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## WITNESS STATEMENT OF MAEL GALISSON

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I, Mael Galisson, of Personal Data France, independent journalist and author of the investigation “*Those Killed in Calais*,” series of articles published by Open Democracy in February 2024, will say as follows:

1. I make this statement in order to provide relevant information to the ongoing Cranston Inquiry, examining the events of, leading up to and following 24 November 2021, based on my knowledge and understanding of the context and circumstances of the events under scrutiny. I have enclosed exhibits with this statement, which I refer to below. These are labelled “MG1/EX-1; **INQ008284**”, “MG2/EX-2; **INQ008295**” and so on.
2. This statement was prepared with the assistance of Duncan Lewis solicitors who I understand represent a survivor and the families of several of the victims of the incident in November 2021, which is the subject matter of the Cranston Inquiry. I intend for this statement to assist the Inquiry with their investigation under the Terms of Reference, and in particular with Part VI. of the list of issues (Recommendations).

### Background to my work

3. Since 2015, I have been collecting and consolidating information about migrants who have died while trying to reach the UK from France. I do this by cross-referencing various sources, such as press articles, local and national print press archives, NGO reports, death certificates and testimonies from asylum seekers and volunteers. I have developed a database which records migrant deaths at the French/UK border from 1999 to present day.<sup>1</sup> I have collated this information into a single place because I believe that we need to confront what is happening along this border and memorialise these individuals who have lost their lives, to preserve their dignity.

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<sup>1</sup> [Le Mémorial de Calais \(lesjours.fr\)](https://lesjours.fr/); [Deaths at border France/Belgium/UK \(tiki-toki.amcom\)](https://tiki-toki.amcom.com/)

4. As part of my investigations into the deaths in the Channel and along the French border, I focussed on identifying those who died on 24 November 2021. I was able to identify the victims by cross-referencing between sources in the press, such as a BBC survey which identified many of the victims with names and photographs on 21 November 21 [MG1/EX-1; INQ008284], information about the incident on social media and speaking with NGOs in Calais such as Utopia 56. I was not in Calais on 24 November 2021 but I was in direct contact with several volunteers and NGO employees who were there at the time. I also continue to regularly visit Calais and Dunkirk in order to take statements from friends and family of victims, speak with NGOs and to investigate missing people [MG1/EX-2; INQ008295].<sup>2</sup> Their thoughts and comments are central to my investigations and my work in preserving the memories of the victims.
5. On 24 November 2022, exactly a year after the tragic loss of life in the Channel of over 27 individuals, I attended the memorial on the beach in Dunkirk. An employee from Caritas France read some letters from relatives of the victims from the Shipwreck on 24 November 2021. She read a letter from Emebet to Fikeru Shiferaw which said:

*“You didn’t deserve to die like that. You didn’t deserve to be treated like this in your last moments in this cruel world. I still hope that justice will be done.”* [MG1/EX-3; INQ008306, p.35]
6. Rallies and memorials such as this are regularly held when someone dies at the border. These serve as a reminder that European migration policies directly contribute to the unacceptable loss of life at the French/UK border. I am part of the planning team for the third commemoration event for those who lost their lives 23/24 November 2021, which will be held in Dunkirk this year. The journalistic work that I do provides a thorough, investigative counterpart to such memorials by creating an archive of all those who have lost their lives and an analysis of the context in which this happened.
7. The focus of my most recent series, published in English by Open Democracy [MG1/EX-3; INQ008306], has been to simultaneously memorialise those who have died and to explain the circumstances in which these deaths spanning 25 years have been able to occur despite the French border with the UK being one of the most highly monitored areas in the world. Investigating deaths at the border, has required me to analyse how people are crossing and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.journalismfund.eu/supported-projects/channel-lost-sea>

the systems in place that have led to these processes, notably the militarisation of the border and smuggling mechanisms. It is clear that these deaths are not unconnected accidents but should be considered altogether and can be analysed for trends.

