuse I sustained. I haven't received any care from anyone since then."*

A number of respondents reported the use of police dogs. While these dogs would usually wear a muzzle, some respondents had been bitten. Several Afghan respondents showed injuries sustained from dog bites, including one incident where the dog had bitten the respondent near his crotch, damaging his trousers. Meanwhile, a 27-year old Sudanese man recounted: *"The police once released a dog. I was very scared. Then they broke two people's phones."*

SEVERAL AFGHAN RESPONDENTS SHOWED INJURIES SUSTAINED FROM DOG BITES.

Alarmingly, a number of respondents told the research team about incidents which involved plain-clothed police officers who had arrived at night and provoked the refugees. A 19-year old Afghan male said: *"At night time two people came in a car and fought me and shouted bad things at me. Suddenly they showed their ID card and they were actually police."*

One 19-year old male from Eritrea summed up his experience with the police in France: *"It's been a year since I came here from Italy. There is nothing that I haven't experienced with regard to police violence. I suspect I have developed eye problems as a consequence of the violence. There are no human rights here!"*

The vast majority had experienced tear gas and pepper spray in Calais. 72.1% said they were experiencing tear gas 'every day' or 'several times a week'. This is a markedly higher figure than during the time of the Calais camp (62.8%) and in April 2017 when 63.2% of respondents said they experienced tear gas with the same frequency. This appears to signal that the use of tear gas against displaced people in the area may have intensified. One Sudanese 25-year old man explained: *"While walking on the main road, we sometimes get sprayed by police driving by in their car."* A 17-year old Sudanese boy reported on a separate occasion: *"At night, while I was walking quietly, the police sprayed me with gas and beat me."*



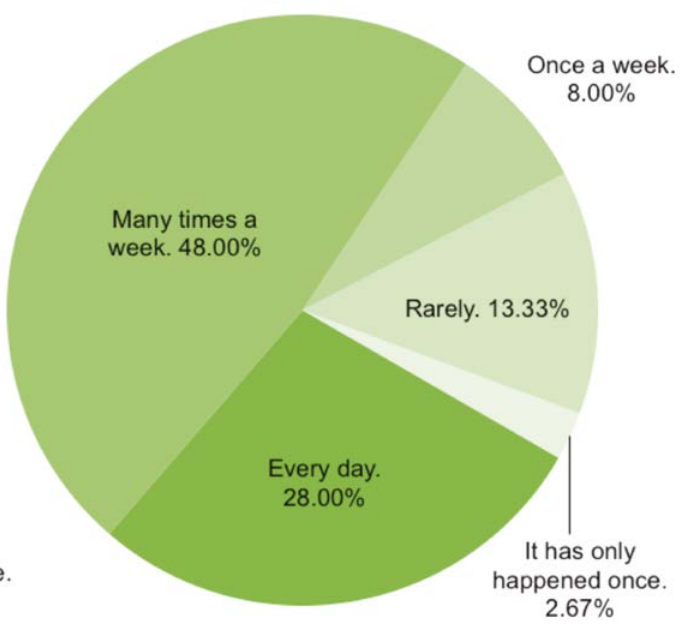
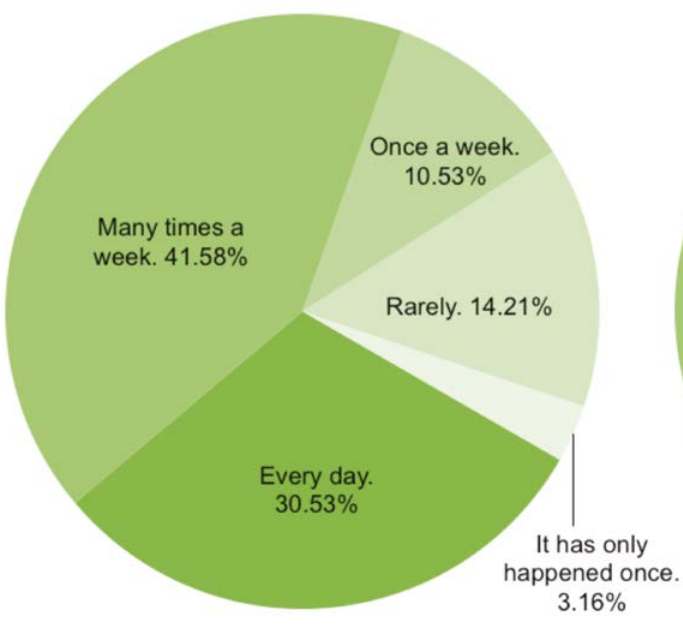
**“I WAS IN THE FOREST
WHEN SOME POLICE BEAT ME
UP AND I HAD TO WALK ON
CRUTCHES FOR FOUR WEEKS.”**

16-year-old Eritrean boy

Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

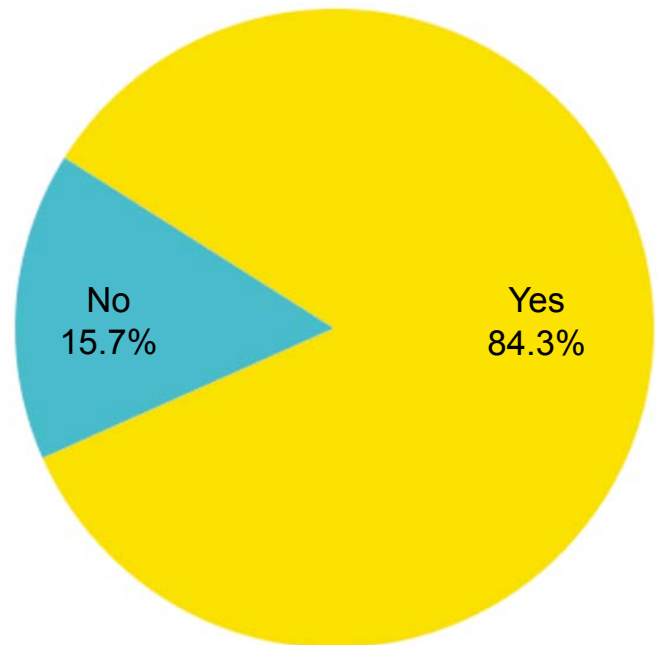
**HOW OFTEN DO YOU CURRENTLY
EXPERIENCE TEAR GAS IN CALAIS?
ALL RESPONDENTS**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU CURRENTLY
EXPERIENCE TEAR GAS IN CALAIS?
MINORS ONLY**



84.3% of respondents had been woken up by police whilst sleeping and forced to leave their sleeping spot. 84.9% of them described the incident as 'violent', while 3.1% said it had been 'peaceful'. 52% reported feeling 'scared' when this happened, while 37.7% felt 'angry' and 2.2% felt 'fine'. A 25-year old Sudanese male explained: "At night while sleeping we get woken up with tear gas and get kicked to move away."

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TOLD BY POLICE TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?
ALL RESPONDENTS



"AT NIGHT WHILE SLEEPING WE GET WOKEN UP WITH TEAR GAS AND GET KICKED TO MOVE AWAY."
25-year-old Sudanese man

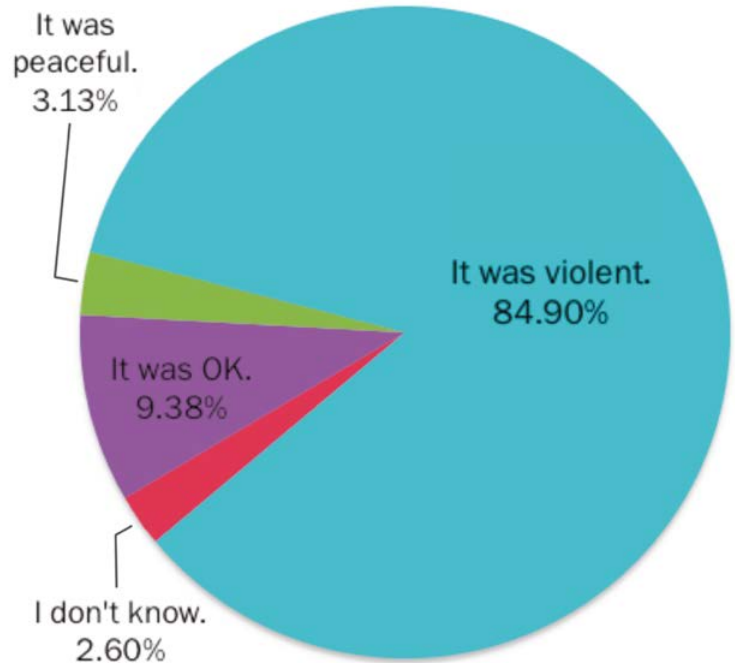
Photo credit: Yonas Tekeste

“EVERYTHING I LEAVE BEHIND THEY EITHER TAKE IT AWAY OR MAKE IT WET SO I CAN’T USE THEM AGAIN. IT IS VERY HORRIBLE.”

