

SALAM



SOUTENONS, AIDONS, LUTTONS, AGISSONS
POUR LES MIGRANTS ET LES PAYS EN DIFFICULTE

www.associationsalam.org

Photo © François Legault

DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



SALAM 
Nord/Pas-de-Calais



Bonne Année 2024

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our British Friends are no better off than we are!
Their government is playing with numbers.
The number of crossings would have fallen sharply!
Except that after the solid boats for a few individuals
2023 has seen large inflatable boats cross over!
40, 50 ... 60 exiles were crammed in!
Such has been the evolution in 2023!

As in France,
Exorbitant sums of money have been wasted,
to the detriment of humanitarian solutions
as legitimate as they are essential for the survival of our FRIENDS!

And EUROPE, you might say!
Move along, there's nothing to see.
What if we let their voices be heard?
a few months before the next European elections
YES
EVERYTHING HAS TO BE BUILT!
LIBERTY EQUALITY FRATERNITY

Jean-Claude Lenoir

EVENTS OF THE MONTH

It's Christmas: a fairy tale surrounds the city of Calais
(photo of 20th November) ...



... A winter, as is often the case, is wet and windy:
What degree of desperation must one have reached, to persist in camping in the undignified conditions they are experiencing, in the hope of an embarkation where they know how to risk death...



Forced displacement of tents is done in all weathers...

Fortunately, some people find ingenious ways to comply with the orders received by the police without being soaked:



SIX MORE DEATHS AT THE BORDER THIS MONTH, SIX DEATHS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH PREVENTED!

Five in the aftermaths of a shipwreck:

- On 5th December, a message from the "death" group arrived:

The day before, a person lost his life while trying to cross the English Channel, his body was found on the beach of Dannes...

- Another shipwreck, on the night between Thursday 14th and Friday 15th December off the coast of Gravelines, left one dead and two missing. They now have to admit the deaths, even if their friends in the Loon-Plage camp are still struggling to accept it...

Another, a Sudanese, found in cardiac arrest on the beach of Sangatte on Friday morning died during the day in the hospital of Calais.

The traditional gathering took place the next day, Saturday, at Richelieu Park at 6:30 pm, in memory of the two deceased (and all the dead and missing at the border)

Another man died, charred on a freight train:

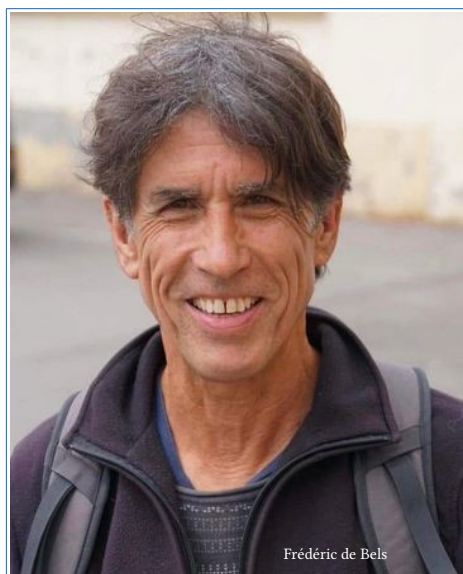
On 9th December, at Calais station, a fire broke out in a freight train, which was carrying paper. One migrant, electrocuted, died; another was injured.

On 11th December, a rally was organised in Equihen by the Osmose Association in tribute to the people who disappeared at the borders.



SIX WEEKS OF HUNGER STRIKE – ONE WATER POINT AND ONE DUMPSTER OBTAINED.

The news was published on 28th November: Pierre, a volunteer at Salam Grande-Synthe, had been on hunger strike since 22nd November. He had insisted on keeping quiet for a week.



Since 4th December, he has been welcomed in Herzele at the Maison Sésame (a place of welcome – precisely – for families and vulnerable people in exile), and information has circulated.

The press shared at the local level after a press conference on 12th December.

A fine article in Le Monde in the 16th December issue brought it into a wider spotlight a little more.

A word from the president, Jean-Claude Lenoir, followed the next day:

"Beyond the importance for Pierre to explain his approach in his daily commitment to accompany our Friends, the press conference confirmed the solidarity of many inhabitants of our territory to defend human rights in a universal way!"





He has the support of local associations: in a photo a salute from the Secours Catholique de Calais.

Several volunteers from Salam took turns accompanying him with 24 hours of fasting.



On 22nd December at 2 p.m., Damien Carême was at Maison Sésame to support him and called for a press conference, which was held in the presence of Jean-Claude Lenoir.

On 23rd December, Bélinda, our favourite harpist, also came from Maisons-Laffite to support him (*see below her testimony*).

40 days into his action, he's surprisingly well shot, lean but determined. Despite getting the water and a dumpster for the Loon-Plage camp, he didn't want to give up. He hoped to change the State on housing problems and on the application of the winter truce to informal camps... But is it possible to get our Minister of the Interior to move?

We had hoped that our partial victory on 18th December would make him give up putting his health further at risk...

Indeed, his action, reinforced by an intervention of migrant aid associations at the Dunkirk Community Council, has caused a dam that had been resisting for two years to give way (since the camps had been driven out of the commune of Grande-Synthe on 23rd November 2021.)

On 30th December, the 40th day of his hunger strike, he finally decided, on the advice of two doctors who found him very weak, to end it, with a visit to a gastroenterology ward in hospital for a safe resumption of feeding.

The appointment was made for the morning of 2nd January and he entered as scheduled.

VICTORY FOR WATER AND WASTE COLLECTION:

On the evening of 15th December, at 5:30 p.m., we were gathered on the steps of the CUD. We all walked into the meeting room.





Banners were unfurled, including "Humanity for migrants" and "Support for Pierre, 24th day of his hunger strike."

M. Vergriete, president of the CUD, called the meeting to order and volunteers began shouting: "Rights violated, elected officials complicit."

