



Advocacy Update Report

Autumn 2022



OUR SERVICE: IMPACT & UPDATES

Welcome to our Autumn Advocacy Update.

This report aims to provide an overview of impact of Project Play in recent months, and an update on the situation in northern France.



Our Impact in Numbers

It's been a busy few months for Project Play - since April, we've run **182 sessions**, facilitating **438 hours of play**, and **reached 788 children**. As a monthly average*:

26

Sessions

112

Children

62

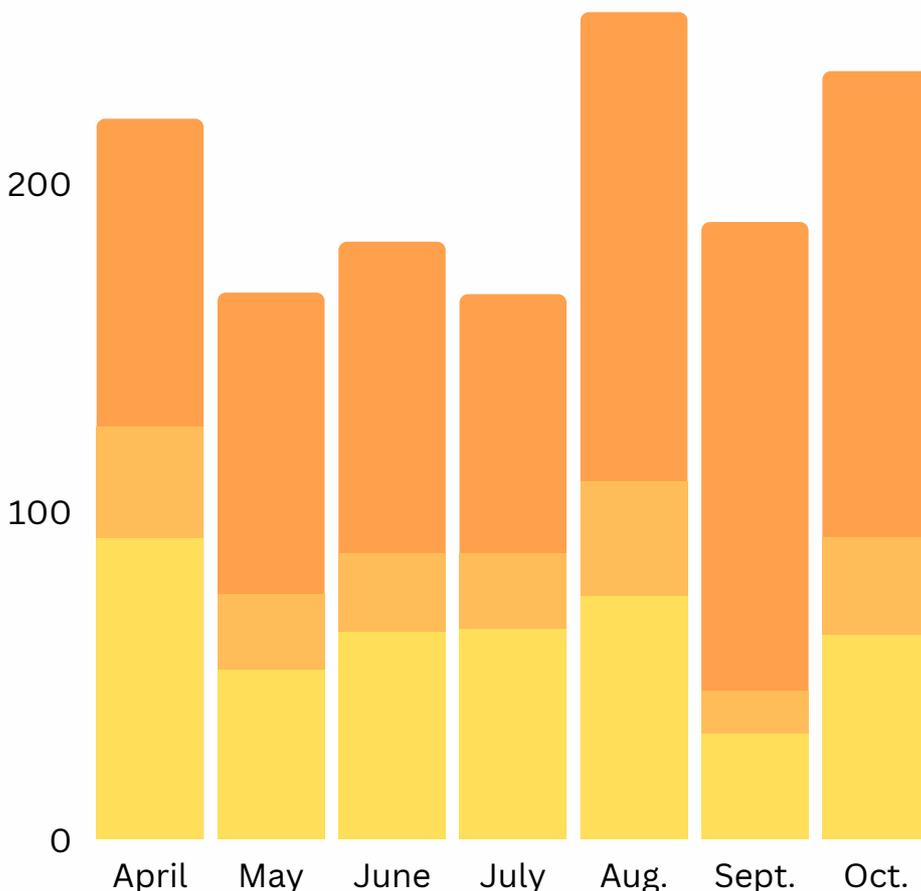
Hours of Play

**Monthly averages from April - October.*

As always, the number of children we reach does not reflect the total number of children living in the camps in northern France - **the real figures will be higher**.

300

Hours of Play
Sessions
Children Reached



There has been a considerable **increase** in the number of children we've seen at sessions since August, with numbers of children **consistently high** throughout the spring and summer months too.

In September, **our van was written off**. We rely on our van to provide our service, and without it, depended on the support of other organisations. As such, our service was inconsistent. A new van in October has allowed us to **resume our normal service**.



The situation in northern France remains as precarious as ever.

Extreme Weather

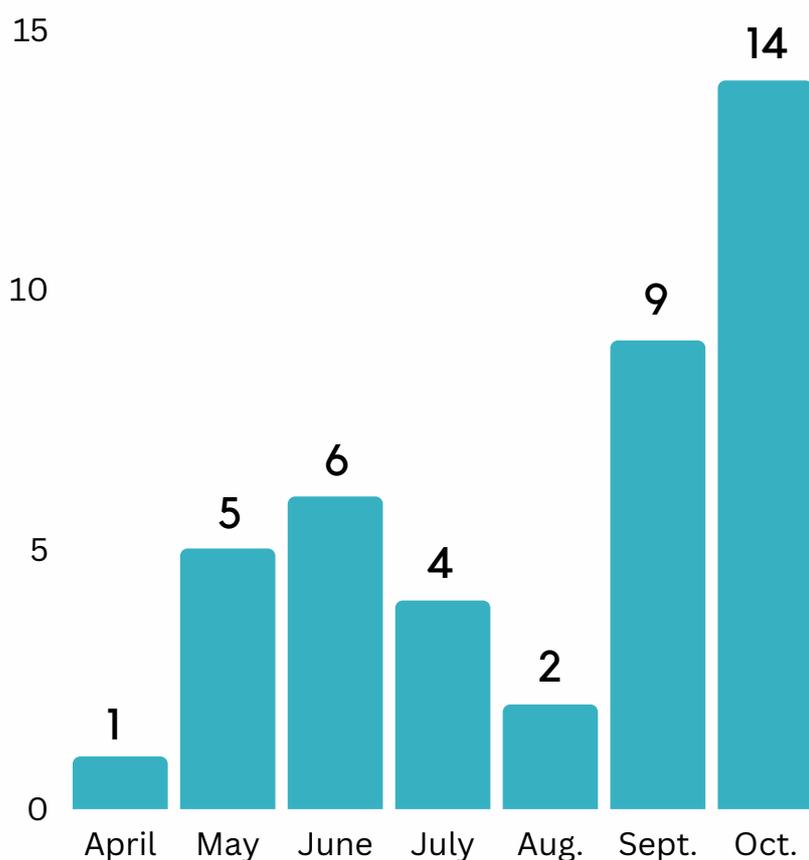
Throughout the summer months, children and their families were **without shelter** or respite from the **record heats** that ravaged Europe. Sun exposure is a threat to the health of the children and families living in the camp in Loon-Plage. With limited access to sun cream or shade, and with no running water, **high temperatures are unbearable and dangerous.**

