



# NEITHER SAFE NOR SOUND

Unaccompanied children  
on the coastline  
of the English Channel  
and the North Sea

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## DEFINITIONS

**Unaccompanied child** – this study uses the phrase “unaccompanied child” to refer to the children we encountered who were travelling alone; it is not reflective of a legal definition.

**Migrant** – the term “migrant” is used throughout the study, but many of the children interviewed fall under the definition of refugee.

**Smuggler / trafficker** – the children we spoke to during the course of the study did not always differentiate between a smuggler (where the purpose of moving or harbouring a child is solely monetary) and a trafficker (where the purpose is exploitation); as such the term “passeur” was used in the French version, which has subsequently been translated to “trafficker” in English given the nature of the testimonies provided by children.

## FOREWORD

### **MARIE-PIERRE POIRIER**

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in Europe*

Since January 2015, some 1.2 million people have made the perilous journey across the Mediterranean in an attempt to reach Europe. This mass movement of refugees and migrants is one of the largest the continent has seen in its history.

One striking feature has been the growing number of children among those reaching Europe's shores. In June 2015, one in ten of the refugees and migrants was a child. By the end of December it was one in three. Today, children make up 40 percent of the refugees and migrants stranded in Greece.

This study brings us some of the human stories behind these dramatic numbers. At the centre of the study is the plight of unaccompanied children living in a number of different camps in northern France and along the coast of the English Channel. Through their testimonies, we learn about their journeys. Some of the children have paid between 2.700 euros and 10.000 euros to reach France, for a journey which can take anywhere between 15 days to 7 months. As the study shows, the majority of children come from countries torn by war and conflict: Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and Syria. Others travel from zones of economic and social breakdown.

Throughout their journeys, refugee and migrant children suffer terribly – stranded at borders, forced to sleep in the open, exposed to rain and heat; left without access to basic services, and easy prey for smugglers and traffickers. Unaccompanied and separated children are at particular risk. Most of the children who reach Europe come in search of safety and protection, and with the hope of a better future. But reaching Europe does not bring an end to the dangers they face.

The study shows that once the children reach France they have limited access to hygiene facilities and food and no access to education. Threats to their safety are incessant, and the children don't benefit from protection mechanisms. The study also demonstrates how the current procedures of family reunification are far from effective. The situation in other European countries is similar. This is truly a children's crisis in Europe.

It is against this background that UNICEF has shaped its response in support of refugee and migrant children. In the West Balkans, since September 2015,

more than 140,000 children have been assisted in different ways, receiving psychosocial support, specialised healthcare, warm clothes, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene services through UNICEF mother-and-baby spaces. Children on the move have been provided a safe space to play, where they can share their stories with professional staff, receive advice and be shown how to access the services they need.

However, the prime responsibility to respect and protect the rights of refugee and migrant children lies with the State on whose territory the children find themselves. The migration status of the child is no reason for States to neglect their commitments to respect child rights. Moreover, the protection of refugee and migrant children requires cross-border collaboration between States and service providers along the routes taken by children and their families.

With no end in sight to the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe, it is our role as UNICEF to monitor the situation of children and the impact State policies have on the realisation of their rights. We will continue to advocate for the strengthening of child protection systems, for example, through policy advice and the building of capacity among national actors. This current study should be seen in this light, reflecting as it does the voices of children and providing concrete recommendations to the authorities. UNICEF hopes such recommendations will be translated into effective protection measures for children. In this way, France can truly become a champion for the rights of refugee and migrant children in Europe.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This sociological study analyses the risks to which the unaccompanied children living in the various slums located in the north of France and along the coast of the English Channel are exposed. It was carried out between January and April 2016 across seven sites (Calais, Grande-Synthe, Angres, Norrent Fontes, Steenvoorde, Tatinghem, and Cherbourg). This research is based on 61 individual and group interviews with unaccompanied children, conducted in their mother tongue at their various places of residence (slums, Jules Ferry centre, temporary reception centre or at the new Grande-Synthe humanitarian centre). The team supplemented this information with documentary research and interviews with on-site workers and individuals who were qualified to comment on the conditions (economic, political) within each country.

<sup>1</sup> This resulting statistic is indicative. The counting method used could have resulted in the same young person being counted multiple times.

Of the children and young people who were interviewed, three were aged 11 to 12, nine were aged 13 to 14 and forty-nine were aged 15 to 17, and were either Afghan, Egyptian, Syrian, Kurdish (Iranian and Iraqi), Sudanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Kuwaiti, Guinean or Vietnamese. The meetings lasted up to 90 minutes.

**The estimates made regarding the number of unaccompanied children in the region are unreliable due to the lack of registration and monitoring of children by the authorities as well as the mobility of these children.**

The figures are based on the counts taken in Calais and Grande-Synthe by various actors at different times. In accordance with our observations and taking into account the provided data, we estimate that in March 2016, there were around 500 unaccompanied children living on the seven identified sites in the region. Taking flows into account, over the course of one year, this shows a significantly higher number of unaccompanied children. By way of example, during 2015, France Terre d'Asile (FTDA) received 1,403 children<sup>1</sup> who had come from just the Calais «jungle» alone. Based on the attempted censuses, which have been carried out by various organisations since the beginning of 2016, we are able to estimate that around 2,000 unaccompanied children have passed through the different sites since June 2015.

All the children interviewed as part of this study complained of cold and fatigue. The most vulnerable among them were living in shelters that were very much exposed to the elements and had difficulty in accessing the distributed meals

as well as showers. **As a result of heightened security at the borders, the unaccompanied children have been staying in the slums along the coast for longer, meaning that these extremely difficult living conditions are having a greater impact on their health. Based on our sample, the average duration of their stay in the «jungle» was five months;** some children had been on the coast for nine months and one had been there for over a year.

**None of the unaccompanied children have access to regular schooling, despite the fact that this is mandatory. Many told us that they cannot stand the ongoing inactivity that they must endure whilst waiting to attempt to cross over each night, which can lead to nervousness and symptoms of depression in certain individuals.** Some unaccompanied children spoke to the Doctors of the World team of their desire to be hospitalised in a psychiatric ward following instances of mental breakdown and aggressive and violent episodes (directed towards themselves or other young people).

**The migrants living in the slums along the coast are exposed to many types of violence-related risks on a daily basis during their attempts to cross, during fights between the various communities or during police operations.** Fights between migrants are becoming more and more commonplace, particularly in Calais, and especially since the southern part of the «jungle» was evacuated, which has exacerbated the precarious conditions that characterise the places in which they live. On account of their vulnerability, children are among those at greatest risk from these types of violence.

**The main fears expressed by the children during the meetings were the violence displayed by the police, civilian militias and traffickers, as well as sexual assault committed against both girls and boys.**

On most of the sites included in the study, an “entry fee” is levied by the traffickers before the children are allowed to stay there. The unaccompanied children who are unable to pay find themselves forced to agree to perform laborious tasks for the adults: searching for water, queuing for the showers on behalf of the adults, doing the cleaning around the container whilst they are staying at the temporary reception centre, reselling food collected during distributions at the informal night-time market which operates in the Calais “jungle”, and other such activities.

**In order to further substantiate the risks to which the unaccompanied children are exposed, the team examined the entire migratory journey and its dangers. Depending on nationality and place of origin, the reasons that led to the individual’s departure for Europe are strongly linked to a high level of insecurity in the country and the total lack of a professional future.** Most of the children interviewed resorted to the use of traffickers.

**In order to reach France, they are charged anything between €2,700 and €10,000.** The routes taken differ according to the person's financial means. For the more affluent unaccompanied children, the journey is organised and paid for before they leave their country of origin. A guide (referred to as "uncle") takes over in each new country they cross and escorts the children to the border. The unaccompanied children who come from poorer families must get by using their own means and negotiate with the local traffickers in each country. This difference between "guaranteed" passage and that which is achieved on a country-by-country basis explains the widely varying durations of time spent travelling for the young people who were interviewed, which ranged from 15 days to 7 months.

**Regardless of the chosen method, the route remains highly dangerous.** Several children told us that they had been held by a number of different criminal groups and a ransom demand sent to their family. Some had to work under near slave-like conditions for many months in order to pay for their journey. Others were detained for periods by the local authorities. Relations with this "uncle", paid by the traffickers to escort a group of children from one point to another, were rarely benevolent in nature. We heard accounts of children who walked too slowly being abandoned in the mountains. In many cases, the sea crossing between Turkey and Greece, or Libya/Egypt and Italy, has proven to be traumatising (for example, loss of loved ones, sense of impending death). Sexual abuse also appears to be commonplace. This was confirmed by those who were interviewed.

As different points of passage (such as parking areas for lorries or trains) have been secured by the authorities, this has made it practically impossible for those who are trying to cross over to the United Kingdom to find a way to do so without help from traffickers. The cost of crossing the English Channel has never been higher: between €5,000 and €7,000 per person. This situation forces the unaccompanied children to take significant risks in order to pass through without paying (by hiding themselves in refrigerated lorries or inside containers, for example).

**The protection of unaccompanied children is a state obligation, as laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.** In France, the departmental councils are the leading agency with respect to child protection. Each department creates its own intervention plan. These differ according to region, but are almost exclusively based on the participation of the young person in an integration project in France. Consequently, the responses to the situation offered by these plans are too fragmented to benefit these young people, who come from a wide range of backgrounds, are vulnerable and mobile, moving from one department to another and for some, regularly staying in Paris for periods of time. The Pas-de-Calais Departmental Council has implemented a system, managed by the organisation FTDA, which attempts to deal with the issue of

unaccompanied children to some extent. Over 80% of the unaccompanied children integrated into this system have been contacted by those working for the organisation. The FTDA teams visit the Calais "jungle" almost every day as well as occasionally visiting the sites at Norrent Fontes and Tatinghem. Various charitable organisations, involving either activists or citizens, are also active within the slums and have regular contact with the unaccompanied children. There is no specific system in place in the Manche and Nord departments and no form of intervention on the sites has been implemented. The organisational actors, mostly charitable, and who are not trained in working with children at risk, are by default primarily responsible for identifying the young individuals.

**Across all the sites, the impossibility of getting the young people to speak on a confidential basis, the constant presence from the adults of their community, the lack of privacy in the slums and the negative perception of the reception centres among the unaccompanied children make it almost impossible to form a bond with the children and reduce the ability of the organisational workers to have an impact.**

Furthermore, the alternative accommodation and reception systems such as those at the Jules Ferry Centre and the temporary reception centre, which are managed by La Vie Active, do not hold the required authorisation or possess the necessary framework to receive and house unaccompanied children. In addition to this, the dedicated sites that do exist are full and this investigation highlights a desperate lack of accommodation. Consequently, in order to be awarded a place in the accommodation centres, the unaccompanied children are forced to declare themselves adults or must come forward accompanied by an older "cousin" or "uncle", which puts them at greater risk of being manipulated by malicious adults.

The unaccompanied children living in the "jungles" of Calais, Grande-Synthe and on the other sites are often viewed by the majority of actors as young people in transit, with an "unwavering determination to cross the English Channel", to whom it is therefore impossible to suggest a project that will offer them protection in France. Only the family reunification process, as described by the EU Regulation of the 26th June 2013, known as "Dublin III", which establishes the deciding criteria and mechanisms by which the responsible member state is to assess an application for international protection, can be suggested to them. This process, which provides a restrictive interpretation of the term "family", is long (due in particular to the ad hoc nomination of a guardian), complex, poorly controlled and has been rarely used by the organisations by their own admission. Since the beginning of 2016 (between the beginning of 2016 and April), 52 referrals were submitted, 24 decisions were made (22 approvals, 20 of which related to children) and 20 transfers were carried out.

**Over the course of our assessment, several situations of exploitation involving human trafficking, which fall within the scope of the French law concerning trafficking of 5 August 2015, were reported to us. Sexual violence is a constant threat for the young women and young boys.**

The interviews conducted with young Ethiopian, Eritrean and Kurdish women have allowed us to identify practices involving the exchange of sexual services for the promise of passage to the UK or in order to pay for their journey and be granted access to certain areas. This form of coercion, a common feature throughout a range of differing circumstances, resembles debt bondage.

Among the Afghan children who were interviewed, the fear of rape is one of their biggest concerns. They are at particularly great risk of sexual violence. The accounts that were gathered mention situations in which children are regularly sexually abused, often by traffickers and their friends during nights that involved the consumption of alcohol.

Finally, with regard to the situation of the Vietnamese living in Agres and Grande-Synthe, although it was not possible to gather a direct testimony over the course of the assessment on account of the controlled speech of the unaccompanied children living on the site (a clear indicator of trafficking), several cases of Vietnamese children being exploited on cannabis farms in the UK, in Strasbourg and in the greater Paris area have been recorded.

**The study shows that not all the unaccompanied children living along the coast are trying to cross over to the UK and that their migratory journeys vary greatly.** Although some leave at the behest and with the support of their families, in the hope of re-joining family members who are living in the UK, others do not appear to have clear goals and have financed their own journey.

**Although some unaccompanied children are under the influence of exploitation networks, all find themselves in a dangerous situation due to their isolation and living conditions. Changes to the child protection system are therefore necessary and urgently needed to enable unaccompanied children to access effective means of protection which respects the rights of the child and no matter what their migration plans may be.**

Faced with greater and greater risks of violence and exploitation on account of their longer stays and more difficult journeys, it is essential that new solutions are put forward. A secure and sustainable framework must be ensured for the children who will arrive over the coming months so that they are able to avoid situations which increase their vulnerability. This must be done so that that they do not have to undergo the same experience as that of the unaccompanied children during the winter of 2015.

## INTRODUCTION

**2** THOMAS O., 2011, *Des émigrants dans le passage. Une approche géographique de la condition de clandestin à Cherbourg et sur les côtes de la Manche*, Thèse, University of Caen.

**3** LAACHER S., 2002, *Après Sangatte... Nouvelles immigrations, nouveaux enjeux*, Paris, La Dispute, p. 121

The mission of TRAJECTOIRES, which was created in 2013 and is made up of individuals with years of experience in dealing with those living in slums, is to aid public sector and voluntary actors in the implementation of relevant solutions to ensure the social integration of these populations. Amongst other measures, the association carries out social and sociological diagnoses within slums and squats across the whole of France, providing actors with a complete and concrete vision with respect to the needs and expectations of these individuals, and enabling them to respond to these as efficiently as possible. This comprehensive knowledge allows a certain distance to be maintained with respect to local issues and encourages the implementation of solutions that have proven themselves in other areas.

The history of migrants along the coast of the English Channel is a long one. In the autumn of 1999, faced with the influx of refugees from Kosovo, a 27,000 square metre hangar belonging to Eurotunnel was opened. Management was entrusted to the Red Cross and it was to accommodate 800 migrants. The Sangatte camp, which shares the name of the commune in which the shelter is located, was closed on 5 November 2002, at a time when 1,600 people were living there. Over 70,000 people had passed through there in three years. In 2011<sup>2</sup>, Olivier Thomas cited a prophetic hypothesis in his thesis which had been made by sociologist Smâin Laacher as part of his 2002 publication<sup>3</sup>: "The disappearance of the Red Cross centre has directly contributed to the scattering of migrants along the coast. Nevertheless, the port of Calais has remained the favoured point of passage for the migrants who are trying to smuggle themselves into England (which can be accounted for by the presence of the tunnel, but is mainly due to the significant number of ferry turnarounds). Around this place, which gave structure to the clandestine routes used within Europe, a new geographical layout of

**4** In 2009, when Eric Besson made the decision to deport the migrants, the unaccompanied children numbered 300 to 500, which had risen to 1,000 by spring 2014.

**5** Libération, En Libye, le calvaire des réfugiés avant la traversée Mathieu Galtier, 20th April 2016.

**6** The term has been used for a decade to describe the slums regularly installed on the moor near Calais.

**7** In November 2015, there were close to 6000 individuals in the Calais jungle (cf. <http://www.msf.fr/actualite/articles/parer-au-plus-presse-sur-jungle-calais-abris-hiver>)

**8** cf <http://www.infomie.net/>

**9** However, it is important to highlight the notable number of participants present, mainly charitable, and associations with a local mandate.

**10** cf. the centre for resources relating to lone foreign children, <http://www.infomie.net/>

traffic began to take form, drawing on support from Paris and distributing the opportunities to cross over along the entire coast". The distribution of slums changed in response to the evacuation of sites, pressure from the police and strategies used by the migrants. The number of these migrants fluctuates<sup>4</sup> based on geopolitical events, such as a state of chaos in their country of origin (Syria, Eritrea, etc.), the destabilisation of Libya<sup>5</sup>, and the opening of the "Balkan route".

In March 2015, the prefecture asked the inhabitants of multiple camps in Calais to move, on a "voluntary" basis and mediated by the associations, into what would quickly become known as the "New Jungle"<sup>6</sup>: an area of 18 hectares, tolerated by the prefecture and located to the south of the open-air Jules Ferry centre, in a flood-prone area.

Nowadays, many slums and squats that shelter migrants exist along the coast and the A25 and A26 highways, as well as in other border European countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands. Although the Calais "jungle" and the Grande-Synthe site regularly attract the attention of the media and politicians due to the number of migrants<sup>7</sup> lodged there, the other sites seem to be discreet enough to avoid attracting attention and to sometimes be tolerated by the local authorities.

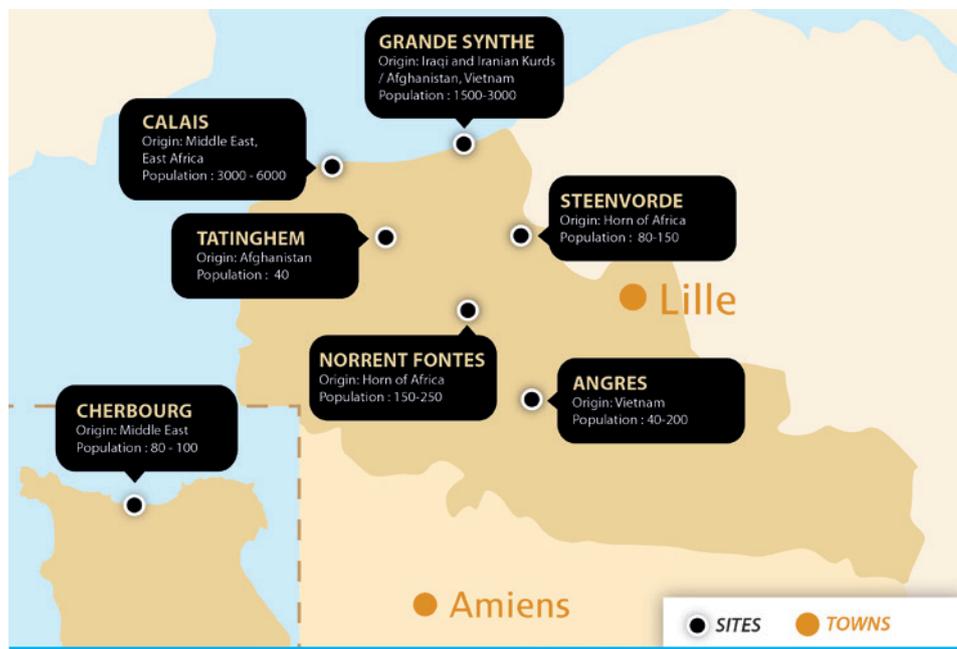
This study is a sociological diagnosis of the situation of the lone foreign children or unaccompanied children<sup>8</sup> who live in the camps and slums along the coast of the English Channel, in and around Calais, and in its surrounding areas. It was carried out by TRAJECTOIRES between January and April 2016 at the request of and in collaboration with Unicef France. Seven slums located across three departments were identified. We can also consider Paris as part of the equation as some of the children in Calais make regular trips there. A trip was organised on the British side to meet with a number of local actors in Kent and London, including the Home Office.

The two sites of Calais and Grande-Synthe stood out due to the number of migrants living there, the media interest they attract and the number of actors present within them. The other sites are smaller, sometimes less well-known, and intervention by public authorities and associations is almost non-existent<sup>9</sup>. A presentation of these sites is available in the annex.

Under French law, there is no fixed definition of the terms "lone foreign children" or "unaccompanied children". The word "lone" recalls the notion of danger and a need for protection. The Council of Europe defines unaccompanied migrant children<sup>10</sup> as follows: children of less than 18 years of age who have been separated from both their parents and other members of their immediate family and who are not under the care of an adult in whom

11 "The Long Way, The Refugee Rights Data Project", feb. 2016, available at the following address : [http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RRDP\\_TheLongWait.pdf](http://refugeerights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RRDP_TheLongWait.pdf)

12 This figure is only an estimate at a specific moment in time and is liable to change as the result of geopolitical context, the evacuations of the slums, police pressure...



this responsibility has been invested by law or custom. For many of the people encountered, this notion of majority or minority does not correspond with any specific idea. "For us, they are babies when they are nursing, the girls are the responsibility of their parents, the girls are the responsibility of their husbands and that is all. What is a child?" as stated by a young Ethiopian woman. Within the context of this study, we have opted for the European approach and the use of the term unaccompanied children.

The estimated figures for the number of unaccompanied children along the coast are unreliable due to the insufficient tracking and registration of children. No charitable or institutional actor has been able to provide us with specific data regarding the number of unaccompanied children living along the coast. There have only been partial censuses carried out in the Calais "jungle" but the figures vary greatly between actors. Hence, according to those working there, in February 2016 between 250 and 800 unaccompanied children were living in the Calais "jungle". The report *Refugee Rights Data Project*<sup>11</sup> estimates that in February 2016 the number of unaccompanied children sat at 423, compared to 294 at the start of March 2016. The census carried out by France Terre d'Asile at the request of the prefecture at the end of February identified 326 unaccompanied children. On 22 March, the French authorities counted 170. These variations could be explained on the basis of the methods used and the time at which the counts took place. Indeed, in the morning, some of the unaccompanied children return from increasingly spread out points of passage across Calais. They are therefore not present in the "jungle".

SEVEN SITES OF SETTLEMENTS OF REFUGEES IN NORTHERN FRANCE

**In March 2016, we were able to estimate that around 500<sup>12</sup> unaccompanied children were present across all seven sites. In terms of flows, over the**

**13** The statistics generated cannot ensure that no duplicates exist, that is to say, children who have been counted multiple times.

**14** One of the first pieces of work to be carried out was the creation a map of those working on the different sites. The annex includes the list of people interviewed.

**15** This work does not replace the work of the organisations responsible for tracking the migrants but allows such to be completed and enriched thanks to an analysis of the cases of the unaccompanied children found along the coast of the English Channel.

**16** In order to deal with the consequences of dismantling the southern part of the Calais jungle, state services have suggested the possibility for the exiled individuals living in Calais to be directed towards the reception and orientation centres distributed across the entire metropolitan area.

**17** The temporary reception centre, built within the «jungle» slum itself, opened at the beginning of January 2016. It is able to house 1,500 people within its equipped converted containers. Each container is fitted with twelve bunk beds, one wardrobe per person, towel radiators and a power socket by the bed. Managed by the Vie Active association, entry is controlled; adults gain access by means of an identification process that detects their palm print, combined with a confidential code; children use only the code and the name of an adult to which they have been assigned.

**course of one year, unaccompanied children accounted for a significantly higher number. By way of example, during 2015, France Terre d'Asile received 1,403 children into their centre in Saint-Omer<sup>13</sup> who had come from just the Calais "jungle" alone.**

## METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

On the basis of the specifications validated by UNICEF, this study is based on a number of different sources:

- **meetings with voluntary actors who are directly involved on the sites**, with or without a charitable mandate<sup>14</sup> ;
- **61 individual and group meetings with children**, conducted within the children's different living environments (slums, Jules Ferry centre, provisional welcome centre or in the new Grand Synthe humanitarian camp) and in their mother tongue, in accordance with the principle of semi-structured interviews, based around a common framework.

For confidentiality purposes, we only provide the nationalities and ages of the children encountered. The subjects pictured are not the children interviewed in this study.

