



**REFUGEE RIGHTS  
EUROPE**

# **STILL ON THE STREETS**

**DOCUMENTING THE SITUATION FOR REFUGEES  
AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN PARIS, FRANCE**





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

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# INTRODUCTION

The research findings outlined in this report follow on from Refugee Rights Europe's study relating to the situation in Paris in January 2017.

One year on from our pilot study, the situation remains critical for refugees and displaced people sleeping on the streets of Paris. Despite

promises from President Macron to get refugees "off the streets, out of the woods" by the end of 2017 and the continued eviction of makeshift settlements in Paris, Refugee Rights Europe's research shows that a large number are still sleeping on the streets of the city.

Organisations on the ground are working tirelessly to provide basic humanitarian

**IT APPEARS THAT THE STATE RESPONSE CONTINUES TO LEAVE VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS IN INHUMANE AND SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS.**

aid to refugees and displaced people, including food and clothing. However, it appears that the state response continues to leave vulnerable individuals in inhumane and substandard conditions, facing freezing temperatures, inadequate shelter and a striking lack of access to information on European asylum law and immigration rules.



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

Moreover, the research indicates that police violence continues to be an issue for displaced people in the area, with refugees subject to tear gas on a regular basis and forced to move from where they are sleeping, without being given an alternative.

The situation is particularly critical in light of the number of unaccompanied minors still living on the streets of Paris. Minors reported being refused appropriate and transparent age assessments, while many who had been deemed underage remain on the streets due to a lack of accommodation. Such information was corroborated by aid organisations operating in Paris.

The lack of accommodation for displaced people, including many unaccompanied minors, remains particularly concerning in light of Macron's recent proposals, due to be put forward as part of a new migration and asylum bill in February. Currently, the bill contains a

**THE STUDY IS BASED ON A SURVEY OF 283 INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGES, OR APPROXIMATELY 10% OF THE ESTIMATED 2950 REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE**

number of proposals designed to 'toughen' migration law and accelerate deportations. It is also alarming that, in December 2017, the French interior minister Gerard Collomb authorised regional authorities to conduct ID checks in emergency accommodation centres - a move that aid organisations are concerned is likely to increase destitution amongst the displaced population who may be afraid to take up available accommodation.

In order to further investigate the situation facing refugees and displaced people in the area, Refugee Rights Europe conducted research in Paris between 27 and 30 January 2018. The study is based on a survey of 283 individuals in their native languages, or approximately 10% of the estimated 2950 refugees and displaced people thought to be sleeping rough in the streets of Paris at the time of the study. Among those interviewed were 58 children - or 5.8% of the research sample. As a result, this is one of the largest independent studies to be conducted with refugees and displaced people on the streets of Paris.

# METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of our first-hand research is to provide policymakers, advocacy groups and the general public with a clear insight into the human rights infringements and unsustainable conditions faced by refugees and displaced people within European borders.

In contrast to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) who are responsible for demographic data collection in many of the state-run camps across Europe, our data and research are independently collected, with the aim of prompting policy development rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The research presented in this report was collected in Paris from 27 to 30 January 2018. Over this period, Refugee Rights Europe's researchers conducted 283 surveys in English, Amharic, Arabic, Pashto, Persian and Tigrinya. The format was semi-structured and captured the lived experience of individuals ranging in age from 14 to 52. The large majority of respondents were men and boys, with only one woman being interviewed, as those were the demographic groups visible and accessible in the streets of Paris at the time of the study.

Each member of the research team had field experience of working with refugees and displaced people or similar groups. The researchers were recruited from Refugee Rights Europe's pool of researchers and included native speakers of all key languages. The study was guided by ethical checklists that were underpinned by data protection policies, child safeguarding policies and a robust risk register to ensure the security and dignity of all participants. Researchers were expected to observe strict adherence to all Refugee Rights Europe's data protection policies, referral policies, child safeguarding and principles of full and informed consent.

Wherever possible, Refugee Rights Europe adopts a methodology of random selection - using stratification and continuously monitoring the breakdown of demographic groups within the sample throughout its

research studies, to ensure that the final data is representative of a given situation. Given the volatility of the situation in Paris, and the absence of any form of camp or stable living locations, it was necessary for us to be flexible in our approach. Rather than applying stratification and random selection, we surveyed as many individuals as possible through so-called snowball sampling. This took place across different research locations in the city - many of which were used as distribution points for food, clothing and/or other forms of support, or in locations where displaced people had set up tents, including under bridges and along the riverbank. As a result, selection bias could not always be avoided, and we were at times unable to steer the sample and stratification as much as we would ideally have liked.

There is uncertainty about the exact population of displaced people in Paris since it is in constant flux. This means it is not possible to determine exactly how large a sample we obtained, and how representative it is of the demographic groups in the area. However, based on approximate figures available, we estimate having surveyed approximately 10% of individuals sleeping rough in the streets of Paris at the time of the study. This allows us to present a number of useful insights into the current situation on the ground in Paris, in early 2018.



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

# ARTICLE ONE

**ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS. THEY ARE ENDOWED WITH REASON AND CONSCIENCE AND SHOULD ACT TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD.**

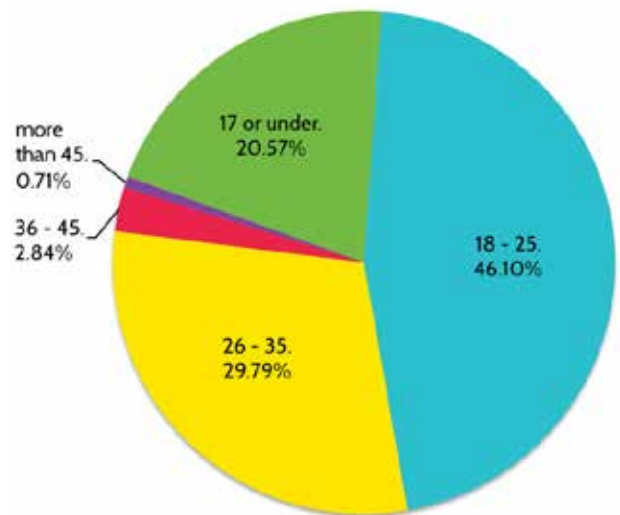
## ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

A total of 283 respondents took part in the study. Almost all of the respondents were men or boys, with only one woman being surveyed. 20.6% of the respondents said they were minors (aged 17 and under), with the youngest respondents as young as 14-years-old.

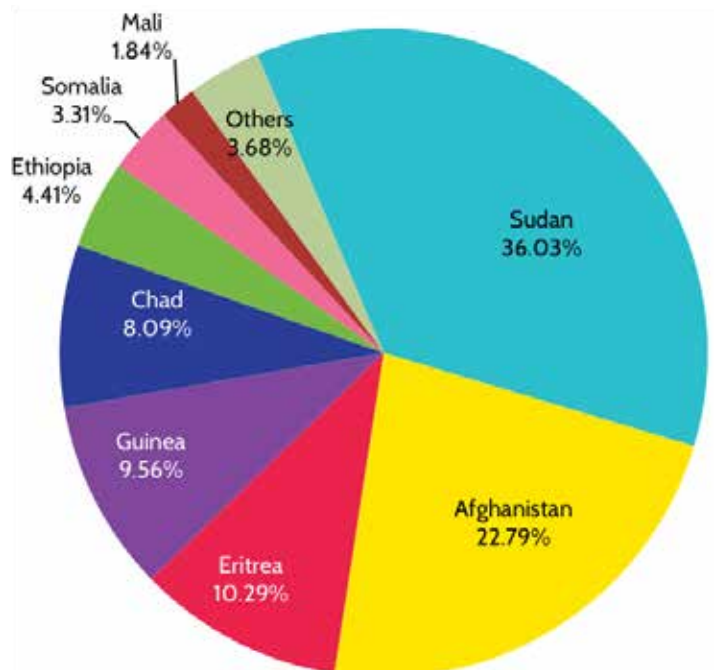
35.2% of respondents were from Sudan, followed by 22.1% from Afghanistan, 10% from Eritrea, and 9.3% from Guinea. Some 7.8% of respondents reported being from Chad, while Ethiopia (4.27%), Somalia (3.20%) and Mali (1.78%) were also represented in the sample. Other nationalities (6.41%) included respondents from Yemen, Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq, Libya, Morocco and Senegal, as well as a smaller number from Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. While we were unable to access any official figures relating to the demographic break-down of the displaced people in Paris at the time of the study, we believe our sample is nonetheless relatively representative of the demographic composition, based on conversations with local organisations and based on our overarching observations.