More recently, storms and intense weather have resulted in **equally tenuous conditions** for those living outdoors. In bad weather we cannot run our sessions safely - risking children getting wet and cold with no way to warm up.



Eviction Operations

The so-called **“zero point of fixation”** policy means that people often face 'securitisation' action, including regular evictions from their living sites, the destruction of tents and the seizure of personal belongings.



Monthly Evictions at Living Sites in Dunkirk

The **Human Rights Observers** document such acts of state violence, and produce monthly reports. Their data shows that eviction operations were **relentless** over the summer months, and have **increased significantly** in September and October.

This graph displays data taken from HRO's monthly reports. To learn more about the eviction operations, their work is an invaluable resource: <https://humanrightsobservers.org>

LIVING CONDITIONS



These operations are not free from violence, and are a source of **psychological and physical exhaustion**.

This data shows that the operations are **random, and unpredictable**.

This serves to systematically destroy what little stability children and their families may have. In October, there were**:

14
Evictions

148
Shelters Stolen

***Data from HRO's October Dunkirk Report.*

The marked increase in operations in September and October is particularly concerning. 14 evictions in October means that there were between **three and four evictions every week**. Some of these were on consecutive days. Not only is this severely traumatic, but it poses a serious challenge to the organisations working to respond to the evictions. Providing tents, sleeping bags and other supplies only to have them stolen and destroyed so regularly places huge strain on limited resources, and risks people being **unable to access essential supplies**.



Churned up ground following an eviction operation.

Recently, operations have involved the **destruction of foliage** for shelter, and the churning up of ground to render it unusable for camping. This has limited the habitable space available, and leaves children playing, eating and sleeping in **fields of thick mud**.

Evictions are a source of **huge instability**, exerting mental and physical trauma on children and their families. The **recent increase** in evictions risks organisations being unable to provide essential shelter, and is particular **concerning going into the winter**.



FRANCE - UK AGREEMENT

Since 2003, the UK has been sending its taxpayers' money to France, to ensure the use of French security forces to stop people from irregularly crossing the Channel.



This month, parties from both governments have agreed to spend even more money on policing the British border. From now on, an **additional €10 million** will be spent on police, gendarmes, and surveillance technology.

Gerald Darmanin and Suella Braverman, sign the joint agreement in Paris. Source: Al Jazeera, 14th Nov. 2022.

This agreement brings the total budget to **€72 million**. The UK Government states that one of the aims of this cooperation is "*preventing and deterring illegal crossing attempts*".¹

Seeking asylum is a human right, yet the UK does not provide safe and legal routes for people seeking asylum.^{2,3}

How can people be illegal, if they cannot be legal? These policies are hostile, preventing people from accessing their human rights, and the rhetoric they promote is dangerous.

€72 million.

This could provide safe, secure and warm housing for the children we work with. **Instead, it is being used to frighten them, destroy their living sites, and criminalise them.** The UK government sees the deterrence of people seeking safety as a bigger priority than protecting the welfare of children and young people.

1 - The UK Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/next-phase-in-partnership-to-tackle-illegal-migration-and-small-boat-arrivals/uk-france-joint-statement-enhancing-co-operation-against-illegal-migration> [18/11/2022]

2 - See the 1951 Refugee Convention. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/3b66c2aa10> [18/11/2022]

OUR DEMANDS



Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁴ states that all children have the right to a **standard of living adequate** for their **physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development**. As a State Party to the Convention, France has an obligation to uphold this right. Leaving children exposed to the elements, whether intense heat waves or biting cold, heavy rain and thick mud, is a failure to do so.

Article 19 of the CRC states that all children have the right to be **protected from all forms of violence**. The evictions are a form of physical and mental violence, and the recent increase in uncertainty creates an even more unbearable, traumatic existence for children and their families.

The new agreement between the UK and France will inflict **further violence** and cruelty on people seeking safety. **All people have the right to seek asylum.**



-  We call upon the French state to provide safe, secure and unconditional housing in strategic locations in northern France.
-  We call on both the UK and France to cease their violent, hostile border policies.
-  We call on the UK government to create safe, legal routes for those seeking asylum.

3 - Amnesty International Briefing Paper - Safe and Legal Routes to the UK. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2021-01/Amnesty%20International%20UK%20-%20Safe%20and%20Legal%20Routes%20Briefing_0.pdf [18/11/2022]

4 - The United Nations Convention on the Child. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf> [18/11/2022]



All children have the right to play.

<https://project-play.org/>   @projectplayfrance  @projectplay7



Support us:

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Contact us:

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Project Play is a registered French Charity, No: W594012083. We also operate under Donate4Refugees, Charity No: 1168435.