The team completed this fieldwork by means of documentary research and meetings with individuals who were qualified to comment on the situations (economic, geopolitical) affecting each country and its migration patterns. The most dangerous situations described in this report (violence, trafficking and abuse) are based, first and foremost, on the meetings with the children and other actors. Most of these facts, although very serious, have not resulted in the filing of a complaint and therefore there has been no investigation or prosecution. However, all situations of exposure to major risks have undergone a rigorous cross-checking process with the various actors on the ground (organisation, hospital, temporary reception centre, etc.).

## DIFFICULTIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY<sup>15</sup>

This diagnosis is marked by numerous constraints. It took place during a complex period that was subject to a great deal of media attention. Therefore, in Calais, the approaches within the reception and orientation centres – the Centre d'Accueil Provisoire (CAP) in Calais and the Centres d'Accueil et Orientation (CAO) throughout the country<sup>16</sup> ; the opening of the temporary reception centre<sup>17</sup>; the large journalistic presence at the time when the evacuation of the southern part of the "jungle" was announced and the judgment on this decision was made; the effective dismantling of the southern part of the "jungle" and the relocation of its inhabitants to the northern part of the "jungle" or other sites – meant that many migrants did

**18** Besides the «historical» actors, non-affiliated activists and volunteers (many of them British) come to offer assistance or meet the people living in the camps, often staying on a short-term basis. This can add to difficulties in gaining the trust of the unaccompanied children, as they can be disorientated by meeting so many different people, each with their own methods of working.

not facilitate access to the on-site actors and unaccompanied children. In addition, following the decision made in January 2016 by the UK's Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber on the family reunification claims of three children and one vulnerable adult, the diagnosis became even more complicated.<sup>18</sup>

It is difficult to conduct meetings confidentially on the various sites. There are few neutral and closed spaces. The young migrants are often accompanied by their peers, who are often older and monitor what the younger individuals say. Within the Calais "jungle", these meetings were conducted within enclosed spaces (offices or closed-off social areas) that had been made available by the temporary reception centre or the Jules Ferry centre.

In order to remain neutral, we chose to work with freelance interpreters who were not involved in activities along the coast.

Finally, it is important to remember that this study was carried out over a short and limited period of time. It was naturally not possible to meet with all the children residing along the coast during this period of time. This assessment is therefore a qualitative study, undertaken among a group of unaccompanied children numbering around 60, and does not claim to be exhaustive.



01

EXPOSURE  
TO HAZARDS  
AND VULNERABILITY  
OF UNACCOMPANIED  
CHILDREN IN FRANCE

<b>p. 19</b>	<b>INHUMANE AND DEGRADING LIVING CONDITIONS</b>	<b>p. 22</b>	<b>PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</b>
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<b>p. 21</b>	<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>	<b>p. 24</b>	<b>ECONOMY</b>

<sup>19</sup> "In Calais, police presence is the most concentrated in all of France. Nearly 1,000 policemen are thus present in a city of 75,000 inhabitants, mostly dedicated to fighting against illegal immigration: Republican Security Companies (PSC), Air and Frontier Police (AFP), National Police, Border Police (English police), etc. Police resources have been increased progressively over the years. PSC and police vans circulate regularly in the city and around the camps" – *Mental Health in Calais. Migrants, findings of involved parties and recommendations for action*, by Lou Einhorn, Doctors of the World, April 2015.

Due to unfit living conditions and the absence of, or inadequacy of, care offered by the public authorities upon arrival of unaccompanied children, common dangers have been observed at all sites. The insecurity of migrants, strengthened border controls<sup>19</sup> on the border between the UK and France, the quasi-public non-intervention in the shanty towns, and the recent prolonged presence of migrants there, have led to the development of exploitative systems. The first victims of these systems are shanty town dwellers, and especially children, accompanied or on their own.

The living conditions in shanty towns located near the coast of the English Channel have often been subject to criticism. In late October 2015, Catholic Relief Services, Doctors of the World and many asylum seekers filed emergency legal proceedings with the Administrative Court of Lille, in order to compel the government to take urgent measures with regard to the living conditions in the Calais "jungle". The Council of State confirms that on Monday, 23 November, it had condemned the French State and the town of Calais for the situation in the "jungle" and ordered them to proceed, within 48 hours, to first, identify all unaccompanied children in distress and to approach the Department of Pas-de-Calais for their placement and, second, to begin to put into place, within eight days, water supply points, toilets, and additional garbage collecting devices, to conduct a clean-up of the site, and create accesses for emergency services. The Council of State believed the living conditions of migrants in the "jungle" could likely expose them to "inhuman or degrading treatment". If the living conditions observed at the sites by themselves have placed the migrants in danger, especially children, other specific areas of vulnerability for these children without protection were also possible in the future.

**20** *Exiles and human rights: the situation in the territory of Calais*, Report of the Defender of Rights, October 2015.

**21** Interview with Marianne Humberstot, Call of the 800, 02 February 2016, in Calais.

**22** *Evaluation mission of the health care system for migrants in Calais*, final report dated 22 October 2015, written by Dr Philippe Bourrier, Chief of Mission, Deputy Director General of EPRUS, Dr Zinna Bessa, Deputy Director, DGS Dr Pierre Coninx, reservist of EPRUS, Dr Dominique Lajugie, ARS Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Dr Beatrice Merlin ARS Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Pr Denis Safran, adviser to the Minister of the Interior.

## INHUMANE AND DEGRADING LIVING CONDITIONS

In October 2015, the Defender of Rights also criticised in its report “the precarious living conditions in the shanty town near the day-care centre Jules Ferry which directly impacts on the physical and psychological health of the exiles”.<sup>20</sup> Although living conditions improved slightly following the court decision and the intervention of the ACTED Association starting from January 2016, they remain very difficult. The Calais “jungle” is equipped with water taps and waste collection is ensured, but toilets are in short supply and regularly blocked at Calais and at the CAP, according to the interviewed migrants. On other sites that we have observed, it is often volunteers or individual initiatives that seek to improve the lives of migrants. At Angres, Tatinghem, Norrent Fontes, for example, water is delivered and civil society actors organise shower tours once a week for the migrants. At Grande-Synthe, before the creation of a new refugee camp, the living conditions there were terrible.

All children that we met there complained about the cold and fatigue, they were saying they had trouble sleeping, and staying warm, even during the day. All the same, the more fragile children were settled in the less well-insulated shelters, were struggling to access food distributions, and had no priority when it came to showers.<sup>21</sup> According to *The Long Way*, 28.4% of migrants do not have access to a daily meal, the remaining 71.6% manage to eat at least once a day, and this after waiting in line an average of 55 minutes. In addition, 72.7% of the migrants reported not being able to wash every day, while others reported having to queue up for several hours for the right to take a six-minute shower at the Salam Association.

Doctors of the World and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have reported many infectious diseases among the migrants (colds, bronchitis, ear infections, sore throats, etc.), dermatological illnesses (scabies, chicken pox, etc.), and secondary infections related to living conditions in the camps. Dental abscesses are not treated. The health situation in the shanty towns of the coast is catastrophic and deteriorating from month to month, and from year to year.<sup>22</sup> The physical traumas, due to attempts at crossing the border are also numerous – cuts, lacerations, tendon lacerations, fractures and muscle contusions. When left untreated, these can become infected and leave severe consequences.

23 The inter-ministerial decree of 25 January 2016 / NOR: JUSF1602101C

## ABSENCE OF SCHOOLING

In addition to these unfit and degrading living conditions, none of the unaccompanied children, nor children with families, present in coastal shanty towns, have any access to regular schooling as guaranteed by common law. Yet education for all children is compulsory in accordance with Articles L.111-1, L.122-1, and L.131-1 of the Education Code and international commitments of France. Decree No. 2014-088, dated 9 July 2014, states that "education is a right for all children residing in the country, regardless of nationality, immigration status or their previous educational background". The inter-ministerial decree of 25 January 2016<sup>23</sup> on the mobilisation of State services by county councils for juveniles deprived temporarily or permanently of the protection of their families, and people presenting themselves as such, has reaffirmed these principles:

"In France, every child and adolescent has the right to education, regardless of his / her immigration status."

"In accordance with Article L. 131-1 of the Education Code, all children aged 6 to 16, present on the national territory, shall benefit from receiving an education, regardless of their nationality or their personal situation. The right to schooling of unaccompanied children, aged from 6 to 16 years, residing on French territory, thus is based on the right to protection under common law and to compulsory education under the same conditions as other pupils. This is not the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research to control the regularity of the situation of foreign students under the rules governing their entry and stay in France. Enrolment in a school of a student of foreign nationality, regardless of age, cannot be subject to the presentation of a residency permit. "

Interim solutions have been proposed for unaccompanied children by civil society actors such as the Secular School of Chemin des Dunes, School of Darfur, the Women and Children's Centre, and also the Baloo's Youth Centre in Calais and Fulgence in Grande-Synthe. The proposed activities for various age groups or reserved for women and children are varied: French language courses, English language courses, library, conversational courses, football, construction of kites, radio programming, and discussion, sewing, and arts groups, among others. These are run by volunteers and have difficulty in finding financial resources. These groups say that some young people attend diligently, but most seem to come sporadically. Apart from the Women and Children's Centre, they hardly involve young women.

The Jules Ferry Centre also offers activities for women and resident children. It is important to note that apart from the School of Darfur, the other structures of Calais were all located in the south of the "jungle", some of which were cleared in early March 2016.

**24** *Mental Health in Calais. Migrants, findings of involved parties and recommendations for action*, by Lou Einhorn, *Doctors of the World*, April 2015.

Article 31 paragraph 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child places on the State an obligation to respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and to encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity. Many young people, during interviews, told us that they could no longer bear the constant inactivity and boredom. "The hardest thing is the waiting and the loneliness. I have nothing to do, I walk in circles," confided a young Syrian. A 14-year-old Egyptian, for his part, said: "we want the simple things in life, just not to live like dogs, learn French and English, go to school, be clean and safe."

On 23 March 2016, the Prefecture of Pas de Calais announced the opening, in mid-May, of a school in the Jules Ferry Centre, for young migrants of Calais.

## MENTAL HEALTH

The precarious living conditions, the failure to have access to schooling or regular occupational activities directly impact on the psychological health and mental frailties of children. Sleep is the first that is affected, bringing with it physiological disorders, which can potentially lead to health problems. Many children, because of attempts to cross the border or night activities on the sites, have shifted their sleeping patterns, always falling asleep at around 2 or 3 am and waking up at 11 am or 12 noon. The intellectual inactivity and waiting for a potential border crossing lead to increased nervousness and depressive behaviours among the youth.

As indicated in the Doctors of the World study,<sup>24</sup> "migrants currently present in Calais have mostly suffered much violence in their own countries, on the road, and upon their arrival in Europe. They are accumulating potentially traumatic experiences. So here we have a vulnerable population, which finds itself in the conditions of a crisis, which has a significant negative impact on their mental health. The troubles encountered by the migrants seem to be mostly reactive, caused or reactivated in Calais by the current situation. The prevalence of people suffering from mental or psychiatric ailments in the migrant population in Calais seems particularly high. The symptoms experienced are numerous: post-traumatic stress, addictions, stress, anxiety disorders, sleep disorders, somatisation disorder, etc. One also meets people with psychiatric disorders such as delusions of persecution, paranoia, delirious fits, etc. The majority of exiles have no psychiatric problems, but are suffering mentally, which is a normal reaction to a seriously abnormal situation. We wish to note the importance of the environment in Calais when it comes to the outbreak of these psychiatric disorders."

**25** Interview with Lou Einhorn, Doctors of the World, 9 February 2016, in Calais.

**26** Interview with Lou Einhorn, Doctors of the World, 9 February 2016, in Calais.

**27** *Exiles and human rights: the situation in the territory of Calais*, report of the Defender of Rights, October 2015, p. 30.

**28** Interview with involved parties from MSF.

**29** For example, on 11 April 2016, 14 migrants of Eritrean nationality were discovered in two refrigerated trucks in Saint-Omer.

“In Calais, the environment is particularly destructive for people’s mental health: the living conditions, the conditions of border crossings, the fear of being arrested, police and racist violence, all have disastrous impacts on the mental health of the exiles.” Things have worsened since this study was conducted in April 2015 because migrants have been stuck in the “jungle” for a longer time, and with increasing violence. In addition to the recurring nightmares, anxiety problems, nervousness and aggressiveness, more and more psychiatric hospitalisations are taking place at the personal request of the young people<sup>25</sup> and adults. Some migrants are also admitted to compulsory care, due to deterioration of health that resulted from aggression and violence suffered during attempts at crossing the border.

While ordinary common law structures are not adapted to take charge of the psychological and mental suffering of unaccompanied children, for lack of competent translators and lack of training, the care is mostly provided by Doctors of the World, MSF or teams of “*l’antenne de la Pass*” in the Jules Ferry Centre. These care professionals are often forced to perform very brief therapies, given the situation of people “in transit”. “We act on the symptoms and we explain what is happening, but we can rarely do anything more.”<sup>26</sup> As was noted by the Defender of Rights, “it is clear that despite the efforts undertaken, the provision of medical care remains very inadequate in the light of the health situation, making this a violation of the right of migrants to the protection of their health.”<sup>27</sup>

## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

All migrants living in the coastal shanty towns are daily exposed to risks of violence. Thus, 61.6% of the migrants, interviewed by the Refugee Rights Data Project, reported never feeling safe. Children, due to their vulnerability, are more likely to feel threatened and become victims of physical abuse.

The most significant cause of violent incidents suffered by the migrants on the coast are the result of their attempts to cross the border. These multiply as migrants start taking more and more risks, as prices rise and people become increasingly more fatigued, leading to increased injuries.<sup>28</sup> Migrants try to cross the border in a number of ways: via the Eurotunnel, blocking the main road, and then trying to hide in refrigerated or regular lorries;<sup>29</sup> and crossing the English Channel by boat. Since the beginning of 2016, at least two boats of migrants were intercepted and their occupants rescued while trying to cross the English Channel at night. With spring coming, it is feared that these attempts will increase, mainly from Dunkirk, heightening the dangers associated with such enterprises. While the risks taken by people that are attempting to cross to the UK involve potentially serious injuries

**30** *Evaluation mission of the health care system for migrants in Calais*, final report dated 22 October 2015, conducted by six doctors at the request of the Minister of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights and the Minister of the Interior available at: <http://social-sante.gouv.fr>

**31** *Calais: migrant dies after being hit by a truck* at: [www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr), article dated 31 March 2016.

**32** Interview with Marianne Humberstot, Call of the 800, 02 February 2016, in Calais.

**33** At the time of this writing, the last major event took place on 16 March 2016, and left 19 injured, see: [www.lavoixdunord.fr/region/calais-19-blesses-dans-une-rixe-entre-migrants-soudanais-ia33b48581n3391356](http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/region/calais-19-blesses-dans-une-rixe-entre-migrants-soudanais-ia33b48581n3391356)

**34** [www.lavoixdunord.fr](http://www.lavoixdunord.fr)

**35** "The Long Way, *The Refugee Rights Data Project*", February 2016.

**36** On Monday, 15 April 2016, six complaints were filed by migrants for acts of violence with the public prosecutor's office of Boulogne-sur-Mer, out of which four were against the security forces. These complaints are added to the aggressions carried out by trained militia groups, denounced by associations and primarily by the legal centre of the "Jungle".

**37** Interview with involved parties of the Jules Ferry Centre, Calais.

**38** See section 2.1 on Afghan unaccompanied children.

(lacerated fingers, broken ankles, fractured ribs, for example.),<sup>30</sup> they can also lead to death. Since late June 2015, at least 20 migrants have died in the Calais region trying to reach England.<sup>31</sup> However, no accurate statistics exist. The legal centre of the "jungle" estimates that half of the migrants who died in 2016 while trying to cross to the UK were children.<sup>32</sup>

Fights between migrants are becoming increasingly common, especially since the arrival of many migrants from the south of the "jungle" once it was closed, forcing people to settle in quickly and increasing the insecurity and overcrowded conditions. While the interviewed children often talked about fights between the Afghans and Sudanese,<sup>33</sup> and between the Egyptians and Sudanese, these tensions may involve other nationalities, and are often related to control over transit areas. In January, a shooting occurred in the Grande-Synthe Camp,<sup>34</sup> it involved Kurdish traffickers, who controlled the shanty town of Basroch.

However, the primary fear reported by the inhabitants of the Calais "jungle"<sup>35</sup> and expressed in the interviews we conducted with children is that of police violence, heavily criticised by the Defender of Rights and human rights associations.<sup>36</sup> The teams from Doctors of the World and MSF have confirmed to us that they have met many people who are victims of police violence or civilian militias, but who have refused to press charges.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is a continuing threat to young women and young boys. While all interviewed children say that they fear going out at night, after dark, for fear of rape, about 20 women in Calais and several Vietnamese and Iraqi Kurd women in Grande-Synthe are involved in prostitution.<sup>37</sup> In an interview at the Jules Ferry Centre, a woman told us: "All girls receive proposals to engage in prostitution, the weakest ones accept, but if you refuse, they do not force you. Unless, of course, you owe them money." According to the confessions of a young Ethiopian and two young Sudanese women, they offer their services in the bars of the "jungle" at night, and are paid in cash. It is with these earnings that they pay for their entries to the sites of Steenvoorde and Norrent Fontes. Young women say that "those who engage in prostitution pass through faster." There could be two forms of prostitution in which migrant women engage: the "reluctant but resigned" form, practised by some women to accelerate their passage when they find themselves blocked, and the second form, which involves women exploited and abused by a trafficking network.

As for boys, as we see it, Afghan children are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, due to practices derived from the local custom of *Bacha bazi*.<sup>38</sup>

## ECONOMY

A true grey economy exists on different sites. While restaurant businesses, steam rooms, bakeries, hair salons, and mini markets are most visible in the Calais "jungle", all sites operate parallel systems, conducive to the exploitation of the weakest, and unaccompanied children in particular. Everything must be paid for, with nothing being free. For protection, or to earn a few euros, a child will fetch water, resell items on the black market at night that he / she received during food distribution, stand in the shower line for an adult, or clean up the container where he / she is living. As we have noted in the first part of this report, an entrance fee is required for most sites. The unaccompanied children, who have no money, are forced to work for the smugglers or traffickers, or move towards more dangerous activities (theft, dealing, prostitution).

**The living conditions observed at the sites, the violence experienced on the road, the risks of border crossings, the monetary relationships in shanty towns, and forms of the resulting enslavement, constitute a permanent danger for unaccompanied children, and were present at all the sites that we studied.**



02

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**39** Meeting with Vincent Deconinck, Secours Catholique, 27 January 2016 in Calais.

**40** Informal meetings with those involved in the work of Doctors of the World and Secours Catholique.

**41** This «legal centre» was created at the beginning of January 2016 in response to a call made by intellectuals, known as the «call of the 800», published in October 2015 in *Libération*, in protest against «the near-routine police violence» and «attacks by extreme-right militants».

**42** <http://www.medicinsdumonde.org/actualites/calais/2016/02/10/les-mineurs-non-accompagnes-en-danger>

**43** Despite the issues that were raised in the introduction with regard to reliability, this estimation is based on the censuses that were conducted (FTDA, Refugees Project) and our on-site observations.

We have chosen to present the different unaccompanied children living in the Calais “jungle” and across the other sites located in the north of France according to nationality, as we feel this corresponds best with the ways in which migration works. This should not mask the presence of the highly mixed range of profiles and paths, even among similarly separated children of the same geographical origin. Some of them left their country alone, others with friends or their brothers and sisters, some with their parents, even though they became separated from them along the way. They usually had an “uncle” with whom they crossed borders. This individual sometimes changed at each new border or disappeared during the journey<sup>39</sup>.

## STUDY SAMPLE

The young migrants we spoke with over the course of our meetings were aged between 15 and 17, with 12 of these younger than 14 years-old and three children aged between 11 and 12 years-old. The meetings lasted between 15 and 90 minutes. According to their statements, they had been staying in the “jungles” for five months on average; some had been on the coast for nine months at the time of the meetings, while one had been there for a year and two months. Lone female children were few in number and usually originated from Eritrea and Ethiopia, very occasionally from Sudan<sup>40</sup>. According to the Secours Catholique, Doctors of the World and the “legal centre” located within the “jungle”<sup>41</sup>, since summer 2015 there are more unaccompanied children who are increasingly vulnerable, but also more visible as the result of the extension of their stay within the numerous slums<sup>42</sup>.

## AFGHAN UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

### DISTRIBUTION AND NUMBERS

Afghan unaccompanied children represent the largest group found on the coast. They live predominantly on three sites: the Calais “jungle”, Tatinghem and Cherbourg. At Tatinghem and Cherbourg, an overwhelming majority of the unaccompanied children living there were Afghan. We can therefore estimate<sup>43</sup> that between 100 and 200 Afghan children were present on the various sites in March 2016.

This trend is not surprising: since 2005, Afghan children have been among the most numerous of those seeking asylum in countries in western and

**44** DANIEL SENOVILLA HERNÁNDEZ « Promouvoir les droits des mineurs non accompagnés et sans protection en Europe » Poitiers 2013, as part of the PUCAFREU project, EU / Migrinter.

**45** The largest percentage come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**46** Philippe Fargues, *Un million de migrants arrivés sans visa en Europe 2015 : qui sont-ils?*, in *Population et Société*, April 2016.

**47** Source: Eurostat « In 2015, a substantial majority of unaccompanied children were males (91%) and over half were aged 16 to 17 (57%, or 50,500 people), while those aged 14 to 15 accounted for 29% (25,800 people) and those aged under 14 for 13% (11,800 people). Around half (51%) of asylum applicants considered to be unaccompanied children in the EU in 2015 were Afghan”.

**48** Mutluer, 2003, p.10.

**49** A Report on Children of Afghan Origin Moving to Western Countries Kerry Boland, Febr. 2010. The main ethnic groups in Afghanistan are the Pashtuns, 44%, the Tajiks, 25%, the Uzbeks, 8% and the Hazaras, 10%.

northern Europe<sup>44</sup>. According to figures from OFPRA (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides), in 2014 Afghan children represented the second most common nationality to request asylum in France.<sup>45</sup> In 2015, after Syrians, Afghans accounted for the largest numbers of those entering Greece and Italy without a visa (186,617)<sup>46</sup>, children and adults alike. Eurostat indicates that among the 88,300 unaccompanied children to request asylum in the EU in 2015, 51% were of Afghan nationality<sup>47</sup>.

## REASONS FOR LEAVING HOME AMONG CHILDREN

Following the *coup d'état* that took place in 1978, a civil war between pro-government forces and the Mujahideen prompted a mass exodus of millions of refugees, who headed for Pakistan and Iran. Ten years of Soviet occupation resulted in the serious destabilisation of the country, both economically and politically. Ethnic conflicts consequently erupted between warlords, resulting in millions of deaths and over six million refugees. The installation of the Taliban regime further contributed to the displacements of populations. Following 11 September 2001 and the arrival of American troops, emigration continued. In order to reach Europe, many refugees passed through Pakistan, Iran and Turkey<sup>48</sup>.

During our interviews, the majority of the children we met (apart from the Tajiks), came from conflict zones or areas known for recent ethnic unrest: Kunduz (taken by the Taliban at the end of September 2015), Baghlan and Samangan. Many of them had lost their father following retaliation. While this provides an overview of the reasons given by Afghan unaccompanied children as having prompted their departure, the vision of an uncertain and dangerous future together with the presence of family members in the UK is the most commonly encountered combination of elements.

## MIGRATION STRATEGIES INVOLVING UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

As shown by UNICEF's study<sup>49</sup> on Afghan children, the majority of families decide to send one of their sons aged between 12 and 30 years-old so that he can eventually support them financially, while being free from the risks of conflict and conscription. Due to the significant sum of money that must be raised in order to reach Europe, the family has significant influence. It's the father who decides where the son shall go. Although this strategy is mentioned in some of our interviews, it is not the only one. According to the same study, from 2009 onwards, the suicide attack carried out in Kabul on 29 October, which indiscriminately affected ethnic groups, heightened the general feeling of insecurity. Children and young adults began to embark upon the journey to Europe alone, either pressuring their family into financing the trip or working

along the way (Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey) in order to pay the local traffickers. This choice of strategy resulted in a path of migration that was less clear and more closely tied to the opportunities that appeared. According to the testimonies of the Afghan migrants who were contacted as part of the study, when the Balkan route opened in the summer of 2015, this strategy increased in popularity due to the decrease in the sum of money that was needed in order to reach Europe. Thus, in 2010, the cost of the journey to Europe amounted to between €10,000 and €15,000. From September 2015 to February 2016, the journey from Afghanistan to the Schengen area could be made for just \$3,000 to \$4,000.