85.9% of those surveyed said they were in Paris alone, with 10.6% responding they were with friends and only 3.5% with family.

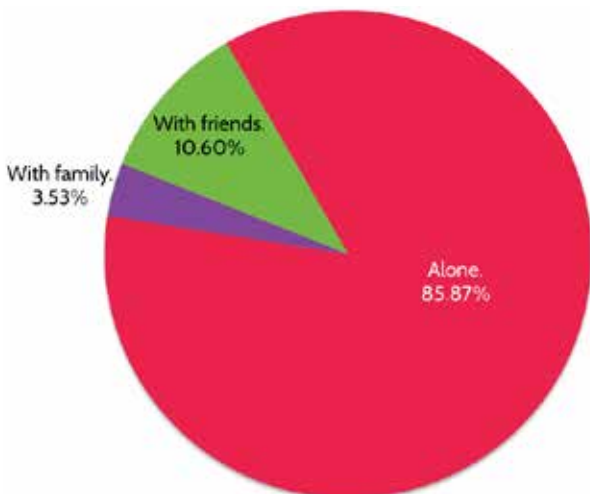
### HOW OLD ARE YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS



### WHERE ARE YOU FROM? ALL RESPONDENTS



### WITH WHOM ARE YOU IN PARIS? ALL RESPONDENTS

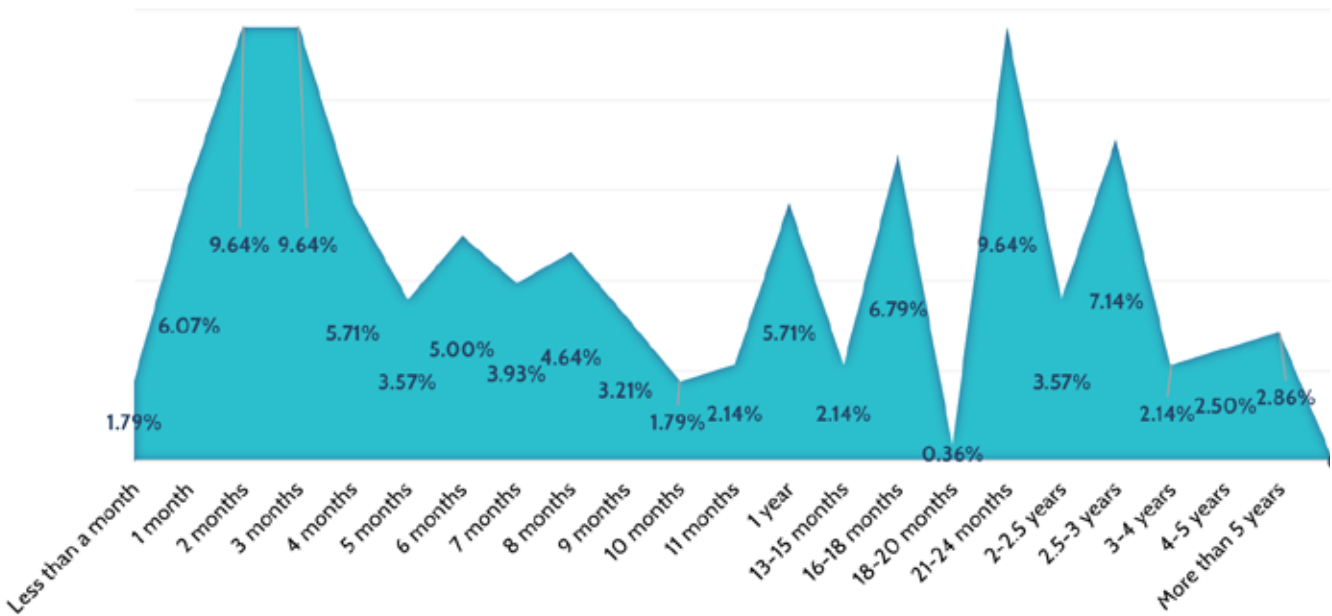




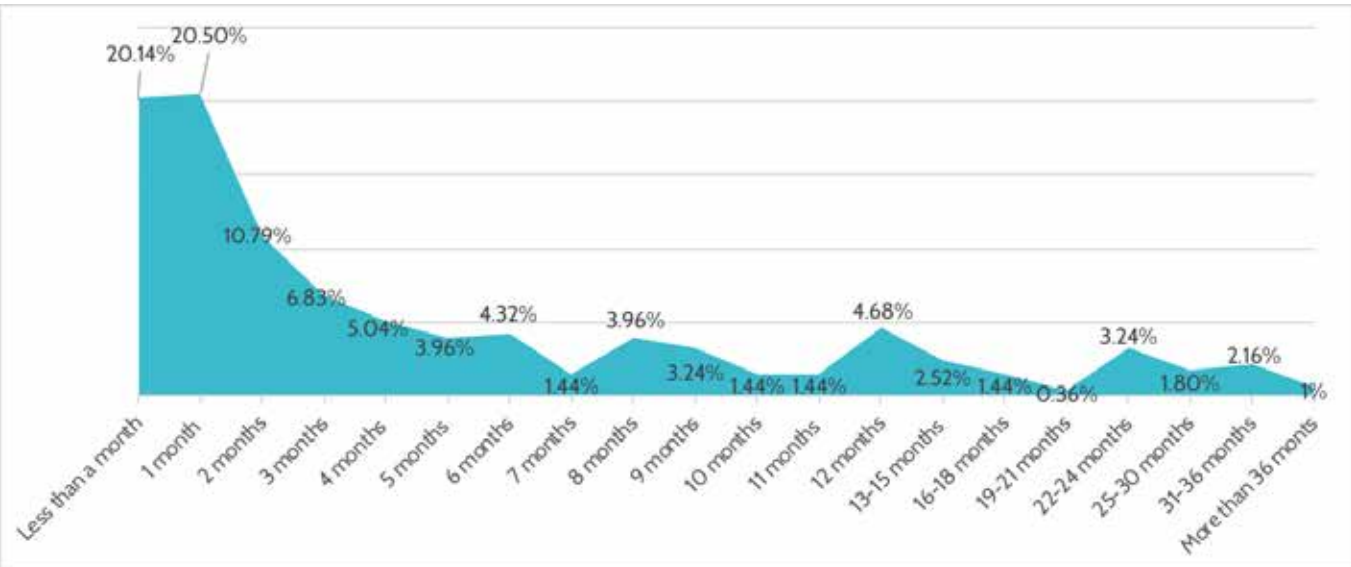
LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN DISPLACEMENT

Many respondents had spent extended periods of time in displacement, with 63.6% having been in Europe for six months or longer. 18.2% had been in Europe for two years to more than five years. 32.7% had been in France for six months or longer.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN EUROPE?  
ALL RESPONDENTS



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN FRANCE?  
ALL RESPONDENTS



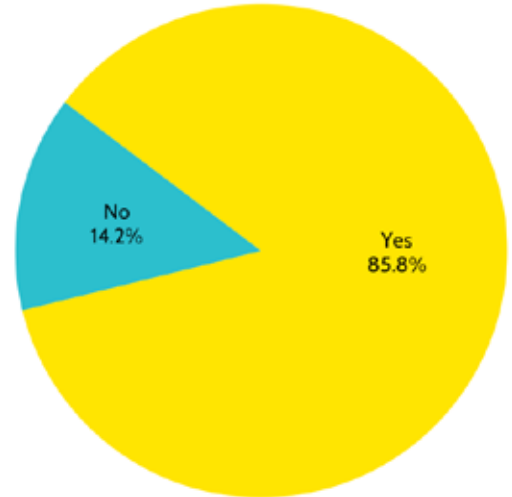
85.8% of respondents had been in another European country before arriving in France.

