

The Refugee Crisis and the Police State: France Orders Forced Removal Of Migrants At Calais Camp

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

Global Research, October 25, 2016

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Area designated as “the jungle” contained 6,000-10,000 displaced persons seeking refuge

Some 1,200 French security forces descended on the migrant camp in Calais on the English Channel with riot gear, buses and sledgehammers in an attempt to relocate the thousands of people awaiting admission into Britain.

This is the latest tragic episode revealing the plight of Africans, Middle Easterners and Asians who have fled the turmoil taking place within their respective geo-political regions due to United States and NATO imperialist wars and the worsening global economic crisis fostered by the exploitative policies of Washington and Wall Street.

Hundreds of the people housed in the camp have resisted the forced removals by leaving the processing areas set up by the authorities. There was no official announcement about the location of where those living in makeshift housing at the camp were to be transferred.

By early morning October 25, construction workers wearing hard hats and oranges jumpsuits began to dismantle the temporary housing units using sledgehammers rather than bulldozers. French authorities say that the entire operation of removal should be complete by October 28.

Ostensibly this is an attempt to ease pressure on the border area between France and Britain allowing for the shifting of the problem to another section of the country. Conditions at the camp were described as deplorable with children living there absent of any parental custody. Much speculation is that those engaged in smuggling people from Libya across the Mediterranean are involved in human trafficking networks into Europe and the possibly the U.S.

Although the area has been a staging point for the migration into Britain from the sand dunes of northern France for at least two decades, the situation has worsened as a result of the escalation of human trafficking into Europe over the last three years. The migrant camp in Calais has been designated as the largest slum on the continent becoming a testament to the failure of European Union (EU) policy of resettlement of displaced persons.

The Independent newspaper in Britain emphasized on October 24 “That the Calais Jungle has been allowed to fester and endure for so long is a blot on the copybooks of governments, both here and on the continent. Whether you believe all of its residents should be allowed into Britain or not, few can say that people living in a state of limbo in makeshift squalor is anything other than barbarism, when there should exist procedures and facilities to process, house and deport such a population efficiently. That said procedures are evidently not in place, which begs serious questions about the preparedness and

seriousness of government agencies responsible for such matters.”

With elections coming up soon in France this is a major consideration for both the Conservative and Socialist parties. Politicians have attempted to position themselves as being tough on migrant camps and the need for stricter border controls.

This process of handling the migrant crisis has taken on more of a militarized character. The presence of security agents, the threat of arrests if people do not comply with removal orders and the immediate demolition of the camps illustrates the lack of humanitarian concern for problems that were created by the proliferation of U.S. and NATO interventions which have been abysmally catastrophic.

This same article published in the Independent continues by saying: “The camp is a source of misery for those who live there. People are not safe. Food, shelter and medical assistance are not guaranteed. For all the charity pouring in, theft, assault, sexual harassment and worse is infinitely more likely in a settlement such as this. The human thing to do would have been to close it as soon as it emerged. Either way, migrants in Europe will have to be resettled or deported. Both are painful decisions, but delaying them has only made the situation worse.”

The Root Causes of Imperialist Militarism and Global Capitalism

However, framing the discussion over how to handle the migration crisis in Europe and Britain conveniently avoids the underlying issues which have spawned this dilemma. Many of the European governments such as France and England have allowed themselves to become willing accomplices in the Pentagon and NATO driven wars of conquest stemming from Afghanistan and Iraq, to Libya, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Sudan, Somalia and other geopolitical regions.

European ruling interests embody their own imperialist designs seeking to outmaneuver Washington in effort to reassert influence lost since the conclusions of World War I and II during the 20th century. Germany which is viewed as the most stable of the 21st century EU economies has been engaged in a political struggle with elements within its own body politic along with governments further to the east and south which have endured the bulk of migration into the continent. According to statistics released by Eurostat the majority of migrants are applying for asylum in Germany.

The inability of the EU countries to develop a unified position on the underlying reasons behind the crisis only provides for more repression against migrants inside these states. Mass deportations into Libya and Turkey have been suggested nonetheless the logistics of such a task would be unfeasible. Images of raging fires in Calais, the herding of thousands of children and adults onto buses with nothing but the clothes on their backs and the possession in their bags are grim enough. An escalation of removals and further dispersals of migrants would worsen the overall view of Europe to many people throughout the world.

Electoral Politics and the U.S. Dimension

In light of the developing migrant question in Europe, the U.S. has also avoided their principal role in the current situation. Countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Somalia, among others have been severely damaged as a direct result of the interference into the internal affairs of these states.

Consequently, successive U.S. administrations, both Republican and Democratic, have continued these military interventions while creating the conditions for mounting instability. The migration crisis in the U.S. is also articulated as a criminal justice issue along with the so-called “war on terrorism.”

The Republican candidate for president, Donald Trump, has built up a substantial bloc of voters by promising to deport undocumented residents from the country. Trump accuses the immigrant population as being a source of crime and a potential threat related to “Islamic terrorism.” He has pledged to intensify the already militarized and deadly U.S.-Mexican border.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton says in response that this plan advanced by Trump would be nearly impossible to implement. Nevertheless, the administration of President Barack Obama, where she served for the first four years as secretary of state, has deported more undocumented workers and families out of the U.S. than any other head-of-state in the history of the country.

In the U.S. and Europe, the migrant question blends with the unresolved character of national oppression against African Americans, Latinos and other people of color communities. There are continuous efforts underway by both parties to divide the African American community against other oppressed peoples.

However, there is a growing level of consciousness that understands that it is the racist capitalist system that manipulates immigration policy to serve its own class interests. The labor of both the existing nationally oppressed and incoming migrant workers is being exploited at higher levels every year.

Working people in the U.S. in general are toiling for less return on their labor power. There are more people being driven into poverty and therefore a direct link joining these elements of the population can be created aimed at its elimination.

These issues are not being discussed in an honest manner during the 2016 elections. It is up to the people themselves to develop a program of action to liberate those who are being exploited by the ruling interests.

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Articles by: **[Abayomi
Azikiwe](#)**

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