## PROFILES

According to our interviews on different sites, the majority of the Afghan children are Pashtun (80%); we also spoke with the Uzbeks and the Tajiks. We did not meet the Hazara (especially present in Germany). A temporary reception centre agent of Afghan origin provided us confirmation of this trend. The Pashtuns interviewed originated from the regions of Kunduz and Baghlan, located in the north of Afghanistan. The Samangan region, also located in the north of Afghanistan, is the Uzbeks' area of origin. For the Tajiks, this is Panchir, a region relatively unaffected by the conflicts. Almost all the children come from large- or medium-sized cities and they have all been educated. Their families belong or belonged to the middle classes, even affluent, up until the time when the troubles began.

## RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROUTE

Among the children who were interviewed, the time spent travelling from the point at which they left Afghanistan to when they arrived in Calais varied between one month and seven months. The vast majority of children travelled through Pakistan and Iran in order to avoid the drug-smuggling areas around the Afghan-Iranian border, which are considered to be too dangerous even though they are geographically closer. After passing through Iran they reach Turkey, and then follow the Balkan route, before arriving in Italy, Paris, and finally the sites along the coast.

The children, just like other Afghan migrants who were interviewed as part of this study, indicated that there are two means of gaining passage: Guaranteed passage costing between €8,000 and €10,000. The Afghan trafficker negotiates with the local traffickers by telephone at each point of passage. The local traffickers never appear in person in order to limit the risk of criminal prosecution. They pay locals, who serve as guides and escort the children from one border to another, without crossing the border themselves. These people are known by the children as "uncle". They are able to escort groups of up to 40 children.

**50** System that enables money transfers within the diaspora without going through banks. For more information, see Alessandro MONSUTTI Eclairage - Les transferts de fonds informels des Afghans : une dispersion stratégique p. 155-159 In annuaire suisse du développement Vol. 27, n°2 | 2008.

The other way is longer and carries more risk, but is less expensive, costing around \$3,000. For the child, this involves travelling to the various points of passage using their own means and negotiating directly with the local traffickers.

Regardless of the chosen technique, the route remains highly dangerous. Several children told us that they had been held in Pakistan or Iran and a ransom demand sent to their family. One declared to have been captured by the Taliban but succeeded in escaping. Others had been sent back to Pakistan from Iran on several occasions and had been detained for periods of time. Relations with their “uncle”, who was supposed to escort them from one point to another, were not always benevolent. We heard accounts of children who walked too slowly being abandoned in the mountains. Likewise, sexual abuse of the boys appears to be commonplace.

Some children worked for many months under very tough conditions (long hours, harsh weather conditions) within agriculture or construction in Pakistan, Iran or Turkey in order to finance their journey.

### **FORMS OF INFLUENCE AND SPECIFIC RISKS AMONG AFGHAN UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

According to our interviews, if the children wish to remain in the “jungle” for a number of days, they must pay an entrance fee of around €100 upon arriving in Calais, in order to be placed under the protection of a trafficker and to avoid being expelled. When necessary, they return to Paris in order to wait for money sent by their family via Western Union or the more commonly used informal banking system, *hawala*<sup>50</sup>. Some Afghan mediators, practitioners who have been based in Paris for a number of years, have spoken to us of dangerous income-generating activities such as the sale of cigarettes around Vuillemain Square, and male prostitution.

According to our interviews, the children staying at the temporary reception centre are not free from the hold of traffickers if they wish to travel to the UK. The Uzbeks and Tajiks explained to us that the Pashtuns have developed far-reaching smuggling networks as far as the coast of Normandy, le Havre, Cherbourg. According to them, only the Pashtun unaccompanied children have the means to pay and benefit from these. The Afghan children who have no more money are regularly used to perform all kinds of work: running errands for the traffickers, monitoring parking areas, opening lorries, etc.

The risk of sexual abuse is something we must especially take into account. To the question “What are you most afraid of?”, for the majority of Afghan children who are housed at the temporary reception centre or who sleep in the “jungles”, the answer is the fear of rape.

51 Jean-Pierre Perrin *Les garçons objets des noces afghanes*, in *Libération* 5 February 2013.

In Afghanistan, relations between boys and girls are subject to strict rules. Some boys therefore serve as sexual objects through the practice, *Batcha bazi*. “In Afghanistan, men and women should never meet unless within a familial relationship. In these meetings, to which even prostitutes are not admitted, the young boys play the role of the girls. It is essential that they are *berich batcha* (boys without a beard). It is a play on ambiguity, the participants offer them cake, throw them banknotes. (...) Yet this form of paedophilia is endemic, particularly in the southern Pashtun regions, among the Uzbeks of the north and in Kabul (...). Despite the presence of strong religious structures, *batcha bazi* is viewed by Afghans as a legitimate practice and is not considered to be a bad or illegitimate custom”<sup>51</sup>. According to the migrants we interviewed, these practices result in the rape of young boys being seen as more socially acceptable than that of girls, which is likely to entail acts of revenge. Generally, the rapist belongs to the same ethnic group. The children explained to us that if a rape was carried out by a member of another ethnic group, retaliation between the different groups would take place.

Although no child has formally stated that they had been a victim of rape, they were particularly afraid of the traffickers and their “helpers”. In February 2016, although this information has not been officially confirmed, multiple sources (police and charitable) had indicated that arrests had been made following the gang rape of around 20 children, which took place in the “jungle” of Calais.

### DISTRIBUTION AND PASSAGE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

The vast majority of the children who were interviewed and living on the heathland or in Cherbourg had parents with some manner of link to the UK. Most of them explained that they would go to work in businesses owned by their family or their community.

Although the UK appeared attractive prior to the summer of 2015 due to the existence of a significant Afghan and Pakistani community, the increase in the price of passage (which has multiplied five- and ten-fold) makes the crossing a financially risky move. Some of the Afghan unaccompanied children have therefore reconsidered their route. In order to reach the UK, the prices charged by the traffickers currently amount to between €5,000 and €7,000. Compared to Germany or Sweden, where only transport needs to be paid for (a few hundred euros), the difference in price is far from negligible. Furthermore, the UK is one of the few European countries to have deported those denied asylum to Afghanistan (upon reaching the age of majority). In the absence of close family on the other side of the Channel, many Afghan unaccompanied children told us that they would prefer to travel to Sweden as it is “the country which offers the best chance of being granted asylum”.

When asked if they had family members in other European countries, almost a third of Afghan unaccompanied children said that they had family elsewhere (Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden). If they fail to find a way to the UK, they will try to join them there. It is possible that the children who left on their own initiative will review their plan if they have not made an advance payment for their passage, particularly when they have been stuck on the coast for many months.

## **“It took us three months to arrive in Calais.”** **Ali, 15 years old**

*Ali, 15 years old, comes from an Uzbek family with three children, living in the city of Samangan in the north of Afghanistan. His town is predominantly Uzbek and had been spared by the conflicts for a long time. Two years ago, the Taliban arrived and began carrying out arbitrary executions. Ali said that his father was accused of belonging to the secret services by members of the Taliban. He was to then be assassinated. The family moved to an uncle’s house (one the father’s brothers) who, according to Ali, was rich and owned a hotel. Ali left with his cousin (the son of his uncle). It was his uncle who fronted the money to pay the traffickers. It took them three months to arrive in Calais. They travelled via Pakistan. Then, after having arrived in Iran, they were stopped by*

*the police and sent back to Pakistan. Remaining in Iran, they were locked up in a house with other people for twenty days. They had very little to eat and drink. His uncle had been able to negotiate with the Afghan traffickers to ensure their release. They then made it to Turkey, Greece and the Balkan route before arriving in Italy and France. At the time of the interview, Ali had been in the «jungle» for three and a half months. His cousin had made it to the UK two months earlier by hiding inside a lorry. Ali went to the temporary reception centre one month ago because he was afraid to be in the «jungle». His clothes were stolen, which he then saw being worn by another person a few days later. He says that intoxicated and violent adults and other youths often commit rape at night.*

*He is scared to make the journey alone for fear of being attacked by the traffickers or the police. He explains that after having located the areas during the daytime where there are lorries stationed, the traffickers look for children to guard these spots, making it very difficult to get through alone. He has been waiting on money from his uncle for a month. He doesn’t know if his uncle will agree to make another payment. He says he has another uncle in the UK who has been living there for about ten years who he doesn’t know very well. If he doesn’t manage to get through in the coming months, he doesn’t know what he’ll do. He doesn’t know if he has the right to remain in France. He has heard that if he wants to stay here, he must give his fingerprints and that he’ll then be sent back to Greece.*

## “It is the price to pay to stay, and he expects to cross the border.” Ahmad, 14 years old

*Ahmad is 14 years old and is of Patchoun origin. During the interview, he insists: his family is rich. After the assassination of his father, he had to flee to escape the vendetta of older male sons. His mother has collected the money and fixed the UK, where his uncle resides, as the destination. His trip first included his «cousin». They separated on the Balkans route. During the interview, the young*

*man remains vague about the countries he crossed and no longer remembers how he found himself in the small slum of Tatinghem. He seems exhausted; his answers are hesitant, when asked clarification about his destination. A. seems to want to cross, at whatever the cost, the English Channel, to satisfy the request of his family and join an uncle that he has never met. He has*

*been in Tatinghem for a week. He seems to accept without complaining the chores on the ground; according to him it is the price to pay to stay, and he expects to cross the border. His days are structured by the tasks to be performed in the field, the attempts to cross the border, returns after failures and after-hours visits to markets. Only the shower trips organised by volunteers break this monotony.*

### SYRIAN UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

**52** When interviews were conducted at the temporary reception centre, three Egyptian children declared themselves to be Syrian during an initial interview in February 2016, before finally admitting that they were Egyptian during a second interview in March.

Whilst attracting lots of attention from the associations and the media, in February 2016, Syrians represented only 10% of the migrants living in the “jungle” according to the Refugee Rights Data Project census, totalling around 300 people. It is almost impossible to estimate the number of Syrian children, all the more so due to the fact that some of those who claim to be Syrian would in fact be Egyptian<sup>52</sup>. They all live in the Calais “jungle” where the majority are housed at the temporary reception centre according to the actors who were questioned. Coming from a higher social stratum, interviews with the young people and with Doctors of the World suggest that their migration is organised: the decision to leave is made in agreement with their parents; there are reliable contacts in the UK and sufficient financial means available to avoid being restricted or exploited by lending systems.

The young people who we met in Calais originally came from Aleppo, Raqqa and Homs, cities affected by the bombing and the fighting between the Syrian army, ISIL and the rebel forces. According to the young people who were interviewed, the intervention of Russian air forces in 2015 accelerated the rate of migration. Students or high school pupils at the time of their departure, they left to escape the bombing, forced recruitment by government forces, rebel forces or ISIL and with the aim of continuing their studies in the UK.

53 Interview with Liz Clegg,  
Women & Childrens Centre, 27th  
January 2016 in Calais.

Since the start of the civil war which began in 2011, the conflicts have spread throughout the entire country, including the capital, Damascus, which had remained untouched for a long time.

### THE ROUTE

The time taken to complete the journey was fairly short (between 25 days and four months). Although some sought refuge in Lebanon before proceeding to Europe, others crossed the Turkish border before reaching Greece, quickly passing through Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Italy, before arriving in France. Some of them spent a number of days in Paris before arriving in Calais. Others arrive in Calais directly. After having paid someone to reach Turkey or Greece, the young people who were interviewed stated that they got by on their own by gleaning information from other migrants or the internet. It also seems possible that some children pretend to be alone when they are in fact travelling as a family or have travelled as a family before finding themselves alone. The journey is paid for using family savings, which means that the young people do not have to be placed at the mercy of traffickers or lenders.

### YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LESS AFFECTED BY THE RISK OF EXPLOITATION

Syrian youths appear to be more vulnerable than the other unaccompanied children in the eyes of the volunteers and activists<sup>53</sup> due to the country of their origin. Doctors of the World though note that they make requests for access to healthcare and treatment without any great difficulty.

Moreover, interviews consistently indicate that the majority of these young people have a reliable contact in the UK, a family member who has lived there for a long time, or older brothers who migrated, legally or illegally, when the conflict in Syria began. They maintain regular contact with these people.

## “Now it is too difficult” Ahmed, 17 years old

Ahmed, 17 years old and originally from Aleppo, arrived in the «jungle» in September 2015 and was allocated a bed in the temporary reception centre in mid-February. Urged on by his parents, he left Aleppo «to escape Daesh». He left behind his parents, his older sisters and his high school. With financial support from his parents, he reached Turkey using his own means, before paying for the crossing to Italy. After arriving in Italy, he continued his journey by asking the Syrians he met for

advice. His journey cost him around €4,500. When he left, his aim was to reach the UK in order to study although he did not have a specific local contact apart from one friend of his father, for whom he has been unable to obtain a telephone number. He has no family living elsewhere in Europe. He regularly calls his parents. Since his arrival, he has been trying to cross over, but «now it is too difficult». He is therefore thinking about asking his parents for additional support in order to

pay the €10,000 to €12,000 demanded by the traffickers to cross over from Calais or Dunkirk. While he did not expect these living conditions, «it's the waiting and the solitude» that he can no longer stand. «The worst thing is not having anything to do.» He has never heard anyone talk about the possibility of obtaining protection in France. He explains that he had heard it was possible to make arrangements in France. He would have been interested, «but now it's too late.»

## “I hope for a family reunification” Ilanis, 15 years old

Ilanis, 15 years old, is a Sunni from Raqqa. He arrived at the temporary reception centre at the same time as A., after having slept in the «jungle» for six months. Prior to arriving at the temporary reception centre, he shared his hut with A., who offered him lots of support. In Syria, he was attending college and lived with his parents, older sister, two younger brothers and younger sister. His father owned a garage. His parents

encouraged him to leave so that he could carry on with his life and so that he would later be able to welcome his family. They refused to send their older daughter, fearing rape and the dangers that the journey would entail. When he left, he planned to reach England in order to track down a «cousin» there, who had been living there legally for the past four years. This «cousin» had spoken to him of the «jungle» and the living

conditions that awaited him in France. Just like A., he had paid someone up to the crossing to Italy, then using his own means, made his way to France. The journey took him 25 days and cost him \$2,500. After having been trying to cross on his own for some time now, he hopes «for a family reunification». He too has never heard anyone speak of the protection system for children.

**54** According to the aforementioned Refugee Rights Data Project, Egyptians account for 1.19% of the migrants in Calais, in the knowledge that we have not encountered Egyptians on other sites. However, it is important to mention that during our interviews, three young Egyptians tried to pass as Syrians, and that according to a voluntary interpreter, this is «a regular occurrence and those who do not speak good Arabic are fooled».

**55** Accused of theft and of operating in gangs by multiple voluntary and independent workers, Egyptians were frequently arrested for breaking and entering in February 2016 by the law enforcement agencies (cf. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2016/02/21/01016-20160221ARTFIG00133-calais-la-jungle-sud-bientot-demantelee.php>).

**56** *A Tatinghem, des mineurs de plus en plus isolés*, by Haydée Sabéran, Libération, 20 January 2015.

**57** It should be pointed out that given the influence of the informal economy, these statistics are approximations.

## EGYPTIAN UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Egyptians account for a minority of the migrants found in the Calais “jungle”<sup>54</sup>. However, they attract a lot of attention as the majority of them are children, according to the volunteers who work with them. The number of Egyptian unaccompanied children is estimated to be between 20 and 50. There are many stories circulating about these young adults<sup>55</sup>. It is difficult to communicate with them, according to members of Doctors of the World and Secours Catholique.

### THE ROUTE

In Calais and Tatinghem<sup>56</sup> where they sought refuge, they live in groups, tend to be younger (those met were between 12 and 17 years-old) and all say that they come from villages in the delta area, not far from Alexandria.

In the accounts of the young people who were met, the reasons given for their departure involve political arguments and economic motivations. They say that they left their country in order to escape poverty and give themselves a better future. Unemployment is a huge issue for young people in Egypt: according to the ILO, one third of young Egyptians between the ages of 18 and 29 are unemployed<sup>57</sup>. Unemployment also increased significantly after the revolution following the closure of factories and declining investment and tourism. They also sought to flee from a political system in which they cannot find a place to call their own. According to the ILO, the number of Egyptian irregular arrivals counted in Europe fell in 2012, before increasing in 2013 and leaping higher in 2014. Although the unaccompanied children only occasionally make reference to the political events of recent years, those that took place in Tahrir Square are known to have had an impact upon many young Egyptians. While the more affluent and educated were able to quickly and legally migrate, others, and young people in particular, were forced to put more uncertain and dangerous strategies in place.

The various stories told allow us to deduce that the departures were ill-prepared, hazardous and sometimes hasty. For some, the route to Europe resembled a voyage of initiation, to “embark upon an adventure and find one’s fortune” as some confided. It would appear that these young people are referring to older individuals who succeeded in doing just that in the UK<sup>58</sup>. At Alexandria, they boarded “large boats headed for Libya or small ones going to Greece.” While some spoke of hiding in the holds so that they could cross, the majority stated that they paid. The rates described varied greatly depending on the routes taken: anywhere from €500 to €4,000. In Greece and in Libya, some young people described being exploited for agricultural or construction work (for anywhere between a few months to three or four years) in order to pay

**58** Interview conducted via telephone with Hisham Aly of Secours Catholique, 14 April 2016.

**59** When asked «Why did you leave?», many of the young people replied that they «had seen France and Europe on the television and they looked good.»

**60** The trafficking networks around the delta area are well-developed in order that migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who travel via Egypt are able to pass through. We assume that these are the same mafias that organise the transportation of the young Egyptians.

**61** Price range given by an Egyptian adult now living in England.

**62** <https://fr.sputniknews.com/international/201510231019043964-italie-traffic-enfant-egyptiens/>

for the next step of their journey. Once in Europe, they moved through Italy, then France, or crossed Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Austria, Germany and France. All of them passed through Paris and the Gare du Nord district for one or several nights. The length of the journey varied greatly: from less than two months to many years. Some workers also told us that the Egyptian unaccompanied children arrive on a tourist visa to visit close relatives in Italy or Greece and decide on the spur of the moment to stay and take their chances.

## TWO PROFILES OF EGYPTIAN CHILDREN

In view of what has been encountered and observed, there are two distinct types of young Egyptians who can both be found living in the “jungle”: on one hand, there are lone children who migrated as part of a family strategy (with the parents’ permission, the highly likely use of a trafficker and a close relative in the UK as a contact), and on the other, children who came from the urban area around Alexandria, most of whom were already living on the streets, and who made this migration independently as part of a self-affirming undertaking by using less costly (and therefore more dangerous) modes of transportation. While the members of the first group are fairly inconspicuous, those of the second group are sometimes noted for thieving and violence. According to the workers who are in contact with the latter, the least educated among them received only very occasional schooling when they were in Egypt. They had a misguided and somewhat fanciful vision of Europe, which was seen as another El Dorado; highly idealised<sup>59</sup>. This dream is maintained by the well-established traffickers in the Delta region<sup>60</sup> who last year were asking for a fee of €1,600 to €3,200 for passage<sup>61</sup>. In England, some would meet with “close relatives” in London, Oxford and Sussex.

## YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FRIGHTENED AND CONTROLLED BY THE TRAFFICKERS

In the opinion of Egypt’s Minister of Immigration, Nabila Makram, the migration of Egyptian children, and other children, is “a national tragedy”, all the more so as these children, having arrived in France or Italy, then become “dealers’ slaves and are victims of sexual violence<sup>62</sup>”. No records of such things were identified during our interviews and meetings with these young people. On the contrary, all the young Egyptians who were questioned complained of police violence and the tight control exercised by the traffickers who, “know exactly where we are at any moment, both in the jungle and the temporary reception centre”.

Other situations described are more difficult to identify. According to our interviews and observations by on-site workers, children of Egyptian origin

**63** Predominantly Sudanese according to our interviews, this could point to the existence of an organisation that is resorting to the use of children.

**64** Interview with Hicham Aly, Secours Catholique, 14th April 2016 via telephone, and Bastien Roland, Doctors of the World, 8 February 2016 in Calais.

would be used to steal from other migrants or the various actors present in the Calais jungle. Most of the resulting proceeds from these thefts are sold in the evening at the makeshift on-site market that is run by the adults<sup>63</sup>. Although we have been unable to identify the nature of the relationships between the children committing the thefts and the adults responsible for the resale of the goods, there are indications that a risk of human trafficking exists.

In order to pay for the journey, one youth told us that he had borrowed “a sum with a short repayment period (...)” and that “if [he] did not make it to England during this period of time, the sum would increase very quickly”. He and his family would receive threats. “This is why we must move very quickly. Once in England, we will pay it back by working.” We have seen that these young people, who have been in Calais for one, six or nine months, are all short on money and are surviving by providing services or stealing from journalists, humanitarian workers or other migrants. Knowing that they have very little chance of being granted asylum in France, they can easily ignore the institutions and voluntary workers and refuse any care<sup>64</sup>.

## “Traffickers know where we are at all times” Min, 15 years old

*Min left the area around Alexandria at the end of summer 2015 in order to travel to Europe. Aged 15, he lived in the Calais «jungle» for five months before arriving at the temporary reception centre with friends in February. As unaccompanied children, they had formed a group containing six members and had appointed an adult leader in order to gain places in the temporary reception centre\* . His journey was quick: it took him five days to reach Italy*

*by boat thanks to a «friend» who paid for this trip, after which he then took the train to France. Since arriving in Calais, he has been trying every night to get through by lorry or via the Eurotunnel site. He states that he is an orphan and does not have family or a contact in the UK. He wishes to travel there «to study, after having worked in order to repay people». He stayed two nights at the accommodation in Saint-Omer, but is very critical: «They are racist there,*

*we have to eat pork». He says that he was never scared during the journey, but in France, he is scared «of the police who hit [us]”. He therefore no longer leaves the «jungle» alone. When we broached the subject of traffickers, he was very uncomfortable and looked as though he wanted to quickly change the subject, whispering «they know where [we are] at all times and even which container we’re sleeping in.»*

\* Please refer to the section on failing alternatives.

## “I would have been happy to stay in France but I’m gassed and beaten here, so I’m continuing onwards” Salih, 13 years old

*Salih appears to be very young. He is no more than 13 years-old and is Egyptian. Nevertheless, he tells everyone that he is 16 and Syrian. He will not share the route he took or his situation. During the first interview, he would repeat: «I’m an orphan and I hid on a boat. I worked*

*in a village in Greece and then I came here.» By taking the time to speak with him on multiple occasions, we have come to understand that he is helping traffickers by closing the doors of lorries in the highway service areas. At the start of March, his sole objective was to reach the*

*Belgian coast with the help of a Kurdish affiliate. When alone, he confides to us that «I don’t care about England; I just want to feel safe now. I would have been happy to stay in France but I’m gassed and beaten here, so I’m continuing onwards. If I’m not safe in England then I’ll come back.»*

### **ERITREAN AND ETHIOPIAN UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

**65** For further details on Eritrea, please refer to Léonard Vincent’s publication, «Les Erythréens» from Editions Rivage (2012).

According to those working for *Gynécologie sans frontières*, the few young female children encountered living in the slums of Calais, Steenvoorde and Norrent Fontes were predominantly Ethiopian or Eritrean, and very occasionally Sudanese. During our visits to Steenvoorde, Norrent Fontes and Calais, these workers told us that no young female had described themselves as a child, while we were able to make contact with five (four in Norrent Fontes and one in Calais) and were able to identify four at Steenvoorde, two of whom were pregnant.

The many young girls who leave their country as children arrive in France as adults after a journey that has lasted multiple years. Consequently, we assume that the children encountered on the coast either left their country at a very young age, have come from an affluent background and were therefore able to travel quickly, or have been exploited by a trafficking network.