## A NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT HAVING THEIR FINGERPRINTS TAKEN IN ITALY,

Of the above, 69.8% had been in Italy before their arrival in France, with a number of respondents reporting they had previously been in the French-Italian border town of Ventimiglia. This is particularly alarming in light of Refugee Rights Europe's research in Ventimiglia in August 2017, which found that 40.4% of respondents had been subject to violence by Italian police, while 53.1% had experienced violence by French police. This included a number of unaccompanied minors who reported what would appear to be illegal pushbacks from the French border. A number of respondents also expressed concern about having their fingerprints taken in Italy, with one young man from Guinea telling researchers, "I thank Italy so much for saving me from the sea. But after you give fingerprints they cannot help you anymore and life is too difficult there when you are a newcomer from Africa."

### WERE YOU IN ANOTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRY BEFORE?

ALL RESPONDENTS



### DID YOU APPLY FOR ASYLUM THERE?

ALL RESPONDENTS



12.8% of respondents had also previously spent time in Germany before coming to France, 6.6% in Spain, 5% in Sweden and 4.5% in Greece. Indeed, researchers noted that a large number of refugees and displaced people in the area had spent extended periods of time in another European country before their arrival in France. Of all respondents, 35.7% had previously applied for asylum in another European country, though it is not clear whether these were rejected or they had left before a decision was made - either due to a fear of rejection or due to the difficult circumstances in which they found themselves during the waiting period.

## A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE AREA HAD SPENT EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME IN ANOTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRY BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL IN FRANCE.

Researchers noted this was especially prevalent among the Afghan community, with one young man explaining that he had come to Paris to try to reach the UK after fearing deportation from Norway: "The police look for you on the street and then you go to jail and [get] deported. I was in jail for a month. Here the police are not so bad. My friend was deported to Kabul trying to get here."



# ARTICLE THREE

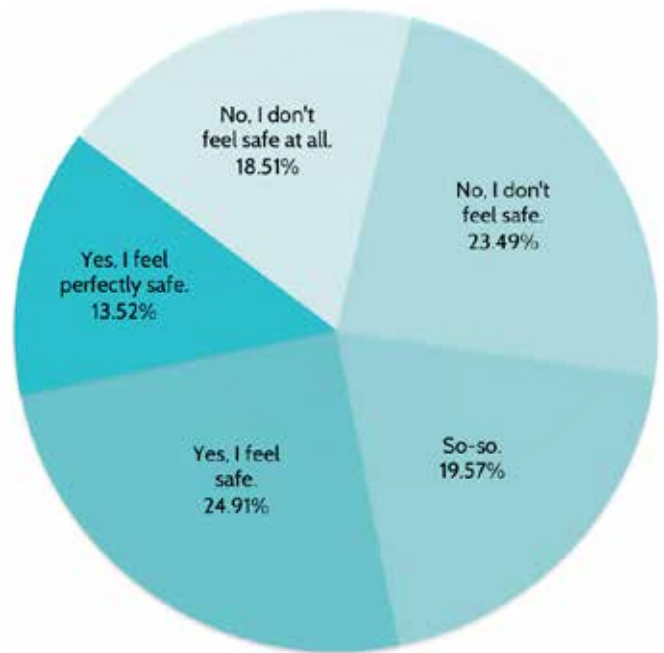
## EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY

Worryingly, a whole 42% of respondents told researchers they 'don't feel safe' or 'don't feel safe at all'. One young Afghan man explained: *"I feel so alone in Europe. I have to move on all the time. There is nowhere safe for me".*

Reasons cited for feeling unsafe often included the precarious living situation on the streets of Paris as well as police violence, including tear gas. Respondents also cited having experienced citizen violence while residing in Paris.

#### DO YOU FEEL SAFE IN FRANCE? ALL RESPONDENTS

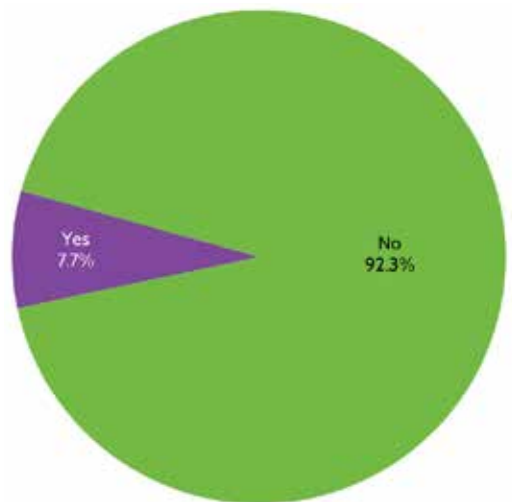


**"I FEEL SO ALONE IN EUROPE. I HAVE TO MOVE ON ALL THE TIME. THERE IS NOWHERE SAFE FOR ME."**

Afghan Man



#### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE BY CITIZENS IN PARIS? ALL RESPONDENTS



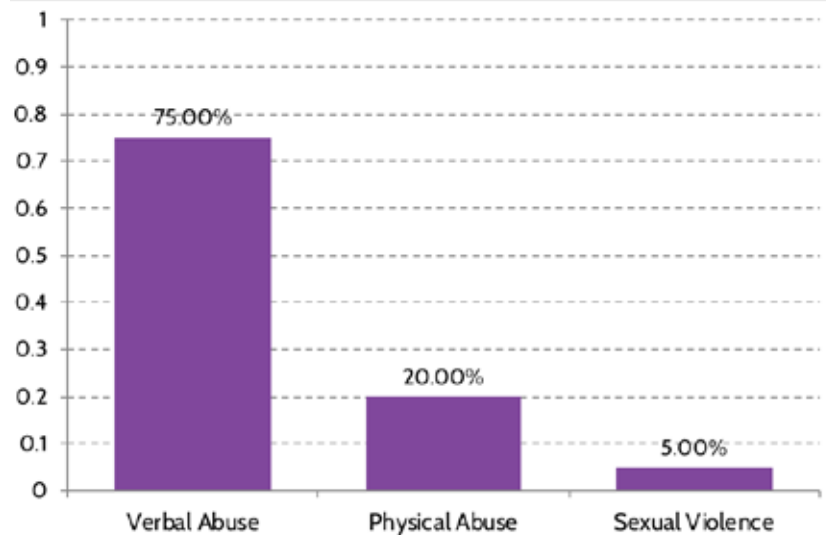
Of these individuals, 75% stated that they had experienced verbal abuse by French citizens, which often took the form of racial abuse. One 29-year-old from Sudan told researchers: *“They [citizens] told me, ‘You can’t be here, you make it dirty here. This place is full of you and we are fed up.’”* Another 20-year-old man from Guinea explained: *“They speak to me badly sometimes but they are not violent”.*

Meanwhile, 20% of respondents said they had been subject to physical violence by citizens. Alarming, 5% stated that they had experienced sexual violence from French citizens, but did not wish to give researchers any further details.