8. My article '*The silent serial killer*', published 5 February 2024, recorded the deaths of 391 people in 25 years at the French/UK border up until 31 December 2024 [MG1/EX3; INQ008306 pp.6-11]. Since I published this article, there have been more deaths in the Channel. In addition to the Open Democracy series, I continuously update an interactive database that is published online. This provides the number of deaths at the border, the location, the date and a brief biography of the individual who lost their life wherever possible.<sup>3</sup>
9. Of course, we cannot have a definitive number but my database is a synthesis of the deaths that have been recorded. From 1 January to 27 September 2024, at least 45 people have died trying to cross the Channel by boat, with 20 deaths recorded in September alone [MG1/EX-3B; INQ008308].
10. I have published articles on the militarisation of the French-UK border [MG1/EX-4; INQ008309] and have created a timeline, which includes the key treaties, political developments, incidents and other publicly available articles relating to violence and deaths at the border.<sup>4</sup> I will go on to outline in this statement how the militarisation of the border leads to changes in the methods taken to cross the Channel and how this impacts the ways in which people suffer and die at the border.
11. As part of my work, I have many conversations with people on the move about their reasons for leaving France and making such a dangerous crossing. Most recently, I spoke to the family of [Name] a young woman who died on 28 July 2024 in the Channel due to overcrowding of the boat. [Name]'s asylum claim had been rejected in Germany and due to Dublin Regulations, she was unable to claim asylum in France. Staying in France or elsewhere in the EU, [Name] and her family ran the risk of being returned to Germany and then possible deportation to the Middle East [MG1/EX5; INQ008310]. This

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<sup>3</sup> [Le Mémorial de Calais \(lesjours.fr\)](https://www.lesjours.fr/)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1560429/Externalisation-Calais/>

is an example, among many, of why individuals are not seeking asylum in France but rather, out of desperation, continue to make the crossing to the UK [MG1/EX-6; INQ008311].

12. I have also observed that the conditions in Calais and Dunkirk add to the suffering and pressure that individuals feel, acting as the final push. The conditions in Calais push people into increasingly dangerous situations because they are desperate. This increases the likelihood that people will lose their lives trying to cross the Channel. People are stuck at the northern French border without water, without the possibility of food three times a day and facing constant threat of evictions, police violence and racist abuse. The French policy towards migrants at the border, such as refusing to provide emergency accommodation, ordering evictions of squats every 48 hours, minimising the opportunity to seek asylum, sends a clear sign to people on the move that they are not welcome in France, and they should disappear. Most recently, I have written some articles on the increase in violence against migrants in Calais because of the election in France and the popularity of Marine Le Pen and the national rally in June 2024 [MG1/EX-7; INQ008312]. All of this harassment comes together to increase people's suffering and therefore their urgency to get to UK as quickly as they can. Often people do not know or choose to ignore what they know about UK immigration policies because they need to hold on to some kind of hope that they will reach somewhere safe and accepting. This is something that smugglers also use to encourage people to take their business, telling them that all the suffering that they are experiencing in Calais could end overnight if they just get on a boat and take the risk.

### The Border

13. The French-UK border has undergone a process of increasing militarisation since 1986. From 1986-2024, more than 20 bilateral agreements, treaties and arrangements have been made between the British and the French regarding the governance of this border and responding to irregular migration from France to the UK. This process has contributed to the evolution of methods of crossing used by people on the move to reach the UK from boarding trucks to travelling across the Channel in small boats.



14. Initially, the Sangatte Protocol 1991, established joint control between the British and the French on both sides of the border in the train stations of Frethun and Folkestone, and those that the Eurostar passes through. This was extended to Calais, Lille and Paris on the French side and Ashford, Waterloo and London St Pancras on the UK side with the signing of the additional protocol to Sangatte in 2000. In 2003, the Treaty of Le Touquet allowed for an expansion of joint controls by extending this agreement to all of the ports in Channel and the North Sea [MG1/EX-4; INQ008309].

15. Following these agreements which implemented joint control and monitoring of the border, a new phase developed which focussed on the fortification of the French border, particularly the port of Calais and the Eurotunnel terminal just outside Calais<sup>5</sup> The key developments in securitisation and militarisation of the border since the early 2000s include:

- a) In 2000, 6 million euros was spent on fencing the area, building a security building and installing a video surveillance network in the port of Calais. 5 years later, in 2005, a further 7 million was spent on strengthening this fortification process [MG1/EX-8; INQ008313].
- b) On the Eurotunnel site, the French doubled the existing 40 kilometres of fences with an additional fence equipped with infrared detectors, more video surveillance network, and Concertina barbed wire in response to the increase in attempted migrant crossings in the early 2000s. In 2006 a new investment programme completed the securitisation plans around the Eurotunnel by strengthening the fences and providing more video surveillance [MG1/EX-9; INQ008314].
- c) At this stage, the funding for fortification was mostly being provided by the French government whilst the UK were providing specific detection devices.
- d) An arrangement dated 6 July 2009 confirmed further securitisation of the port of Calais. This included a pilot project equipped with the latest detection technologies and the creation of a joint coordination centre responsible for

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1560429/Externalisation-Calais/>

collecting and sharing relevant information for the control of goods and people travelling between France and UK [MG1/EX-10; INQ008285].