### **MIGRATION PRIMARILY MOTIVATED BY POLITICAL PERSECUTION**

These women left their country mainly for political reasons. Since the end of the 1990s, Eritrea<sup>65</sup> has been subject to an authoritarian regime, where military service is mandatory for everyone over the age of 17 and sometimes up to the age of 40. Many young people leave their country before they have reached 18 in order to escape this obligation. If their means permit it, or if the

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/newsFr/storyF.asp?NewsID=33731#.VxeD-3GLTC0>.

<sup>67</sup> cf. <http://www.sept.info/almaz-bd-esclavage/>

<sup>68</sup> Cécile Allegra and Delphine Deloget, *Voyage en barbarie, sur la piste des réfugiés du Sinai*, at [www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr), consulted 17th November 2014.

family comes under particular political pressure, they could be even younger. The wealthiest travel directly to Europe by plane, sometimes with a fake tourist visa. The poorest make their way towards Europe in stages, via Libya where they sometimes stay to work for a number of months or years in order to pay for the next part of their journey. The country is being drained of its inhabitants: in 2014, a UN census counted an average of 2,000 crossings to Sudan and Ethiopia every month<sup>66</sup>.

Although the political situation in Ethiopia is not the same, it remains very poor with high levels of inequality. Many young women are fleeing from arranged marriages, the economic crisis or the poverty that is usually the result of sometimes improper confiscation of land. According to the interviews that were conducted with the women encountered, there are two main migration patterns among women: to seek employment as maids with wealthy Saudi Arabian families<sup>67</sup> and then use a holiday to France as a chance to escape (and thus apply for asylum in France), or to follow the same migratory path as the Eritreans.

## A JOURNEY OF RAPE AND VIOLENCE

After reaching Sudan, there are two routes that can be taken: the first is via Egypt and Israel (none of the children described this as the route they took), the second is via Libya and Italy. The journey along both these routes is especially difficult and entails a number of risks, including abduction, rape and violence<sup>68</sup>. The taking of hostages by the border guards during the journey across Sudan appears to be rife. They sell the migrants to Bedouin tribes, the Rashaida, who then transport them to Egypt. There, they are detained in villas in Sinai and their families are asked to pay a large ransom. Once the money has been collected, the migrants may be released in Israel or freed. In this case, they make their way to Libya with the help of the Sudanese mafias and cross the Sahara into the south of Libya under very harsh conditions. One woman described her trip to us: "In the Sahara, there was a three-hour break during the trip when the trafficker would rest. We were never guaranteed water or food, it just depended and we didn't know for sure. There were many who died during the trip." In Libya, they find themselves hostages of the mafia network. They may be detained or used as slaves by certain families in order to pay the traffickers who then carry them across the sea. "Once in Libya, you pay and you must hide. I was very frightened during the journey and they could rape you or hit you whenever they liked. The traffickers changed every night, so you didn't know who would be there. And every night they chose who they would rape. Only the women with young children were sometimes left alone." After Libya, they reached Italy or Greece by boat. "Every morning at the port, the men were flogged and the women were raped. The lucky

ones got on the boat. Not all the boats arrived at the same spot, they dropped you off in different places." Upon arriving in Italy "we were told what we had to do in order to get papers. But other Ethiopians told us that we had to go elsewhere, that if we stayed there we would lose time making arrangements. That it is better to go to Germany and that France is complicated." In Paris, many women pass through the district around the La Chapelle metro station, where they are advised to go to Calais, in order to either reach England or to request asylum. "It takes less time", they tell us.

The risks and dangers along the way are ever-present. For women, the threat of rape is constant. "All the women are raped, even pregnant women. They did not touch me, because I was breastfeeding my baby who I always kept held against me, but it's a miracle," one woman told us. The longer the journey, the more women are exposed to the risk of exploitation and trafficking. While those who possess the financial means to reach France fairly quickly (around 45 days according to the women who were encountered) with the help of a woman acting as an intermediary, for the poorest and the most vulnerable, this can take many years. We were told by one Ethiopian woman, who was 30 years of age and staying at the temporary reception centre, that she left her country at the age of 14. It has taken her over 15 years to arrive in France, forced to work in Libya, Greece and Italy for many years; another 17 year-old Ethiopian who we met in Calais left her country at the age of 13 to escape from an arranged marriage. After quickly reaching Libya, she stayed there for two years, working as a maid. She was frequently raped during the long journeys, during which she had no other means of earning money.

### **A VAGUE PLAN TO HEAD FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM**

The reasons for going to the UK are somewhat vague. While some say that they have family there, the women have rarely kept in touch with them. The older women often speak of a spouse who lives there legally. They justify their journey on the pretext that their marriage certificates have not been recognised as authentic and that they are unable to qualify for family reunification. They also often speak good English and this is their first argument put forward to justify their plan to resume study or return to work in the UK.

### **EXPLOITATION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN FRANCE**

Arrival in France does not mean that the danger is over. The women from the Horn of Africa take refuge in Calais (now mainly at the Jules Ferry centre) and in the slums of Norrent Fontes and Steenvoorde. Some only remain a short while, staying for a couple of weeks or months on the sites at Norrent Fontes

**69** Interview with a Terre d'Errance worker, 5 March 2016, in Norrent Fontes.

**70** 23 February 2016 and 5 March 2016, in the morning then in the afternoon.

**71** Interview with the workers at the Jules Ferry centre, 25 March 2016.

**72** Telephone interview with Carine Zerouali, 22 April 2016.

and Steenvoorde, to months on end in Calais. To enter Norrent Fontes or Steenvoorde, the women must pay an entrance fee of around €500 in order to be granted access to voluntary-sector services and the adjacent highway service areas. If they leave the sites on their own initiative only to return later, they must pay again. In Norrent Fontes, there are two wooden cabins which are reserved for women: according to one woman's testimony, in order to secure a place there, you must wait your turn and sleep in the men's area in a tent. There, rape seems to be commonplace and they have been forced into prostitution. It would appear that there is a high turnover of young women, particularly children<sup>69</sup>, even if they declare themselves to be adults at first. None of the young women we interviewed were aware of France's protection system for children. According to some workers, the site is run by a woman who organises the migration of young women.

In Steenvoorde, over the course of our three visits<sup>70</sup>, none of the migrants living there agreed to be interviewed by us in a one-on-one setting. The women appeared to be young and pregnant. Four of them appeared to be children even though they refused to talk to us. One English-speaking man systematically introduced himself as the sole spokesperson and others watched us stealthily in order to control who we tried to speak to. Collectively, the responses were given hastily, even though some young Sudanese, Eritrean and Ethiopian boys agreed to give their ages (13, 14 and 16 years-old). At our insistence, one individual agreed to speak to us, officially and under the supervision of the group, and it seemed to us that he told a story which had been learnt by rote, without waiting for us to ask questions. We assume that these people are strictly supervised and controlled by the traffickers who remain at their sides day and night.

In Calais, it was reported that the majority of women are housed at the Jules Ferry centre. However, these women are still vulnerable to rape and prostitution; around 20 young women leave in the evening with their make-up done to engage in prostitution in the cafés located within the "jungle"<sup>71</sup>. All the women questioned said that they were afraid of the violence, thefts and rapes which are widespread after dark.

An activist close to the migrants living in Paris, within the Stalingrad and La Chapelle districts, told us that around once a week, a car drops off a number of African women and picks up others. These women confided that they live in the "jungle" and that they have been exploited by men of Albanian origin since arriving in Calais. Nobody living in Calais was able to confirm that women from the "jungle" were being forced to work as prostitutes in Paris. However, this corroborates with the stories of women who have said that they leave the "jungle" or the Jules Ferry Centre for a number of days "to rest and see close relatives in Paris"<sup>72</sup>.

In view of the increasing difficulty of crossing over to the UK, many voluntary workers fear that women are turning to prostitution and are being exploited in order to be able to survive and cross over more quickly. Since the end of February 2016, workers at the Jules Ferry Centre have noticed that many women have been leaving for Paris, Norrent Fontes, Belgium or even Germany.

## *“It was very hard, I didn’t have control over anything, I depended on the traffickers”* Winta, 13 years old

*Winta left Ethiopia when she was 13 in order to escape from an arranged marriage with a much older man, without warning her parents. «I left on the spur of the moment, without any money». As a friend of hers had travelled the route, she knew who she had to report to in order to make it through. Before she left, she was an ordinary secondary school pupil who looked after her younger brother during the day and attended school in the evening. Her mother cleaned houses and her father was a*

*labourer for hire. «We didn’t have a lot of money, but we didn’t go hungry.» Once in Sudan, she worked in various houses as a maid, cleaner or nanny. She stayed there almost three years in order to pay back what she owed and cover the costs of the next stage of her journey. In Libya, she only stayed for a few months, but was terribly afraid of being killed on account of her being a Christian. Winta recounts her journey with sorrow, during which she was regularly raped and forced into prostitution on a number*

*of occasions in order to earn money more quickly: «It was very hard, I didn’t have control over anything, I depended on the traffickers. I wanted to end it all in Libya as it was too difficult, but as that was worse, I continued on. She met four other young women in Libya, with whom she made the journey to France via Italy. Shortly after her arrival, her friends succeeded in crossing over to England. Since then, they have filed a request for asylum and are studying, they have told her.*

## “I know that if I pay or offer sex, I will cross more quickly” Martha, 16 years old

*Martha arrived in Calais nine months ago at the age of just 16. She speaks good English and dreams of resuming her studies in England, having left school at the age of 13. She claimed to be an adult at the Jules Ferry Centre*

*so that she would be taken into the shelter and does not want to ask for protection for fear of losing her place. In the meantime, she regularly tries to cross using her own means. «I know that if I pay or offer sex, I will cross more*

*quickly. I have been asked to do this. It's hard to say no. They have not forced me yet, but they do force other girls.» She has had no news of her parents since she left.*

## “I moved into the women’s cabin, I am relieved about this” Yohanna, 16 years old

*Yohanna is 16 years-old, but refuses to declare her age on account of the police and associations, «otherwise they ask you to leave when [I want] to cross». Born to an unknown father, she left Eritrea upon the death of her mother in order to escape military service and to join her sister who has lived in England for a number of years. However, she doesn't know where she lives, nor how to reach her. She attended a good private school and*

*speaks very good English. In order to leave her country, she gave her mother's jewellery to a woman. «She took care of everything and dropped me off in Paris, near Gare du Nord and La Chapelle. She took care of me until we reached Libya, after which I moved from group to group.» In Paris, after having slept in the streets for a number of days, «it was terrible, just like everything else», she met an Ethiopian who told her about Calais and Norrent Fontes.*

*She chose to go to Norrent Fontes «as he said that it was safer». In the beginning, she slept in a tent with the men, with the girlfriend of one of this boy's friends. «But I moved into the women's cabin as soon as a place became free. There are 30 of us here. I am relieved about this, because down there in the tents, it's tough and I don't want to describe it. When we don't have any more money, we sort it out.»*

**73** According to the workers who were on the site almost every day.

**74** Name given by those working on the site to people who appear to try to «control» the group members' every move and gesture. One of the caretakers had been on the site for four months.

**75** Originally, ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism) was a movement, born during the 90s in the form of an international campaign, which sought to tackle the alarming extent of the sexual exploitation of children within Southeast Asian tourism. ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) today is a global network that brings together associations across 74 countries. ECPAT UK has taken an interest in the protection of Vietnamese children for a number of years.

**76** Some details were communicated to us when the Vietnamese, some of whom were children, were placed in detention in 2015.

**77** The use of such a quantity of herbicide had a significant impact on the environment. In *Le Courrier de l'Unesco*, published in May 2000, the UN-associated organisation estimated that one-fifth of South Vietnam's forests were destroyed by American herbicides.

**78** The region is primarily dependent on fishing and tourism.

**79** Laurent Appel, *Cannabis: la connexion vietnamienne*, in *Criminalités, Revue de géopolitique*, Revue n°5 - March 2013.

## VIETNAMESE UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Within the framework of our study, we were able to visit a site in Angres, where a number of Vietnamese nationals lived. There could be between 30 and 200 people living on the site, 10% to 15% of whom are children<sup>73</sup>. We believe there to be a significant turnover. The majority of those present appeared to be between 16 and 20 years-old. There was another slum that also housed Vietnamese nationals; it was dismantled in 2015.

The land was made available by the mayor of Angres. The community provides water (for cleaning dishes, washing) and 80% of the wood. The group of volunteers ensures, most notably, that the migrants' health is monitored and their physical welfare maintained by offering them the opportunity to take a shower once a week.

It is extremely difficult to gather reliable information on this group. There is limited background literature on the subject and conversation with these people has been complicated. They speak very little or deliver a set speech under the supervision of a "caretaker"<sup>74</sup>. We have therefore had to combine multiple sources of information: reports created by ECPAT<sup>75</sup> who have been working on this subject for many years, a number of articles relating to new forms of drug trafficking and interviews with people which took place in another context<sup>76</sup>.

### REGIONS OF ORIGIN

According to the group that is active on the site at Angres, its inhabitants originate from the Song Ca region, not far from the shores of the South China Sea and the Quyet mountains, 295 kilometres to the south of the country's capital, Hanoi. The reasons for leaving are economic in nature, as the result of this zone having been particularly severely affected by the herbicide that was sprayed during the Vietnam War<sup>77</sup>. During the interviews we conducted, these people told us that they had originally come from Huet<sup>78</sup> – central, moderately urbanised, rural regions of the country.

### THE MIGRATORY ROUTE

The Vietnamese travel through Russia, then Poland, and finally hidden inside lorries in order to cross through Germany and into France. According to some testimonies, this journey can last 14 months. The presence of the Vietnamese who have made their way here as the result of co-operation between former Soviet Bloc countries has enabled the establishment of networks in Eastern Europe, mainly in the former GDR, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Poland<sup>79</sup>.

**80** Aude Lasjaunias, *Le pêcheur passeur de migrants qui met le port de Dunkerque en émoi*, Le Monde, 7 November 2015

**81** In its 2006-2007 report, the NGO DrugScope revealed that three-quarters of cannabis farms in the United Kingdom are run by Vietnamese criminal organisations. Laurent Appel, *Cannabis: la connexion vietnamienne*, in *Criminalités*, Revue de géopolitique, Revue n°5 - March 2013. According to the report published by ECPAT UK, 96% of people working on cannabis farms in Great Britain are Vietnamese, 81% of whom are children.

**82** According to some testimonies, this debt can amount to between £17,000 and £20,000. This debt is sometimes shared with the family members who have remained in the country, which represents an additional form of leverage that can be used against the young person.

**83** Laurent Appel, *Cannabis: la connexion vietnamienne*, in *Criminalités*, Revue de géopolitique, Revue n°5 - March 2013

**84** Laurent Appel, *Cannabis: la connexion vietnamienne*, in *Criminalités*, Revue de géopolitique, Revue n°5 - March 2013

**85** Paule Gonzales « Le milieu vietnamien suspecté après la découverte d'une ferme de cannabis » In Le figaro, 9 November 2014.

**86** One of the members of the group told us about the story of this young girl who seemed to have developed a relationship with a nurse who worked for the association *Gynécologies Sans Frontières*. The young girl disappeared very quickly after this bond was formed.

## PASSAGE

Although the highway service area located close to the site at Angres appears to be the preferred place of passage, it would appear that other means are exploited. As such, a fisherman was stopped in November 2015. He was a suspected member of a network which made arrangements for migrants to cross over to England by sea. One trip could cost nearly €14,000 per person, of which the fisherman could expect to receive almost €1,400, according to the details provided by Lille's specialised interregional court (JIRS), which was responsible for the investigation<sup>80</sup>.

## A HIGHLY ORGANISED NETWORK

There is a strong suspicion that the existing situation is one involving trafficking or exploitation. These individuals are exploited and abducted, particularly in the UK, where the young men are sent to work on cannabis farms<sup>81</sup> and the young women in nail salons (probably also involving prostitution (see part 3.2. on trafficking). This is how these individuals pay for their passage to Europe<sup>82</sup> and they are often exploited for years whilst subject to very precarious living conditions<sup>83</sup>. Cannabis farms have also emerged in France, in Alsace<sup>84</sup> and the area around Paris<sup>85</sup>, thereby confirming that the UK is not the only destination.

## A HARD-TO-ESTABLISH CONNECTION AND BOND OF TRUST

Even if there is no perceptible tension on the site (in our presence), it appears that very strong control (set speech) is being exerted over the group through the presence of "caretakers". As such, during our visit, one of the caretakers was the only man who spoke English and two older females (between 30 and 40 years-old) also appeared to fulfil this role. It was almost impossible to be able to converse with a member of the group (both children and adults) on a one-to-one basis. Control was exerted immediately as soon as the "caretakers" came to interfere in the discussion. It also appears that when a connection was made, this individual was quickly "extracted" from the site<sup>86</sup>.

These people appear to have money despite the fact that there is no money transfer agency located in the surrounding area. It is unlikely that they are travelling whilst carrying such a great quantity of money. Furthermore, according to those interviewed, connections appear to be with Paris and the UK.

**87** According to the medical consultation statistics compiled by Doctors of the World on the site at Tétéghem, in August 2015, 1/3 were Iraqi, 1/3 Iranian and 1/3 Syrian. In November of the same year, there were 53% Iraqis and 28% Iranians.

**88** Interviews conducted in January, February and March with the workers of MSF and Groupe SOS, commissioned by the prefecture.

## **KURDISH UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FROM IRAQ AND IRAN**

### **DISTRIBUTION AND NUMBERS**

For more than a decade, populations of migrants (including children) originally from Iraq and Iran, hoping to cross over to the UK, have been living in the Dunkirk area. In 2006, Doctors of the World launched a mission in Dunkirk to provide assistance to those living in slums and squats. The vast majority of the Kurdish populations of Iraq and Iran are found at the Grand Synthe camp, which was opened in mid-March on the initiative of MSF.

### **AN UNSTABLE SITUATION THAT CAUSES FLUCTUATIONS IN THE NUMBER OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

Within one year, both the circumstances affecting this population, as well as the composition of such, have changed considerably. According to the estimates of a number of charitable actors (Doctors of the World, Carrefour des migrants, Emmaüs) and the affected city councils, up until July 2015, the number of those living in the slums of Basroch at Grand Synthe and Tétéghem (located a few kilometres away) did not exceed 80 individuals. Across these two sites, the total number of unaccompanied children was no greater than 10 or so, and included a range of nationalities: Iranian, Iraqi, as well as Syrian and Vietnamese.

Beginning in August 2015, the number of people increased significantly, the majority of whom are Kurds from Iraq<sup>87</sup>. In January 2016, following the closure of the Tétéghem slum (18th November 2015), the prefecture conducted a census. It counted 2,400 people: 80% were Iraqi, of whom 230 were children. Whether they could be regarded as “lone” was not specified. These figures are contested by the on-site associations due to the fact that the counting was carried out early in the morning, while some of the people (and young people in particular) had yet to return from their night-time attempts to secure a means of passage. According to workers<sup>88</sup>, there were between 250 and 350 unaccompanied children in January 2016.

In mid-March 2016, after the humanitarian camp financed by MSF was closed and the Basroch slum was abandoned by the migrants, the number of people fell by half. The new census that was conducted at the end of March 2016 by the sub-prefecture via the border police reported 1,276 people. 90% were Iraqi nationals, of whom 20 were unaccompanied children. As the count was made under the same conditions (early morning), those working on the site feel that the number of unaccompanied children has again been underestimated. The number of children fluctuates from one day to the next

**89** Interviews conducted in March 2016.

**90** Bahar Baser, *La diaspora kurde d'Irak au Royaume-Uni, Hommes et migrations*, 1307, 2014, 140-143.

**91** In 2015, the number of refugees and related individuals was 2,019,050, of whom 578 000 received assistance from UNHCR.

**92** Term that describes "those who advance in the face of death" and refers to the soldiers of the Kurdish region of Iraq.

on account of those who manage to cross over to the UK, those who leave for other countries (notably Germany) and those who have just arrived. According to those working on the site<sup>89</sup>, unaccompanied children number around 50.

## REASON FOR THE DEPARTURE OF IRAQI KURDISH UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

The Kurdish region of Iraq, with a population of around five million inhabitants, has been no stranger to a number of troubles over the last thirty years.

At the end of the 1980s, Saddam Hussein's regime launched a repression known as the "Anfal campaign" against the Kurds of Iraq. At this time, when Iraqi Kurds first began to migrate, they headed for the Commonwealth countries, including the UK for historical reasons (Iraq was under British mandate). Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the Iraqi Kurdish diaspora continued to develop in the UK<sup>90</sup>. As of 2005, following the second American intervention in Iraq, the region experienced an economic upturn which led to the arrival of a number of foreign businesses and a significant increase in the cost of living (the price of accommodation increased five-fold). In order to benefit from this boom, part of the diaspora that was living in the UK returned to Iraq. This return contributed to the popularity of the idea that there were opportunities for success in Britain. As the retreat of the American forces grew closer, and faced with the greater and greater level of autonomy displayed by the Kurdish region of Iraq, the government reduced the amount of money that it allocated to this region whilst retaining control of the oil. The civil servants were therefore paid their salaries many months late. Furthermore, in 2014, the taking of Mosul and the surrounding region (the border area of Iraqi Kurdistan) by ISIL led to the arrival of a huge number of internally-displaced people. According to the UNHCR, they numbered 2 million in 2015<sup>91</sup> (Christians, Yazidis and Kurds originating from other parts of Iraq). This population influx contributed to the reduction in the cost of labour.

In order to combat the advance of ISIL, local government, now without financial support from Baghdad, was compelled to finance 150,000 *Peshmergas*<sup>92</sup>. Despite the existence of large oil fields, the Kurdish region of Iraq still benefited little from the oil wealth that was collected by the Iraqi government. But when the price of crude oil collapsed, these revenues became insufficient to cover the needs of the population and the salaries of the Kurdish region's soldiers, which were many months late in being paid. Some of the adults present at Grande-Synthe were in fact former *Peshmergas* who were unable to meet their families' needs. These economic difficulties resulted in severe rifts between Kurdish political parties and an increase in the occurrence of cronyism in order to get a job.

**93** This information is corroborated by a study conducted by British Red Cross, which counted 125 Iraqi Kurdish families at the Grande-Synthe site in January 2016, 100 of whom had family in the UK.

For many of these young people, these elements made for a very uncertain future, particularly in urbanised areas. Migration therefore became an apparent alternative, made easier since summer 2015 by the opening of the Balkan route. Families who do not have enough money to plan their departure together depend on the sending of one child (male) in order to ensure regular income and to open the way for other family members.

### PROFILE OF IRAQI KURDISH UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

During our interviews, the majority of Iraqi Kurds declared themselves to have come from small towns in the As Sulaymaniya region (Ranya, Qalat Dizah) close to the Iranian border. Their social status sometimes differed: for example, young people who had worked since the age of eight as a shoe shiner and those who had never worked and wished to pursue studies in the UK. The majority had graduated from secondary school. Only one child among them had not been educated. Their parents were small business owners, civil servants or *Peshmergas* who no longer received a salary and were forced into jobs such as driving taxis, bricklaying, and similar trades.

Although the causes that prompted their departure are relatively varied, the children explained that they had no future in their place of origin and that the large cities had become too expensive. Finding a job other than in construction was becoming more and more difficult as the result of corruption and nepotism reinforced by the economic and political crisis.

The reasons for departure given by the children are, in order of frequency:

- a decision made by the father who finances his son's trip to rejoin family living in the UK (brother, uncle, cousin who works in hospitality, construction, hair salons, car washes...);
- a decision made by the family following the disappearance of the father, who finance the trip by selling assets or thanks to the help of relations living in the UK;
- the absence of prospects beyond drug trafficking for children originating from Qaladiza (entry point for drug trafficking into the Kurdish region of Iraq);
- the pursuit of studies in the UK;
- the desire of the boy to escape from a marriage, particularly after having had sexual relations with a girl;
- the desire to escape from an early marriage and an overly traditional society for the girls.

The vast majority of unaccompanied children stated that they had family in the UK<sup>93</sup> but also in a number of other European countries. As for the question "If

you do not succeed in crossing over within six months, what will you do?”, only one-third said that they would cease trying to find a way into the UK.