**“THEY [CITIZENS] TOLD ME, ‘YOU CAN’T BE HERE, YOU MAKE IT DIRTY HERE. THIS PLACE IS FULL OF YOU AND WE ARE FED UP.’”**

29-year-old man, Sudan

**WHAT TYPE OF CITIZEN VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN PARIS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

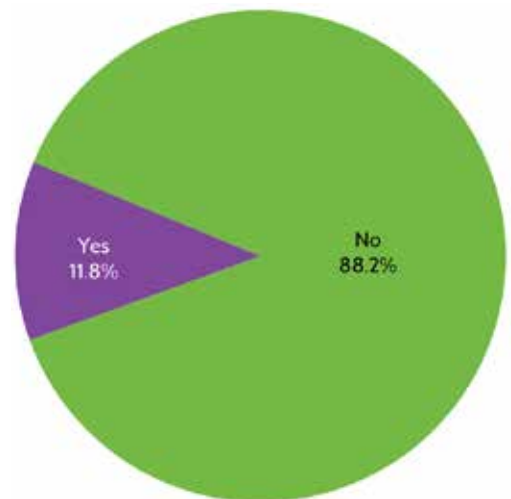


**HAVE YOU WITNESSED A REFUGEE DIE WHILE IN PARIS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

A worrying 11.8% of respondents had witnessed a refugee die while in Paris. One 29-year-old man from Afghanistan told us: *“I have known many people who died here. They killed themselves. It is because of the bad life here”.* Another group of men said that they had witnessed a refugee die ten days ago after throwing himself into the river while he was drunk.

**“I HAVE KNOWN MANY PEOPLE WHO DIED HERE. THEY KILLED THEMSELVES. IT IS BECAUSE OF THE BAD LIFE HERE.”**

29-year-old man, Afghanistan





# ARTICLE FIVE

## NO ONE SHALL BE SUBJECTED TO TORTURE OR TO CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

### POLICE TREATMENT

During our research in Paris, 33.8% of respondents said they had experienced police violence. Of these, 86% had experienced tear gas, 28% verbal abuse, while 20.4% reported physical abuse.

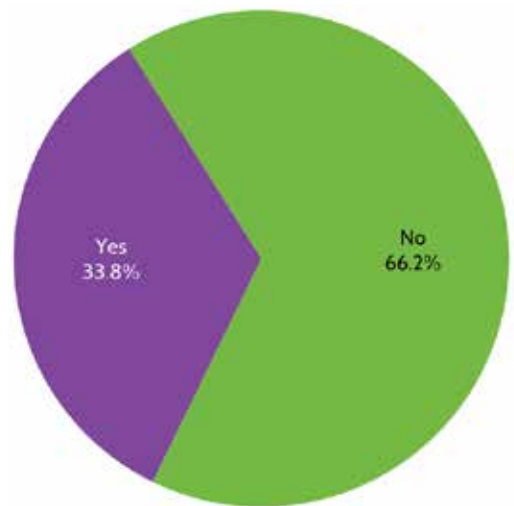
While the levels of police violence are significantly lower than reported in Refugee Rights Europe's previous studies in Calais, the use of tear gas appears highly prevalent against refugees and displaced people in Paris. Respondents reported that police would spray tear gas into their tents at night while they were sleeping, while others explained how police had destroyed their tents.

#### THE USE OF TEAR GAS APPEARS HIGHLY PREVALENT AGAINST REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN PARIS.

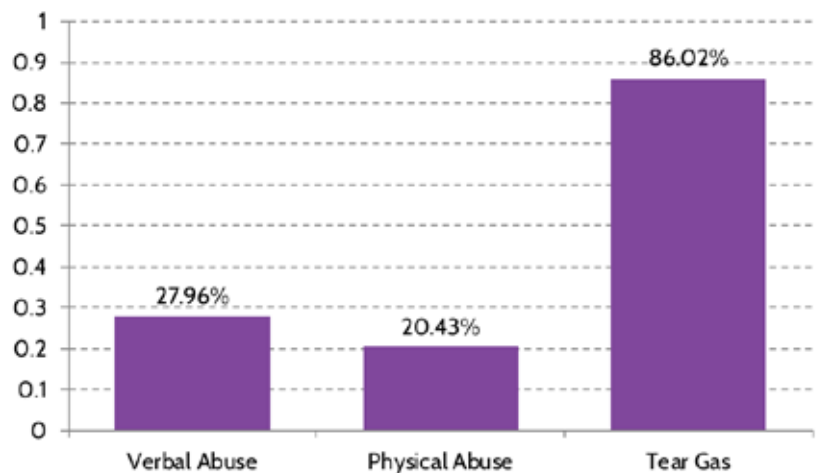
One man from Guinea told researchers: "The police often come in the night, open the tent when I am sleeping and spray tear gas in my tent and face. I wake up and feel like I am suffocating, it is a feeling of panic". A young Afghan man added: "They come all the time and spray the tents - clean up the streets and then we come back again". Sometimes, the police would visit when there was no one in the tents and remove them, with all their belongings inside.

Often, it would appear that the use of tear gas is utilised as an intimidation tactic in order to force displaced people move from the area. 63.3% of respondents reported that they had been told by police to move from where they were sleeping. Of these, nearly half (49.1%) described this incident as 'violent', while 33.7% said it was 'OK'.

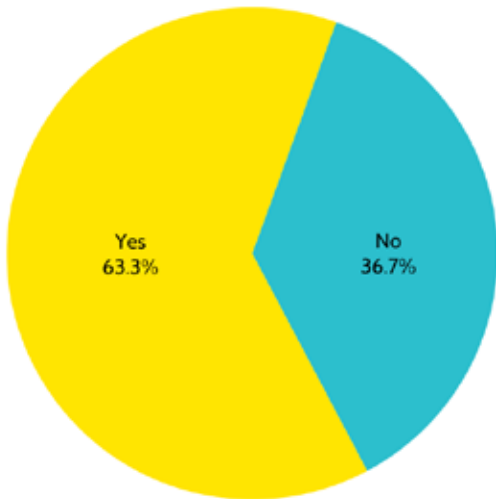
#### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF POLICE VIOLENCE IN PARIS? ALL RESPONDENTS



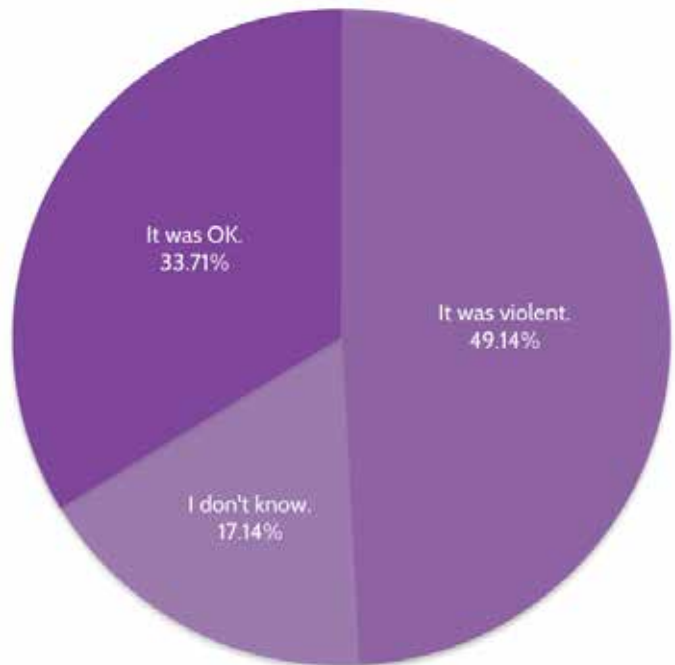
#### WHAT KIND OF POLICE VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN PARIS? ALL RESPONDENTS



**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TOLD BY POLICE TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

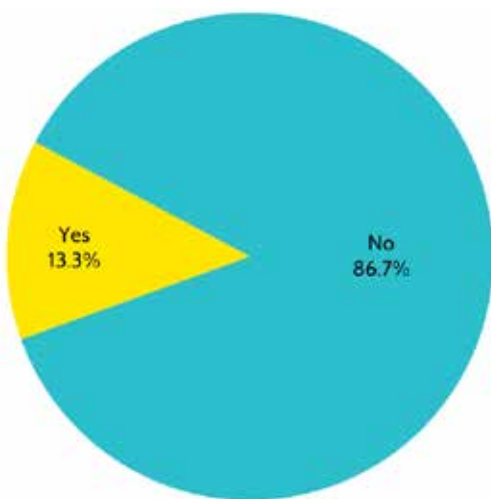


**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT OF BEING ASKED TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



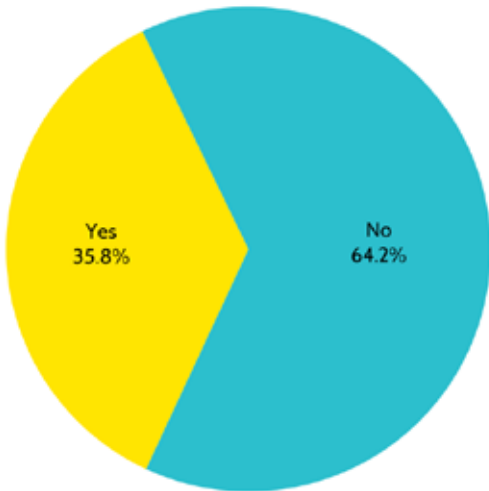
86.7% of respondents had not been told where they could sleep instead.