Mr. Vergriete requested that the room be evacuated. No one moved, he announced a quarter of an hour break, the time to call the police to evacuate us... Everyone sat quietly in silence. The police didn't come...

A few speeches highlighted the undignified conditions of survival in the camps, with a reading of Pierre's demands.

An official finally proposed, to break the deadlock, that four representatives of the associations be received on Monday afternoon (18th December) at 3:30 p.m. at the CUD, on condition that we go out. Utopia 56, MDM, the Womens Center and Salam were designated.

On Monday, it was immediately clear that our first two demands had been met:

-A water point: a reopened fire hydrant, with a water ramp and taps. (The president wants people to have access to water.)

It will be moved in the event of an eviction that results in the relocation of the camp.

A dumpster that will be replaced as soon as necessary.



The rest was denied to us without any possibility of discussion because it is the responsibility of the State:

- No opening of a premises in a sustainable way, like the Espace Jeunes du Moulin.
- A Cold Weather Plan (opening of rooms for certain nights) will only be activated upon requisition by the State.
- For the reception of people who have disembarked in Dunkirk after a failed passage: the CUD is not directly informed.
- The installation of toilets and showers as at the Linière hangars during COVID can only be done with the agreement of the State.

We were reminded that the state does not want fixed points, and that it says that there is a significant proportion of free places in CAES.

We recall that the only time a mass evacuation by bus was not followed by equally massive returns was during the evacuation of the great Calais jungle in October 2016, when the Minister of the Interior had the Dublin fingerprints removed.

FROM DISMANTLING TO DISMANTLING...

At both of our sites, the last major evacuation with mandatory departure in buses was on 30th November.

On 1st December, the next day, the situation was catastrophic:

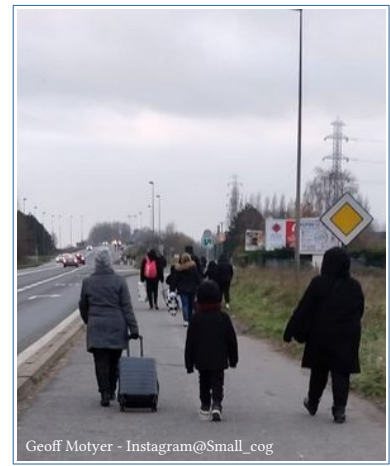


In Loon-Plage, a systematic deforestation has taken place: of an area previously occupied by tents. And it took place without the slightest reaction, apart from a press release from our president, which met with no response...

"What's going on in Dunkirk? Why the absolute silence of elected officials in the face of the scandalous deforestation of several hectares, disregarding all scientific assertions related to the primordial role of wooded areas in the balance of nature? Don't hesitate to see this ecological disaster first-hand. J-
Claude Lenoir.



He attaches photos to these words, and we have our eyes drawn to the little red tent that is there, all alone, in the middle of the felled trunks... What is she doing there?



As of 1st December, people are starting to come back, even families.

In Calais, also on 1st December, the Salam team witnessed the misery that reigned:

in BMX, the police vans are there and everything is dismantled.

The next day, there is no one left on this site. They'll come back later, replenish it.

Many of the occupants landed at the Stadium, they waved when they recognized our van and they gobbled up the bread almost without chewing...

On Judea Street, the guys are all grouped around a small pile of plastic bottles.

In addition, in the first three days of December, 730 people crossed into England by sea (these are the Home Office figures) in 15 dinghies. That's between 48 and 49 on average per boat... But many more of them missed the crossing, and found themselves homeless, frozen and often soaked. 70 men were left on the spot on rue des Huttes on the morning of 3rd December when the buses departed for the CAES...

On 4th December, only a minibus came to pick up those who would like shelter. Many are repressed. A little girl is there, in her pyjamas. A volunteer from Salam gave her a jacket to the mother, who immediately wrapped it around her.

In the vehicles we always have "shipwreck kits": bags labelled by size, with everything in them to dress a man from head to toe, but not a little girl!

And then little by little, as always, people come back to Calais, from all over France, from great distances or no so far far.

The number of breakfasts distributed by Salam is increasing.

Rather around 700 per day, but 1,020 on December 17th. That day, the team decided not to go to the last meeting in the city centre: there was nothing left to provide: no tea, no coffee, no bread, nothing...

Because the returns follow one another...

In Loon-Plage, there has been only one dismantling since then, on 28th December:

That of the tents that accompany the stalls on the side of the railway tracks, between the bridge and the distribution area. Then they evacuated the shop on the Mardyck side, near the pylon and the tracks.

Pictured is an arrest made on this occasion:



However, we are alerted by the very recent installation of the dumpster and the water point not on the distribution site of Loon-Plage where we are located, but on the territory of Mardyck... This is where the exiles had already been moved to on December 7th 2022, a year ago, to be brought back to Loon-Plage on May 4th and 5th.

We can expect this incomprehensible seesaw game to continue...

Otherwise, why put the water and the dumpster so far away from the camps and the distribution area that was allocated to us by Mr. The Sub-Prefect on 4th October?

When? We feared that it would be between the holidays, when our presence and vigilance might be weakened, but no... At the very beginning of 2024?

In Calais, evacuations continue every other day, with the same rules and methods for several years.

An unusual gift: the 24th and 25th of December were spared... Since the one on December 22nd, it has been three days without a dismantling...

The HRO (Human Rights Observers) point out that flagrante delicto should not be used as a legal basis for operations since people have been sitting there for more than 48 hours. The answer is immediate: there is indeed flagrante delicto since there are regular complaints and also findings.

We are astonished: the texts applied are the ones that apply to squatted housing, we have been told for years. If the squatter is not evicted within 48 hours, a judgment of the Administrative Court is required, which can take a year and a half to two years... And for an informal camp, a repetition of a complaint would be enough to trigger the evacuation?...