18-year-old Ethiopian man

These nightly police raids almost always included the use of tear gas or pepper spray, with the majority of respondents explaining that their sleeping bags and blankets usually get sprayed to prevent them from being used again. One 18-year old Ethiopian male explained: *“Everything I leave behind they either take it away or make it wet so I can’t use them again. It is very horrible.”*

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT OF BEING ASKED TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



**HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN BEING ASKED TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?
ALL RESPONDENTS**

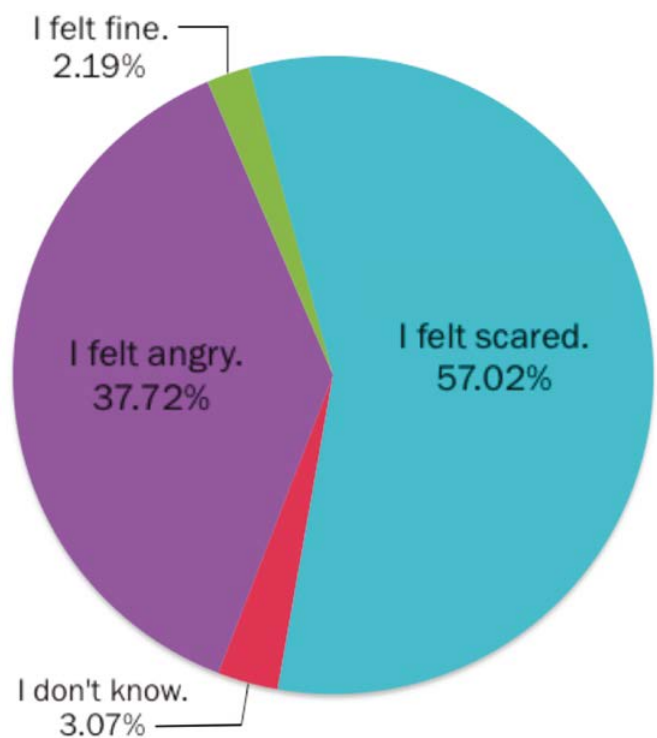


Photo credit: Samer Mustafa



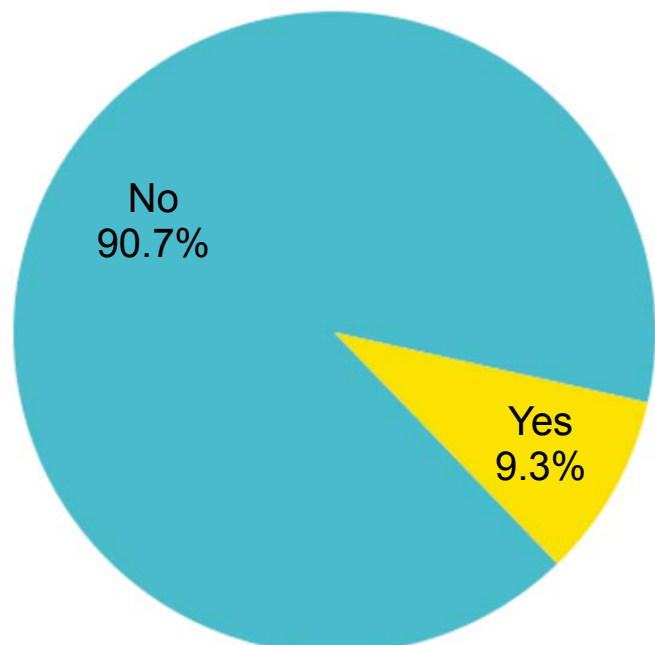
“WHILE I WAS SLEEPING, THEY CAME OVER AND SPRAYED ME ON MY FACE, THEY HIT ME WITH THEIR BATON ON MY KNEES WHICH LEFT ME NUMB. THEY TOOK MY SHOES AND TOLD ME TO LEAVE.”

16-year-old Afghan boy

Many respondents also explained having had additional belongings confiscated, including the shoes they were wearing as well as any spare clothes. One 23-year old Eritrean recounted: *“While I was sleeping, they came over and sprayed me on my face, they hit me with their baton on my knees which left me numb. They took my shoes and told me to leave.”* A 16-year old boy from Afghanistan explained a typical night in Calais: *“They [the police] spray tear gas in my face, they take my blanket and sometimes my shoes. Then they beat us with sticks and we run away.”* A large number of respondents similarly reported having had their shoes confiscated, which meant they had to run away barefoot in the wet and cold environment.

Uprooting individuals from their sleeping places, without suggesting a viable alternative, appears to be an official state practice in Calais. Based on the research findings, this practice appears to amount to intentional sleep deprivation, which would have a detrimental effect on the physical and mental health of displaced people in the area.

**DID THE POLICE TELL YOU WHERE YOU COULD GO INSTEAD?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

71.9% of respondents (72% of minors) had been arrested or detained during their time in France. According to respondents, displaced people in Calais are detained for a period of time ranging from a few hours to up to 45 days.

THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RELIEVE THEMSELVES ON THE FLOOR NEXT TO THEIR SLEEPING SPOT AND FELT HUMILIATED.

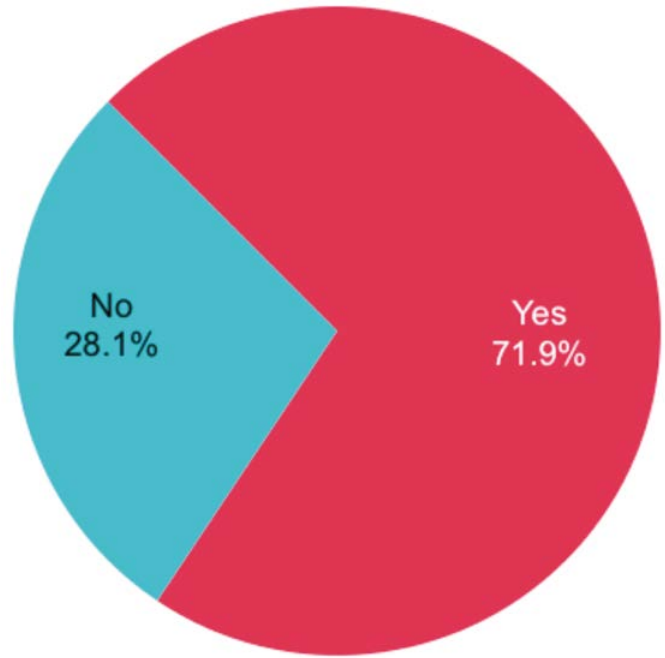
A number of respondents explained that they had been physically abused in the detention centre in Calais, whilst having access to very little water and food. One 22-year old man from Afghanistan recounted: *“The police arrested me and took me to the deport centre. They have taken me four times and I was kept there for several days with little food and only one bottle of water.”* A number of respondents reported in separate interviews that they had been held in a cell without a toilet. They had no choice but to relieve themselves on the floor next to their sleeping spot and felt humiliated.

A 17-year old Eritrean girl explained that the police had detained her and then drove her to a remote location where they left her at around 6pm. She then walked back to Calais for some three hours. She told researchers she felt scared as it was dark and she didn't know the directions.

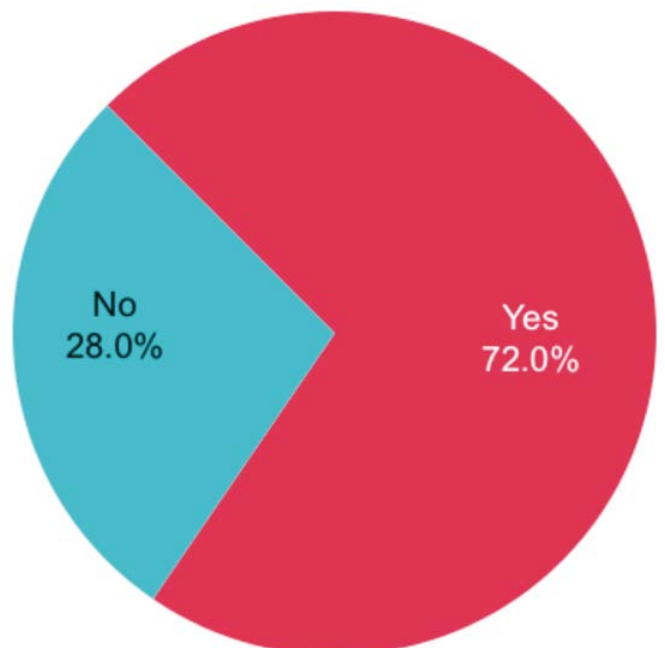
“THE POLICE ARRESTED ME AND TOOK ME TO THE DEPORT CENTRE. THEY HAVE TAKEN ME FOUR TIMES AND I WAS KEPT THERE FOR SEVERAL DAYS WITH LITTLE FOOD AND ONLY ONE BOTTLE OF WATER.”