### **REASON FOR THE DEPARTURE OF THE IRANIAN KURDISH CHILDREN**

“In Iran, the Kurds are subject to religious discrimination as they do not belong to the Shiite majority. Shia Islam is the state religion, to which adherence is required in order to reach high-ranking political and even administrative positions. (...) the repression of the Islamic Republic has not reached the extreme level of violence seen in Iraq and Turkey, that is to say, the massive deportations of millions of Kurds and the destruction of more than 4,000 villages in each of these two countries and genocide in Iraq. Iranian repression is of a more “classic” nature: executions and targeted arrests.<sup>94</sup>”

For Iranian Kurds, the reasons for leaving are primarily linked to the lack of prospects and the risk of arbitrary detentions. The warming of diplomatic relations between Iran, the United States and the European Union since the beginning of the conflict in Syria leaves the Kurds with little hope of a change in regime or attitude that will be in their favour.

### **PROFILE OF THE IRANIAN AND IRANIAN KURDISH CHILDREN**

The Iranian Kurdish children who were encountered come from medium-sized cities, particularly from Bukan County, in Iran’s West Azerbaijan province. They had all been educated prior to their departure. Their parents belonged to the middle class. According to our interviews, the presence of family members in the UK is less systematic than among Iraqi Kurds. We also met some non-Kurdish Iranian children. They explained that their families had been willing to pay, no matter what the cost of passage. They led us to believe that they came from a fairly comfortable background and that they wished to go to the UK in order to pursue their studies there.

### **RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROUTE**

According to our interviews with Iraqi Kurdish migrants who had been living in France for a number of years, it was at the start of the 1990s that Iraqi Kurdish networks were put in place to allow passage to Europe. The Iranian Kurds turn to the same traffickers who operate the network as the Iraqis, which explains their presence on the site at Basroch (Grande-Synthe). Prior to the opening of the Balkan route, the price of entering the EU was approximately €10,000, to which another few hundred euros would be added in order to reach the UK.

All the children we questioned paid traffickers in Iraq to bring them as far as Greece by using a down payment system which limits monetary exchanges. In order to pay for their journey (between \$2,000 and \$6,000) as far as Greece, some worked in construction for a number of months. In other cases it was the parents who paid. Lastly, for the families of more modest means, an uncle living in the UK paid for their travel. Upon their arrival in the UK, they would begin working right away in order to pay this back. This debt creates a significant risk of economic exploitation.

Their journey took them through Iran then Turkey (which did not require a visa, an Iraqi passport is sufficient to be allowed to enter), followed by the Balkan route and Austria. Two went to Germany, but felt their future to be uncertain there, and after a number of months of waiting in a centre, set their sights on the UK. In the majority of these cases, the journey to reach France was relatively short (between 15 days and seven months).

With regard to the Iranian Kurds, the closure of the Balkan route at the end of November 2015 to nationalities other than Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan forced them to purchase a fake Iraqi passport in order to pass through.

The most difficult part of the trip, made on inflatable boats, is between Greece and Turkey, for the following reasons which were cited by the children:

- violence shown by the smugglers;
- being threatened with a firearm to force them to board the boat;
- risks associated with the sea;
- the loss of a family member.

## **PASSAGE BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

For a long time, the main point of passage to the UK has Loon Plage, a ferry port located a few kilometres from Grande-Synthe where numerous lorries board. Other points have appeared in Belgium and even the Netherlands. Most of the young people who were questioned had tried to cross 40 to 50 times, which required a significant level of risk-taking. In order to avoid the detection systems, more and more children have told us about crossing in refrigerated lorries. On 1 April 2016, an unaccompanied Iraqi Kurdish child living in the Grande-Synthe camp died after having hidden himself underneath a lorry.

## **FORM OF INFLUENCE AND SPECIFIC RISKS AMONG KURDISH IRAQI CHILDREN**

The specific risks to Kurdish Iraqi children come from the extended presence of traffickers. At the beginning, unaccompanied children who arrive in

Grande-Synthe attempt to cross alone. They then simply pay a variable rate for the right of entry on the basis of family ties. This can go for regular gifts such as buying alcohol up to the payment of a sum of € 500. Those who do not have money to pay for the right of entry are turned back and then go to Calais, Belgium or the Netherlands. Once the sum is paid, after many unsuccessful attempts and suffering hardships, many hire smugglers. To avoid criminal prosecution, the exchange of money is done either in the Kurdish region of Iraq or in the UK. Often, a deposit is paid and the rest of the sum paid once the child has crossed over. This technique increases the influence on the children with regard to their obligation to go to the UK since a part of the sum has already been paid. The prices paid by the children for their crossings are between € 5,000–7,000.

In the camp, the traffickers organise everything. They have recourse to young adults or unaccompanied children who do not have money and who serve as helpers for shopping, opening trucks, retrieving money from any family, monitoring parking areas, blocking access to certain services (food, showers, etc.). In the Basroch camp, access to showers, initially installed by MSF, has required payment for a long time. The children who we have encountered have not been able to shower for 45 days. Progress has been made in the new refugee camp, but the presence of traffickers and their helpers remains a reality.

Regarding girls, the different visits of SOS and MSF have, during their observations, heard of situations of prostitution of children who are 17 years-old without any success in identifying them. In our interviews with the children, several have mentioned that girls arrived alone, had resigned themselves to provide sexual services to their trafficker and to the helpers for small sums (around €5 per session). It has not been possible to know more; the children explained to us that the young girls in question were sent to the UK.

During the interview, when asked the question: "What do you fear most?", those who had not yet paid traffickers were afraid of being molested. Indeed, to force people (children and young adults) to pay, they explained to us that on the different truck parking sites (Loon Plage, in particular), young people are paid to see if migrants want to cross. When they are identified, they then call the "big guys", always paid by the traffickers. Several bruises were shown to us. According to the children interviewed, these acts of violence would have been escalated in recent weeks. Since the transfer to the new refugee camp (mid-March), young people would have encountered a drop in police surveillance in the borders, which makes crossing less difficult. In order to maintain their control over the children who decide to cross alone, traffickers have increased their surveillance on the parking areas and the acts of violence against those who try to break free of their "services".

## “I know that at the beginning I will work to pay for my brother” Akar, 16 years old

*Akar is 16 years old and comes from Ranya, a city of the Kurdish region of Iraq near the Iranian border. His father has a business in the building sector. When his brother went to the UK, four years ago, it was he who has paid the traffickers. Akar went six months ago to Kurdistan. With his Iraqi passport, he crossed over to Iran (there is no visa required for the Iraqis), then Turkey, travelling in a group with other people from his*

*city. To reach Greece, he was forced to embark in a rubber boat under the threat of a firearm. In total, the journey up to Calais would have lasted three weeks. In the new camp, he said that it was cleaner than before. «There are a lot of people involved who come but each time give different information. In the evening, there is often fighting and free flowing alcohol.» He has attempted to go over 50 times, especially to Loon*

*Plage. At this time, he said that «it is easier (early April 2016) because the police is less present but the traffickers are very aggressive. As soon as they see you, they hit you violently.» He has found someone who can make him cross for £5,000. In the UK, his brother works in a «barber shop». He knows that at the beginning he will work to pay for his brother because he owes £9,000.*

## “I did not know how my father paid for the crossing” Zoran, 16 years old

*Zoran is a 16 year-old Kurdish Iranian boy. He comes from the city of Boukan. His father advised him to go to the UK because he saw no future for him in Iran. Zoran explains during the interview that if he had stayed it would have been very difficult to find a job other than as a subordinate. «Within companies and the administrations it all works through contacts. When they (the recruiters) see that you come from Iranian Kurdistan, they do not trust you and, at the slightest problem, they fire you». Zoran says that in his*

*city there are more and more drugs (crystal meth, heroin, hashish) and that many of his friends have fallen prey to them. For him it is part of the plan «that destroys the Kurds, since elsewhere (in Iran) you risk the death penalty when you sell drugs.» To finance his trip, his father sold his assets. Before leaving, Zoran first went to Iraq to buy a fake Iraqi passport. He returned to Iran. Then, he received help at several border points: Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, to avoid the verification of documents at the Greco-Macedonian border,*

*Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and France. The trip lasted two weeks. Zoran said he did not know how his father paid for the crossing, but he will have to send him money regularly to repay his family. In the UK, he said that he had an uncle who will be able to give him work in a small store. He said he had been for 15 days in the camp of Grande-Synthe. For his crossing to the UK, he expects the traffickers to call him.*

<sup>94</sup> Saywan Barzani, *Géopolitique actuelle des Kurdes en Turquie, en Irak et en Iran*, EchoGéo Sur le Vif, made available online on 13 March 2008,

<sup>95</sup> See the Amnesty International report of 4 August 2015: *The attacks perpetrated in South Kordofan constitute war crimes*. <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2015/08/sudan-attacks-in-south-kordofan-constitute-war-crimes>

<sup>96</sup> UNHCR, *Operational Profile 2015 - Sudan*, <http://www.unhcr.fr/pages/4aae621d46f.html>

## OTHER NATIONALITIES

### SUDANESE UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

#### NUMBER AND LOCATION

During the mission, it was difficult to have in-depth Interviews with Sudanese children. On the different sites, they were very supervised by adults, did not wish to speak or had set stories. Their number is very limited. They are mainly present in the “jungle” of Calais and more rarely at Norrent Fontes. According to our observations and interviews with the actors in the field, the vast majority of them would be 16 years-old and older.

#### PROFILES AND RISKS LINKED TO THE JOURNEY

The children that we have encountered say that they come from areas of conflict of South Kordofan, where government forces are regularly accused of the massacre of civilians<sup>95</sup> according to Amnesty International, and Darfur, where, according to UNHCR, the situation is more and more worrying. “The humanitarian situation in the Sudan has deteriorated over the past two years, with new internal displacement caused by the conflict in Darfur. Approximately 400,000 new internally displaced persons have been recorded between January and August 2014. According to United Nations figures, 6.9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in Sudan. The latest estimates indicate that by the end of 2015, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the country could rise to 460,000.”<sup>96</sup>

By cross-checking the information collected during our interviews with the Sudanese unaccompanied children encountered in Calais, in Paris and the members of the community, two routes would be used. A very limited number would cross through Egypt, travelling by boat across the Mediterranean to arrive on the Italian coasts. This route remained less used because it requires the unaccompanied children (from western Sudan, near the border with Niger) to cross the whole of the north of the country with the risk of imprisonment and/or torturing by pro-government forces. The majority of the Sudanese unaccompanied children would therefore cross through Nigeria, where, for around three days, they cross the Sahara Desert up to the city of Sebha, located 660 km from Tripoli, where the majority of migrants from the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia) converge. In Sebha, they are supported by Libyan traffickers. Those who do not have enough money to pay for the crossing are forced to work in construction or agriculture (between eight months and a year, according to the stories) in order to finance the trip to Italy. Some children have said they have been victims of gratuitous aggression as “the Libyans say we are the friends of Gaddafi”. Others are placed in detention for several months while they prepare to take a boat to Italy. According to them, their confinement is due to rivalries between traffickers.

**97** *Jungle de Calais : 19 blessés dans des rixes entre migrants*, Le Parisien 17 mars 2016.

**98** *Calais : neuf blessés dans une bagarre opposant 200 migrants*, La voix du Nord, 11 sept. 2015.

**99** Unicef UK / Unicef France mission from 24 to 25 February 2016.

**100** Which means «without nationality» in Arabic.

In order to circumvent the interception of boats, some have explained they have had to change boats in the middle of the sea. Others have explained that the boat has been voluntarily capsized when a merchant ship was close enough for the rescue.

It remains difficult to know the actual route of the children encountered, since a part of their stories is very set. These elements however allow us to better identify the risks and trauma which the Sudanese unaccompanied children may be facing.

### **RISKS WITHIN THE “JUNGLE” AND MIGRATION PLANS**

During the course of our interviews, for the reasons mentioned above, it has not been possible to identify the specific risks to Sudanese unaccompanied children. The only elements that emerged are the fear of Afghans. In fact, clashes between Sudanese and Afghans within the jungle of Calais occurred regularly. The latest one occurred on 16 March 2016<sup>97</sup>, the most important one had taken place in September 2015 when 200 Afghans and Sudanese had clashed on the background of the history of thefts between them.<sup>98</sup>

Concerning migration plans, if some children say that they want to join members of their families settled in the UK, two other strategies have emerged – seeking assistance or speeding up asylum claims, and seeking education.

Some Sudanese unaccompanied children, having arrived for a time in the Parisian region, would come to Calais to benefit from the social assistance to children via FTDA and/or so that their application for asylum is dealt with quicker than it would be in Paris. These children seem to travel to and from the capital on a regular basis as we have seen in two situations encountered in Calais and in the vicinity of the Stalingrad metro.

The supervisors of the Millbank Reception Centre in Kent<sup>99</sup> are in charge of receiving unaccompanied children who arrive through Dover having crossed (most of them) through the “jungle” of Calais, and the young Sudanese that they receive express the desire to continue their studies. They are among the children more inclined to go to school, together with the Eritreans.

## **BEDOON KUWAITI UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

### **NUMBER AND LOCATION**

At the time of our field mission to Grande-Synthe, in the Basroch slum, several Bedoon<sup>100</sup> Kuwaiti unaccompanied children were present. They had only been there for a few days and the number of arrivals does not exceed two or three per week. In Calais, their number was larger but remained limited.

**101** Claire

Beaugrand, *Radicalisation de la contestation politique au Koweït: quelle place pour les « Bidoun » dans une société ségréguée?*, Orient XXI, 14 seven. /2015.

**102** *Coquelles: des migrants arrêtés deux fois en quelques jours avec des passeurs différents*, La Voix du Nord, 30 December 2014.

**REASON OF DEPARTURE AND ROUTE**

Our interviews with the children have been too limited to get precise information on the reasons for their departure. In the words of Claire Beaugrand: “The Bedoon constitute a marginalised segment of the Kuwaiti population; they have been living in a legal void for 30 to 50 years. They claim to have the right to Kuwaiti nationality because they have no other. Kuwait puts them in the category of foreigners “residing illegally” on its territory since 1986 – although their presence is sometimes prior to this date. Accordingly, they are denied access to the most basic of rights: education, health, employment and official documents<sup>101</sup>”.

If it has not been possible to know the personal stories of Kuwaiti unaccompanied children, the institutionalised discrimination that they suffer and which has tended to increase since June 2015 probably explains a good part of the reason for their departure.

Regarding the itinerary followed, during the course of our interviews with the Iraqi Kurds, several of them have explained that the Bedoon would use the same channels of traffickers and therefore the same routes after they have obtained a false Iraqi passport. With regard to the specific risks specific to the journey, our information is too fragmentary to make assumptions.

**RISKS WITHIN THE JUNGLE**

The small numbers in the slum and then the camp at Grande-Synthe, where one Bedoon family with 15 members resides, puts them in a situation where they face strong discrimination, confirmed by different visits of the SOS and MSF groups. Their access to food, showers and other services is often hampered by others present. Their presence at Grande-Synthe, very limited in time (less than a week sometimes), seems to demonstrate that they do not have the means to pay the right of entry to stay in the camp. In Calais, from our observations, they would suffer less discrimination although they remain a minority among the other unaccompanied children. Therefore, most seek to cross at all costs by taking the maximum risks. In January 2016, two Bedoon Kuwaiti unaccompanied children had been found with hypothermia in a refrigerated truck. They were between 15 and 17 years-old, according to SOS which had accompanied them when they left the hospital, and they explained they were in a truck in Belgium in order to avoid police checks. Several Bedoon children mentioned in the course of informal discussions that they wanted to go to Belgium or the Netherlands in order to access more isolated places. A few diverse facts in 2014 suggest the possibility that they meet traffickers operating out of Belgium.<sup>102</sup>

**ALBANIAN UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

Although the diagnosis was on the different slums of the departments of La Manche, the North and the Pas-de-Calais, where unaccompanied children live,

**103** Conducted by Olivier Peyroux in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean project in October 2015 for Caritas France.

**104** NCA Strategic Assessment, *The Nature and Scale of Human Trafficking in 2014*, Dec. 2015, London.

during the mission to the UK the authorities demonstrated that in the last three years Albanian children were among the first 10 nationalities of unaccompanied children who have crossed through the Hauts-de-France (the name of the new region) before moving to the UK. These children are also among those most at risk of for human trafficking.

According to the interviews with Caritas Albania<sup>103</sup>, the majority of these children come from the region of Shkodra in northern Albania. These Albanian unaccompanied children would come for economic reasons, to flee vendettas related to rivalries between clans for the trafficking of drugs or to be exploited in the UK (refer to Part 3.2. on the trafficking of human beings). Anecdotally the price of the crossing from the Albania would be around €15,000. Before moving to the UK, they often stay in hotels in Paris, Lille and Calais, where girls, including children, would be sexually exploited. Albanian unaccompanied children are also among the children most exposed to human trafficking (cf. section on human trafficking).

Although information is very difficult to verify, in 2014, the number of Albanian children identified at risk of exploitation in the UK was 83. Compared to 2013, the increase in the number of alleged victims is 137% for these children. Among the forms of exploitation identified by the National Crime Agency, we find the economic exploitation in agriculture, exploitation for criminal purposes including the transportation and sale of drugs, and the sexual exploitation of girls.<sup>104</sup>

## CARE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: THE ATTRACTION AND THE REALITY

### **SUPPORT FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AND CHILD VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING**

Child protection in the UK is decentralised, carried out by local authorities. But the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is funded by the Home Office, which gives local authorities a daily rate for each child. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under the age of 16 (and unaccompanied asylum-seeking girls up to the age of 18) are invariably placed in foster care. Boys over the age of 16 are usually placed in semi-independent accommodation.

In the UK, as in most of the countries in Europe, the practice of using bone analysis tests or x-rays to determine age is not used. An evaluation of identity papers is made by the Home Office; however most children arrive with no documents. If there is a significant doubt about a child's age, a multi-agency age assessment is organised.

## EDUCATION

According to the interviews conducted during the Unicef France/Unicef UK mission, for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under-16 the waiting period to access formal education does not exceed six weeks. But for over-16 year olds the responsible authorities expressed concerns about increasing difficulties in finding school places for them. If a child's asylum application is successful, children's services can extend support to age 21, or to 24 in certain circumstances.

## APPLICATIONS FOR ASYLUM AND RISK OF RETURN

In 2015 the UK ranked 9th position concerning asylum applications, with 39,000 applicants (adults and unaccompanied children), far behind Germany (431,000), Sweden (163,000), France (62,000). Compared to Sweden or Germany, the rate of acceptance (for most of the nationalities) is lower in the UK with an average of 39% (30% in France). The rate of return of rejected asylum-seekers is one of the highest in Europe. In 2015, 12,056 people were deported or undertook a voluntary assisted return. Unlike other countries, rejected Afghan asylum-seekers can be returned. However, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children cannot be returned without safe and adequate reception arrangements being in place in the country of origin, so in practice returns rarely happen. Children whose asylum applications have been rejected are often given a form of limited leave to remain in the UK (so-called unaccompanied asylum-seeking child leave), which lasts until they are 17 and a half, or for 30 months, whichever is shorter.

## FAMILY REUNION ONCE IN THE UK

The unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who arrive in the UK and have a member of their family already living there with legal status may ask to be placed with them. Children's services conduct an assessment in order to ensure that the environment is suitable, taking into account housing, financial and educational conditions. The UK's Immigration Rules on refugee family reunion do not allow a refugee child to sponsor the application of their parent or main carer to join them in the UK.

## RISKS OF TRAFFICKING

The fact that children are taking on increasingly higher debts in order to reach the UK to join relatives or to work increases the risk of these children being subject to trafficking (refer to part 3 on trafficking).



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## THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

**p. 60 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

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## **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

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### **INTERNATIONAL TEXTS**

The protection of children in danger is an obligation for the States, which is indicated by Article 20 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

"A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background."

According to common law, the care exercised through social assistance to children is thus exercised without considering any nationality. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child stated in its General Comment 6 of September 2005: "State obligations under the Convention apply within the borders of a State, including with respect to those children who come under the State's jurisdiction while attempting to enter the country's territory.

**105** This law has been amended, Child Protection Law of 14 March 2016 (<http://www.infomie.net/spip.php?rubrique27>).

**106** «The following individuals are supported by the service of social assistance to children under the decision of the President of the General Council: the children who cannot remain temporarily in their normal environment and whose situation requires a full-time or part-time home, which is flexible according to their needs, in particular emotional stability, as well as children experiencing particular difficulties requiring a specialised home, family or an institution or a service such as the one provided for in Section 12 of Article L. 312-1»

Therefore, the enjoyment of rights stipulated in the Convention is not limited to children who are citizens of a State party and must therefore, if not explicitly stated otherwise in the Convention, also be available to all children - including asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children - irrespective of their nationality, immigration status or statelessness.”

## CHILD PROTECTION IN FRANCE

In France, Article L.111-2 of the Code of Social Action and Families confirms the absence of the condition of nationality in the context of the measures for child protection: “Foreign persons enjoy in the conditions specific to each of these benefits: 1. child protection”. The Law of 5 March 2007 has strengthened the competence of general advisers, turning them into “leaders of child protection<sup>105</sup>”.

Article L.226-3 of the Code of Social Action and Families provides that the President of the departmental council is responsible for the collection, treatment and assessment, at any time and for whatever origin, of disturbing information relating to children in danger or who are likely to be in danger.

There are two types of procedures to support children in danger: administrative protection and judicial protection.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROTECTION FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

The administrative support of children in danger or at risk of being in danger in the absence of any judicial ruling is based on Article L. 222-1 of the Code of Social Action and Families – including Article L222-5<sup>106</sup> – which provides for the intervention of the child protection system. In addition, Article L. 112-3 of the same Code provides that “the protection of children also aims at preventing the difficulties that children may encounter temporarily or permanently if they are deprived of the protection of their family and to ensure their care”. Unaccompanied children are by definition isolated, and therefore in danger, and therefore they must have administrative protection on the basis of the emergency.

**107** «If anyone who had knowledge of deprivation, ill-treatment and sexual abuse inflicted on a child under the age of fifteen years or to a person who is not able to protect themselves due to his age [...] does not inform the judicial or administrative authorities, he will be punished with three years of imprisonment and a fine of 45,000 euros».

**108** «If the health, safety or morality of a child not emancipated are in danger, or if the conditions of his education or physical, emotional, intellectual and social development are seriously compromised».

**109** Article 226-4, II, «Any person working within the bodies mentioned in the penultimate paragraph of Article L. 226-3 who advises directly on the gravity of the situation to the Prosecutor of the Republic of the situation of a child in danger should address a copy of this transmission to the President of the Departmental Council. When the Prosecutor has been advised by another person, he communicates to the President of the Departmental Council the information, which is necessary for the fulfilment of the mission of protection of the child entrusted to the latter, and he shall inform this person of the stages reserved for its reporting, under the conditions laid down in Articles 40-1 and 40-2 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.»

## **THE REPORTING OF SITUATIONS OF DANGER IN THE DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL, LEADER IN CHILD PROTECTION, AND THE COMPETENCE OF THE ACTORS**

Information relating to concerns about children at risk or in danger is processed by the departments of collection, processing and assessment of concerning information (CRIP), and must be sent to the Departmental Council to report situations of children in danger. CRIP was created in each department in order to centralise this worrying information. These cells are also responsible for organising the follow-up of children in danger by the services of social assistance to children.

### **THE RELEVANT ACTORS WITH WHOM TO SHARE CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN AT RISK**

Article L.226-2-1 of the Code of Social Action and Families provides that “ the people who implement the policy of child protection as defined in Article L.112-3 as well as those who provide their assistance shall transmit without delay to the President of the General Council or to the person designated by him, in accordance with article L. 226-3, any concerning information on a child in danger or at risk of being in danger, within the meaning of Article 375 of the Civil Code.” Furthermore, the following parties must report the situation of unaccompanied children: the police, the PJJ, National Education, participating in the missions of the service of social assistance to childhood, to the protection of maternity and early childhood. The obligation is not limited to the whole of these actors. Article 434-3 of the Criminal Code broadens its scope to any person and therefore all the institutional or voluntary actors, with or without an order.<sup>107</sup>

## **JUDICIAL PROTECTION AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

Judicial protection applies after a judicial authority issues its judgment on the need of support of a child due to the danger or risk of danger that occurs. The two main actors involved in the process of the judicial protection of children in danger are: the children’s judge, who must take educational assistance measures (Art 375 of the Civil Code<sup>108</sup>) or orders of provisional placement (Art. 375-5 of the Civil Code), and the State Prosecutor, who may also order a provisional placement in case of emergency (Art. 375-5 of the Civil Code). Any professional noting a situation of danger to a child must directly notify the latter via an alert<sup>109</sup>.