**DID THE POLICE TELL YOU WHERE YOU COULD GO INSTEAD?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



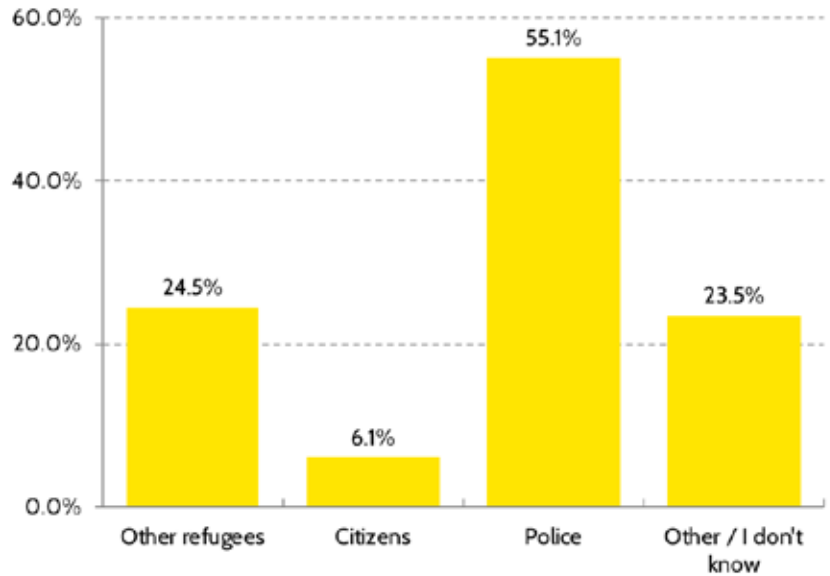


**HAVE YOU HAD ANY OF YOUR BELONGINGS TAKEN WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN IN PARIS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



35.8% of respondents reported that their belongings had been taken since arriving in Paris. 55.5% reported that these were taken by the police, while 24.5% stated that they were taken by other refugees.

**WHO TOOK YOUR BELONGINGS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

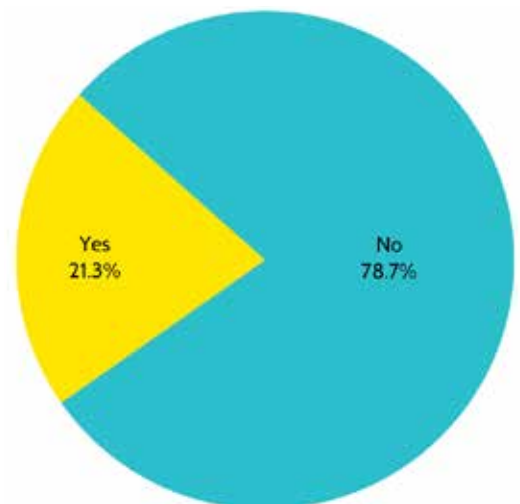


6.1% of respondents reported that French citizens had taken their belongings. The removed items were often items of clothing, with a number of refugees reporting that police had taken their shoes, despite the cold and wet weather.

**ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS**

21.3% of respondents had been arrested while in France. One 15-year old Sudanese minor explained that he was once accused of stealing a phone whilst travelling on the underground train. He told researchers he was beaten and taken to the police station, where he was left to sleep naked on the floor "like an animal". The boy said that he subsequently spent two days in jail before being released without charge.

**HAVE YOU BEEN ARRESTED OF DETAINED IN FRANCE?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



## ARTICLE TWENTY-FIVE (1)

**EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A STANDARD OF LIVING ADEQUATE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS FAMILY, INCLUDING FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSING AND MEDICAL CARE AND NECESSARY SOCIAL SERVICES, AND THE RIGHT TO SECURITY IN THE EVENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT, SICKNESS, DISABILITY, WIDOWHOOD, OLD AGE OR OTHER LACK OF LIVELIHOOD IN CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL.**

## LIVING CONDITIONS

Living conditions in Paris remain wholly inadequate with the large majority of respondents living on the streets of Paris. Researchers were shocked by the conditions in which many people were forced to live, with little access to appropriate sanitation facilities, and relying on food distribution points by local organisations and civil society.

**“HOW [CAN] A COUNTRY GIVE PEOPLE ASYLUM BUT CANNOT GIVE THEM THE BASIC RIGHTS?”**

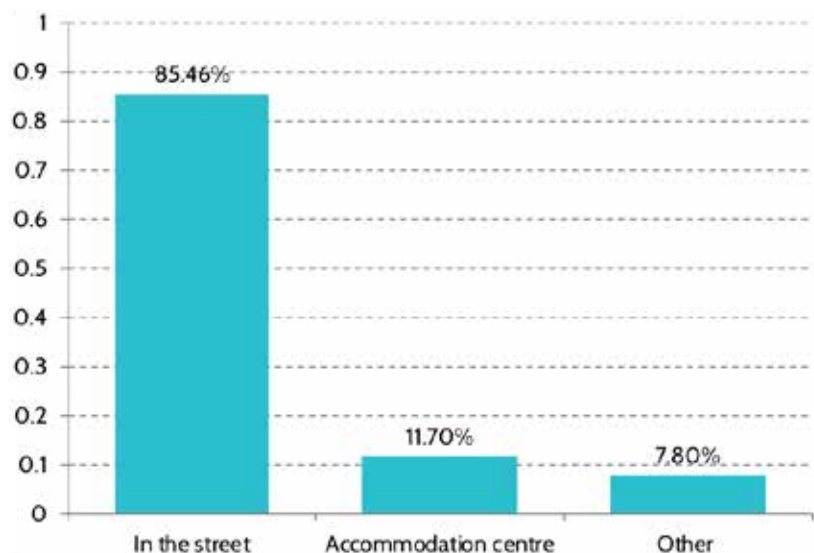
Anonymous

## SHELTER

An alarming 85.5% of respondents reported they were currently living on the streets of Paris - often in tents provided by local NGOs, or sleeping under bridges on damp mattresses or the floor. A few days after the research was conducted, the weather deteriorated in Paris and tents were covered in several inches of snow. Refugee Rights Europe understands that a number of refugees in the area were allowed into emergency accommodation while snow remained, but were subsequently returned to the streets.

**NGOS ON THE GROUND TOLD THE RESEARCH TEAM THAT THE ASYLUM ACCOMMODATION CENTRES ARE FULL**

### WHERE DO YOU SLEEP? ALL RESPONDENTS





11.7% of respondents reported that they were currently staying in accommodation centres, with one Afghan respondent explaining: *“I have just been in the centre for two nights so I am happy. Before that, I slept on the streets for one month – I have a massive infection in my leg and an insect in my skin. I didn’t sleep for so much of the journey – four months from Kabul – now I have some sleep and medicine, so I am happy”.*

However, NGOs on the ground told the research team that the asylum accommodation centres are full. Despite the opening of an accommodation centre in the La Chappelle district in 2017, known as the ‘bubble’ camp run by Emmaüs Solidarité, respondents told us that it was very difficult to get into the centre and displaced people were only allowed to stay for a limited period.