- e) An arrangement dated 2 November 2010, extended these measures to the Eurotunnel site and the port of Dunkirk. It is within these two arrangements that France and UK begin to share the financial burden of securing the border [MG1/EX-11; INQ008286].
- f) Fortification of the border seriously accelerated from 2014 [MG1/EX-12; INQ008287]. On 20 September 2014, a joint ministerial declaration was signed and announced that French/UK governments would work together to double the amount of barriers around the Calais port area, a double fence would be erected along the bypass road accessing the port zone equipped with a curved access ramp to prevent climbing and topped with barbed wire [MG1/EX-13; INQ008288-MG1/EX-14; INQ008289]. This work was further extended by the building of a 4m high and 300m long wall equipped with surveillance cameras and an anti-climbing system along both sides of the main road to Calais Port in 2016 [MG1/EX4; INQ008309].
- g) On 20 August 2015, the UK/French ministerial declaration on Calais was signed [MG1/EX-15; INQ008290]. The intention of this agreement was to ‘help alleviate the migrant situation in Calais,’<sup>6</sup> [MG1/EX-16; INQ008291] by increasing the securitisation of the Eurotunnel site [MG1/EX-12; INQ008287]. The French and UK governments agreed to build 29 Kilometres of new fences, to reinforce the existing fences and to the deforestation of 100 hectares of wood in the surrounding area to prevent intrusion.
- h) In the Sandhurst Treaty, signed in January 2018 following the Brexit referendum and the expulsion of the Calais Jungle, the UK committed to paying 50 million euros in support of the treaty’s objectives [MG1/EX-17; INQ008292]. This included 15 million euros to be spent specifically on video surveillance devices, security barriers and the recruitment of guard dogs to be used at the port of Calais and the Eurotunnel site. This treaty also allowed for the construction of a British

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-ukfrench-ministerial-declaration-on-calais>

border police and customs building in the port of Dunkirk and the development of new control systems in other ports such as Le Havre and Ouistreham.

- i) On 24 January 2019, another joint action plan was signed in which the UK pledged, amongst other things, 7 million euros worth of monitoring equipment to be used along the coast of Calais which included drones with thermal cameras, infrared glasses, all-terrain vehicles, police on horseback and motorbikes. This agreement marked a shift in focus onto the trying to monitor and limit small boat crossings [MG1/EX-18; INQ008293].
- j) On 28 November 2020, the UK and France signed a joint action plan entitled '*next phase of collaboration on tackling illegal migration*.' The UK allocated 31.4 million euros to support French effort to investigate, deter and prevent irregular crossing in small boats in Boulogne and Dunkirk [MG1/EX-4; INQ008309].

16. Since 2021, the UK have committed significantly more money to assist the French. The latest agreement signed by the UK and the French on 10 March 2023 clearly demonstrates that the approach taken by these governments is not changing but instead they are reinforcing the same political position and approach that has been developing since the 2000s [MG1/EX-19; INQ008294]. The UK has offered than £476 million over three years to the French to increase control of the border. This is meant to pay for 500 more officers, new surveillance equipment in the form of drones, helicopters and other aircrafts, and reportedly an immigration detention centre in Dunkirk.

17. The increasing breadth of these agreements in both their geographical span, extending further along the French coast away from Calais and the significant increase in UK funding demonstrates that these governments continue to respond to the evolving methods of crossing with force and securitisation.

#### Methods of Crossing the Channel

18. Each evolution in the methods of crossing the border by people on the move has prompted a phase of fortification which in turn has led to a new method of crossing to reach the UK. As I have shown by going through a timeline of militarisation of the French border, this

has increased rapidly in the last 25 years. A review of these agreements also exposes the deadlock of such a policy because it only perpetuates the cycle.