In addition, it is impossible to make anyone believe that the dismantling frees the land from the illegal occupants: very often the exiles reinstall their tents on the heels of the Forces of Order when they leave the premises...



A policewoman explained to the HRO (Human Rights Observers) on 7th December at the George V Bridge: They don't take personal belongings, they leave them there, the tents are taken, cleaned, recycled and made available to people, clean and in good condition.

They have a contract with the company, so that something is done.

"Tents that are abandoned, we can't leave them on the public road... »

We hope that this lady is convinced of what she says and therefore of the legitimacy of her actions, otherwise it is a profession that must be intolerable...

Why take the tents and recycle them to give them back to them (which of course cannot be done on the same day) rather than leaving them to them who ask for nothing...

Why, on a regular basis, do batons, shields, gas and rifles get carried by them for such peaceful operations?



And the behaviour of the police observed by the HRO is not always respectful:

On the George V Bridge, on 20th December, a CRS said that the legal basis for the operation was "the prefecture... the safety of migrants".

But how can we believe (and make people believe) that we are bringing people to safety when we leave them behind by taking the equipment with us?...

But what we see does not correspond to this presentation of the facts:

Contrary to what the Commanding Officer had stated a week earlier, the HRO had seen personal belongings seized.

The rules are applied in a way that seems quite random:

Of course, there are CRS teams that respect the rules: on December 7th at the George V bridge, a person is allowed to cross the perimeter to look for his phone... and find it! Personal belongings are effectively left there, on the pavement.

On the same day, in BMX there is no security perimeter, or rather the guys can cross it quietly to get in and out... But at the Beaumarais bridge, the APC agents destroyed the shelters, their truck was full! Why this difference in behaviour?

On 14th December at BMX, the commander makes an exile take his tent while screaming, but at least she encourages him to take it... On the same day, on Judea Street, a person was prevented from crossing the perimeter to collect his belongings.

On 28th December at the George V Bridge, the police let people pass to collect their belongings. But a little later, on the same day, on the hospital site, in the same situation, a person was prevented from passing.

On 20th December, at the BMX station, an exile asked to go back and get his music speaker that was in his tent (it had just been seized, which was already not regular since he was there!), a CRS authorized him but another blocked him. The first told him to wait for the commander's permission. But the APC officer violently threw more tents and pallets over them. It becomes impossible to recover the speaker.

These are just a few examples...

It gets worse:

On 20th December, Salam's team saw police collecting all the tents under a bridge. The police had first driven the guys a little further off: of course, the tents are abandoned!

That day, we also saw them (especially in BMX where Salam was locked in the security perimeter) taking all the pallets (which are essential to make a fire and to insulate the tents from the ground), cutting the tarpaulins, demolishing the shelters on Judean Street...

On the 22nd, Salam was also locked up in a perimeter with the exiles; and we were accompanied by representatives of Emmaus des Deux Sèvres who also saw everything.



On 30th December, the HRO saw cleaners retrieving belongings hidden in bushes on the edge of a canal in the city centre.



On 7th December, the HRO saw a tent removed with a saw... "Taken, cleaned, recycled and made available to people, clean and in good condition," said the policewoman on the same day (7th December) (*see above*).



Pallets are systematically collected. They are not only used to make a fire for heating and hot food, but also to insulate the tent from the soaked ground.



Security perimeters can sometimes be justified: a police operation may require a closed door (a crime scene for example). But then the ban must be applied to everyone! On 28th December, in Marck, a gentleman was walking his dog and was able to pass by. The CRS explains that he is a local resident but has not asked him for any proof.

Law enforcement agencies often engage in intolerable bullying:

On 16th December, a riot police officer threw a bottle of water on the fire to extinguish it.

On the same day, a tent fell into the water, which provoked laughter from the riot police in front of the HRO.

On 20th December, on rue du Beaumarais, a riot police officer showed the sign "Permanent prohibition of all acts of hunting and searching " to justify the establishment of a security perimeter !!

On 22nd December, a riot police officer chanted, mocking the exiles: "No, don't come back, take your things, go home."

SHELTERING FOR EXTREME COLD.

It was very cold the first few days of December.

Only one night of opening of a premises in Calais,

On 2nd December, it was snowing and freezing but the Plan for a "Great Cold" was not activated despite the requests of several associations (at least Salam, Utopia and Secours Catholique). The water had even frozen at the city's only 24-hour water point, rue des Huttes.

The next day, the Plan for a "Great Cold" was still begun for the soaked exiles who missed the passage in small boats.... Only for the night. An Audasse bus left full in the morning shortly after 9 a.m. from the rue des Huttes for shelter. It's exceptional on a weekend and it's good, but it wasn't announced. There were about fifteen people left who didn't get a place. When the Salam team left, there was little hope for them to see a new bus appear...

Nothing for the next few days..

On the Dunkirk side, the shelter for the night was better set up for these frosty days.

On December 1st, in the early afternoon, the Red Cross was responsible for announcing the opening of a gymnasium for the following night in Petite Synthe for women, families and vulnerable people: 70 places. Registration is done through 115.

This opening is maintained, for the night only, until the morning of 7th December.

In conclusion: the floor goes to Dominique P., volunteer of Salam Dunkirk, who has flooded the local authorities with letters of all kinds since the beginning of Pierre's hunger strike: this is a small message to the President of the Urban Community, at the same time Minister of Housing:

"Mr. Minister, Mr. President,

The conscience of a man in the face of our cowardice and abandonment. Fortieth day of hunger strike for Pierre.

Beautiful weather today for all these people abandoned outside! The CUD's rubbish bags as a poncho !! »

Claire Millot.

LET UNIVERSAL DEMOCRACY COME TO PASS...

Here is a little text that reveals my joy to be welcomed in the Sesame house:

Leave it to us.

We don't ask for your permission, we already do it so much better than you, so...

You are brutally repressing all forms of life.

We oppose you with love and compassion.

The people in exile are our fellow human beings, you have driven them from their homes.