Refugee Rights Europe were extremely concerned to hear from a number of respondents who, despite either having their asylum claim accepted or having an active claim in the French system, remained sleeping on the streets. Several refugees said they had received their status in France but continued to sleep rough, with limited access to services and support. One refugee exclaimed: *“How [can] a country give people asylum but cannot give them the basic rights?”.*



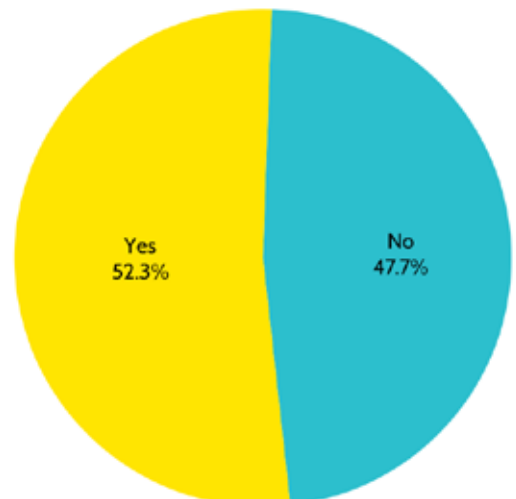
Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

## FOOD

In addition to poor living conditions and a lack of shelter, 47.7% of respondents told us they did not have access to enough food every day. The majority of displaced people in the area relied on food handouts from NGOs and civil society, who are distributing food at various points in the city. A number of the newer arrivals did not yet know where these distribution points were located.

**THE MAJORITY OF DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE AREA RELIED ON FOOD HANDOUTS FROM NGOs AND CIVIL SOCIETY.**

**DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT EVERY DAY?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



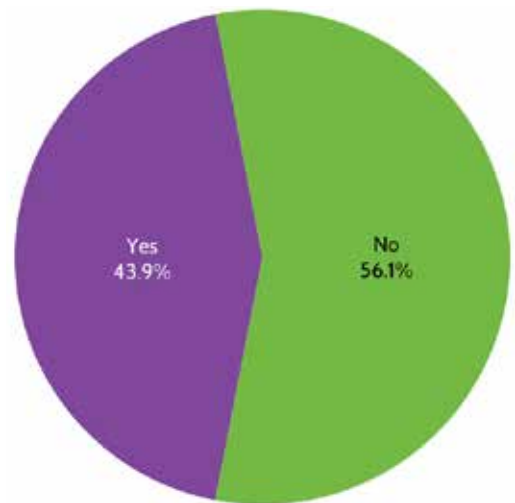
PHYSICAL HEALTH

The poor living conditions have undoubtedly had a detrimental impact on the health of refugees and displaced people in Paris, with 43.9% of respondents reporting that they had experienced a health problem since arriving in France. 37.3% of these respondents reported that these problems were caused by the unhealthy living environment on the streets of Paris.

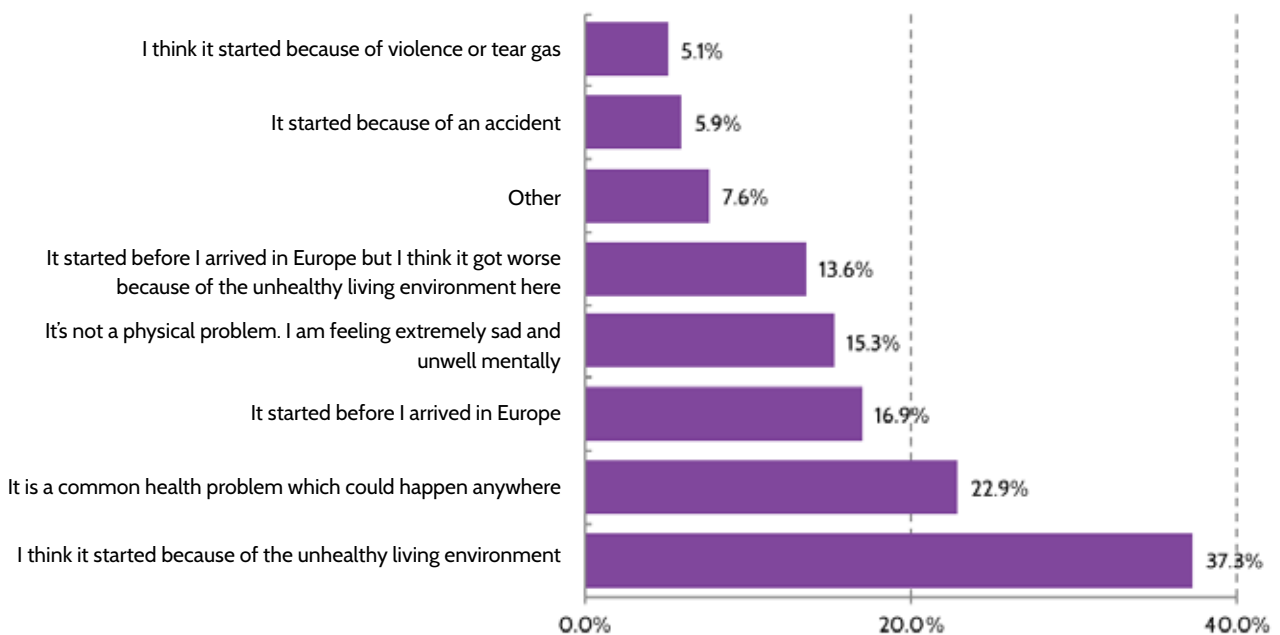
**DESPITE THE TIRELESS WORK OF NGOs WORKING ON THE GROUND, HEALTHCARE IS INADEQUATE.**

Despite the tireless work of NGOs working on the ground, healthcare is inadequate. Respondents said that while a mobile doctor visits twice a week, there is so much demand that they cannot always provide help. Indeed, during the study researchers spoke to a young Afghan man who had been ill inside his tent for three days, unable to leave. He told researchers he had a fever, difficulty breathing and was unable to walk unaided.<sup>1</sup>

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY HEALTH PROBLEMS IN FRANCE?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HEALTH PROBLEM?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



<sup>1</sup> Refugee Rights Europe ensured that the man was able to access urgent medical care.

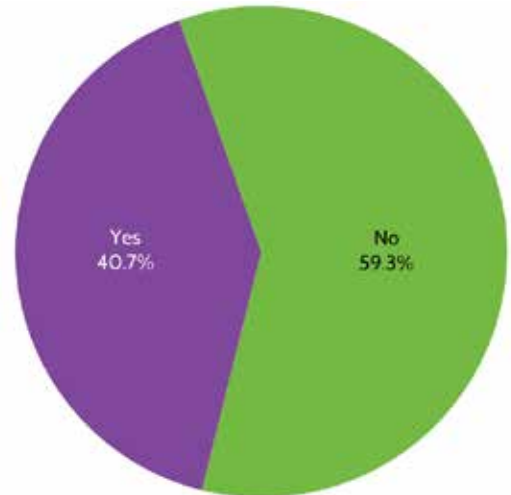


Overall, a whole 59.3% of respondents told researchers that they did not receive any medical care in France. Respondents often cited issues with their status or language barriers stopping them from receiving medical care. One man recounted: *“My foot was swollen and it was very painful. When I asked in the hospital they said they cannot help me without my paper. They [told me] to go to a clinic that was over an hour away. I had no money for transport and walking hurt so much, so I could not go”*. Another Afghan man told researchers that he had never seen a doctor while in France, telling researchers: *“Even an aspirin or one bandage would be helpful, but even that no one gives us”*.