22-year-old Afghan man

**HAVE YOU BEEN ARRESTED OR DETAINED IN CALAIS?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



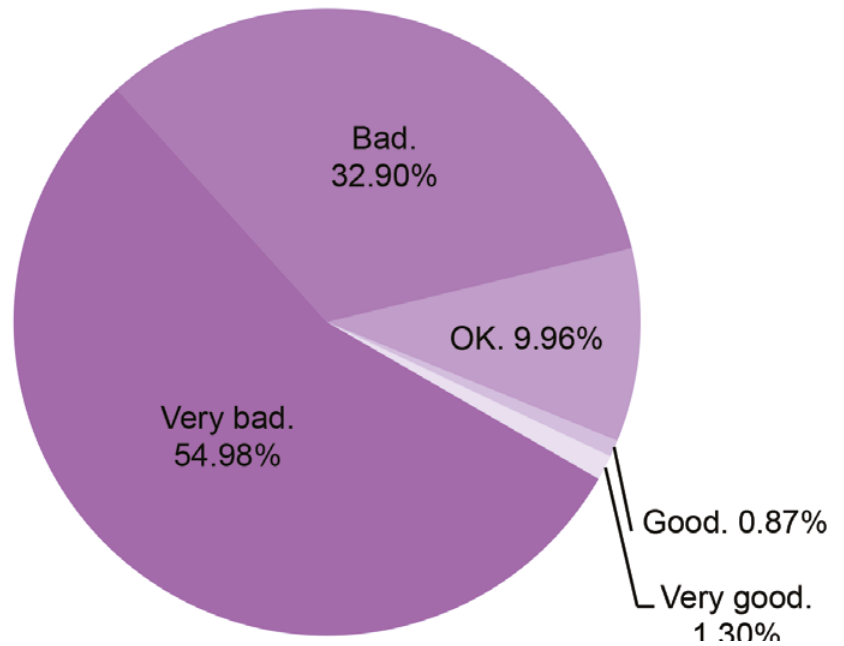
**HAVE YOU BEEN ARRESTED OR DETAINED IN CALAIS?
MINORS ONLY**



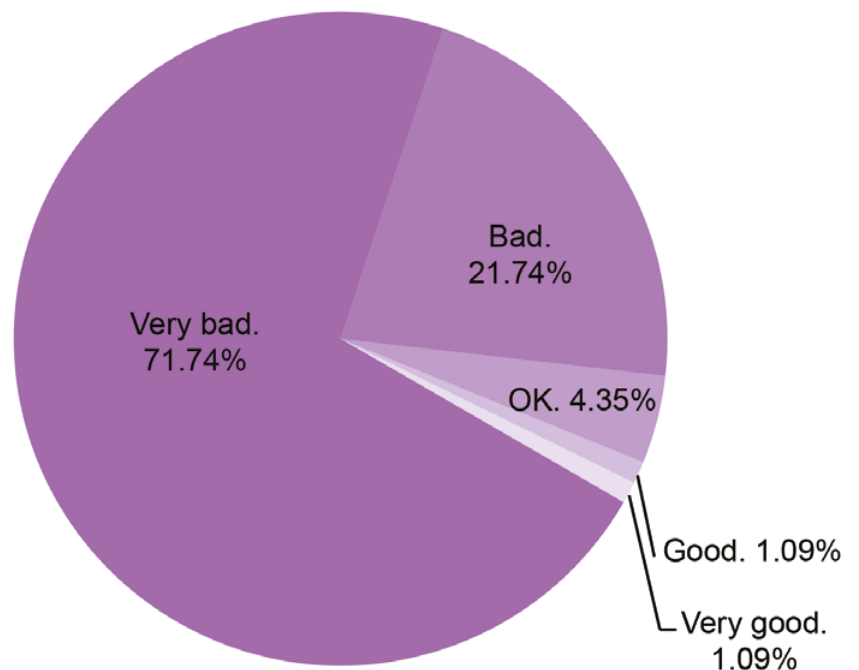
PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE

Overall, 87.9% of respondents described the police treatment of refugees as 'very bad' or 'bad'. This is a higher figure than during the time of the Calais camp (78.6%) and in April 2017 (81.4%) which signals a worsened perception of the police over time.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE POLICE TREATMENT IN CALAIS?
ALL RESPONDENTS



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE POLICE TREATMENT IN CALAIS?
MINORS ONLY



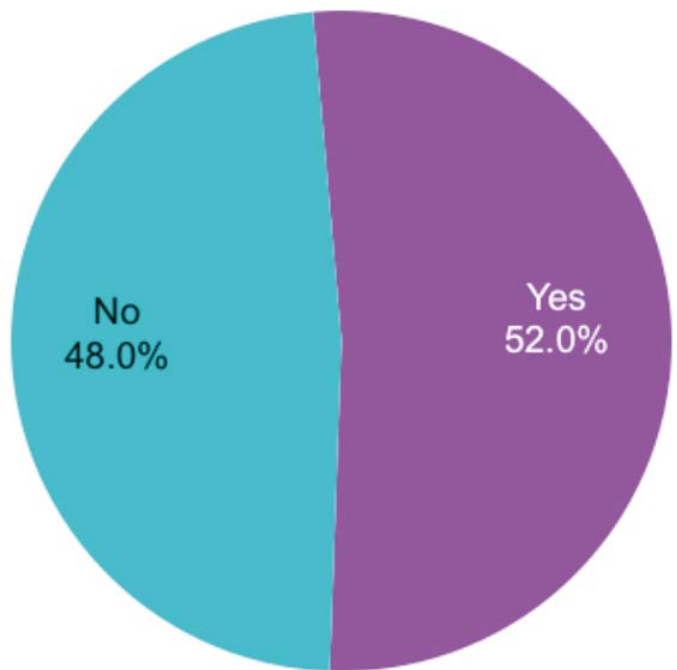
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

PHYSICAL HEALTH

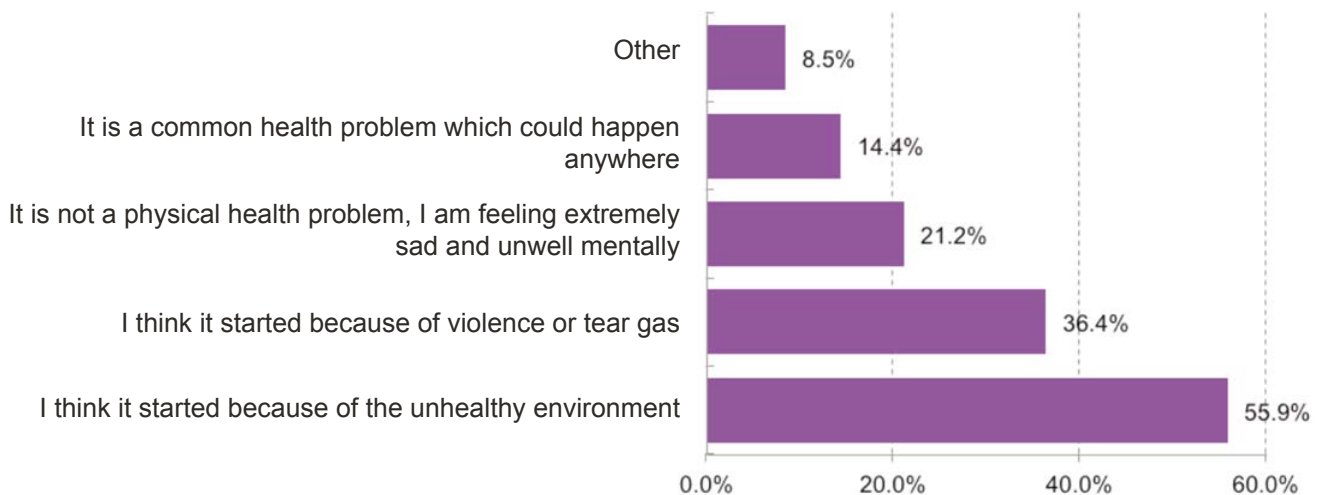
52% reported having experienced health problems in France. 55.9% of them believed that their health concern was a result of the unhealthy living environment, while 36.4% said it had been brought on by tear gas or other forms of police violence. For instance, one 16-year old boy from Eritrea explained: "I was in the forest when some police beat me up and I had to walk on crutches for four weeks." One 16-year old boy from Afghanistan explained that the police had broken his leg and now he has problems with his back. A number of respondents showed the research team serious injuries sustained through episodes of violent police treatment or chase.