We will welcome them into our own, with joy and sharing.

Thousands of houses will open around the world, and your violence will strike into the void.
We are innumerable, your violence reveals your terror at seeing us rise up.
We don't have our fists raised.
We have an outstretched hand.
Let universal democracy come to pass.

Pierre L.,

hunger striker since 22nd November, housed at the Sesame House since the evening of 4th December 2023.

"THE FIGHT IS FAIR SO IT GIVES ME COURAGE... »

(Wednesday, 27th December, support for Pierre).

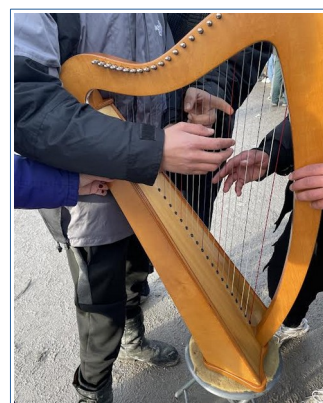
"The 'SHORE' bin was emptied this morning," says Claudine with a big smile. Good timing!

With Pascaline, we unload all the donations from the students of the Darius Milhaud secondary school in Sartrouville. Thank you!
Christmas magic or not, the bin is filled to the brim again, with duvets and sleeping bags all stored in the right place :-). Pascaline will be able to continue to distribute these warming items in the camp as she did last night, on the "African" side, which remains illuminated... Instantly, we decided to take a break to offer our friends a few notes on the little harp before going to support Pierre.



On the right, as you enter the distribution site, very far from the tents, a long queue, almost militarily supervised by the volunteers of 'Care 4 Calais', is organised in the slush.

Today, everyone receives a plain jacket or down jacket, hoping that there will be enough for everyone, so many. A small ray of sunshine, although slight, warms the heart and the little harp illuminates beautiful smiles on each face.



The noise of generators installed to charge the phones do not manage to cover its delicate notes thanks to the human barrier formed by our friends. Time stands still for a moment, ephemeral moments of heart-to-heart sharing... Mine squeezes as I leave. Where Magda a few months earlier was washing her little girl's t-shirt on a flat stone, no more water...!



The straw that broke the camel's back, no pun intended, and that led Pierre to take an extreme decision: to stop eating, in order to help our friends obtain living conditions, worthy of a human being. The essential ones that our country denies them by mistreating them outrageously. Criminal France...



Instead, a pile of garbage bags is piling up.

I remember the little eternal red rose from last year when Pierre carried the harp all around the camp...

Where is the Brotherhood? At the 'Sesame House'! Pierre was able to be welcomed there and about fifteen people found refuge there thanks to Sylvie and Benoît who made this large family house available.



A haven of peace where it is good to live and settle for these families in exile. Herein lies humanity, true humanity.

The one that knows how to self-manage in sharing and pooling.s



The walls tell in pictures the snippets of the lives of the many who have passed through here. A collage, painting 'HOPE' catches my eye: 'Love is forever, love is for all'. These umbrellas, frail boats that protect you to get through the storm...

A large world map in the centre of the house, seems to remind us that the Earth belongs to everyone! Borders, papers for travel...? Have we just become cattle for some?

A very suspicious little boy, visibly traumatized by what he has had to endure, finally gives in to temptation and slips his fingers over the strings of the harp. Peter is here. Although his physical body is fading more and more every day. 36th day without eating! Still, he impresses with the clarity of his gaze. He looks incredibly fit! Carried by an inner force that inhabits him and guides him on his path... Equal to himself, confident that things can, must change for all these uprooted human beings... There is no shortage of resources. One only has to consider all that has been done at all levels to disfigure the landscape by cutting down trees, turning over soils, seeds of desolation sown...



laying countless blocks of stone and concrete, miles of fences and barbed wire... The list is long and the bill is salty... If only these means could be redirected to a welcome worthy of the name. Sesame houses could, should, multiply! This is not utopia, the one in which Peter is living at this moment, is a living example of it.



He goes down the stairs without any problem, removes the chairs on the big table... Where does he get this strength from? Very happy because Dominique, who is currently taking care of it for him, has come to visit him with her faithful companion Arthur. Far from being overweight usually, Pierre has already lost 10 kgs. We feel that he is weakened but supported by an unfailing determination. The little harp rests in front of him on the table.



With his forehead resting on the sound column, Pierre takes it in his hands. The delicate notes of the instrument spread through his hands, his arms, his torso, his whole body receives a benevolent and salutary bath of music.

He also plays it standing up for a moment and then sits on the radiator which gives him a gentle warmth. The harp accompanies him and we feel the Music of Life flowing between the three of us.

Pierre's face is calm, his eyes sparkle and his smile so infectious. Several residents of the house joined us around the table.

Suddenly, the phone rings. Commotion. In an instant, two couples and a baby come down with a small suitcase at arm's length. Hugs... Pierre explains that they have just received an offer to cross the Channel by truck at night from Paris. One of the very young women is eight months pregnant, the other is just as young and cradles her baby who is barely two months old. A truck? At night? The cold? The risks? What if baby cries at the border? A shiver runs through me...

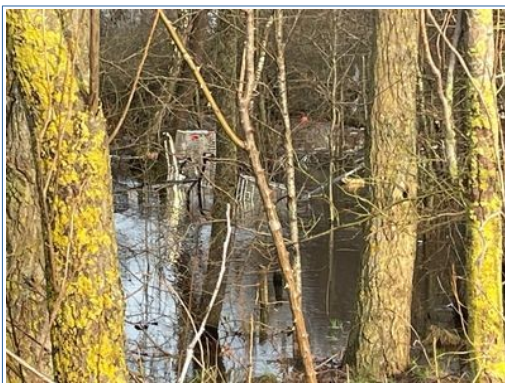


I invite the “mother-to-be” to take the little harp in her arms so that baby can feel it. "Only 2 minutes, we have to go!" she warns as she plays. Her husband sat opposite. She relaxes and gives us a wonderful smile. The beauty of a woman ready to give life... I take a moment to ask them to assess the situation before getting into the truck and not to hesitate to come back if it's too uncertain. We even do a 'check' with our hands and after another round of kisses they disappear into the night. Silence, the one in which everything is said, has taken its place in this house of heart, of hope and of trust in Life. I decide to keep the memory of their eyes sparkling with joy at the idea of finally being able to achieve their dream: to reach UK, to access a better life!