**“EVEN AN ASPIRIN OR ONE BANDAGE WOULD HELP, BUT EVEN THAT NO ONE GIVES US.”**

Sudanese man

**HAVE YOU RECEIVED MEDICAL CARE IN FRANCE?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



**MENTAL HEALTH**

**“I AM THINKING TO COMMIT A SUICIDE, BETTER THAN THIS PAINFUL LIFE UNDER THE BRIDGE.”**

Sudanese man

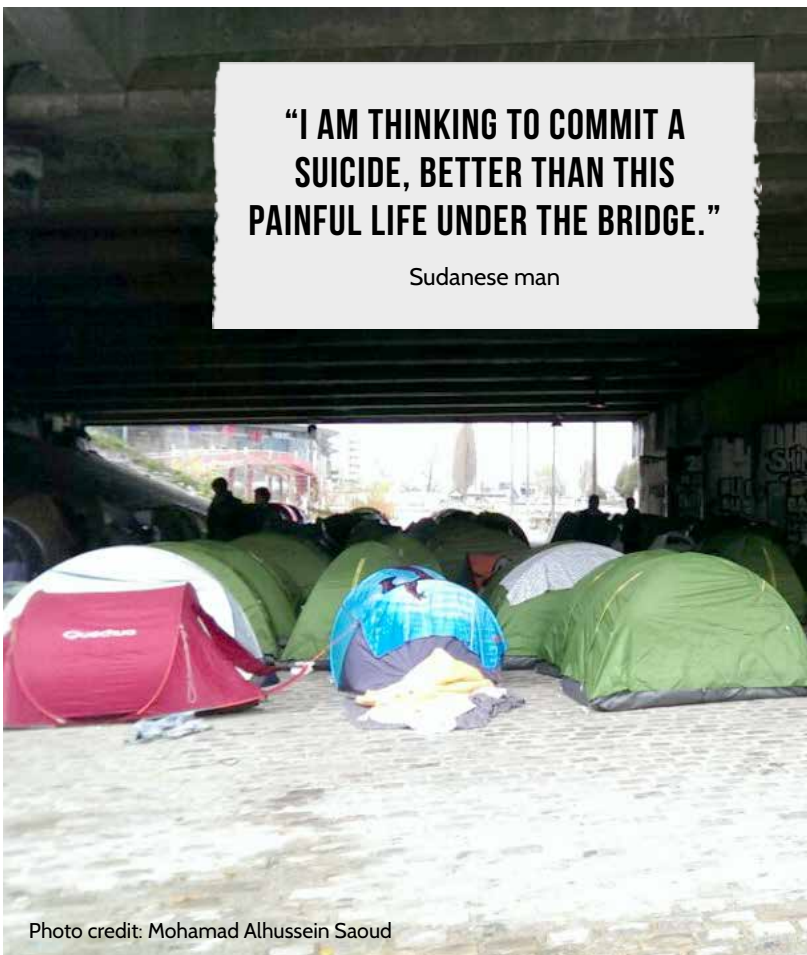


Photo credit: Mohamad Alhussein Saoud

Worryingly, 15.3% of respondents referred to their health concern as a mental health problem, rather than a physical ailment. The length of time that respondents had spent in displacement, coupled with their precarious living situation, appears to be having a detrimental impact on their mental health. One Sudanese man explained: *“The whole process of asking for asylum here, it is pure stress, all the time. So everyone is going mad. It is not good for your sanity, this uncertainty and conditions. It breaks you”*. Another man from Sudan, who had been living on the streets for over one year, told us: *“I am thinking to commit a suicide, better than this painful life under the bridge”*.

Indeed, a number of displaced people we spoke to demonstrated signs of what might be psychological illness. One man told a researcher that he had been taken to a mental health centre where he was diagnosed with paranoia. He told us that he was given pills every day for one month then told to leave the centre, facing no choice but to return to life on the streets.

# ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHT

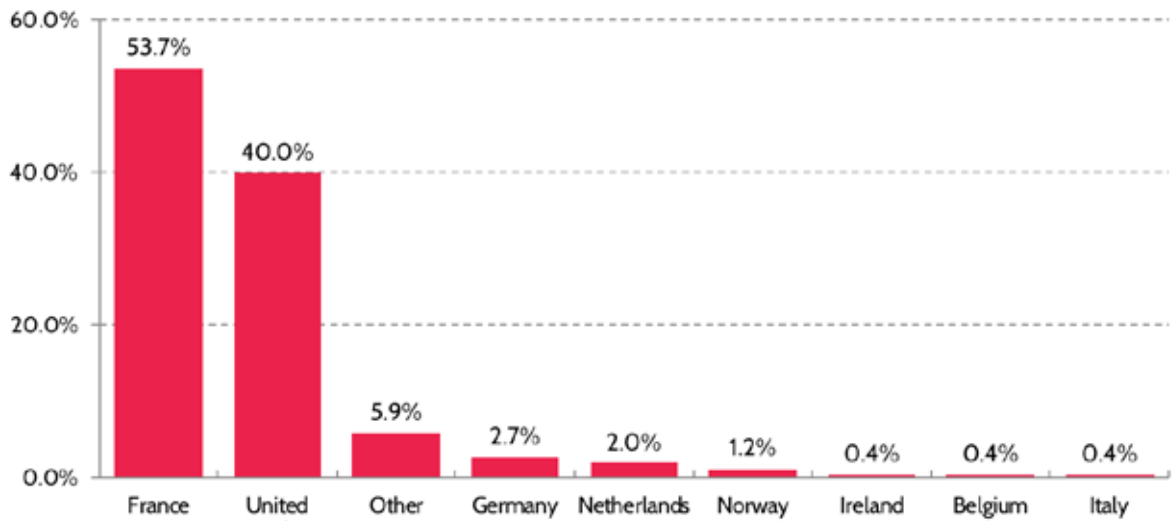
EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO A SOCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER IN WHICH THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS SET FORTH IN THIS DECLARATION CAN BE FULLY REALIZED.

## ONWARD JOURNEY

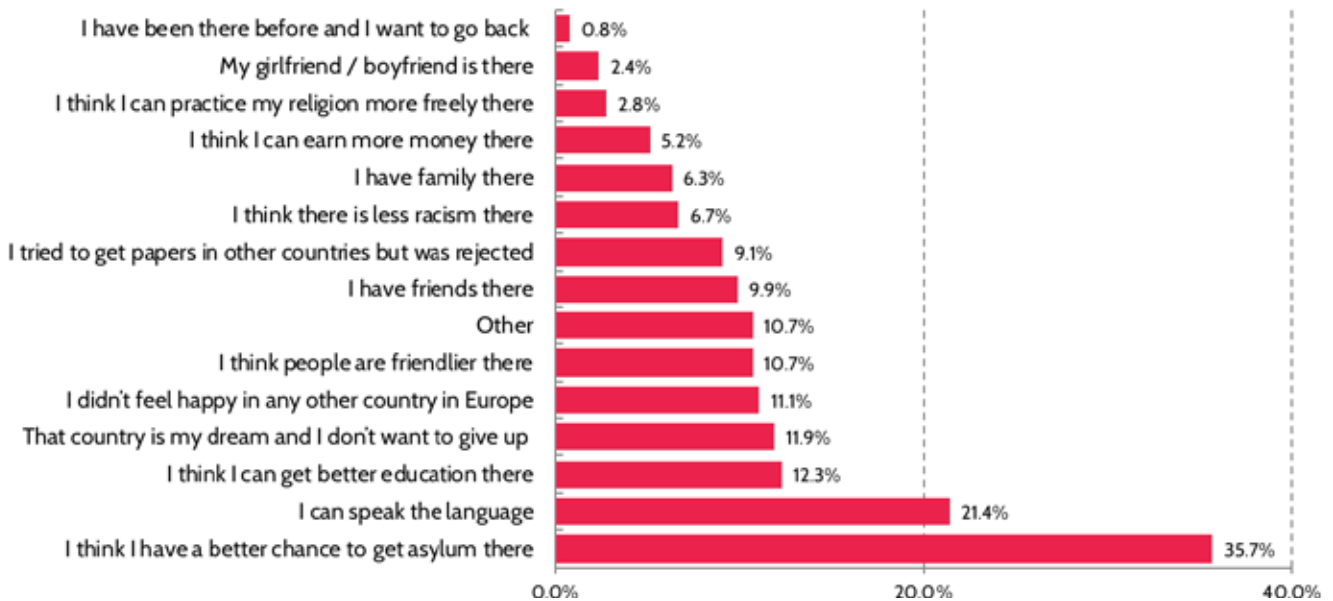
Of the people surveyed, 53.7% of respondents thought that France would be the best country for them. Meanwhile, a significant number (40%) stated that they thought that the UK was the best country for them. Indeed, researchers noted that a number of refugees had recently arrived in Paris from Calais,

where they were trying to reach the UK. A group of young men told researchers that they had fled Calais after an increase in violence in the area in previous weeks, when one young refugee lost his eye as a result of tear gas. They said they would return to try again in a few days' time.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU? ALL RESPONDENTS