**110** <http://infomie.net/spip.php?article1681>

**111** In a decision of 30 January 2015, the State Council has partially annulled the circular of 31 May 2013, believing that the distribution of unaccompanied foreign children, governed by this circular, should be fixed by the law.

**112** <http://www.infomie.net/spip.php?rubrique272>

**113** This system has been endorsed by the recent amendment of the protection of the children, in the new law of 14 March 2016

**114** <http://www.infomie.net/spip.php?article1850>

## DIRECT APPLICATION TO A CHILDREN'S JUDGE BY THE CHILD

In the event of a challenge of their underage status due to the result of the assessment by the services of the departmental council, the child or young person has the opportunity to make an appeal with the children's judge. A child may go before the children's judge by him or herself<sup>110</sup>. Article 1182 of the Code of Civil Procedure provides that the judge fixes a hearing in order to assess the criteria of the danger to the child within the meaning of Article 375 of the Civil Code.

## A SPECIFIC PROTOCOL FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

If the conditions of access to judicial protection are identical with regard to national and foreign children, a mechanism put in place by a Protocol of 31 May 2013 relating to the sheltering, assessment and orientation of unaccompanied children and a circular of the Ministry of Justice<sup>111</sup> organised a specific scheme in respect of unaccompanied children<sup>112</sup>. This protocol provides for a preliminary procedure for the shelter and assessment of the situation of unaccompanied children and a territorial distribution of unaccompanied children between the different departmental councils<sup>113</sup>.

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Beyond the care of a child in danger, unaccompanied children may benefit from Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013 of 26 June 2013, otherwise known as "Dublin III". This Regulation establishes the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for the examination of an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third country national or a stateless person. Its Article 8 stipulates different assumptions for unaccompanied children and their care. The Member State responsible is the one<sup>114</sup>:

- In which a member of the family or the brothers or sisters of the child reside lawfully;
- In which a close relative resides and can take care of the child;
- In the absence of members of the family, brothers or sisters or close relatives, the one in which the unaccompanied child has introduced its request for international protection.

**115** <http://www.myria.be/files/Migration-rapport-2015-focus-enfant-dublin.pdf>

**116** <http://france-terre-asile.org/images/stories/accompagnement-hebergement/pdf/rapportFTDA/rapport-calais-bbc-ftda-09-2009.pdf>

**117** [http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/viewpoints/080804\\_FR.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/viewpoints/080804_FR.asp)

**118** The judge of Lille has also emphasized this aspect: «It is deplorable, on the one hand, that the associations authorised by the department Pas-de-Calais by social assistance to children have not been able to provide to X, when accepted by the emergency shelter service, with the information on the procedure known as «Dublin III», taking into account the family relationship he maintains within the United Kingdom « Ref. Ord. TA Lille 11/02/2016 n° 1600877. In 2015, only four applications for care have been issued by France to the United Kingdom under family reunification; only one was accepted and none focused on an unaccompanied child. <https://revdh.revues.org/1807>

**119** Upper Tribunal, Immigration and Unaccompanied children Chamber, 29 January 2016, *The Queen on the application of ZAT, IAJ, KAM, AAM, MAT, MAJ and LAM v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, JR/15401/2015 and JR/15405/2015.

**120** <https://revdh.revues.org/1807>

## THE RESTRICTIVE FIELD OF THE DUBLIN REGULATION

The current Dublin Regulation III provides specific rules for determining the State responsible for the examination of applications for international protection introduced by unaccompanied children whose brothers, sisters, other members of their family or relatives reside on the territory of the EU. The State which welcomes unaccompanied children must first check if a member of his family, a brother, a sister or, in default, a “close relative” resides on a regular basis in a Member State and may take care of him<sup>115</sup>.

For those other than unaccompanied children the interpretation of “family” does not allow certain categories of relatives (uncles, brothers and cousins) to join the family<sup>116</sup>. As noted by Thomas Hammarberg, the European Commissioner for Human Rights, a very narrow definition of family that includes only parents and their immediate children “[ignores] the fact that the physiognomy of the core family clearly differs according to traditions and situations (...). A positive and humane policy should take into account, in each case, the actual composition of the family<sup>117</sup>.” This procedure of family reunification, which is long (in particular because of the appointment of an ad hoc administrator), complex, and poorly controlled<sup>118</sup> was until recently little used but it is a protective clause that enables unaccompanied children to be able to join their family.

## A POSSIBLE INFRINGEMENT OF FAMILY LIFE

It is due to a ruling very much influenced by the media, that the Dublin procedure for family reunification was put under the spotlight. The Immigration and Asylum Chamber in the English Upper Tribunal heard the cases of four young Syrians (three children and a vulnerable adult with psychiatric disorders) who sought to join their family in the UK<sup>119</sup>. In this case, the judge considered that the strict application of the mechanisms of Dublin III stipulated a disproportionate infringement of their right to a family life protected by Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights<sup>120</sup>. In this case, these are the procedural time limits, associated with the aforementioned terrible living conditions of the slum of Calais, which highlight the malfunctions of the system of child protection in France and the complex implementation of the Dublin Regulation.

## THE ORGANISATION OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION

It is difficult to establish who is responsible for organising the transfer of unaccompanied children in the framework of the Dublin Regulation. Its Article 8 does not fix the modalities of an operational transfer.

Nevertheless, it seems that the French Office for Immigration and Integration (FOII) is responsible for organising the trip of children regardless of their nationality. It then takes care of all of the organisation logistics (assistance in obtaining travel documents, transportation ticket, support for baggage, transfer to the place of departure), establishes contacts with the family and accompanies the child up to their destination.

Two conditions are necessary:

- It must be ordered by the competent judge;
- Upon their arrival in the country of destination, the children must be entrusted to their family or to an empowered person/body.



# 04

## RESPONSES AND ACTORS

**p. 67 THE PROTOCOLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CHILDREN OF PAS-DE-CALAIS, THE NORTH AND THE CHANNEL**

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**p. 69 THE DYSFUNCTIONS OF THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS**

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- 73 The family reunification procedure little used up to 2016
- 74 The legal framework: a lack of coordination that harms the situation of unaccompanied children in Calais
- 75 Alternative imperfect and inadequate systems

**121** See part 3.2. on the legal framework.

**122** See section on trafficking.

As we recalled<sup>121</sup>, the care of unaccompanied children is an obligation under child protection law. To deliver this, each department has defined its own scheme of intervention. It differs according to the territories, but it is based almost exclusively on the access of the children to a project of integration in France. Thus, the protocols are not adapted to children who would be in “transit”. On the other hand, the problem of children in a trafficking situation is not sufficiently taken into account. From January 2016, FTDA put in place a specific project on this issue<sup>122</sup>, but this intervention remains too limited (see section on human trafficking).

## THE PROTOCOLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CHILDREN OF PAS-DE-CALAIS, THE NORTH AND THE CHANNEL

The elements and the protocols identified below are those identified and stipulated on 1 March 2016.

### **A SPECIFIC PROTOCOL IN PAS-DE-CALAIS**

Two specific procedures have been developed on the basis of the age of the unaccompanied children concerned.

#### **LESS THAN 15 YEARS**

Regarding unaccompanied children under 15 years of age, child protection in Pas-de-Calais has “blocked” four places for the sheltering in the M.E.C.S.

**123** A social house for children is a social or medico-social institution, specialised in being a temporary home for children.

**124** Concerning in particular the publicised affair of Garden of Ollieux.

**125** 45 shelter places are available for the whole of the Department. They are divided on the whole territory, throughout the territory, with a few places in Dunkirk at the youth hostel, run by the AFEJL.

Georges Brassens in Calais (whose management is entrusted to the association La Vie Active).<sup>123</sup> We did not have information on the average duration of the rotation of children, nor on the number of children less than 15 years-old, who have passed through this shelter, admitted or not by the child protection system, but it seems that these four places are permanently occupied.

#### **FROM 15 YEARS TO 18 YEARS OF AGE**

Regarding children over the age of 15, the shelter is provided by FTDA via accommodation located in Saint-Omer. Forty-five places are provided, most of which are permanently occupied. Their stay may not exceed five days. Furthermore, the young person must have expressed their desire to want to stay in France to be supported by the common law. They may be put in the shelter as many times as needed. It should be noted that the age assessment is not subject to a bone examination.

#### **ACCESS TO CHILD PROTECTION IN DUNKIRK (59): ACCESS HAMPERED**

The question of unaccompanied children in Grande-Synthe, Dunkirk fits in a particular context at the level of the Department of the North. Since the end of the year 2015 and the beginning of the year 2016 the Departmental Council has been condemned on several occasions for the non-execution of orders of temporary placement of young unaccompanied children by the Administrative Court of Lille<sup>124</sup>.

According to the information collected from the actors in Grande-Synthe, the child protection system of the North has not put in place a specific protocol. Since all the actors we met have explained that the Territorial Unit of Prevention and Social Action of Dunkirk never responds to concerning information, the admission procedure is, in theory, not closed to unaccompanied children of Grande-Synthe. However, they must be present in Lille, in the EMA (Sheltering Evaluation) cell in charge of the evaluation of foreign unaccompanied children of the Department. In practice it is open from 9:30 am to 8:30 pm during the week and from 10 am to 4 pm during the weekend. The retention of identity papers seems to be a criterion of admission. The PAF proceeded to the examination of documents and interviews with children. While in theory the unaccompanied children over 15 years of age can benefit from sheltering, few places seem to be available. Most of the time, unaccompanied children are therefore forced to wait 12 days before being assessed. In the meantime, they are again in an itinerant situation. For unaccompanied children under the age of 15, the operation is the same. In contrast, as soon as they go to Lille and visit the EMA cell, they are automatically sent to the shelter<sup>125</sup>.

**126** *Exiles and fundamental rights: the situation on the territory of Calais*, Report of the Defender of the rights, October 2015.

**127** Interview with JF Roger, director Maison of young refugee of Saint-Omer, FTDA.

According to our interviews with the Northern Region of the Patronage Society (NRPS), which takes part in this protocol, a very limited number of children are introduced to the cell (less than five) and none have been able to be assessed and put in the shelter, during the period of the diagnosis. At the date set for their evaluation (12 days after their first appointment), none of the five children were present.

### **ACCESS TO CHILD PROTECTION IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL (50): ACCESS TO COMMON LAW WITHOUT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

#### **There is no distinction between children under or over 15 years of age.**

According to the information collected by the actors involved in Cherbourg, the ASE of the channel has not put in place a specific protocol. The applications are directed to the CRIP. The care is provided during the day. Children are placed in an Ibis hotel located 10 kilometres from downtown Cherbourg and the educational support they receive seems very scarce.

If the child has been identified by the police (Commissioner, PAF, etc), their civil documents are systematically challenged (forgery and use of false documents) and a bone examination is carried out. Currently, several children (reported to be of legal age following the bone examination) are waiting for a response to an application to the children's judge that challenges the evaluation that declares them to be of legal age.

## **THE DYSFUNCTIONS OF THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS**

### **MALADJUSTED PROTECTIVE PROTOCOLS**

#### **SHELTERING PLACES AWAY FROM LIVING PLACES**

As we have seen, each department has its own scheme. Even if the department of Pas-de-Calais has the merit of putting in place a protocol attempting to respond to the problem of unaccompanied children, it is not suited for this situation. As recalled by the Defender of Rights in his report <sup>126</sup> "downtown Saint-Omer, because of its distance from Calais, does not ensure the effective sheltering of all young people who could be welcomed (...). The sheltering protocol is therefore at fault since this geographical remoteness prevents the sheltering of young people". Furthermore, as confirmed by FTDA <sup>127</sup>, the majority of young people who are willing to go to the downtown Saint-Omer do so on Saturday evening, when the trucks do not travel to

**128** *Exilés et droits fondamentaux : la situation sur le territoire de Calais, rapport du défenseur des droits, October 2015.*

**129** *Op. cited* P 553.

**130** We have met many children of less than 15 years of age, of Afghan origin, in particular, living near Saint-Omer. Few seem to know the sheltering protocol.

**131** 342 young people in 2013, 1,365 in 2014, 1,403 in 2015.

**132** Interview with JF Roger, director of the House of Young Refugees in Saint-Omer, FTDA.

**133** Several actors before our visit of the sites have certified that there was no child, which we have not found.

England. They then take advantage of this time to rest, take a shower, but have no desire to remain<sup>128</sup>. In 2015, 1,403 different young people came to the sheltering of FTDA in Saint-Omer. Among them, 84% have gone missing. The average number of nights spent at the centre by youths is 2.5 nights.

### **PROTOCOLS THAT ARE UNSUITED TO THE MOBILITY OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN**

Unaccompanied children, like other migrants, are extremely mobile. They can move from one department to another. Furthermore, we have met with Afghan unaccompanied children from the “jungle” of Calais in Cherbourg. Beyond the three departments of the coastline (North, Pas-de-Calais, the Channel), this must also include the department of Paris. As noted by Olivier Thomas “Paris is also a “rear base” in the passage. The migrants sometimes return after having spent several weeks or several months in the squats of the coastline; they will either go back to another cross-Channel port or they will use other networks to go toward the north of Europe via Germany and Denmark. Travel to Paris, or from Paris, is carried out essentially by train. The Paris-Cherbourg line is frequently used by migrants, in the same way that the lines that allow them to reach Lille and Calais”<sup>129</sup>. Furthermore, no link exists between the different child protection services of the departmental councils and the State level in these territories, making the monitoring and support of unaccompanied children very problematic.

### **THE LIMITED IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTHS**

The FTDA teams go almost daily to the “jungle” of Calais and regularly to the sites of Norrent Fontes and Tatinghem<sup>130</sup>. Even if the number of young people put in the shelter has increased sharply in Saint-Omer<sup>131</sup>, it does not appear that the FTDA teams have a network size that is adequate in relation to the number of sites, the diversity of languages and the mobility of unaccompanied children. In addition, few proposals can really be made by employees of FTDA, with the sheltering protocol being very regularly at capacity<sup>132</sup>.

Apart from the actors mandated, various associative volunteers, activists or persons acting in their personal capacity, intervene in the slums and are regularly linked, informally, with the unaccompanied children. In the departments of the Channel and the North, the identification of young people is done mainly by actors working in the camp, mostly volunteers. It therefore seems to be limited, with the latter not being trained in identification techniques or the procedures of the child protection system.<sup>133</sup>

In Grande-Synthe and in the “jungle”, many volunteers, often without associative mandate, the British most often, sometimes the Belgians,

**134** Makeshift shelters, the structures can provide equipment or build cabins themselves.

Spanish, Canadians and more rarely the French, are present. The majority remain a few days to a few weeks, have no formal training, and do not speak the language of the migrants. The information they transmit to migrants including unaccompanied children is uneven and partial and involves very often the possible approaches in England (such as family reunification); the possibilities of protection in France for unaccompanied children seem very rarely addressed. A child told us the following during an interview: "It is here that the English help us and explain how it is down there. I have never met one person who explained my rights to me here."

Two structures in the "jungle" of Calais play a critical role for unaccompanied children: the Women and Children's Centre (WCC) and the Refugee Youth Service or Baloo's Centre. They are located in the south of the "jungle", the WCC has recently moved to the CAP in a double-decker bus. While the WCC welcomes the women and unaccompanied children under the age of 12, Baloo's Centre concentrates on unaccompanied children who are 12 to 18 years of age. Open every day since their arrival in the fall of 2015, these two structures offer various sporting, occupational and educational activities for young people but also ensure that the more fragile have access to a shelter<sup>134</sup>, food and care for their primary needs.

Created by the community leaders of the "jungle", these structures are often the first to identify and meet with new child arrivals or the most fragile migrants. Some of their members sleep in the "jungle" and are required to meet the young, the night before their attempt to cross or after their failure. A bond of trust is created, so that they can ensure a form of monitoring of several unaccompanied children, something that is not achieved by any other association.

#### **THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS**

In Calais, in the "jungle", community leaders play an important role with the unaccompanied children. This organisation of community representatives has been initiated prior to the "New Jungle" by the Secours Catholique and Doctors of the World, and has since been reinforced after its installation. During the intervention of Acted, the leaders met an unaccompanied children once a week with all the actors within or outside of associations. During these meetings, all topics could be discussed: intercommunal violence, distribution of water points, organisation of a legal defence and jurisdictional aid applications, the situation of unaccompanied children, and so on.

These community leaders organise themselves as they wish. Often older or more educated than other migrants, they are very respected and serve as mediators in the event of conflicts. Most have a good knowledge of the realities for unaccompanied children within their own community.

**135** The absence of such spaces does not allow the young to take distance from their group and to express themselves freely, to evoke their situation, or to solve a specific problem. Their words in the presence of the members of their community tended to then be stereotyped and forced.

**136** Criticism on Saint-Omer surfaces in several interviews with children. A 16-year old Egyptian child, who had spent 20 nights at Saint-Omer on three different stays, was very critical regarding the constraints and the qualifications of the shelter and discouraged his friends to go there in turn.

**137** *Exiles and fundamental rights: the situation on the territory of Calais*, Report of the Defender of Rights, October 2015.

Restaurant and shop owners also play a role with unaccompanied children. Older and more settled (often with maps of their stay in other countries or more financial means), they have an influence with both a positive and negative impact on the young people. With the support of the restaurants in early 2016, Afghan children blocked the road in the “jungle” to obtain a reorganisation of the distribution of food. It seems that no child is working in the kitchen or in the dining hall, but many restaurant owners play the role of adviser, protector or provide support. Some restaurants host the new arrivals at night and it is with restaurant owners that some young people resell or trade the food or the items that they retrieve from their distributions.

### THE OVERALL INEFFECTIVE “HOOK” OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Beyond the geographical remoteness of the shelter centres for young people and the lack of appropriate spaces, the care of unaccompanied children is unsuited to the reality on the ground. The inability to be able to gather in a confidential manner the statements of the children<sup>135</sup>, the constant control of the adults in the community, the overcrowding in the slums, and the word of mouth on reception conditions<sup>136</sup> prevents trust-forming with the majority of actors and make establishing positive and trusted relationships with children almost impossible. To enable this, it is necessary that professionals and practitioners be able to communicate in the native language of children: during the drafting of the report we found that mostly only English and Arabic were spoken by the relevant actors. It is also essential to offer activities in places reserved only to children in which confidentiality is guaranteed.

Children may be put in the shelter for five days but, beyond this period, if they wish to remain, they must have a willingness to reside in France. According to FTDA, 84% of young people run away. The Defender of Rights said this in his report: “The reasons why these young people relinquish a perspective of stabilisation to reach England at any price are multiple: they can hold on to a language community or to the existence of family ties across the Channel, but they can also be the result of the absence of information of these young people on their rights, the possibilities of care existing in France and, more generally, the interest and the prospects of life in France<sup>137</sup>”.

Furthermore, “taking into account the specific nature of unaccompanied children present at Calais, that is to say, their willingness to arrive in England, their refusal, either free or forced, to establish themselves on the French territory, must therefore become a consideration prior to any reflection concerning their care.” This observation can be made on all the sites that we have studied.

**138** Interview with JF Roger

**139** The procedure has been facilitated. A British liaison officer has spent several weeks working with the unaccompanied children, which has resulted in the establishment of a more effective and faster procedure.

### **A LACK OF WILLINGNESS OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES**

The level of involvement, as we have seen, varies greatly between the different departmental councils. The smaller sites and less influenced by the media are, in general, less monitored (only in Pas-de-Calais). Nevertheless, the presence of an important and identified slum does not necessarily lead to the intervention of services for child protection. Thus, in Grande-Synthe, according to NRPS, no unaccompanied children have benefited from sheltering. In turn, the FOII indicated in a meeting in early April that they knew of three unaccompanied children who would have benefited from sheltering. In all cases, the number of unaccompanied children present remains extremely limited.

In the last week of January 2016, two Kuwaiti unaccompanied children residing in Grande-Synthe hid in a refrigerated truck from Belgium. They could not withstand the cold because of the length of the journey. They were therefore reported to the driver. Since they had frostbite, they were hospitalised. When they left the hospital, despite the medical opinion that indicated a need for accommodation to ensure a proper recovery and the absence of members of the family found by the actors involved in Grande-Synthe, the UTPAS 59 has not responded to the request for shelter.

### **FEW OR VIRTUALLY NO REPORTS**

Few serious reports appear to be directly transmitted to the CRIP and very few reports are transmitted to the responsible public prosecutor by professionals. Several factors may explain this finding:

- a lack of knowledge of the protocols by the actors, either employees or volunteers;
- a certain fatalist attitude regarding the responses of institutional actors;
- an acceptance of the presence of unaccompanied children, sometimes very young, who are only passing through;
- the establishment of specific protocols: in Pas-de-Calais, any referrals for sheltering are made by the intermediary, FTDA.

### **THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROCEDURE WAS LITTLE USED UP TO 2016**

As we have already mentioned, when the protocols exist, they do not take into account the young people who would be “passing through”. Since the decision of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber in the English Upper Tribunal, the related actors understand the family reunification procedure laid down in the framework of the Dublin Regulation. In 2015, only three children had been transferred. This procedure was not used because it was deemed to be too complex and too long (approximately 10 months)<sup>138</sup>. Since the beginning of 2016<sup>139</sup>, 52 applications have been addressed (including 45

**140** <http://www.leparisien.fr/flash-actualite-monde/jungle-de-calais-depart-pour-la-grande-bretagne-de-quatre-mineurs-isoles-19-04-2016-5728307.php>

**141** EC, ref. ord. 23 November 2015, *Ministry of the Interior, Commune of Calais*, n° 394540; see ADL December 2015.

**142** Petitions for fundamental liberties have been introduced by associations to compel the administration to register applications for unaccompanied children by children through the attorney so that an ad hoc administrator is appointed. Ref. ord. TA Lille 11 February 2016, No. 160087.

**143** Children's Court of Boulogne-sur-Mer, *Ordinance for the purposes of provisional placement*, 18 February 2016.

children in Calais and seven young adults from the CAD), 24 decisions have been taken (22 admissions including 20 children) and 20 transfers have been made<sup>140</sup>. To our knowledge, this work on family reunification seems to be focused on the unaccompanied children in Calais.

### THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK: A LACK OF CO-ORDINATION THAT AFFECTS THE SITUATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN CALAIS

As acknowledged by the State Council, the mere fact that a child lives in the "jungle" justifies their protection and sheltering in light of the living conditions<sup>141</sup>. They are in a situation of danger within the meaning of Article 375 of the Civil Code. Since the decision of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber in the English Upper Tribunal in January 2016, the situation of unaccompanied children is particularly monitored and many initiatives have been launched. While some seem thoughtful and co-ordinated between several related actors,<sup>142</sup> others seem less so and can lead to confusion. Furthermore, before the dismantling of the southern part of the "jungle" of Calais, the children's judge of Boulogne dealt with a case from several unaccompanied children of the "jungle" of Calais, supported by an association intervening on the site. This association has selected these unaccompanied children based on the fact that they lived in the part threatened with evacuation of the "jungle" and that they had family ties in the UK. The submission of the case to the children's judge highlighted the character of imminent danger that the evacuation of the southern part of the slum would entail. In its placement orders, the children's judge of Boulogne-sur-Mer followed a line of argument emphasising that the evacuation of the southern part of the "jungle" "is an additional criterion on the concept of danger to the child"<sup>143</sup>. If, at first reading, this framework may seem attractive by obliging the authorities to shelter unaccompanied children, it could create a dangerous precedent by circumscribing the intervention of the children's judge to the additional criteria of the mere fact of living in an area with terrible living conditions.