The sustained use of tear gas and pepper spray is demonstrably bringing on additional health problems for displaced people in the area. Several respondents demonstrated skin conditions, including rashes, burns and peeling, whilst others said they had developed problems with their eyesight.

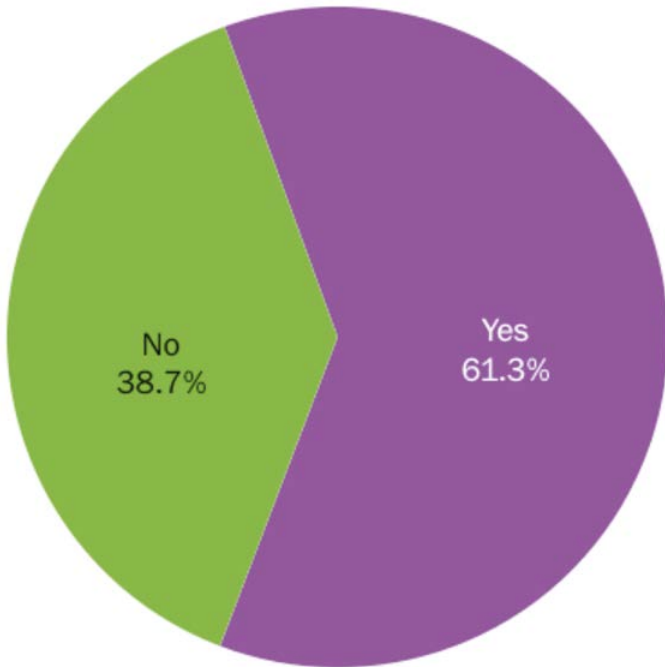
HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY HEALTH PROBLEMS IN FRANCE? ALL RESPONDENTS



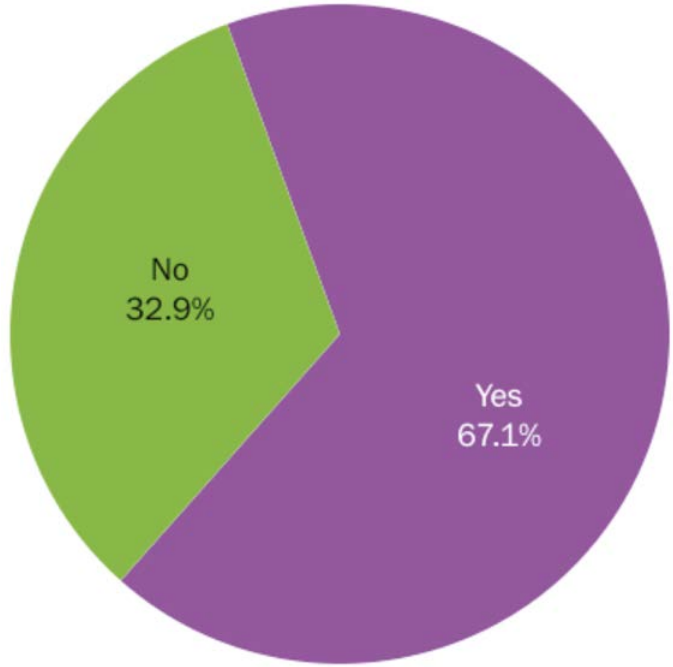
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HEALTH PROBLEM? ALL RESPONDENTS



HAVE YOU RECEIVED MEDICAL CARE IN FRANCE?
ALL RESPONDENTS



HAVE YOU RECEIVED MEDICAL CARE IN FRANCE?
MINORS ONLY



ONE AFGHAN RESPONDENT SAID HE HAD BEEN MET WITH HOSTILITY IN THE LOCAL HOSPITAL AND WAS TOLD TO LEAVE.

Some health issues pre-dated the arrival in Europe but were exacerbated by the conditions in France. One 27-year old Sudanese man explained: *“I have a heart problem from my country. I had an appointment with the doctor, but before I could go they deported me to Italy”*.

61.3% of respondents (67.1% of minors) had received medical care in France. While many

respondents seemed relatively enthusiastic about the care provided by NGOs and charities in the area, others appeared upset about the way they had been treated in the local hospital. One Afghan respondent said he had been met with hostility in the local hospital and was told to leave.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health issues appear endemic in Calais. A whole 21.2% of those with health issues self-declared that these issues were mental health issues rather than a physical ailment. This is a markedly higher figure than in April 2017 (16.4%). A significant number of respondents were observed by RRE’s research team speaking to themselves, and several respondents mentioned that one of their peers appeared to be *“going crazy”*. Some of the young boys told the research team that one of their peers, a 12-year old boy from Afghanistan, had recently self-harmed and

tried to kill himself because he is so unhappy with his situation.

THE ONGOING POLICE RAIDS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO GET MORE THAN A FEW HOURS’ SLEEP PER NIGHT, IF ANY AT ALL.

Many respondents cited the lack of sleep as the main factor making them feel mentally unwell, and others cited the seemingly

hopeless situation in which they found themselves. A significant number of respondents were using sleeping pills to relax and try to get some sleep at night. However, the ongoing police raids make it difficult for people to get more than a few hours’ sleep per night, if any at all.

AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS

The vast majority of respondents appear to be in the area due to its proximity to the UK border, with 92.2% believing that the UK is the best country for them.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS

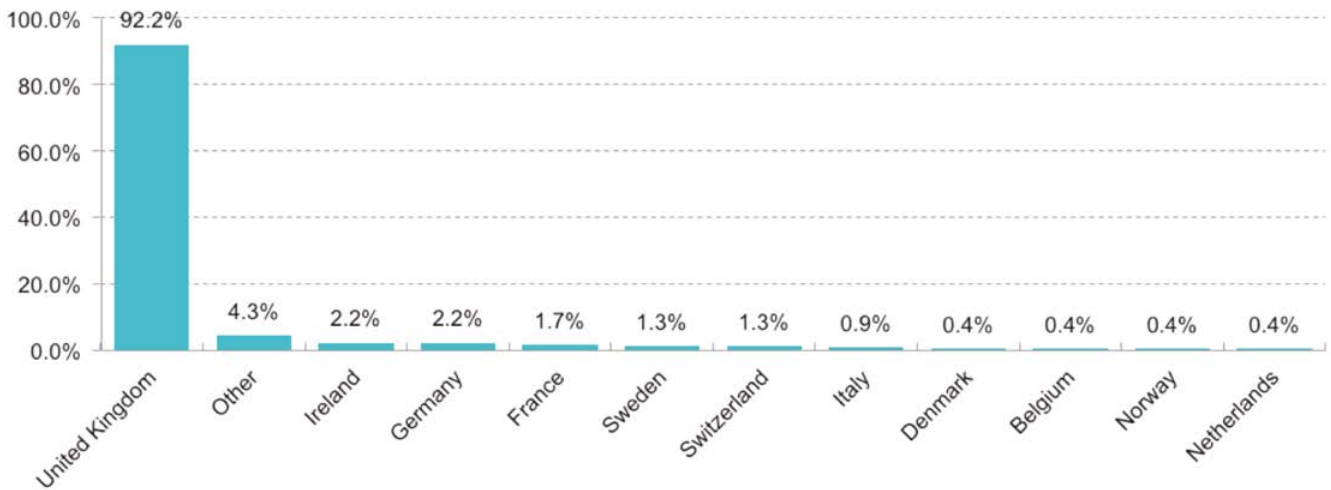


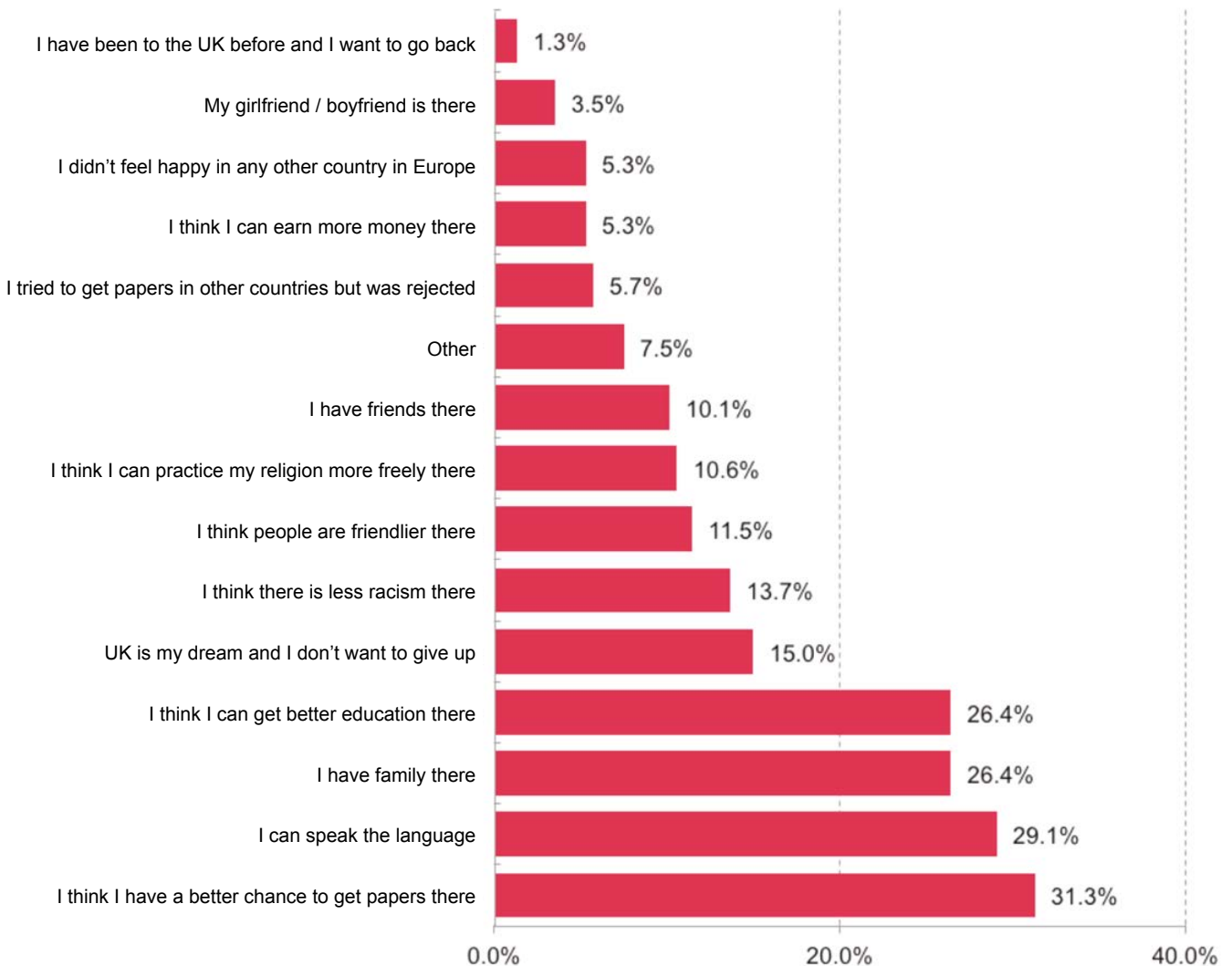
Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

The most commonly cited reason for favouring the UK over other European countries was the belief that they would have a greater chance to obtain asylum, ie refugee status, in the UK than in other countries (31.3%), followed by language reasons (29.1%), having family in the UK (26.4%) and the belief that they could receive a better education in the UK (26.4%).

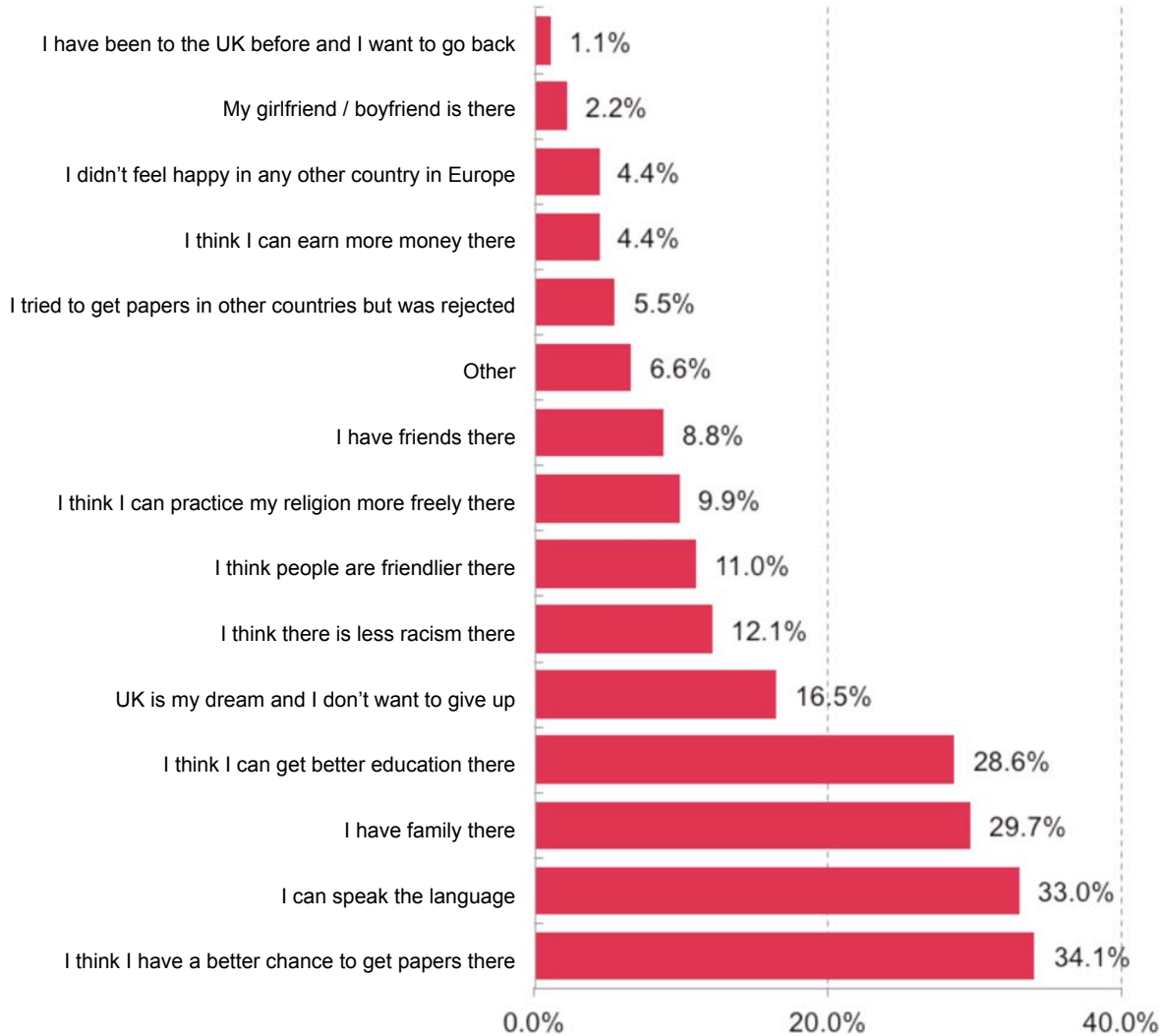


Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS



**WHY DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU?
MINORS ONLY**

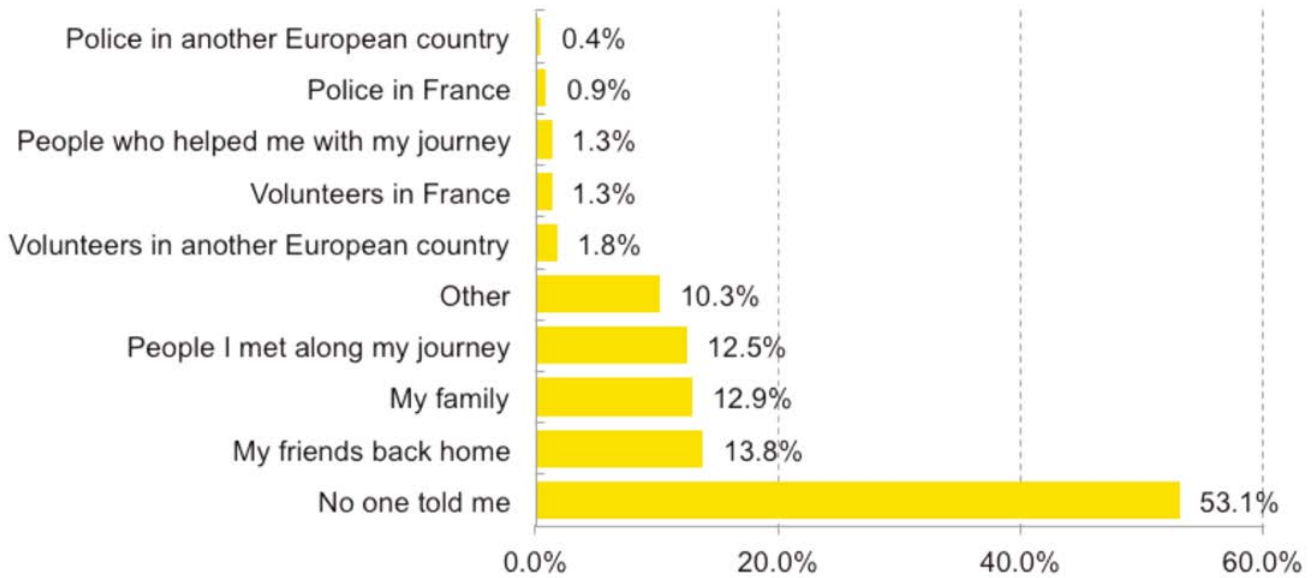


When asked who had told them that the UK would be the best country for them, the majority said 'no one' had told them (53.1%). 13.8% said their friends back home had told them, while 12.9% had been told by family, and 12.5% had been told by people they met along the journey.