Peter's struggle continues. To date, his action has prompted the Urban Community of Dunkirk to install two water points for our friends. A dumpster has also been installed, although it is very far from the places where it would be more useful...

A future dismantling plan to move the camps further and further away, is in order to make our friends even more invisible? Pierre remains hopeful of obtaining more humane shelters, respect for the winter truce... The floods have left swampy ground, groves are under water and sleeping under bridges is forbidden to them, leaving very few areas left to set up tents.



A pocket square where everyone fights for their little “square metre”, in sandals...

While I was about to send these few lines to Claire, Pierre sent news as promised. The little family with the baby turned back last night and the young couple, soon to be parents, found themselves in Brittany more than 300km away, and also on their way to the Sesame house. Very happy to know they are all safe and sound. Peter's audio message ends with these words: "... I'm doing pretty well, I'm fine, quiet. Tired of course but it's okay. It is the doctor who will decide at any time whether I can continue. For the moment I feel good. The struggle is fair, so it gives me courage... »

I am sending this testimony on his **38th day without eating to support our friends...**

We are with you from the bottom of our hearts dear Pierre, tender thoughts at the end of the year and all the best, in the Brave New World possible for the new 2024!
May your message be heard...

Text and photos: Bélinda M. Welton

and the whole joyful team of ***Music for Life and for a Better World***

P.S.: Pierre has just told me that his struggle will end on Monday, New Year's Day, the 40th day of action... He will be hospitalized on Tuesday for medical follow-up towards nutrition.

What a joy and relief to know that he was liberated and, on his way to back to life!

Pierre reasonably and wisely relied on the doctors' advice. He seems happy to regain his physical strength, some autonomy and feeling less vulnerable.

THE FEET: COMPETITION.



Who owns these feet?

Those who find the correct answer (if possible send before 31st December 2024 to salamnordpasdecals@gmail.com) and win a free one-year subscription to this newsletter for 2025.

A LITTLE CHRISTMAS TALE: SESAME HOUSE.



The distribution of a breakfast with Salam, with
"Yolaine the marvellous" at the helm,
Friday morning, in Calais, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.,
Serve 1,200

We, a few Sésami e s and Emmaus Thouars
Let's meet a small couple
In this habitat...

This morning, 24th December 2023,
A spare room in Sesame
We go to Calais to offer them a little respite.

Surprise!
He is Egyptian, has been "travelling" for 4 years.
She is... French, barely 18 years old,

They're in love
They're on their own
But "together"!
They accept the adventure of a "stop-over"
and they are being taken on board!
They trust...
And smile!
They are happy. How beautiful they are!
Pack their bag: two small bags.



"I discovered the associations that take care of us and give us food.
It's unbelievable!
The watering hole on the jungle is good, but it's too cold to wash.
I'm a woman, refugees are too nice to me. »

"At night,
That's terrible,
We don't sleep.
The howling wind is a constant reminder of the precariousness of "our living spaces and our lives".
Arrival at the house,
They're worried,
Lots of people,
Babies, an association that came to celebrate Christmas with the children,

Then...
A meal at the table
An open cloakroom
A shower
One bedroom
They relax.

Come on
Sweet Home
Tonight, the stars will watch over all your inhabitants.
And we...
We will try not to think of all those who are facing the storm.

Merry Christmas SESAME HOUSE
Text and photos: The Sesami

HAPPY NEW YEAR?

This year, I don't want to wish "Happy New Year". These three words seem so meaningless to me... Happy New Year? and a healthy friend suddenly falls ill and is left disabled... Happy New Year? And so many people tear each other apart instead of working together... Happy New Year? And a war breaks out, conflicts multiply, the poverty rates increase, violence is more and more present...

Happy New Year? and species continue to disappear and the planet to be overexploited...

No, really, this year, I want something else!

I'd rather wish "Merry Christmas" for the whole year!

Christmas, but not in the sense of a celebration of overconsumption and the reign of ephemeral and useless tinsel! No!

Christmas, in the sense of the "first Christmas"... when an unconditional welcome becomes possible, when an infinitely great love becomes very close to us, even when it is neither the right time, nor the right place...

Christmas, when peace, joy, love, hope are brought together...

Christmas, when a light, tiny and fragile, shines bright enough to warm and illuminate all our nights and our darkness...

So, this year, I wish you, us, each and everyone of you, a Merry Christmas! Let this little light shine in all our darkness, let it shine for you, through you and around you!

Myriam Moyen, Vice-President of the Regional Council of the EPUF (United Protestant Church of France).

"Regional post", taken from the magazine "Réveil", regional Protestant magazine Centre-Alpes-Rhône, n° 568, January 2024.

THANK YOU



THANK YOU TO THE VOLUNTEERS:

Christmas volunteers: those who drop by, once or from time to time, but without whom meals at this time of year would have been very difficult to provide.

- Adèle and Alice, Saturday, 2nd December,
- Inès (friend of our Thursday Clara), 7th December,
- Mamadou, who accompanied Marie on 12th December,
- Renaud, back from Nantes as he does every year, with additional help from his family on 25th and 26th December.
- Audrey on 26th, 28th and 30th December,
- Chantal on 28th December.

Young people in a training program:

- Two interns from Sciences-Po, to strengthen the Calais team every weekend from the beginning of November to the end of December.
- Juciara and Blanche, sent by AFEJI to Grande-Synthe every Thursday, and immediately integrated into the team.
- Abdulkarim, a middle school student, for a week-long discovery internship, under the tutelage of Marie.