### THE OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE TRANSFER OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK

As we have explained, the FOII should be mandated by the children's judge in order to ensure the transfer of unaccompanied children in the framework of the Dublin Regulation. We have not been able to obtain more details but it seems that for the first departures of unaccompanied children to the UK, no procedure had been put in place, although the children have been accompanied by an agent of the FOII via the Eurostar.

**144** During the summer of 2015, in the face of the numerous requests for care by female migrants, the Jules Ferry Centre has identified, among the women already hosted, the unaccompanied children seekers likely to integrate (INTO) Centres for Unaccompanied Children (CADA) and unaccompanied children that can be sheltered in the centre of Saint-Omer. Those who were (ASYLUM)-seeking unaccompanied children have been able to quickly integrate the CADA. In the face of the reluctance of unaccompanied children, a period of reflection (a weekend) was granted to them. None accepted the care proposed. On Monday morning, the 20 children had left the centre by their own means.

**145** To return to the CAP, the unaccompanied children present themselves with an adult. There is no identity verification carried out; they must, however, give a palm print to enter the site, except for children. We were able to obtain the testimony that confirms that bands of «youths» (up to eight unaccompanied children) come together and are in charge of finding an adult representative.

## ALTERNATIVE IMPERFECT AND INADEQUATE SYSTEMS

### IN CALAIS: THE JULES FERRY CENTRE (WOMEN AND CHILDREN) AND THE PROVISIONAL HOME INSTITUTION

The Jules Ferry Centre and the CAP are managed by La Vie Active. At the Jules Ferry Centre, approximately 200 women with their children are hosted in built containers and 200 of them under heated tents. They have access to a collective kitchen, washing machines, showers and toilets and can have breakfast and one meal per day at the (mixed) adjacent day centre. Spouses may not return to the centre, nor boys “appearing to be of legal age”. We were told that the accommodation of young boys from 13/14 years of age was avoided as much as possible within of Jules Ferry if “they looked older”.

The sheltering of unaccompanied children is not possible. Several young women told us that children try to pass as being of legal age in order to be accepted within the Centre. When the teams of the Jules Ferry Centre identify a possible unaccompanied child, they offer him shelter under the protocol managed by FTDA. The refusal of unaccompanied children appears to be systematic<sup>144</sup>.

The CAP can accommodate 1,500 people in containers. There is no distribution of meals on the site, or fitted kitchen arranged, or shower. The CAP is accessible as a priority to persons in a situation of vulnerability. On 24 February, 1,297 places were occupied. Although the CAP cannot officially shelter unaccompanied children, we found unaccompanied children in the centre. The employees of teams have told us that they advised a young 14 year-old Syrian to attend with an adult and make him look like an uncle in order to obtain sheltering. This example is not the only one of its kind<sup>145</sup>. In the face of these situations, the employees of the CAP have had to establish procedures in order to better manage these situations, taking into account their sheltering of unaccompanied children but without the possibility of proposing a perennial project. Upon each arrival of an unaccompanied child, the prefecture and FTDA appear to be alerted. Then, the child will be notified on the possibility of shelter at FTDA and given a certificate specifying that such information has been communicated to them. Finally, an adult “guardian” is placed in order to supervise the isolated minors, which can strengthen the grip of adults on children. It was reported to us that the team had a project to consolidate all containers with children in a place to separate them from the adults, but this seems to be conditioned to obtaining an approval to shelter unaccompanied children.

**146** A draft charter is being prepared. The document will specify the terms and conditions of operation of the home and orientation institutions (CAO), specifying the main benefits to be provided and the main rules related to the care and guidance of persons who are received.

### **HOME AND ORIENTATION INSTITUTIONS**

By interdepartmental notice of 9 November 2015, supplemented by the notice of 7 December 2015, shelter centres called “home and orientation institutions” (CAO) have been created. Initially planned to accommodate individuals up to the end of the winter period, with people oriented after the camp was formed around the Day Centre Jules Ferry of Calais, the CAO protocol has been maintained over a longer period. In its draft CAO Operation Charter<sup>146</sup>, it states that these centres “are (...) not adapted to the reception of unaccompanied minors”. Nonetheless, several related actors, as a result of the lack of response of the actors of child protection, have entrusted us with advising unaccompanied children to visit the centres in order to be oriented. In theory, unaccompanied children can be identified within the structures, at the time of the social, medical or psychological assessment carried upon their arrival. This assessment would be carried out by the manager within the structure or by professionals or outside agencies.

**For the department of the North**, two initiatives had been proposed by various actors (permanence once a week of the cell for evaluation and guidance of the MIE in Grande-Synthe, and booking a place of shelter for unaccompanied children present on the camp), but by early April none had yet been approved by the departmental Council and the sub-prefecture.



# 05

## SITUATIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AMONG UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

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## THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

**147** The additional protocol to the Convention against transnational organised crime, called «the Palermo Protocol», adopted by the United Nations in December 2000.

At the beginning of the 2000's, the UN Palermo Protocol on human trafficking was adopted by UN Member States<sup>147</sup> as a tool in the fight against organised crime. From 2005, the Council of Europe and the European Union have sought to influence the position of the Member States that favoured a safe approach to the detriment of the protection of the victims. In order to ensure that the needs of an investigation do not take precedence over any other consideration, the right of victims of trafficking to protection has been the subject of a normative rebalancing exercise. In May 2005, the adoption of the Convention of the Council of Europe on the fight against human trafficking, the so-called "Warsaw Convention", invites Member States to strengthen the mechanisms of protection of victims and clearly emphasises the need to protect the victims without conditioning the assistance to the needs of the investigation. The European Union goes in the same direction. Through the EU Directive 2011/36/EU to combat human trafficking it encourages Member States to expand still further the field of categories of trafficking victims and provide stronger protections.

This change of paradigm giving priority to the protection of the victims is found, in France, in the national plan for the fight against human trafficking 2014-2016, adopted in May 2014 by the Council of Ministers, which set as its first priority the identification and protection of the victims of human trafficking. Law No. 2013-711 of 5 August 2013 transposes into the Criminal

Code European Directive 2011/36/EU and gives a definition of human trafficking which is larger than the previous one.

“Art. 225-4-1. - I. – Human trafficking is recruiting, transporting, transferring, sheltering or hosting a person in one of the following circumstances:

- 1** The use of threat, coercion, violence or deception on the victim, his family or a person in a usual relationship with the victim;
- 2** By a legitimate ascendant, natural or adopted child of the person or by a person who has authority on them or abuses the authority conferred to them;
- 3** By abuse of a situation of vulnerability due to a person’s age, a disease, a disability, a physical or mental disability or a state of pregnancy, apparent or with a known father;
- 4** In exchange of or by granting a remuneration or any other benefit or the promise of a payment or benefit.”

The operation referred to in sub-section 1 of the first section of this Article means placing the victim at someone’s disposal or at the disposal of a third party, including non-identified third parties, in order to allow the commission of crimes against the victim, such as pandering, sexual assault or abuse, enslavement, submission to labour or forced services, bondage, collection of one of their organs, exploitation of begging, working or accommodation conditions contrary to the victim’s dignity, or to compel the victim to commit any crime or offence.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN**

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As stipulated in Article 225-4-1. - II of the Criminal Code: “Human trafficking in respect of a minor is constituted even if it is committed in any of the circumstances provided for in section 1, sub-sections 1 to 4”. This means that for children, only the exploitation must be proven in order to grant protection and lead to the prosecution of the person who carries it out, without taking into account questions of consent or remuneration. A similar absence of means is present in UK law.

## **RECORDED FORMS OF EXPLOITATION**

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Over the course of our assessment, several situations involving exploitation, which fall within the scope of the French human trafficking law of 5 August 2015, were reported to us.

148 Julia Pascual and Matthieu Suc, « Dans la « jungle » de Calais, l'ombre de la prostitution » in *le Monde*, 13 August 2015.

## FEMALE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The interviews conducted with young Ethiopian, Eritrean and Kurdish women have allowed us to identify practices involving the exchange of sexual services for the promise of passage to the UK, or in order to pay for the journey and be granted access to certain areas. At Norrent Fontes and Steenvoorde, the men and some of the girls broached the subject during our meetings. People, resigned and penniless, are forced to engage in prostitution in order to pay the entry fee (around €500). Although they explained that they are able to refuse clients, the rates they indicated, around €5 a time, gives an idea of the level of pressure that they are under to raise the €5,000 to €7,000 that is charged for passage. Although in theory, such exploitation does not concern children, the people we questioned explained that the children who do engage in prostitution claim to be adults during police checks.

Several on-site actors, particularly the temporary reception centre teams, have also observed young girls occasionally making back and forth trips, saying that they are going to Paris so that they can rest. The teams of Parisian workers who are involved with people engaging in prostitution have reported to us the presence of girls originating from the Horn of Africa, who say they are going to Calais and are probably watched over by Albanian pimps. The presence of Albanian organisations is plausible; in August 2015, the police did in fact break up an Albanian network in Calais which was involved in a combination of trafficking migrants and pimping<sup>148</sup>.

There is also another concerning practice which has been recently observed by the temporary reception centre. Young girls leave for Spain with the promise of a forged passport which will allow them to board a flight in Madrid heading for London. The cost of the operation is around €9,000. Although this information is based solely on statements that are impossible to verify, the existence of legal brothels in some areas of Spain, which can be used by prostitutes in exchange for the simple payment of an entry fee and without verification, make it possible to sexually exploit young girls.

This form of coercion, a common feature in a range of different cases, resembles debt bondage. The young girls (children or adults) know that if they are unable to raise the sum demanded by the traffickers, it will be significantly more difficult for them to reach the UK. Without money or close relatives who can finance their passage, they find themselves trapped in a situation in which they are sexually exploited. On the basis of the information gathered, it can be assumed that two types of prostitution take place along the coast: the first is prostitution to which some women have “resigned” themselves in order to cross over more quickly, which is not necessarily

**149** From mid-March to the start of April 2016, women were travelling to Madrid, via Paris, in order to reach London by plane using a forged passport. The network is organised by Iranians. The women would pay €9,000 for guaranteed passage.

**150** In February 2016, although we have not been able to officially confirm this information, several sources (police and organisational) indicated that adults had been arrested behind the Kaboul Café following the gang rape of some twenty Afghan children. According to our information, this arrest did not prompt the implementation of protective measures for the juvenile victims of this attack.

**151** Predominantly Sudanese according to our interviews, this could point to the existence of an organisation that is resorting to the use of children.

organised; the second is linked to the pimps who exploit the young women in places outside of the coastal areas (Paris, Lille, perhaps Madrid<sup>149</sup>).

## MALE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Among the Afghan children who were interviewed, the fear of rape appears to be one of their biggest concerns. The testimonies that were collected spoke of the necessity of allowing themselves to be sexually abused, especially when the trafficker and his/her friends had been consuming alcohol. Although it is impossible to quantify the number of victims who are children, this form of exploitation appears relatively commonplace across the various sites. The likely intervention of police services in February 2016 in connection with the sexual assault of some 20 Afghan children in the Calais “jungle” is a tragic example.<sup>150</sup>

## INCITEMENT OF CHILDREN TO COMMIT OFFENCES

Over the course of our interviews and our observations, it became apparent that children are being used to monitor parking areas. Their role is to prevent the intrusion of other traffickers and people who have not paid the traffickers. The unaccompanied children are also used to open lorries, help the migrants to hide and create diversions to distract the lorry drivers and law enforcement agencies. The children who are involved in these activities are recruited by the traffickers with the promise of passage or remuneration. Even if this takes the form of collusion with the traffickers, according to our interviews, this usually a matter of incitement to commit offences, which constitutes human trafficking.

Other situations described are more difficult to identify. According to our interviews and observations by on-site workers, children of Egyptian origin would be used to steal from other migrants or the various actors present in the Calais “jungle”. Most of the resulting proceeds from these thefts are sold in the evening at the makeshift on-site market that is run by the adults<sup>151</sup>. Although we have been unable to identify the nature of the relationships between the children committing the thefts and the adults responsible for the resale of the goods, there are indications that a risk of human trafficking exists. The sale of heroin by Egyptian children has been successfully identified. One of these cases was reported to the police by the temporary reception centre. This led to action being taken by law enforcement agencies during the weekend of 2–3 April 2016. The children who were identified as dealers were accompanied by adults. Although it has not been possible to

**152** NCA Strategic Assessment, *The Nature and Scale of Human Trafficking in 2014*, Dec. 2015, London.

**153** Latest officially available figures.

**154** NCA Strategic Assessment, *The Nature and Scale of Human Trafficking in 2014*, Dec. 2015, London. 2015, London.

**155** Olivier Peyroux, *Fantasies and Realities Fuelling Child trafficking in Europe*, ECPAT France, 2015.

establish the existence of coercion, there are risks associated with the use of children for selling drugs.

Finally, with regard to the situation of the Vietnamese living in Agres and Grande-Synthe, although it was not possible to gather a direct testimony during the assessment on account of forms of control over the unaccompanied children's speech being exerted during interviews, which itself is a clear indicator of a risk of trafficking, several cases of Vietnamese children being used on cannabis farms in Strasbourg and the greater Paris area have been recorded (refer to part 1.6 on the Vietnamese). Furthermore, in 2014 in the UK, Vietnamese nationals represented the second most common nationality identified, from among 97 cases, as children who could potentially be victims of human trafficking<sup>152</sup>.

## ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

Some of the children had been victims of economic exploitation in their country of origin or along the route as a means of financing their journey. From what the children relate, it seems as though working for adults in exchange for benefits or protection is regarded more as a norm than a form of exploitation. According to our interviews, some of the unaccompanied children are preparing to work in the UK for several months without remuneration in order to repay the debts incurred by travelling. Across the various sites, the unaccompanied children with little money explain that they must regularly run errands for the trafficker, preparing meals, doing laundry, and so on. These situations thus resemble domestic servitude, which can sometimes go hand in hand with sexual abuse.

## RISKS OF EXPLOITATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK, the system for identifying victims of human trafficking is not linked to the opening of an investigation, which is not the case in France. This system explains the significant number of officially recognised victims. In 2014<sup>153</sup>, the number of identified children was 732<sup>154</sup>. Two means of identification are currently prescribed by the National Referral Mechanism. The first is dependent on the UKHTC (UK Human Trafficking Centre): this agency is charged with assessing the potential cases of trafficking reported by actors who are in contact with the victims (NGO, local authorities, child protective services, police, hospitals, etc.). The other is linked to UK Visas and Immigration, which revisits potential cases of trafficking which have been identified or expressed in asylum applications<sup>155</sup>. In contrast, according to the official figures<sup>156</sup> released by France to the

**156** France's response to the questionnaire for evaluating the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings - Second round of evaluation (response submitted on the 15th February 2016).

**157** Ibid. p70, the report merely refers back to reports on the activities of organisations, without further detail.

**158** It is widely recognised by all actors (including government) in the UK that the UK statistics on victims of human trafficking are a significant underestimate of the scale of the problem.

Council of Europe in 2014, 50 juvenile victims had been identified, 21 of whom were identified by the Brigade de Protection des Mineurs de Paris over the course of two investigations into the incitement of children to commit offences (solely in the Paris area) and 29 by the French Central Office for the Suppression of Trafficking of Human Beings, where the sexual exploitation of children was involved. As to the issue of how these children have been aided and protected, no details are given<sup>157</sup>. This data implicitly demonstrates that in France, the victims of human trafficking are not officially recognised without a criminal investigation. In 2014, no identification by child welfare services outside of an investigation was reported by MIPROF (Inter-ministerial mission for the protection of women against violence and the fight against human trafficking). This goes some way to explaining the difference between the number of victims of human trafficking in the UK and France.<sup>158</sup>

POSITION IN 2014	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	POSITION IN 2014	TOTAL 2014	CHANGE FROM 2013
1	United Kingdom	1	116	- 9%
2	Vietnam	2	97	+ 26%
3	Albania	6	83	+ 137%
4	Slovakia	3	76	+ 36%
5	Romania	4	51	+ 21%
6	Nigeria	5	44	+ 22%
7	Bangladesh	10	15	+ 67%
8	Eritrea	26	11	+ 267%
9	Hungary	22	11	+ 175%
10	China	8	10	- 17%
10	Pakistan	9	10	- 17%

The above table, produced by the National Crime Agency, shows the substantial risk of human trafficking among unaccompanied children of certain nationalities who are found in Calais if they made it to the UK: Vietnamese, Eritrean and Albanian. The forms of exploitation that affect the Vietnamese are being forced to work on cannabis farms, domestic servitude, economic exploitation (often in nail bars), and sexual exploitation (predominantly female). For the Eritreans, the main issues are domestic servitude and economic exploitation. As for those from Albania, the debts incurred through the funding of their journey are very high (between €15,000 and €20,000) according to the information provided by the Home Office, while the main forms of exploitation of those of Albanian nationality are linked to the sale and

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN  
OF POTENTIAL JUVENILE  
VICTIMS OF HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM  
2013/2014

**159** Information provided by the Home Office and the Millbank Reception Centre during the mission carried out by Unicef France and Unicef UK in February 2016.

**160** Information provided by the human trafficking official for the immigration service in Dover.

transportation of drugs, economic exploitation in agriculture and the sexual exploitation of women<sup>159</sup>.

During our interviews, some of the Iraqi and Afghan children explained to us that once they had crossed over to the other side of the Channel, they were going to work in order to repay the money that had been loaned by family members or the community living in the UK. Although these cases of economic exploitation are still rarely detected, the British authorities<sup>160</sup> spoke to us of having noticed cases of this type in 2015, involving Afghan and Iranian children who had incurred significant debts through the funding of their journey. The places of exploitation were the catering sector (kebab houses and other fast food restaurants), car washes, hairdressing salons and barber shops.

## **FAILURE OF THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO TAKE THIS PHENOMENON INTO ACCOUNT**

Over the course of the on-site research that was conducted between January and April 2016, to our knowledge, no instance of human trafficking involving either the adults or children living on the various sites was identified by the authorities despite a significant police presence. With respect to the organisations, only one actor intervenes in an operational capacity, with financing provided solely by the UK Home Office. This is the organisation FTDA, which has been doing regular rounds of some of the sites since January 2016. It should be noted that the site at Angres, where the majority of Vietnamese unaccompanied children are to be found, does not form part of the territory covered by these patrols, nor the Cherbourg site in the Manche department. As of the end of April 2016, it would appear that no victim has been identified or referred to the authorities. Likewise, as far as we are aware, no financing has been provided and no site visit has been carried out by MIPROF (Inter-ministerial mission for the protection of women against violence and the fight against human trafficking), whose stated priority is the identification and protection of victims of human trafficking.

During the joint Unicef UK / Unicef France mission in February 2016 to the UK, the Home Office informed us that 750 unaccompanied children had passed through Dover in 2015. Almost all of them had come from the slums along the coast and 62 were in a position in which they could be at risk from human trafficking (around 8%). This was based solely on the information provided by the children during their interview, even though no instances of exploitation on British soil had been observed. These children were placed into the care system in the UK. According to the Home Office, once these children have been placed, the runaway rate is very low (1 or 2 cases).

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# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation in which unaccompanied children living along the coast of the English Channel find themselves shows evidence of a series of violations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by both France and the UK. The information presented in this study demonstrates that the living conditions that were observed, the violence suffered along the route, the risks associated with passage, the financial relationships found within the slums and the forms of servitude which arise as a result of this, constitute an ongoing endangerment of the unaccompanied children living on the sites which were included in the study.

The safety nets that are in place to protect children are not adapted to the profiles of these unaccompanied children. Support, when it is offered, does not reflect the realities of the situation on the ground.

Children must be admitted into a shelter irrespective of their stated intention to be included in an integration initiative, thus making their admission unconditional. Changes to child protection systems are absolutely essential in order to address the need to provide support and protection for unaccompanied children who are in danger.

State and organisational intervention varies greatly between the sites. The majority of actors have little training in the protection of unaccompanied children and systems used to identify victims of trafficking. In Calais and Grande-Synthe, the lack of co-ordination between actors impacts upon the care of the unaccompanied children. On the other sites, volunteers find themselves alone, often with little or no training, and confronted with complex situations. Consequently, the responses are varied, inconsistent and contrary to the principle of fairness.

The interviews indicate that the majority of children are not aware of the protection system in France. When they do have access to information, this is often incomplete and contradictory.

Faced with a great and increasing risk of violence and exploitation resulting from longer stays and increased difficulty in obtaining passage, the proposal of new solutions is essential. The objective has to be to guarantee a secure

environment for arriving children so they can avoid ending up in situations which make them even more vulnerable. This must be done urgently so that unaccompanied children do not have to undergo the same experience as that of their peers during the winter of 2015.

The best interests of the child must be taken into account and a child's rights must always be respected, regardless of the situation they find themselves in and the place they are living, whether in the north of France or on other existing or future sites. Unicef France and its partners call upon the Minister for Children, Minister for National Education and the Minister for Health, in co-ordination with the Minister of the Interior, to take urgent action to ensure that all children have access to rights and basic services. The rights to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation, to health and to education are rights guaranteed by international texts and the commitments that France has made. They apply to all children under French jurisdiction, indiscriminately and unconditionally.

## TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

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### FOR THE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

**1 Create a place of “protection” on sites, secure and specific to unaccompanied children in the North, on the coast of the English Channel and in the camp planned in Paris, with an unconditional support for children and young people to settle there, with the prospect of access to common law.**

In co-ordination with the state, the departments and the organisational actors, plans must now be made for the provision of a “protective” day centre on existing and future sites, both along the coast as well as in Paris and Ile-de-France. This space must allow the children to rest in a secure and dedicated environment, so that lone children may take the time to settle, benefit from the attention of caring adults and resume their roles as children. It must support the distribution to children and young people of all information relating to their situation and the opportunities available to them under the jurisdiction of the host state or their destination state. This period of protection is to be a preliminary stage prior to entry into the system for child protection under common law, or for the time required to take the first steps towards obtaining family reunification where appropriate.

It is also essential that a bond of trust with the workers is able to be established, which would be achieved, for example, through the provision of psychosocial activities in languages understood by the children, in reception facilities reserved solely for children, beyond the control of “traffickers” and adults, in which confidentiality is guaranteed.

In the absence of a more lasting solution, the provision of unconditional emergency accommodation, in an open centre that respects the international standards of protection for unaccompanied children, is also necessary so that decent living conditions for unaccompanied children can be guaranteed, at least for a transitional period.

All actors should note that the reception and orientation centres (ROC) are not appropriate systems for receiving and caring for unaccompanied children. As a precautionary measure, and in anticipation of a case in which an unaccompanied children nevertheless arrives at a ROC on an exceptional basis, co-ordination between the managers of the ROCs and child protection services must be ensured so that the type of guidance and care provided is specifically tailored to the unaccompanied child.

**2 Guarantee equal access to the right to information and various services for all children** by means of regular contact with professionals, who are able to express themselves in the children's languages. The age of the unaccompanied children must be taken into account through the use of age-appropriate information and by adapting other communication tools and discourse.

**3 Support and co-ordinate those working on the region's sites with the aim of implementing uniformity of practices and the distributed information, and enabling access to all children, including within the "little camps".**

It is essential that investment in the system of professional workers is increased by focusing on the formation of a bond between unaccompanied children and a trained member of staff, based on a psycho-social approach. The aim is to promote the establishment of an initial dialogue based on trust, which will enable an initial referral to the nearest reception facility. These workers must also be put into action on the smaller sites, where some children find themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation. In order to guarantee that the information will be understood and a bond of trust will be developed, the workers must have a good command of the languages spoken by the children (as English and Arabic are insufficient in most cases).

**4 Introduce regular training for the organisational workers, police forces, ad hoc administrators and volunteers, on child protection, identification of situations involving human trafficking and produce a practical reference document which can be easily distributed.**

It is critical that the situations involving violence and trafficking documented in this study are addressed in order to equip the workers with the ability to track, identify and provide guidance to unaccompanied children.

The public authorities must take this situation into account so that everything possible can be done to combat the networks by prioritising the protection of victims of human trafficking, as stipulated by international obligations, above all else. The subject of effective protection requires specific work to be carried out in conjunction with child welfare services in order to establish adapted safeguards which can be rapidly implemented, at locations which remain secret.