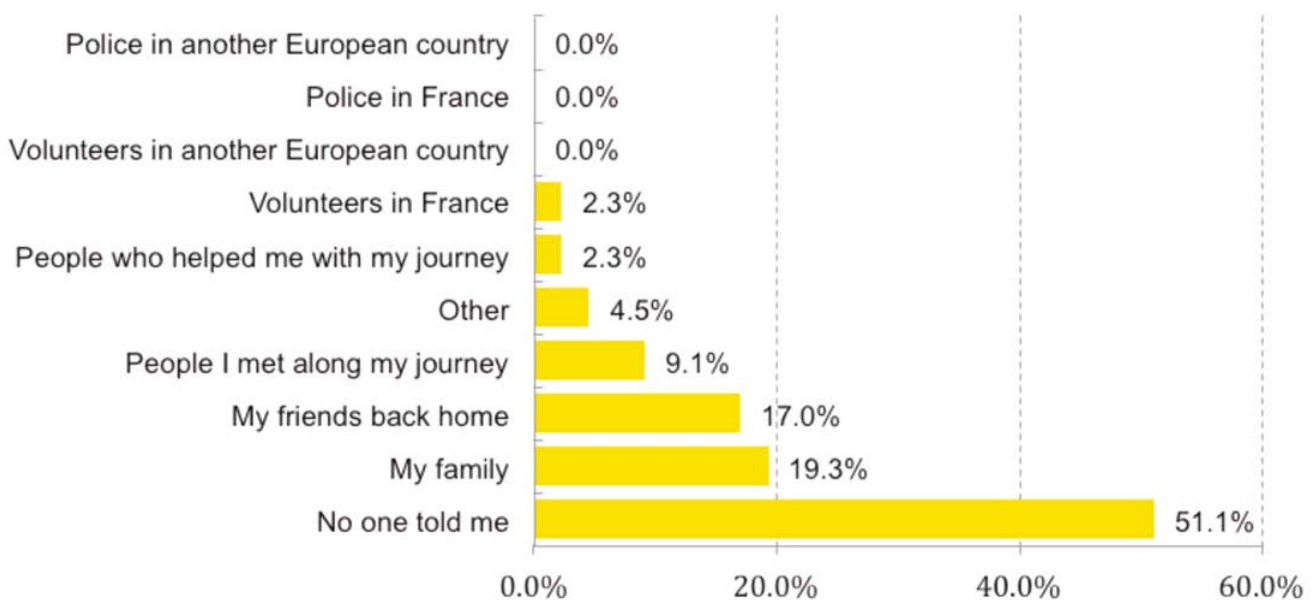
When asked where they would go if the UK didn't exist, nearly half of respondents were unable or unwilling to give an answer, saying they wouldn't want to go anywhere else. Some respondents said they would 'rather die' than give up on the UK. A small number of respondents said they would go to countries such as Ireland, Germany, Switzerland or Sweden whilst others said they would like to go to any safe country if they were granted protection through asylum there.



WHO TOLD YOU THE UK IS THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU?
ALL RESPONDENTS



WHO TOLD YOU THE UK IS THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU?
MINORS ONLY



A number of respondents interviewed seemed to consider asylum in the UK to be their 'last resort'. For instance, one 22-year old respondent from Eritrea told the research team that he had been fingerprinted by police in Italy who, despite telling him that his fingerprints would only be used by police rather than going to the Eurodac database, was subsequently rejected when he tried to seek asylum in Germany. He therefore decided to try to reach the UK where he hopes he will be able to seek asylum and have his case accepted. An Afghan youth had ended up in Calais following a deportation order from Norway where he had lived and gone to school for three years. He feared deportation and therefore took matters into own hands and escaped to Calais.

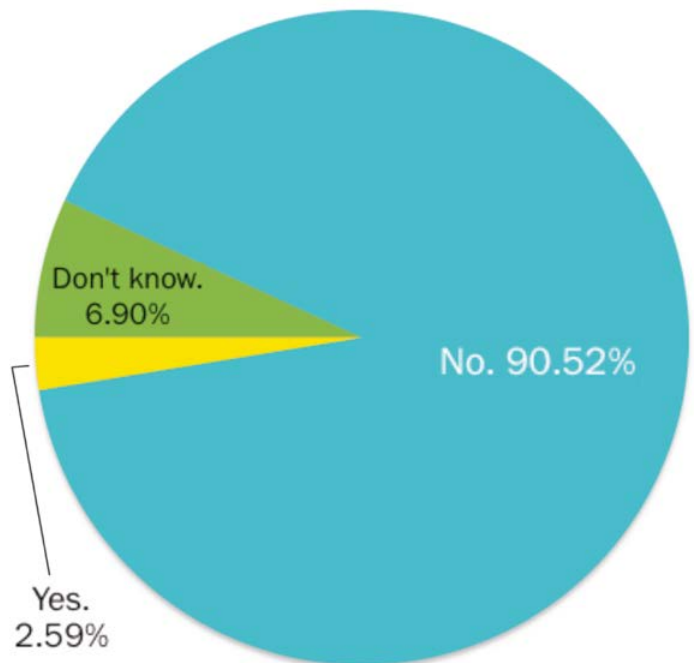
WHEN ASKED WHY THEY DO NOT WISH TO REMAIN IN FRANCE, THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS CITED POLICE BRUTALITY, HOSTILITY AND FEARS OF NOT HAVING THEIR ASYLUM GRANTED AS MAIN REASONS.

When asked why they do not wish to remain in France, the majority of respondents cited police brutality, hostility and fears of not having their asylum granted as main reasons. One 19-year old Sudanese youth explained: *"There's no safety here, no shelter. I've been left in the streets in France, it's no way to live."* Many also cited having family in the UK and better education opportunities as a reason for wanting to carry on with their journey. One boy explained: *"I don't think the French education is for me and I have also heard that they reject people on their application for housing here."* A 17-year old Eritrean similarly suggested: *"The government is not good. No paper. No food. No education. If they give me asylum I will stay."* One 22-year old Ethiopian man said: *"It's horrible here"*.

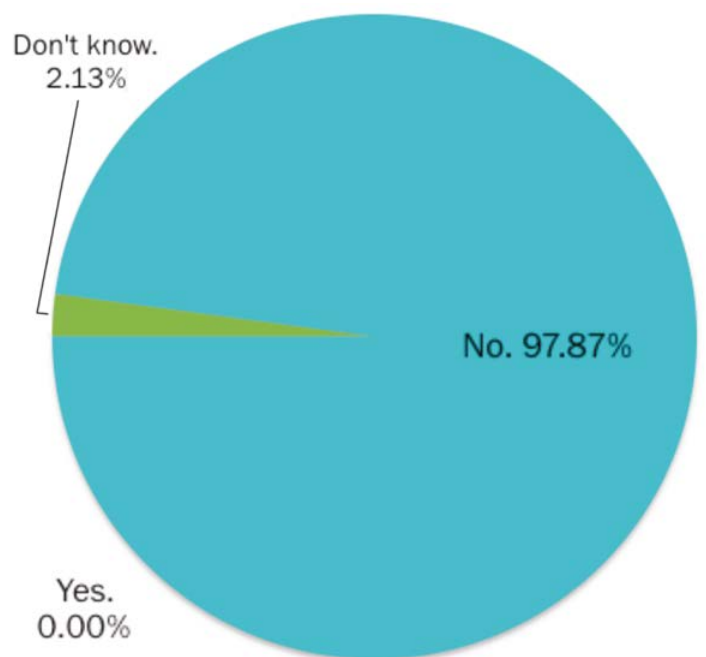
"IF THEY GIVE ME ASYLUM I WILL STAY"