Those who have worked overtime,

- Gaby, who came on 5th December to strengthen a very feminine team.
- Those on 25th December (Gaby, Renaud and their relatives, Claudine and Amélie...) who came to lend a hand to the Christmas Day distribution with the promise of being released very soon after a distribution without dishes: we were expecting an arrival of trays of hot dishes from Calais, and they were expected by relatives for the Christmas meal... At 3:30 p.m., still nothing. The Salam team abandoned the post, leaving Help4 Dunkerque to ensure the distribution of the meal if it finally arrived...

Those who do the shopping:

Denise, who placed an order for pasta and canned goods from Supermarket Auchan, and those who assisted her in unloading.



Those who bake cakes at home (Elisabeth and Josette) to improve the ordinary.

Let us salute the friendly cooperation, on 2nd December, between the Saturday team and a lady, who, from the window of her office in Loon-Plage, spotted a very young exile who had to be saved from the cold and despair.

I quickly received a text message from Valérie: "Mission accomplished.

He's a very young, cold-blooded Sudanese who doesn't speak English.

He has dry clothes.

We dropped him off at the camp. Brahim did the translation over the phone to explain.

The lady had given him cookies and hot chocolate. »

Best to her, who had contacted me on the phone...



And of course, those who prepare, distribute, wash up, week after week with the greatest discretion...



Special mention for those who have embarked on new tasks. Could this be the beginning of a career change?

- Thierry "in trouble", who has become a "mitron",

- Ghislaine, owner of a chip shop.



THANK YOU TO THOSE, KNOWN OR UNKNOWN, WHO GAVE GIFTS FOR OUR EXILED FRIENDS:

Tote packages:

- A new delivery of several boxes from Jean-Guillaume de Reims, arrived by Mondial Relay. As always, space is used efficiently (the tube of cups placed on the side of the towels, for example), and a parcel of (small) gifts for the little ones had obviously been put together with the greatest care and a lot of tenderness.
- Brigitte and Jean-Noël de Templeuve, regular donors, came twice a month (on the 2nd and 14th) with warm clothes, foodstuffs (boxes of vegetables, pasta, rice, flour...) and even packs of tarpaulins.

Food gifts:

- The lady who called Jean-Claude, at the end of a Christmas market on Sunday evening, 17th December, to pick up what was left of the unsold buns.
- The baker from Deep Flanders who didn't want her Christmas cakes to go to pigs and chickens and went to great lengths to get someone from our country to pick them up. Thanks to Anne-Marie who made the connection.
- Guillaume, a baker friend of Thierry's, who made about sixty loaves of organic flour with natural sourdough, deposited on the evening of 29th December in the Salle Guérin for the refugees.



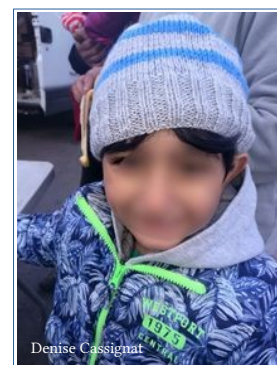
Textiles:

- Benoosh, from the Paris region, who sent a large bag of clothes by Mondial Relay, picked up on 7th December.
- Also on the 7th, Amélie, whom we had not met before, arrived with men's clothes.
- the daughter of Michel Candat (president of the MRAP at the time) and her husband, who came with clothes on 14th December. It was an emotional moment to talk about Michel, his energy and efficiency.
- One of my neighbours who was emptying the house of a deceased lady and rang my doorbell to offer several duvets and blankets on 27th December.
- On 28th December, a lady and her husband dropped off clothes, and another lady brought blankets.

Thank you, to the grannies who knit hats.

José continues to pick up a shopping bag about once a month at the "Val des Roses" in Dunkirk.

Régine, a courageous volunteer who regularly comes from Lille, also knits as well as two of her friends, to the delight of our friends, young and old.





A supply of wood:

On 12th December, Bart, Philippe's friend, was once again in Loon-Plage with a truck full of wood for the exiles:



Hygiene products:

From Marie-Ange D., a new donation of shampoos, creams and small bags (filled with skincare products) for Christmas, 17th December.

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED US ON BEHALF OF A COMPANY OR AN ASSOCIATION THAT IS FRIENDLY OR IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING ONE...

Thank you to Secours Populaire/Copains du Monde, Christian Hogard, Caroline and their team. Without them, we wouldn't be able to make it!

The committee of Coudekerque Branche, 2nd December:

Message from Christian Hogard: "Very, very nice action by our Friends of the Secours Populaire de Coudekerque-Branche committee this afternoon. Nicolas TANCREZ, the secretary general, came with a truck full of blankets and warm clothes... As soon as they were settled, as soon as they left in the direction of Calais to our Friends of Salam to urgently hand them over to the vulnerable victims in addition to the aggressions of the cold... Thank you Nicolas and the friends of the Secours Populaire de Coudekerque-Branche committee. Good night. Fraternal friendships and, above all, solidarity. Christian Hogard.



*Not a week goes by without bread and pastries being delivered by them.
Salam's 9th December acknowledgments:*

"Last week, breads and pastries continued to flow to Salam's premises in Calais, where the Copains du Monde are always eagerly awaited, as the population of the camps is in demand and deprived of everything. And precisely, as it is lacking everything, the Secours Populaire truck arrived at the end of the week, full of blankets, clothes, and even, supreme luxury, shoes!

Thank you to our Copains du Monde, thank you to Christian and Caroline for their constant help. On behalf of Salam, thank you so much! »

And those of 17th December:

"The target of 1,000 breakfasts distributed by the Salam team in Calais has once again been exceeded: 1,020! Luckily our friends (from the World) were there and had brought us twice at the end of the week a very large quantity of bread and pastries. Otherwise, we wouldn't have got away with it!