The improved distribution of information is an equally urgent matter, as this will reduce the ability of traffickers to hold influence over unaccompanied children. The traffickers tighten their hold by passing on false information and using informal channels of communication. A breakdown, in the various languages, of the different types of support available, is crucial for ensuring equal access to this information.

**5 Refer back to the legal framework for the protection of children, which includes the importance of reporting to Public Prosecutor’s departments as well as that of unsettling information, which will allow the departmental councils to become empowered in their mission to care for children in danger.**

With the support of the State, the departmental councils must play their part in contributing towards guaranteeing the identification, protection and support of unaccompanied children on the sites. Professionals must be made available as part of the dedicated structures in order to ensure that unaccompanied children are provided with good guidance.

Furthermore, the need for the nomination of a guardian, to guide the child throughout all the processes in which they are involved and who is charged with ensuring their protection, must be reasserted.

Building on this, the establishment of a regional platform for Pas-de-Calais, Nord and Manche, in consultation with Paris as well as the Assembly of French Departments, would allow the co-ordination of protection to be prioritised and a fluid system to be identified for the orientation of unaccompanied children within the child protection systems under common law.

**6 Report all evacuations if there are no adapted arrangements for the reception and guidance of unaccompanied children.**

As unaccompanied children, a comprehensive and individual social assessment (as described in the circular from 26/08/2012) should precede any evacuation from the camps and alternative solutions should be considered in order to prevent a trend of dispersal and the breaking of the bonds that children and young people may have formed with social workers or other trusted adults.

**WITH RESPECT TO THE APPLICATION OF THE RIGHT TO FAMILY REUNIFICATION:**

*> For the UK and French governments:*

**7 Ensure that the French and UK governments dedicate sufficient resources to the system that enables family reunification,** including increased human resources from the UK Home Office and the French Interior Ministry, which will allow them to take a proactive approach in identifying children, thereby significantly reducing the duration of the family reunification process (to a maximum of three months). The term “family” must also be understood in its broadest sense, including by regarding the best interests of the child as the most important consideration.

A clear process, which integrates the transfer of reunification cases and establishes special provisions for when additional information is required, must be urgently defined. A liaison officer could be specifically assigned, following the example of the model that has been used in Calais. Furthermore, it is essential that the ministers in charge of matters relating to children in each of the countries concerned are involved, and share information in order to ensure that the process put in place is driven by the best interests of the child.

**8 Ensure that the children have received reliable information regarding the family reunification procedure under the Dublin Regulation.** This information must be communicated in a language and form that can be understood by children, and must include the different stages of the process, the information children will need to provide, and the criteria on which decisions will be based.

**9 Guarantee access to high quality legal assistance for unaccompanied children,** so that their request for family reunification in the UK can be submitted as quickly as possible.

> *For the UK Government:*

**10 Publish practical advice on how to handle family reunification cases under Dublin III,** including clarification of the responsibilities and processes involved in the assessment of the unaccompanied children's families in the UK, ahead of transfers. It must be ensured that the local authorities have the financial resources and operational capacity to enable these evaluations to be carried out quickly, whilst safeguarding the child's best interests.

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# ANNEXES

- p. 93** SITES STUDIED
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AND ACTORS
- p. 100** LIST OF INTERVIEWS  
CONDUCTED WITH THE CHILDREN
- p. 101** LIST OF ACTORS MET  
AND INTERVIEWED

## SITES STUDIED

	<b>CALAIS</b> Pas-de-Calais (62)	<b>GRANDE-SYNTHÉ</b> Nord (59)
<b>Composition</b>	Between 3,000 and 6,000 people. Mostly men, some women, families and lone children.	Between 1,500 and 3,000 people, most accompanied by their family.
<b>Origins</b>	Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea	Kurds from Iraq and Iran, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Kuwait
<b>History</b>	Following the closure of the Sangatte centre in 2002, many migrants moved to Calais, living on the heathland or in squats. In September 2009, the place known as the Calais «jungle» is evacuated. There were around 700 people. For now, the figures for the number of people in transit are falling; there are only 300 to 500 migrants in transit within this region each year. Up to March 2015 and the official opening of the «new jungle» (18 hectares of sandy ground adjacent to the Jules Ferry Centre), the camps and squats were regularly evacuated and the inhabitants evicted by law enforcement agencies. There were 500 to 700 affected people living in the Calais centre or on the surrounding land. In November 2015, there were 6,000 people living on this site. In January 2016, the prefecture announced the opening of the first centre for women and the most vulnerable individuals, which could offer 1,500 places in converted containers. In March 2016, after containers for families and men had been opened, the southern part of the “jungle” was dismantled.	For more than a decade, Iraqi and Iranian populations (including lone children) have been living in the Dunkirk area. In 2006, Doctors of the World established a mission in Dunkirk in order to help the populations living in the slums and squats. The circumstances and the composition of the population have changed greatly. Up to July 2015, the number of people living in the Basroch slum in Grande-Synthe and the Tétéghem (a few kilometres away) slum did not exceed 80. In August 2015, the number of people began to increase significantly, the majority of whom were Kurds from Iraq. In January, following the closure of the Tétéghem slum (18 November 2015), the prefecture conducted a census. It counted 2,400 people, 80% of whom were Iraqi, among whom were 230 children. At the other end of the spectrum, the organisations claim that there are 3,000 people, with unaccompanied children numbering between 250 and 350. In mid-March 2016, after the humanitarian camp financed by MSF was closed and the Basroch slum was abandoned by the migrants, the number of people fell by half. The new census conducted by the border police upon instruction from the sub-prefecture at the end of March 2016 documented 1,276 people, 90% of whom were Iraqi. The number of unaccompanied children remains somewhat unclear, the organisations are stating around 50 with a high turnover.
<b>Types of accommodation and conditions</b>	Tents, cabins, shops, restaurants and places of worship constructed by the migrants with the support of certain actors. Toilets, water and garbage collection. Generators installed by the migrants in certain communal areas.	Igloo-style tents at the Basroch site. Wooden shacks at the camp financed by MSF.
<b>Actors</b>	Citizens UK, La Vie Active, France Terre d’Asile, Acted, SOS Solidarité, Doctors of the World, MSF, Auberge de la Solidarité, Women & Children’s Centre, Gynécologie Sans Frontières, Baloo’s Youth Centre, Appel des 800, Secours Catholique, Belgian and British activists and independent actors	Utopia 56, Doctors of the World, MSF, Gynécologie Sans Frontières, Baloo’s Youth Centre, Appel des 800, Fulgence, SOS solidarité, Belgian and British activists and independent actors.
<b>Type of intervention</b>	Distribution, legal aid, medical and psychological assistance, emergency accommodation.	Distribution of food and clothing. Medical care and legal aid, French and English courses.

## SITES STUDIED

	<b>NORRENT FONTES</b> Pas-de-Calais (62)	<b>STEENVOORDE</b> Nord (59)	<b>TATINGHEM</b> Pas-de-Calais (62)
<b>Composition</b>	Between 150 and 250 people. Men, women (40 to 50%).	Between 80 and 150 people. Men, women and children.	Around 40 men, relatively young.
<b>Origin</b>	Horn of Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea)	Horn of Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea)	Afghanistan
<b>History</b>	The St Hilaire Cottés area, close to Norrent Fontes, has been used to obtain passage for a long time, prior to the closure of Sangatte, but the migrants remained inconspicuous for many years and did not prompt the involvement of the population. Some individual inhabitants aided them. It was only at the end of 2006 that the first squat was reported, and from this moment that the people became aware of the migrants' presence at a local level.	The migrants have been using the Steenvoorde highway service area since the closure of Sangatte in 2002. They come close to the commune on a periodic basis and settle in a wood located between the highway service area and the village. They were driven out from this place by the police in 2008. In November 2008, some inhabitants organised an information session for the population. Representatives of the organisations active in Calais, Dunkirk and Norrent-Fontes were invited. Within a few weeks, involvement had been organised, supported by the municipality. The aim was to accommodate the migrants throughout the winter period. From the beginning of December, two tents were installed on communal ground.	The first migrants arrived in Audermois following the closure of Sangatte. At first, they squatted in an abandoned house (2002-2003) before the authorities demanded that they evacuate the property. At this time, the partners of Emmaüs de Saint-Omer were already involved in taking steps to assist the migrants (food, clothing, mattresses, etc.). Over the winter of 2007-2008, they lived in a trench at the border between the Longuenesse and Tatinghem communes.
<b>Types of accommodation and conditions</b>	Tents, wooden huts for the women and for the kitchen that was built by Terre d'Errance in 2012. Water supplied from a tank, dry toilets on-site but unused. Shower once per week in Isbergues for the men and in Ilères for the women.	Tents and tarpaulins. No water, toilets or electricity on-site.	Rudimentary wooden huts, built by the migrants with help from the organisations. A hut serves as a kitchen. No water. A tank that is refilled each week by the organisations and a generator supplied by the organisations.
<b>Actors</b>	Terre d'Errance (member of the France Terre d'Asile migrants' platform), France Terre d'Asile, Gynécologie Sans Frontières	Terre d'Errance (member of the France Terre d'Asile migrants' platform), Gynécologie Sans Frontières	Emmaüs, France Terre d'asile, Secours Catholique, Red Cross, Doctors of the World
<b>Type of intervention</b>	Distribution of food and clothing. Medical care and legal aid.	For the past five years, the reception has been based in a church hall, which is open from 8 am to 7 pm, 7 days a week. Distribution of a daily meal and clothing. Treatment of child ailments.	Provision of food, showers (notably in Emmaus using an organised shuttle), medical examination, washing of laundry.

## SITES STUDIED

	<b>ANGRES</b> Pas-de-Calais (62)	<b>CHERBOURG</b> Manche (50)
<b>Composition</b>	Between 40 and 200 people. Predominantly men.	Between 60 and 100 people, predominantly men.
<b>Origins</b>	Vietnam	Mainly from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria
<b>History</b>	The migrants living in Angres were only recently «discovered». Two inhabitants, now members of Collectif Fraternité Migrant, saw them for the first time in August 2008 when out for a bicycle ride. The migrants live in a wood close to the Angres highway service area. A camp has been steadily growing there. It was razed and burned down by the authorities a number of days after a violent confrontation between the migrants and members of an organised network of «traffickers». The same day, the collective set up a camp on the site at Angres. The migrants only stayed there a few days. On 12 September, the members of the collective had gathered enough materials and a new camp was constructed in a wood on land belonging to the commune. Then, in 2009, land owned by the municipality was made available by the town council. Two large tents were set up. A large dilapidated building was restored by the migrants little by little.	A long-running presence (first squat was recorded by the Red Cross in 2002), but the nationalities have changed.
<b>Types of accommodation and conditions</b>	3 furnished dormitories in tents within a hangar: one for the girls, one large and one small for the men. A kitchen corner has also been installed. The people there also have access to a ping-pong table, some exercise equipment. Water and wood distributed. Chickens and adjoining garden. The entire site is fenced off.	3 rooms with beds. Site is open and unpartitioned.
<b>Actors</b>	Town council, Gynécologie sans frontières, Collectif Fraternité migrants (member of the migrants' platform)	Itinérance (member of the migrants' platform), SAO (reception and orientation service).
<b>Type of intervention</b>	A disused house without running water has been made available by the town council. They provide water and 80% of the wood used for heating. The collective ensures health monitoring, organises shuttles each week so that the migrants can take a shower (on a rotational basis involving four towns) and engage in political advocacy.	Nearby reception facility in the deconsecrated chapel, the SAO (reception and orientation service) offer a space where the migrants can rest and take a shower. The facility is open from Monday to Friday and is separated into three phases: reception, assessment interview, orientation. The collective of volunteers provides legal aid, health monitoring and offers courses in French as a Foreign Language.

## ON-SITE PARTICIPANTS AND ACTORS

ACTORS	PRESENCE	TYPES OF INTERVENTION	SITES WHERE ACTIVE
<b>Acted</b>	January - April 2016	<p>720 m extension of the water supply network and increase in the number of distribution points (8 manifolds and 8 taps currently being installed) on the site.</p> <p>Increase in the number of available latrines (an additional 60 installed in various locations around the site), as well as the frequency with which they are emptied and cleaned.</p> <p>Development of internal access routes (552 m to date) as well as improving ease of access for the vehicles that empty these latrines.</p> <p>Waste management, implementation of a collection system and involvement of the communities themselves in this process (90 m<sup>3</sup> on-site waste storage capacity and cleaning of the receptacles every four weeks.</p> <p>Production of site maps</p>	Calais
<b>Appel des 800</b>	Since October 2015, following «l'appel des 800» (Call of the 800). Legal advice cabin, opened on the 11th January 2015 and burned down.	<p>Media-related aspect: bringing in of well-known personalities who signed the «Appel des 800» (Call of the 800) (film-makers, designers, writers, photographers etc.)</p> <p>Legal aspect: establishment of an on-site legal centre which aims to inform the exiles about their rights as migrants in Europe.</p> <p>Lawyers and legal scholars.</p>	Calais Grande-Synthe
<b>Auberge des migrants</b>	End of 2008	<p>Construction of accommodation.</p> <p>Distribution of clothing and food for 1000 to 1,200 people.</p> <p>Support and follow-up of certain cases.</p>	Calais
<b>Collectif Fraternité Migrants</b>		Food, health, material and administrative assistance.	Angres
<b>Ecole du Chemin des Dunes</b>	2015	School in the Calais camp which welcomes children and adults of all nationalities: French courses, English courses, artistic activities, slam workshop, dressmaking workshop.	Calais

## ON-SITE PARTICIPANTS AND ACTORS

ACTORS	PRESENCE	TYPES OF INTERVENTION	SITES WHERE ACTIVE
<b>France Terre d'Asile</b>	2009	<p>Patrols to identify and provide information to lone foreign children (Pas-de-Calais).</p> <p>Facility to accommodate unaccompanied children from 15 to 18 years old in Saint-Omer: 45 places in the residence (Pas-de-Calais).</p> <p>Assessment of the LFM's status as isolated children (Pas-de-Calais)</p> <p>Facility to help unaccompanied children from 15 to 18 years old to find stability in Saint-Omer: 38 places in semi-autonomous apartments (Pas-de-Calais).</p> <p>Daytime reception for unaccompanied children in Saint-Omer: 50 places (Pas-de-Calais).</p> <p>Facility to help unaccompanied children between 15 and 18 years old find stability in Arras: 30 places in semi-autonomous apartments (Pas-de-Calais).</p> <p>France Terre d'Asile/HRC information office.</p> <p>Patrols to identify trafficking victims as part of a project to help victims of human trafficking.</p>	Calais Norrent Fontes Tatinghem
<b>Fulgence</b>	Since March 2016	Attempt to provide schooling through French and English course.	Grande-Synthe
<b>Gynécologie Sans Frontières</b>	2015	<p>Gynaecological and obstetric consultations offered.</p> <p>Composed of one gynaecologist and two midwives.</p>	Calais Grande-Synthe Angres
<b>Itinérance</b>		Food, health, material and administrative assistance for the migrant populations that have not been received by the urban community of Cherbourg.	Cherbourg
<b>Jungle Books</b>	Since May 2015.	<p>Self-directed with the help of the migrants.</p> <p>Library and French and English courses from Monday to Friday.</p> <p>Music, art, legal advice at the weekend.</p> <p>Internet access, computers</p> <p>Opening of a «family library» in January</p> <p>In April 2016, Jungle Books opened a restaurant for children in the main street.</p>	Calais
<b>La Vie Active - Temporary reception centre</b>	2016	Open 24/7. Entry using a code and palm print. List of those staying there along with photographs of said individuals. Accommodation in containers. WC and washbasin. No kitchen or shower. Separate accommodation for families and the creation (as of March) of a sanitary area (for children's showers among other things). Since it opened in March: 272 have passed through, 72 departures for the UK or elsewhere. Up to the 24th February: 1,297 places have been occupied. Since the 11th January, 341 people have left.	Calais

## ON-SITE PARTICIPANTS AND ACTORS

ACTORS	PRESENCE	TYPES OF INTERVENTION	SITES WHERE ACTIVE
<b>La Vie Active - Jules Ferry Centre</b>	2014	Open 24/7. Close to the centre that is open to the public, open from 9 am to 5.30 pm. Opened in January 2015 on a temporary basis with accommodation (200 places in containers and 200 places in heated tents, erected by Civil Defence) for women and children. Shower, shared kitchen, washbasin, toilets, washing machine. Some time for group activities. Older women and children received on a declaratory basis.	Calais
<b>Doctors of the World</b>	2005: Calais 2006: Dunkirk	On-site mobile clinic and care between June and November 2015 Patrols: raising awareness and providing information Paramedical and special care patrols Health monitoring and orientation Gathering of testimonies from people who have been victims of violence. In co-operation with MSF and the hospital's emergency medical unit.	Calais Grande-Synthe
<b>MSF</b>	Since November 2015	Clinic offering medical consultations from Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 4.30 am: 3 doctors, 6 nurses, 1 physiotherapist, 1 psychologist, 7 social workers Prioritised: Women, children, vulnerable individuals, emergencies 3 water points, half of the latrines, waste collection, distribution of garbage bags Construction of shelters in collaboration with L'Auberge des Migrants	Calais Grande-Synthe
<b>FOII (French Office of Immigration and Integration)</b>		Information on asylum, return journey Orientation and support in the Reception and Orientation Centre Patrols every day (except weekends) 2 patrols of the ROC each week	
<b>Plateforme de services aux migrants</b>	2011	Network of organisations working in the exiles' camps in Nord-Pas-de-Calais Helping the organisations to work together Training, discussion workshops and conferences for volunteers and activists Legal aid for charitable organisations and activists Implementation of tools for communication: Newspaper for the jungles	Calais Grande-Synthe Tatinghem Angres Norrent Fontes
<b>Salam</b>	2003	Distribution of one meal per day at the Jules Ferry Centre Distribution of clothing Distribution of wood for heating - 1 x per week	Calais

## ON-SITE PARTICIPANTS AND ACTORS

ACTORS	PRESENCE	TYPES OF INTERVENTION	SITES WHERE ACTIVE
<b>Secours Catholique</b>	Since 2005. Evolution in their position: shift from a focus on distribution 7 or 8 years ago to a greater focus on support and advocacy.	General information Information on asylum: help with filing claims, help with presenting their story, CNDA (French National Court of Asylum) appeals and Dublin appeals French courses, literacy lessons every day and a bicycle workshop at an open, non-distributive day centre in the centre of Calais Making rounds through the sites End of February 2016: opening of a shack to prioritise collective action in the «jungle» that burned down during the clearance of the south zone.	Calais
<b>Terre d'Errance</b>		Solidarity association for the migrants great freedom depending on the site: distribution of food and clothing, reception, health monitoring, legal aid, support with respect to common law...	Steenvoorde Norrent Fontes
<b>Women and Children's Centre</b>	Centre open every day since November 2015.	After having operated a reception facility in the south of the «jungle», the WCC was moved to a double-decker bus. Reception of boys up to 13 years of age as it becomes difficult after this point compared to women.	Calais
<b>Baloo's Youth Centre</b>	Present since November.	Open every day from 11 am to 5 pm. Cultural, recreational, sport activities. Aimed at boys between the ages of 12 and 18. Priority allocation system for accommodation for unaccompanied children Nutrition programme Reception in the south zone of the "jungle" retained following the evacuation of the southern part	Calais Grande-Synthe

## LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH THE CHILDREN

DAY	PLACE	NATIONALITY	AGE	DAY	PLACE	NATIONALITY	AGE
26/01/2016	Cherbourg	Syrian	17	10/03/2016	Calais	Afghan	17
26/01/2016	Cherbourg	Afghan	16	10/03/2016	Calais	Afghan	16
26/01/2016	Cherbourg	Afghan	17	10/03/2016	Calais	Afghan	15
26/01/2016	Cherbourg	Congolese	16	10/03/2016	Calais	Afghan	16
26/01/2016	Cherbourg	Pakistani	16	18/03/2016	Tatinghem	Afghan	14
08/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	15	18/03/2016	Tatinghem	Afghan	15
08/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	17	25/03/2016	Calais	Ethiopian	17
08/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	14	25/03/2016	Calais	Ethiopian	16
08/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	17	26/03/2016	Calais	Egyptian	14
08/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	14	26/03/2016	Calais	Syrian	17
08/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	12	26/03/2016	Calais	Syrian	15
22/02/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	15	26/03/2016	Calais	Egyptian	16
22/02/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	17	01/04/2016	Angres	Vietnamese	Unknown
22/02/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	17	01/04/2016	Angres	Vietnamese	Unknown
24/02/2016	Calais	Syrian	17	04/04/2016	Calais	Syrian	11
24/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	16	04/04/2016	Calais	Syrian	12
24/02/2016	Calais	Syrian	16	04/04/2016	Calais	Syrian	16
24/02/2016	Calais	Syrian	16	04/04/2016	Calais	Syrian	17
24/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	15	04/04/2016	Calais	Sudanese	16
24/02/2016	Calais	Egyptian	15	04/04/2016	Calais	Sudanese	17
25/02/2016	Calais	Syrian	14	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	15
25/02/2016	Calais	Afghan	14	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	16
25/02/2016	Calais	Afghan	16	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	15
05/03/2016	Norrent Fontes	Eritrean	15	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	17
05/03/2016	Norrent Fontes	Eritrean	15	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	16

## LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH THE CHILDREN

DAY	PLACE	NATIONALITY	AGE	DAY	PLACE	NATIONALITY	AGE
05/03/2016	Steenvoorde	Sudanese	13	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iraqi	15
05/03/2016	Steenvoorde	Ethiopian	14	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iranian	16
05/03/2016	Steenvoorde	Ethiopian	15	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iranian	17
10/03/2016	Calais	Afghan	16	05/04/2016	Grande-Synthe	Iranian	17
10/03/2016	Calais	Afghan	14	23/04/2016	Paris	Sudanese	16
				23/04/2016	Paris	Sudanese	17

## LIST OF ACTORS MET AND INTERVIEWED

### CALAIS

Acted  
 Secours Catholique  
 Jungle Books  
 Baloo's Youth Centre  
 Gynécologie Sans Frontières  
 Woman & Children's Centre  
 Doctors of the World  
 L'Auberge des Migrants  
 MSF  
 La Vie Active / Jules Ferry Centre  
 La Vie Active / Temporary  
 Reception Centre  
 "Jungle" legal centre  
 / Appel des 800  
 Ecole du Chemin des Dunes  
 Plateforme des Migrants  
 (Migrants' Platform)  
 France Terre d'Asile

### GRANDE-SYNTHÉ

MSF  
 Doctors of the World  
 FOII (French Office of  
 Immigration and Integration)  
 Groupe SOS  
 Emmaüs  
 Carrefour des solidarités  
 Salam  
 Fulgence  
 Grande-Synthe town council  
 Utopia 56  
 SEPreNe (Lille)

### NORRENT FONTES

Terre d'Errance

### STEENVOORDE

Terre d'Errance

### ANGRES

Collectif Fraternité Migrants  
 Director of Technical Services  
 for Angres town council

### CHERBOURG

Itinérance  
 Reception and orientation service

### TATINGHEM

Volunteers' collective



PHOTO REPORT  
ON UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN  
IN THE NORTH OF FRANCE

**LAURENCE GEAI**

Ahmed, 16,  
Sudan.  
↓





↑  
Iyad, 11,  
Syria.

Between March and May 2016, photographer Laurence Geai constructed this photo report on unaccompanied children in the North of France, which now illustrates the present study (the subjects photographed are not those questioned for the sociological study; names have been changed).

At 25, Laurence Geai decided to become a journalist. She started out in television until she discovered photojournalism. In March 2013, she covered the Syrian war. Since then, she works with major French media outlets, especially on conflicts and their consequences. In 2015, she investigated the fate of migrants in Paris.

*Dismantling  
of the South zone  
of the "jungle",  
1 March, 2016.*  
↓





↑  
*Afghan  
unaccompanied minor  
in the slums of Calais,  
February 2016.*



←  
Attempt  
to cross  
the border  
to England,  
May 2016.  
↓





↑  
*Dismantling  
of the South zone  
of the "jungle",  
1 March, 2016.*

Ahmed, 16,  
Sudan.  
↓







*Slums of Calais,  
February 2016.*