22-year-old Ethiopian man

**DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN FRANCE?
ALL RESPONDENTS**



**DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN FRANCE?
MINORS ONLY**



7.3% had previously stayed in a French accommodation centre. The main reason respondents gave for having left the centre was the poor treatment they received. Respondents explained that they felt mistreated in the centres, and felt stressed due to the curfew imposed upon them. A number of Sudanese respondents cited the obligation to leave their fingerprints as a reason for having left the centre. Others expressed having felt isolated and lonely. One 26-year old male from Afghanistan said: *"The city I was sent to [Caen] felt unwelcoming and racist. I felt very alone there, as there are not many Afghans, and I got mugged several times."*

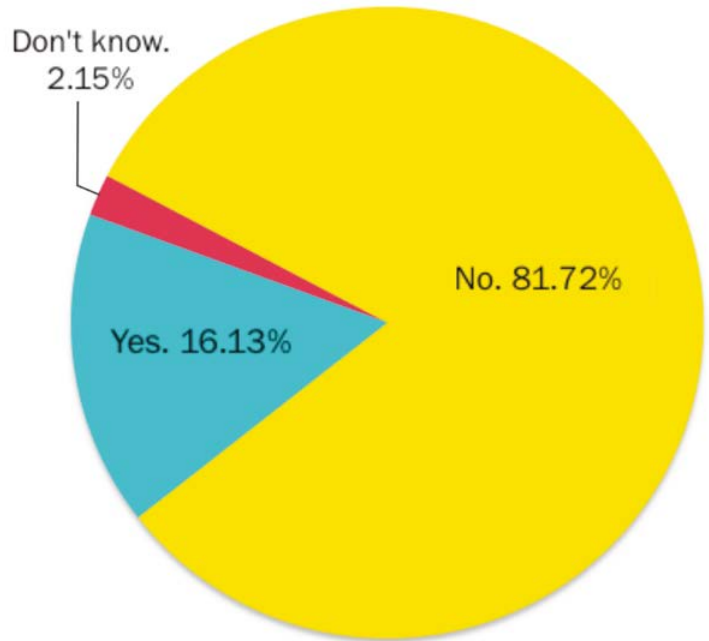
Many respondents also cited the lack of information given to them about their asylum-claims as a reason for leaving. One 18-year old Ethiopian youth said: *"I left and it was very stressful. I didn't feel safe or that anything was getting done for me."* An 18-year old Afghan explained: *"I was told I could go to the UK legally through the centre, but there was no result so I left."*

THE MAIN REASON RESPONDENTS GAVE FOR HAVING LEFT THE CENTRE WAS THE POOR TREATMENT THEY RECEIVED.

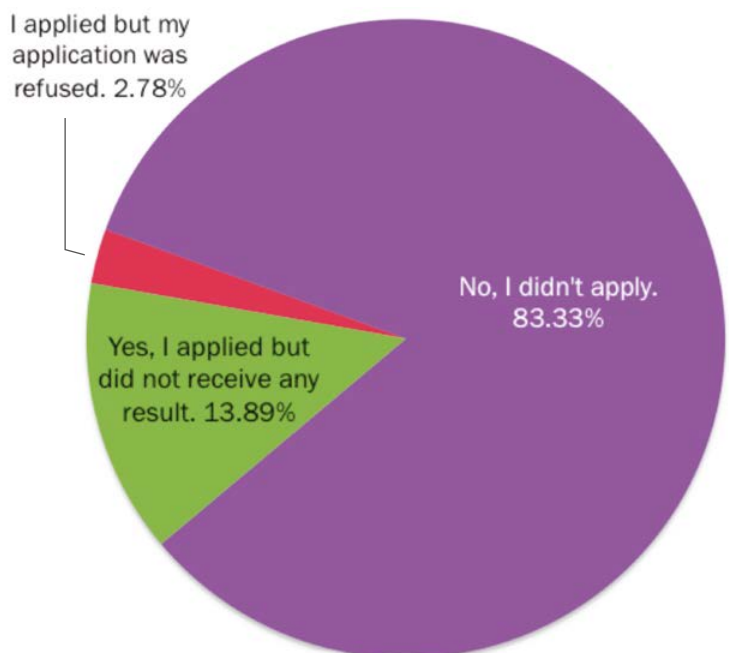
16.1% of minors had been staying in the state-run centre for minors in Saint-Omer. The main reason for leaving appears to have been the fact that nothing was done to progress their asylum-related cases.

A 16-year old Eritrean boy said: *"I am underage and I asked if I could get processed but they don't seem to care or do anything"*. A 17-year old boy from Ethiopia said: *"I tried to stay in France but it's difficult to get help."* A Sudanese 17-year old explained that he had left because they were not treating him well in the centre. A 15-year old Afghan boy added: *"I don't want to stay even if they kill me."* The same respondent explained that he had left Afghanistan three years ago, at the age of 12. His brother is currently in the UK and he is trying to join him there. He once paid a solicitor and an interpreter but he claims they didn't help him. One of the friends he met in Europe tried to apply for family reunification under the Dublin regulations but had no success, so he has now lost faith in the legal route. He explained that he has no money left to pay a smuggler, so he attempts to jump on lorries every night.

HAVE YOU EVER STAYED IN THE FRENCH ACCOMMODATION CENTRE FOR MINORS IN SAINT-OMER? MINORS ONLY



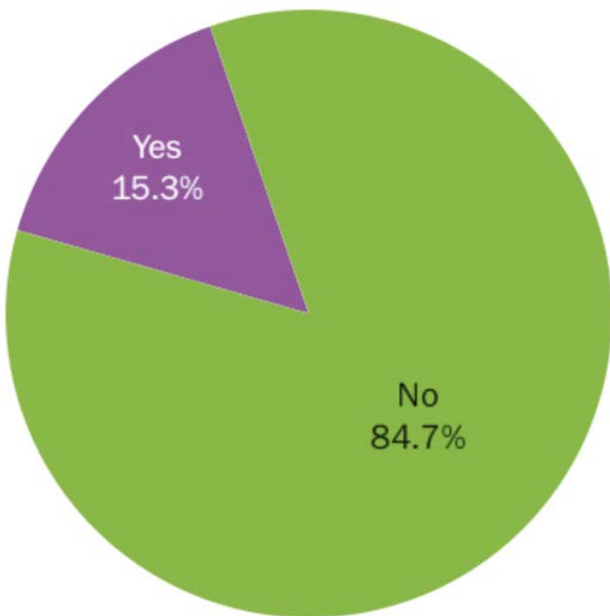
HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION? MINORS ONLY



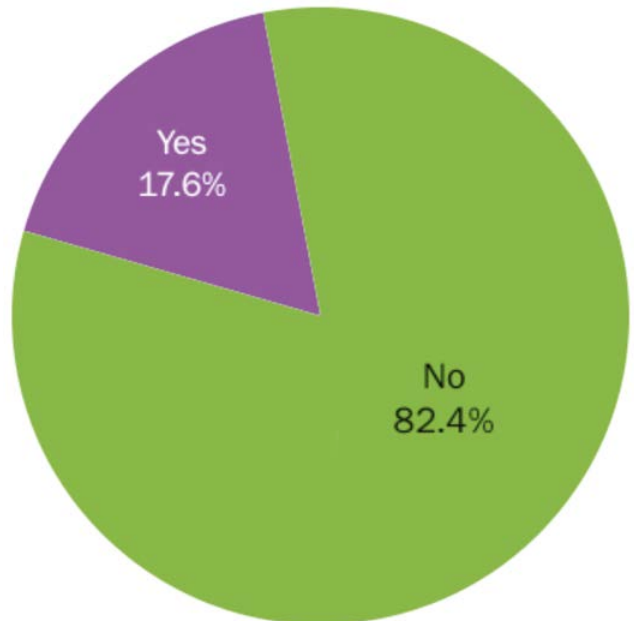
ACCESS TO INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ALTERNATIVES

A whole 84.7% of respondents were lacking access to information about their rights and opportunities to change their current situation. 88.5% said they were unable to access information about European immigration and asylum rules.

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION?
ALL RESPONDENTS



DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION?
MINORS ONLY



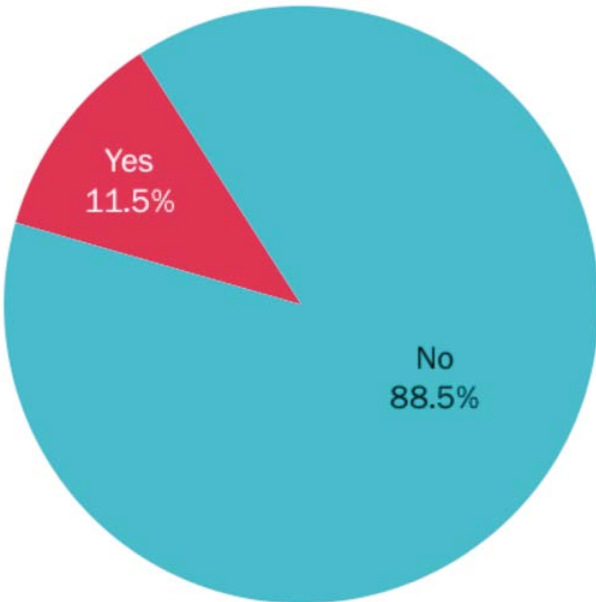
“I WAS TOLD I COULD GO TO THE UK LEGALLY THROUGH THE CENTRE, BUT THERE WAS NO RESULT SO I LEFT.”