Thanks to them...

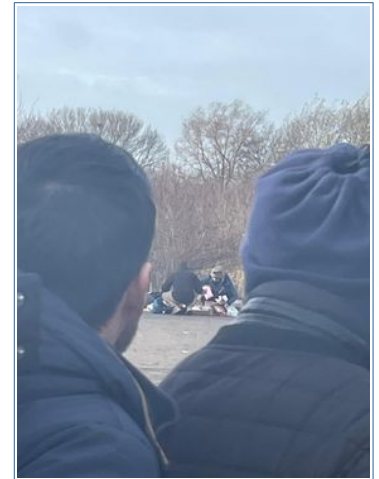
Thank you Christian, thank you Caro, thank you to the Secours Populaire / Copains du Monde team... For Team Salam and their band of hungry people. »

And of course, like every year, Green Santa Claus visited the camps of Calais and Loon-Plage on 28th December.

A message on Whatsapp, the same evening:

"At dawn, there was an almost general mobilization for the Secours Populaire Français. A large delegation from the Friends of Roubaix came to lend a hand to the friends of the solidarity shop and the Copains du Monde de Loon-Plage... With the participation of the committee of the Banks of the Aa and our friend Jean-Louis Callens of the federation of the North... as well as our friend Damien, priest of Loon-Plage.

Hundreds and hundreds of gifts and products of all kinds were distributed: no less than 12 pallets between Calais and Loon-Plage.



Thank you very much to our friends from Adra and Salam who were kind enough to accept us working with them for these distributions... Green Santa Claus has fulfilled his mission to the fullest.



"When fraternity meets humanism... We feel a better world...
Happy Holidays!
Fraternal friendships and, above all, solidarity -

Christian Hogard (text and photos) »

Thank you, also to the Secours Populaire de Guérande, who gave us clothes brought by Jocelyne, the mother of Julie, a pillar of the Saturday team.
Great happiness to meet her mother!

Thank you once again to Onjali and his association "O's Refugee Aid Team" who have been offering us a large food fund every month for a year now.



(Onjali is the lady in blue, on the right in the photo)

And on the 21st, Onjali came in person, accompanied by Farah, Souleymane and Caroline, with a few surprises for Salam's volunteers.
They were a great help in the preparation, thanks again to them!

Thank you to the churches that once again called on parishioners for clothing and textile donations:

- The small chapel of Notre-Dame des Dunes in Dunkirk who provide blankets.
- The church of Bergues that has been collecting for us since Lent:

This month, a good number of bags and cartons of warm clothes and blankets.

A special thank you to Brigitte, who is very sensitive to the distress of our friends, who calls me when the dedicated box fills up and who has come several times to drop off her donations at my place to save me a trip.

Thank you to the children of the Grande-Synthe catechism, who by way of seeing our Saturday morning team at work wanted to give them their support, on 9th December, with a dance "for the love of God", a group photo mixing our two teams and a pack of greeting cards made by them.





Thank you to our sister association FTS in Bailleul.

Every week they provide breakfast in Calais.
On Tuesday 19th, there were four of them to support the distribution team of Grande-Synthe. They also brought blankets, warm clothes, sweaters, coats and some products.

Thank you to the Red Cross of Armentières who sent us Francisco hygiene kits. Thanks also to Francisco...

Thank you to the representatives of several Emmaus communities,
Those of Niort (the day after the big evacuation of 30th November), those of Deux Sèvres (22nd December) and those of Brittany (who also remained for the first days of January).
All the material, brought with them, contributed to the warmth inside and outside of our exiled friends.

Thanks to the town hall of Eperlecques, to Mr. The Mayor and the City Council, for a donation of clothing, the result of a collection.
Thanks to Brigitte and Alain D. who acted as coordinators.

Thanks to Help 4 Dunkerque: present every day at the Loon-Plage distribution site, they are always willing when we need a hand, especially to manage a disorderly queue during the distribution of our meals.

Thank you to the CER in Paris, who sent young people with their educators to help with the distribution of breakfast in Calais on 30th and 31st December.

Thanks to "Bonjour Désordre", the smallest chip shop in the world, which I'm saving for last because for the second year in a row we finished with them the calendar year:

Arnaud began his report of the day as follows:

"This morning's team had a lot of money.

"Bonjour Désordre" has put oil in the wheels.

Potato and oil... enough to make at least 300 portions of fries in a joyful, friendly and relaxed atmosphere... nothing but happiness. »

They came to 18, if you count the youngest, Riem, who is now a year and a half old.

They arrived in Dunkirk the day before to peel 275 kg of potatoes...

They also brought 30 litres of sauces, about 400 cones, 80 litres of water and 6 litres of syrup.

The week before, December 23rd, César (in charge of this superb team) had dumped a van full of textile donations in the basement that they sorted on Saturday the 30th... Appointment is made for December 31st, 2024. It's becoming a tradition, a beautiful one!



AND FINALLY, THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED MONEY TO US,
without which we would not be able to maintain the vans, put diesel in the tanks, pay for the water and electricity used in our premises, replace the gas cylinders...
Thank you to everyone (close friends and strangers) who slipped us a note, sent a check, made a transfer directly or by Helloasso.

This month:

the smallest gift, very original and which could serve as an example for others: that of Ursula who decided to offer her relatives a membership to Salam for Christmas.

A cash donation targeted "cuisine pour Grande-Synthe" was given to us by Nabeel and Zaynah, to celebrate the birth of their baby Adam.

The money is already spent!

The collection of the first Sunday of Advent at the church of Saint Jacques de Grande-Synthe was paid to Salam. Gillette had spoken just before the collection, a few minutes, at the time of the homily, to talk about the conditions of survival in the camps and about our work.

On 11th December we received this message from Céline:

"Last year, with the fire of the unitary scouts of France of Dunkirk, we participated in one of the meal distributions on a Saturday and your association touched us a lot.