19. From the early 2000s, people on the move were crossing from France to the UK by truck, either through the Eurotunnel or on ferries. Following this increase in migration, the French and British built fences all around the port of Calais and the Eurotunnel terminal (see 15f-g above). The fortification of these areas, the criminalisation of truck drivers and the constantly expanding surveillance, resulted in a decrease in truck use, and an increase in smuggler control as individuals needed assistance, and a new method of crossing – by small boat, in around 2018 [MG1/EX-20; INQ008296].
20. Since the small boat crossings increased in 2018, I have observed, along with other civil society organisations based in Northern France and UK, that there have been three broad stages of development within this method of crossing:
21. From 2018-2020, people on the move started to attempt crossings from beaches near Calais such as Sangatte and Wimereux. These crossings were generally made in totally unsuitable boats, sometimes people were even using kayaks or inflatable boats and toys for children [MG1/EX-21; INQ008297].
22. From 2020-2022, police presence on the beaches near Calais increased. This resulted in people moving further away from Calais to make their departure to cross the Channel. This includes locations such as Boulogne-sur-mer and Dunkirk. The consequence of this shift is that the journey to the UK by boat became longer and therefore, more dangerous.<sup>7</sup>
23. From 2023-2024, the Channel coastline experienced further increase of police presence and surveillance technology. This led to departures from even further away and increased overcrowding of the boats. Boats are now starting in rivers that flow into the Channel such as the Canche, Authie and Aa. This evolution has increased the risks of such a journey. On 3 March 2024, a 7 year old girl called [Name] drowned in the Aa canal in northern France, 30 kilometres from the coast, when the boat that she was travelling in capsized [MG1/EX-22; INQ008298].

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1560429/Externalisation-Calais/>



24. The longer the journey, the higher the risk that there will be an accident or individuals will lose their lives. These journeys often happen at night or very early in the morning and groups are under the control of smugglers at the moment they are expected to get on the boats. For significant periods people on the move are under the control and supervision of smugglers. It is often the case that they are sent a GPS location and will have to make their way to this point where they will meet the smuggler, who will arrange the launch.
25. From speaking with individuals who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to cross and individuals working in and around Calais, we know that sometimes smugglers are violent and they force people in these boats. When I was reporting on the shipwreck of 12 August 2023, we spoke with a survivor of this incident called [Name] who is now based in the UK. He explained that the smugglers were violent with them and forced them to climb onto the boat even though they were afraid and it was clearly overcrowded [MG1/EX-6; INQ008311].
26. A recent evolution that is reported by people on the move and civil society organisations is 'Taxi Boats.' This is the process of having people waiting on the beach and a boat appearing in the water rather than boarding the boat on the beach, in shallow water. Smugglers arrange for groups to hide at a specified location until a boat appears in the water or they are told to move and wait in the water for the boat and board it in the sea. This results in a chaotic scene and means that people are already wet and cold before they have even got on the boat. This has developed in response to the increased police patrols on the beach. The smugglers have developed this in order to circumvent the police and the French policy that they will not intervene once a boat is in the water [MG1/EX23; INQ008299].
27. A very recent example of the danger of this new Taxi Boat method is the death of [Name] [Name] on 28 July 2024. [Name] died on the fifth time that her and her family tried to cross the Channel. When I spoke with [Name]'s sister [Name] about what happened that night, she described a chaotic scene with people struggling and fighting with each other in the water in order to get onto a taxi boat. She explained that too many people were trying to board at the same time and because she and [Name] has been some of the first on the boat, they were quickly overwhelmed and suffocating beneath the weight of more and more people trying to board. [Name] survived this incident but her sister [Name], who was very pale and covered in bruises passed away because of this chaos [MG1/EX5; INQ008310].

28. It is the case that the smuggling networks have control of the boats crossings the Channel. However, many individuals do not have any money left by the time they reach Calais. The number of people trying to cross by truck to the UK is much lower than it used to be due to police controls, barriers around the port and anxious truck drivers who try to avoid stopping near Calais in case people try to get into their vehicles. Some individuals who cannot afford to pay a smuggler continue to attempt this route. However, there are also reports of individuals waiting in the sand-dunes by the coast until a boat appears in the water for a group of people on the move who have paid for the crossing. In such instances, individuals will take the risk and run into the water in the hope that amongst the chaos of boarding the Taxi boat, the smugglers will not be able to distinguish between them. This further increases the danger of the situation as people are struggling for a place on the boat whilst in the water.
29. On 23 April 2024, five people died on a boat carrying 112 people not far from the shore near Wimereux. These individuals did not lose their lives from drowning but they were asphyxiated due to the overcrowding and chaos on the boat [MG1/EX24; INQ008300].
30. I have transferred the data that I have collected on deaths at the border from 1999-2023 onto an interactive map.<sup>8</sup> This map allows you to see the evolution of how and where people are dying at the border. In particular, it is clear that before 2018 very few people died at sea which is because very few people attempted this method to cross. Sometimes individuals tried to cross by kayak or by swimming. From 2018/19 the maps shows that more people started to lose their lives at sea and in larger groups, most notably the incident on 24 November 2021.<sup>9</sup> However, the map does not yet fully reflect the most recent evolution that we are witnessing. As I have described, individuals are crossing from further afield due to the increase in police presence and surveillance on the beaches. This has led to deaths in areas by the coast further away from Calais. People are also now dying closer to the French coast due to the police repression. This is a consequence of the violence observed on the beaches, the use of tear gas, the chaos of individuals boarding boats directly from the water and the smugglers increasing overcrowding of the boats [MG1/EX23; INQ008299].

