**RAPAR**

**A Manchester-UK based Human Rights Organisation**

**1st March 2016**

**Press release – for immediate release – 2 videos linked, I video in dropbox and 3 pictures**

**Putting out the fire – or stoking it?**

* **“The police sprayed gas outside of the houses.  I left the house, and left clothes, food, phone charger, gas for cooking, everything.” *Bashir, 26, from Sudan***
* **“I was sleeping in my house this morning. The police suddenly come and started to destroy my house. The police were all around. They pushed me and my foot was twisted.  When the police pushed me I just fell on the ground in front.”*Abdurahman, 17,  from Kapisa in Afghanistan***
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* **“If there are no people, there is nothing to judge.” *Marianne Humbersot, Coordinator, Calais Legal Centre***

**From last Friday (26th February) until 4.30pm yesterday, RAPAR was on the ground in Calais.**

**On Saturday night (27th), Channel 4 News broadcast the story of our work with two Afghan men who are trapped in the camp there, having served as interpreters for the British army for four years:[http://www.channel4.com/news/catch-up/display/playlistref/270216](http://www.channel4.com/news/catch-up/display/playlistref/270216%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).**

**At 08.30 yesterday morning, the CRS police\* guarding the camp entrance by the Banksy mural under the motorway bridge refused entry to RAPAR founder, Dr Rhetta Moran who was standing beside Marianne Humbersot,  the Coordinator of the Calais Legal Centre.  Dr Moran offered her international press credentials (IFJ card) and asked the officers to tell her the law under which entry was being denied – they would not answer.  Then, when Ms Humbersot reached the Prefecture, Delphine Brard by phone (photo attached) entry was allowed.**

**The eviction was taking place on the south side – the other side – of the camp. The CRS had demarcated an area by surrounding it with armed police and, inside of that area, surrounding individual dwellings with more police and Prefecture officers who ‘persuaded’ inhabitants to leave.**

**Dr Moran tried to enter this area and was pushed back, three times, by a CRS officer.  Despite repeated questioning he refused to explain why he was barring her entry or why he was assaulting her. A short while later, the only national or international press who became visibly present during the morning, Al Jazeera, set up a live feed.  Dr Moran telephoned Channel 4 and the Guardian.**

**Two of the evicted people spoke in person with Dr Moran.  One of the videos linked here is by Bashir, aged 26, shot from just outside the doorway of his shelter, before the French State moved in and dismantled his shelter, [http://www.rapar.org.uk/calais.html](http://www.rapar.org.uk/calais.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).**

**Rhetta met him on road at 3pm, as she was leaving the camp to return to the UK.  Bashir was carrying the green sleeping bag you can see in this video, and his friends were with him.**

***"The police sprayed gas outside of the houses.  I left the house, and left clothes, food, phone charger, gas for cooking, everything.  They were meant to give us a day to move our house but they didn't.  Tonight I will stay with my brother in his shelter."***

**She asked Bashir if she could photograph him, but he was nervous. *“I have a video though”* he said, *“I will send you the video when I can get to the Internet.”*  And he did.**

**Earlier in the afternoon, Abdurahman, aged 17 from Kapisa, Afghanistan approached her.**

**Together, and with his friends, they went to Jungle Books - *photo attached* - the camp library developed with the involvement of a RAPAR member who has been in Calais since September 2015.**

**With the help of his bilingual friend, Jan, Abdurahman described what happened to him.**

***“I have been three months in Calais. I was sleeping in my house this morning. The police suddenly come and started to destroy my house. They did not say anything to me. I was inside. When I came out the police were all around.  They pushed me and they said:   “Get out, get out.” The police pushed me and my foot was twisted.  I was in front of my house.  I don't want the police to destroy my house therefore, when the police pushed me, I just fell on the ground in front of my house.  The police start shouting “Get out from here, we are destroying your house.”  They did not let me control my things, inside my tent.  I was worried about my foot so looked for help for my foot.  I have lost all my money and phone and clothes.  All my things - everything is finished.  I don't have any place to sleep. I try to manage with my friends.* I am very angry.”**

**During the entire morning, up until the point where the police moved onto the road leading through the camp with a water cannon lorry, flanked by riot police, Dr. Moran did not see any violence, at all, from any resident or volunteer.  She was on the road when the first house caught fire.  Residents and volunteers put it out – *photo attached*.  She was tear gassed the first time tear gas was used by the police –*video attached.***

**This morning, speaking from Calais, Marianne Humbersot’s assessment of the legal situation is as follows:**

***“The State is running out of time.  An appeal has been put before the administrative Supreme Court and if the State manages to make people leave the camp through psychological pressure, before the judge’s decision, then it is their way to avoid condemnation. If there are no people, there is nothing to judge.”***

**ENDS**

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\* CRS  - Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité - the only official force of law and order to be seen dealing with the refugee situation in Calais.