18-year-old Afghan man

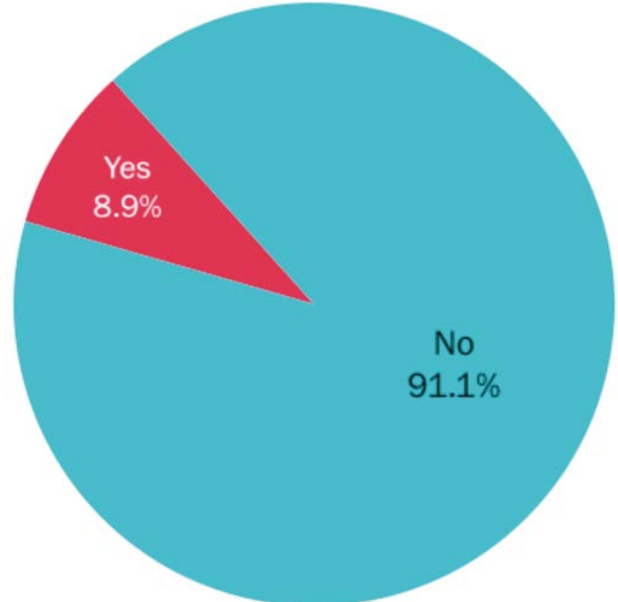


Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM RULES?
ALL RESPONDENTS

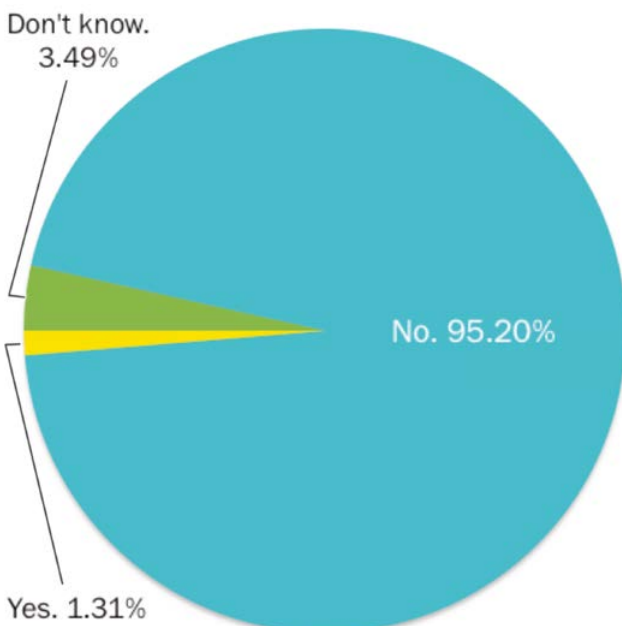


DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM RULES?
MINORS ONLY

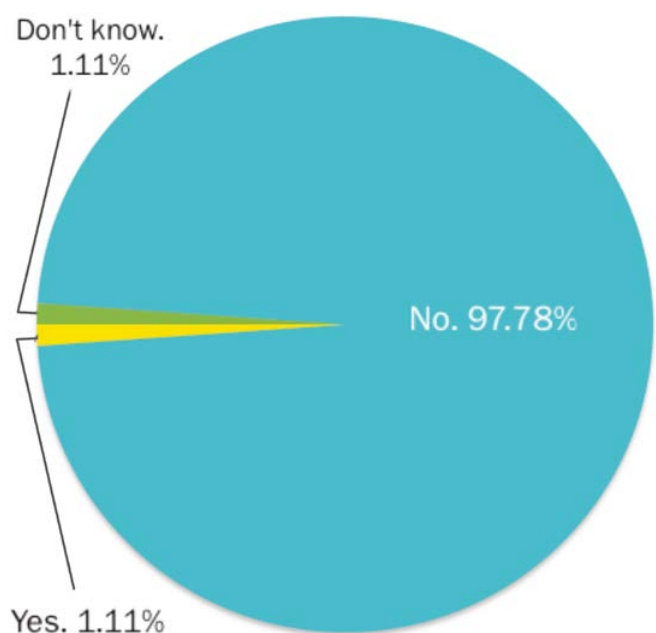


95.2% said they are unable to go back to their country of origin, largely for fear of conflict, war or persecution.

CAN YOU GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN?
ALL RESPONDENTS



CAN YOU GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN?
MINORS ONLY



CONCLUSION

The research findings outlined in this report highlight the extent of the human rights crisis and child protection failure taking place in the Calais area.

Twelve months on from the demolition of the Calais camp, it is clear that the situation remains unsolved and has, in many respects, deteriorated steadily over the last twelve months.

Specifically, the research findings highlight the following key concerns:

POLICE VIOLENCE

The level of police violence appears to have intensified since RRE's research during the time of the Calais camp and in April 2017, with respondents' overall perception of the police treatment having worsened steadily. As corroborated by many of the police brutality cases reported to the RRE research team, the use of force by the police appears to have been disproportionate and indiscriminate (e.g. breaking of limbs, pushing people off lorries resulting in severe physical injuries, and deploying police dogs without muzzles). In many cases, the

police violence appears to have amounted to excessive abuse, when used against displaced people who posed no threat (e.g. spraying of tear gas or pepper spray whilst people were sleeping or walking along the main street). Additionally, in a large number of cases, the police practices appear to have been largely non-sensical and counter-productive (e.g. confiscation of mobile phones and shoes, breaking of teeth, as well as the act of dispersing unaccompanied girls to remote areas thus exposing them to increased risk).

CHILD PROTECTION

It appears as though little, if anything, has been done to address the situation of the several hundred children circulating in the area since our last research in Calais in April 2017. The authorities and police seem to be making no distinction between unaccompanied minors and adults in their treatment and approach; the child protection failure unfolding in the area is striking. According to the research findings, children continue to avoid the state-run centre for minors in Saint-Omer, signalling that this is by no means a viable child protection

mechanism. Instead, children as young as 12-years of age are sleeping rough in the forests around Calais, risking their lives by jumping on lorries or resorting to smugglers or traffickers in order to reach the UK. The absence of social workers, interpreters and healthcare professionals in the Calais area remains unaddressed, which continues to alienate children from the severely limited state services and protection mechanisms that are in place.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The situation in Calais continues to be characterised by a striking absence of information and support structures for the displaced people in the area, especially on the part of the French authorities. While the current hostile and violent environment in France pushes individuals further towards pursuing their goal of entering the UK, the lack of viable alternatives and guidance

means few will try to pursue legal routes and will rather take matters into own hands. Any reasonable attempt to resolve the situation will require a more humane approach which aims to provide sufficient information and guidance, and which favours effective communication via interpreters over the excessive use of police violence and intimidation techniques.

Based on these research findings, RRE recommends the following:

On the French side: There is an urgent need to provide more humane standards on French soil. The current state approach of police brutality and intimidation does little to resolve the unsustainable situation that continues to unfold in and around Calais. Such practices need to be urgently replaced by an approach which takes into account the human rights of the individuals in the area. Despite the recent ruling of the Conseil d'état reaffirming the state's obligation to install water

points, toilets, showers, and daily outreach for minors in Calais, it is evident that the state is yet to take appropriate action to ensure displaced people's access to food, water and other basic needs is secured. This must be combined with a strengthened state effort to provide viable alternatives through dissemination of relevant information and effective communication channels through trained interpreters.

On the British side: Given the direct relevance of the situation to the UK government, decisive action ought to be taken in relation to the vulnerable children on the streets of Calais. The implementation of safe legal routes should be considered a matter of priority for the UK Government; many of these children could be granted protection in the UK

under the 'Dubs' scheme or may be eligible for family reunification under Dublin III. Safe legal routes are integral in combating the growing power of traffickers known to exploit vulnerable children and adults in the area, and must not be delayed any further.



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

As such, effective and long-lasting policy action by the French and UK Governments is urgently needed to secure the human rights of refugees and displaced people in Calais. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be at the centre of any policy initiative to ensure that refugees and displaced people are given the protection and opportunity expected by international standards. In sum, the British and French governments still have an urgent role to play in the development of this humanitarian crisis, twelve months on from the demolition of the Calais camp.



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