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<sup>8</sup> <https://neocarto.github.io/calais/en/>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

### Aftermath of 24 November 2021

31. The incident on 24 November 2021 resulted in a firm response from the French and UK governments to increase surveillance over the Channel and police control on the beaches (see s.16).
32. A significant consequence from this tragic incident is that the EU decided to launch a Frontex operation in Northern France. On 27 December 2021, Frontex announced that a plane, equipped with modern sensors and radars to support border control at land and sea, would be deployed to operate in the Channel and North Sea coastal region [MG1/EX25; INQ008301].
33. I consider that it is partly due to the Frontex deployed plane, and the 24/7 aerial surveillance of the French coastline, that we have seen this evolution in the methods of small boat crossings, pushing people further away to start their journey in canals or boarding boats from the sea in order to avoid detection by the police.
34. Public statements by Frontex confirm that their mandate in the Channel is to support with aerial surveillance and to prevent the rising number of sea crossings [MG1/EX25; INQ008301]. It is difficult to have a detailed understanding of the Frontex operation or the efficacy of their operation seeing as there is very limited information published. It is also unclear what role they play in rescuing boats in distress and the extent to which they carry out their duty to report this to CROSS.
35. Following the Shipwreck on 23 November 2021, the French government changed their approach to rescue operations in the Channel by contracting a private company to assist with rescue operations specifically for migrant boats in the Channel [MG1/EX26; INQ008302]. In doing so, they minimised the role of the French sea rescue volunteer organisation SNSM in the Calais and Dunkirk areas. SNSM is the only sea rescue organisation in France and provides thorough training to its volunteers in search and rescue.
36. In spring 2023, the French Ministry of the Armed Forces signed two contracts with SeaOwl in which SeaOwl agreed to supply two boats: the *Apollo Moon* (renamed *Minck* under the French flag) and *Esvagt Charlie* (renamed *Ridens* under the French flag), their own crews and

to accept financial penalties for any public communications made prior to the approval of the maritime authority [MG1/EX27; INQ008303].

37. Since these contracts were signed in spring 2023, the operational effectiveness of these vessels has come into question. Several experts, civil organisations and journalists have raised concerns about the technical capabilities not meeting the needs of the situation. The *Esvagt Charlie*, a vessel that is nearly 50 years old, cannot exceed 10 Knots (18km/h), which is also true of the *Apollo Moon*, which is a former fishing vessel. By way of comparison, some of the RNLI or SNSM lifeboats can reach 25 Knots, which is more than double speed [MG1/EX27; INQ008303].

38. Another issue that has been observed is that the *Apollo Moon* has a very high freeboard, which is the height between the waterline and the deck. Two journalists [Name] and [Name] who I frequently collaborate with, interviewed some rescue workers about what problems this might cause in a rescue situation. The rescue worker noted that even with a freeboard of just one metre, it is a challenge to pull people out of the water. The *Esvagt Charlie* and the *Apollo Moon* use RHIBs deployed by crane in their rescue operations. The contract between SeaOwl and the Ministry of Armed Forces specifies that the ships should have a lowered rescue area to bring shipwrecked people on board from these RHIBs. However, the *Apollo Moon* does not have such an area [MG1/EX27; INQ008303].

