

Calais: Syrian refugees stage blockade of ferry terminal

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Sixty-five Syrian refugees have been maintaining a blockade of the entrance of the port of Calais since yesterday afternoon, in protest against the inhumane treatment that they are receiving in France. Some are on hunger strike. They are demanding that a representative of the UK Home Office comes to Calais to speak with them and grant them refuge in the UK.

The blockade is now in its 10th hour. Up to fifty police are present. Blankets are being delivered by local groups in support of the demonstration. The migrants are refusing to leave until their demands are met.

In a statement released earlier today the Syrian demonstrators stated:

'We have been here now between one and two months. The French government and police have been very bad with us and do not care about us. They have kicked us out of our house into the street. Anytime we find a place to stay the police comes and arrest us, destroy our belongings, close the place.

There is nowhere safe for us to shelter in Calais, we are here just for one thing and that is to have asylum in England. Many of us have family and friends in England who we would like to see and be able to live with. There is also a strong Syrian community there, more than in France.

We are now demonstrating in the port of Calais, we will not leave until they let us go to England. We demand one person from the UK home office comes here to speak with us, and to see our situation. We have the right to claim asylum in England, but how do we get there? There is not a legal way to cross.

We are about 65 people from Syria at the port at the moment, with our families, old women, mothers, children the youngest being three years old and friends.

We have the right to live a peaceful life and we have unfortunately war in Syria. We need help quickly. We are looking for safety and shelter in Europe but we have not found it yet and we hope to find it in UK.'

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Notes for journalists:

For background information on repression of migrants in Calais see 'This Border Kills'

<http://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com/this-border-kills-our-dossier-of-violence-2/>

For updates and news from Calais see the Calais Migrant Solidarity Website

<http://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com/>