After several years in Scouting, we have made other commitments this year.

However, we have decided to send you the rest of our cash. »

A gift that touches us enormously!

Renaud is a hospital doctor in Nantes. For Christmas, all hospital employees receive gift vouchers, which doctors leave at the bottom of a drawer.

For several years, he has been collecting these vouchers from his colleagues, using them to buy groceries and giving Salam a cheque for the money he saved... A very big cheque this year.

This donation could also serve as an example...

Médecins Sans Frontières has just offered us a nice subsidy to help finance breakfasts in Calais...

THANK YOU to the diocesan association of Lille which, through the parish of Grande-Synthe, has been making the premises of the Guérin room available free of charge for about fifteen years.

THANK YOU to Michel who has been in charge of the layout of this newsletter, without fail, for years,

to Chris who translates it into English, month after month, for our website,

to Antoine, who has also been managing the Facebook Page since 2017,

and to Guillaume who introduced us to the LinkedIn network almost two years ago.

Claire Millot.

OUR NEEDS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Dunkirk:

We need people on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from the beginning of the food preparation chores (8 a.m.) to the end of the dishes (between 2 and 4 p.m.). In between, we distribute the meal.

Call Claire (06 34 62 68 71). From outside France 00 33 6 34 62 68 71

Calais:

Salam continues to distribute improved breakfasts every morning with tea and coffee.
But we are sorely lacking in volunteers, especially those with driver's licenses:
Meet at 8 a.m. at the premises, 13 rue des Fontinettes.

Call Yolaine at 06.83.16.31.61. From outside France 00 33 6 83.16.31.61

CALL FOR DONATIONS**MONEY NEEDS.**

Without state subsidies and with a very significant reduction in subsidies from local and regional authorities, we still need money to keep the association's work going:
Maintenance of premises and vans, fuel, purchase of food that is in short supply...

Go to the association's website: www.associationsalam.org
Section: "Support us"

Go through HELLOASSO:
<https://www.helloasso.com/associations/salam-nord-pas-de-calais/formulaires/2/widget>

or simply send a cheque to:
Association Salam
BP 47
62100 CALAIS

You are entitled to a 66% tax reduction on these donations, in cash by one of our volunteers, by cheque made out to SALAM, or by bank transfer (direct or by Helloasso) (please check your local tax laws)

A big thank you to all our generous donors!

TENTS AND TARPAULINS!

From dismantling to dismantling, the tents are removed at both sites, and we are unable to replace them.
Many people sleep with nothing on them, in all weathers.
But we hesitate to suggest that you buy one: the life expectancy of a tent is a few days...
On the other hand, tarpaulins, pieces of 3 m by 3 m (or 2.50 m by 3 m), cost much less and allow an honest man to spend a night in shelter.

Otherwise, the most pressing needs at both sites:
BLANKETS (DUVETS, SLEEPING BAGS).

hygiene products (shampoo, shower gel, deodorant, sunscreen, etc.), especially razors,
towels,

men's clothing from XS to XL: underpants, long underpants and thermal leggings and thermal sweaters,
socks, jogging pants, jeans, shorts, t-shirts,
SHOES for men: trainers or light hiking shoes (sizes 40 to 46), sandals, caps.

backpacks,
lamps and batteries,
water packs,
Bags (small backpacks, rubbish bags, freezer bags, shopping bags and plastic bags)

Foodstuffs for Calais:

JAM,
Milk
tea and sugar, instant coffee,
biscuits (or pastries, or cake bars or pound cakes etc...)

To drop off your donations, go to 13 rue des Fontinettes, and call 06 83 16 31 61. From outside France 00 33 6 83.16.31.61

And for Grande-Synthe:

Mostly canned vegetables of all kinds (we have been getting a lot less fresh items lately),
bags of pulses,

Drop off your donations in the Salle Guérin, rue Alphonse Daudet, behind the church of St Jacques on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m..

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The membership form for 2024 is attached to this mailing.

If you are not yet a member, please do not hesitate to join us.

Whether you are an active volunteer or not, becoming a member gives the association the strength to the union! We were more than 250 members in 2023, help us to exceed the 300 threshold.

CONTACT US

<http://www.associationsalam.org>

salamnordpasdecalais@gmail.com

Facebook page: [SALAM Nord/Pas-de-Calais](#)

And the new LinkedIn page, which can be consulted on the following link :

www.linkedin.com/in/association-salam-nord-pas-de-calais

Association SALAM
BP 47
62100 CALAIS

Association SALAM,
Salle Guérin, Quartier St Jacques,
1, rue Alphonse Daudet,
59760 Grande-Synthe

Bulletin d'adhésion 2024



Principaux objectifs de SALAM :

- Apporter une aide humanitaire aux migrants (soins, hygiène, nourriture, vêtements...)
- Accompagner les migrants dans leur demande d'asile
- Informer et sensibiliser l'opinion publique sur la situation des migrants du littoral Côte d'Opale
- Combattre toutes les formes de racisme et de discrimination
- Agir dans les pays en difficulté
- Soutenir juridiquement les membres de l'association

Merci de remplir le bulletin ci-dessous et de le renvoyer à l'adresse suivante :

Association SALAM-Nord/Pas-de-Calais

BP 47

62100 CALAIS

Monsieur/Madame : _____ Prénom _____

Adresse _____

Code postal _____ Ville _____ Pays _____

Téléphone _____ E mail _____

☐ J'adhère à l'association en versant la somme de 10 €.

(5 € pour les étudiants et demandeurs d'emploi , adhésion valable jusqu'au 31/12/2024)

Date et signature :

☐ Je fais un don* à l'association Salam en versant la somme de : _____

**Par chèque à l'ordre de l'association Salam. Un reçu fiscal vous sera adressé*

☐ Je souhaite recevoir davantage d'informations sur l'association Salam.