39. This attempt to ‘improve’ the French search and rescue operations in the Channel since the incident on 23 November 2021 is not sufficient. There are clearly practical issues with the boats that have been contracted as rescue vessels. This seems like an illogical development when one considers that in 2021, prior to the Shipwreck, SNSM played a much larger role in search and rescue with a crew of specifically trained volunteers. Following the tragedy in November 2021, SNSM were requesting more support from the French state with search and rescue but instead the French chose to stop calling SNSM to regularly assist with boats in distress along the northern French coastline and rather to use a private company. This trend can be seen by a cumulative review of the Maritime Prefecture press releases since November 2021, which refer less and less to SNSM.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.premar-manche.gouv.fr/communiqués-presse>



40. At the time of writing (27 September 2024), there have already been 45 deaths in the Channel in 2024. Shipwrecks continue to happen in the Channel despite attempts to control the situation at the border such as using privately contracted vessels, increased surveillance, police presence on the beaches and British financial investment to try and ‘stop the boats.’ We have recently observed that even where these private rescue vessels are present, and are in fact following the boats, it is still possible for the rescue operations to fail and for individuals to lose their lives.
41. The current approach is that when a rescue team detects a small boat at sea, a rescue vessel will approach them to ascertain whether they need to be rescued. If the people on the boat refuse, then the rescue boat will generally stay near the boat in case it encounter difficulties and needs rescuing until it enter UK territorial waters, at which point the expectation is for the UK coastguard to intervene.
42. However, the problem is that this technique does not always work because these private rescue boats are not practically suited to rescue operations. The *Apollo Moon (Minck)* was involved in the rescue operations for two recent shipwrecks: on 3 September 2024 in which 12 people died, the largest loss of life in the Channel since 24 November 2021, and 15 September 2024 in which 8 people died. This has been confirmed in press releases from the Maritime Prefecture for each incident [MG1/EX28-29; INQ008305].
43. On 15 September 2024, despite being present and actively monitoring the situation of the small boat, the *Apollo Moon* could not properly intervene when the small boat got into trouble because the boat went too close to the shore.<sup>11</sup> It seems that the rescue vessel was too large and too slow to carry out an effective rescue operation. The boat carrying 59 people capsized and 8 people lost their lives very near the French shoreline. The two most recent incidents in September 2024 alone raise the question of the suitability of these private rescue boats [MG1/EX30; INQ008307].

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.premar-manche.gouv.fr/communiqués-presse/nauffrage-et-deces-de-huits-personnes-en-mer-a-proximite-de-la-plage-d-ambleteuse-62>

## Conclusion

44. I have closely analysed the evolution of the UK/French border regime and of the crossing methods made by people on the move through my investigation of deaths at the border. It is impossible to investigate and record these deaths without engaging in the broader picture and the confluence between formal securitisation agreements, the profiteering of smugglers who benefit from this and loss of life at the border.
45. The last 25 years of agreements have shown that securitisation of the border will not stop the movement of people. Instead, such agreements lead to increasingly dangerous crossing methods. Since the incident on 24 November 2021, at least 103 people have died at the French-UK border. People continued to cross the Channel in large numbers and these methods have become more precarious and their reliance upon smugglers more organised and prolific. People are travelling longer distances in increasingly crowded boats.
46. We continue to see people dying in the Channel and in the canals in their attempts to cross to the UK. My investigations into deaths at the border demonstrate that people will continue to cross the Channel and that they will take any method that is available, irrespective of the risk. Therefore, my personal recommendations would be:
  - a) The establishment of safe and legal routes for people to reach the UK.
  - b) For the British and French governments to ease the pressure placed upon people on the move on Northern France. The French government should uphold the right to seek asylum, provide emergency accommodations to people on the move, cease their policy of 48-hour evictions. This might not stop people from crossing the Channel by boat. However, alleviating the pressure that individuals in Calais are exposed to would reduce the power of the smugglers, the urgency people feel to cross to the UK and therefore the level of risk that people take to cross the border. Reducing police presence and violence on the beaches would reduce the current phenomenon that we are witnessing of extremely chaotic departures from the coast on overcrowded boats leading to asphyxiation and shipwrecks very near the coastline.

- c) This could be achieved through the establishment of suitable reception centres in France where people on the move can be accommodated, have access to basic hygiene, learn about the rights and allow for a safe environment for unaccompanied minors.
- d) Alternatively, the dismantling of bilateral agreements between the French and UK such as the Treaty of Touquet. It was following this agreement, that we saw a rapid increase in the fortification of the French border. This approach has continued over the last 20 years and results in people taking higher risks and increasingly dangerous journeys. The longer this continues, the more lives will be lost at the border.

### Statement of Truth

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to made, false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed: Mael Galisson

Date: 8 November 2024

Name:

Personal Data