**WHY DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



**“THEY [THE FRENCH] WERE THE ONES WHO COLONISED US SO FRENCH BECAME OUR LANGUAGE. THAT’S WHY I THINK FRANCE IS THE BEST COUNTRY FOR ME IN EUROPE.”**

Anonymous

When asked why they thought a particular country was best for them, the majority (35.7%) cited a belief that they would have a better chance of being granted asylum. 21.4% also told researchers they wanted to go to that country because they could speak the language, which was especially the case for respondents from French-speaking African countries. One respondent told us: *“They [the French] were the ones who colonised us so French became our language. That’s why I think France is the best country for me in Europe”*. 12.3% of respondents believed they could receive a better education in their preferred country, while 11.9% stated that the country was their dream which they were not willing to give up on.



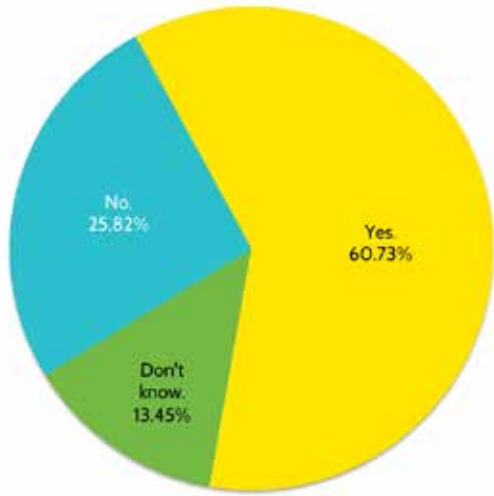
Photo credit: Samer Mustafa



Of the refugees and displaced people surveyed, 60.7% were hoped to remain in France (although some said they would have preferred the UK, they had made the decision to apply for asylum in France). At the time of the research, 55.8% had applied for asylum in France.

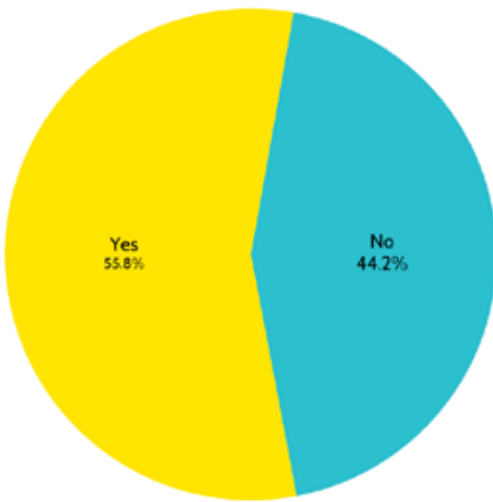
88.6% of respondents told researchers they could not go back to their own country. During the period of our research, the media reported a bombing in Kabul that killed more than 100 civilians. Many of the people we spoke to from Afghanistan mentioned the incident, and said this was one of the main reasons why they feared being returned to Afghanistan.

**DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN FRANCE?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



Indeed, a number of humanitarian organisations have raised serious concerns about the designation of Afghanistan as a safe

**HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR ASYLUM IN FRANCE?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

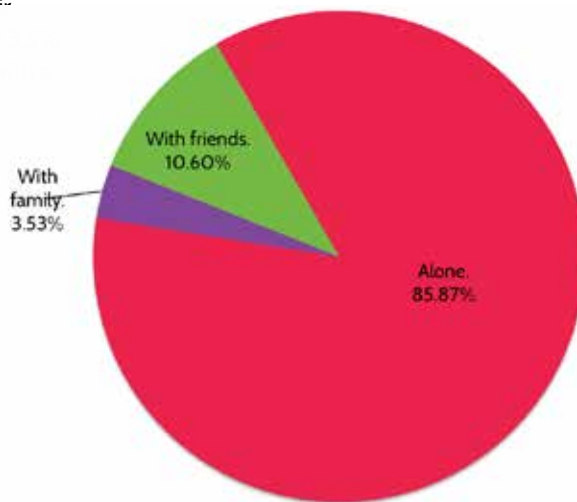


third country, while figures released by the UN report that more than 10,000 people died from the violence in the country in 2017.

**FAMILY RELATIONS**

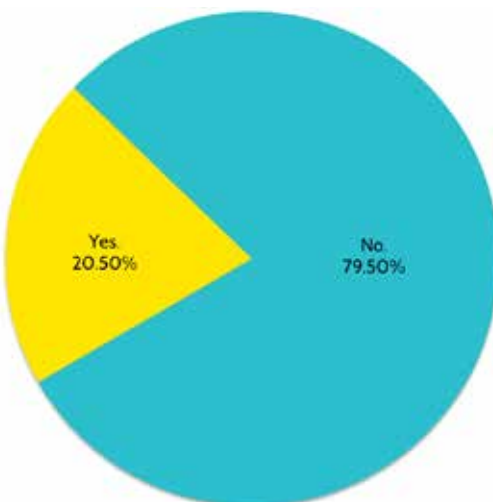
85.9% of respondents were in Paris on their own. 10.6% said they were with friends, often seemingly referring to people they had met along the journey or in Paris. Only 3.5% said they were in Paris with family member.

**WITH WHOM ARE YOU IN PARIS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



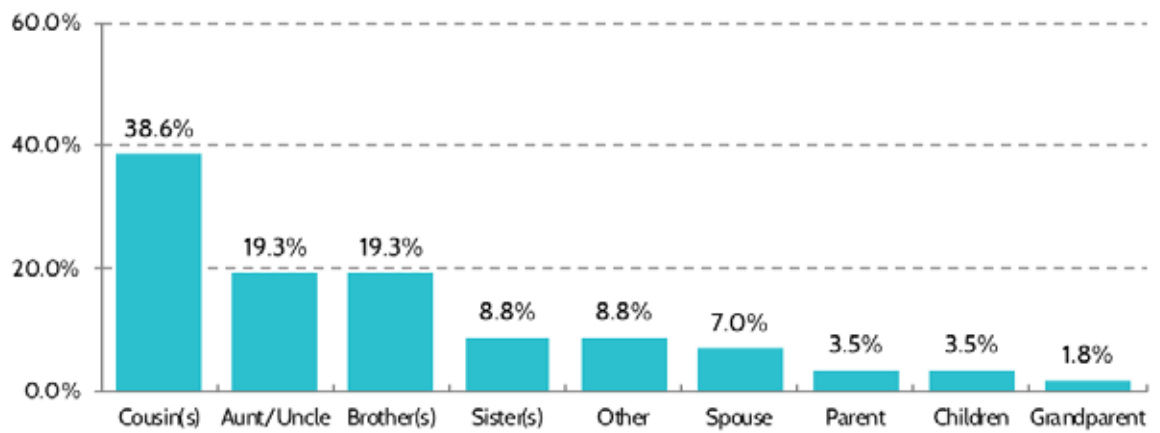
Meanwhile, 20.5% of respondents said they had family elsewhere in Europe, of which 38.6% were cousins, 19.3% an aunt or uncle, 19.3% a brother and 8.8% a sister. Other family members cited included a husband or wife, father or mother, children or grandparents.

**DO YOU HAVE FAMILY IN PARIS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

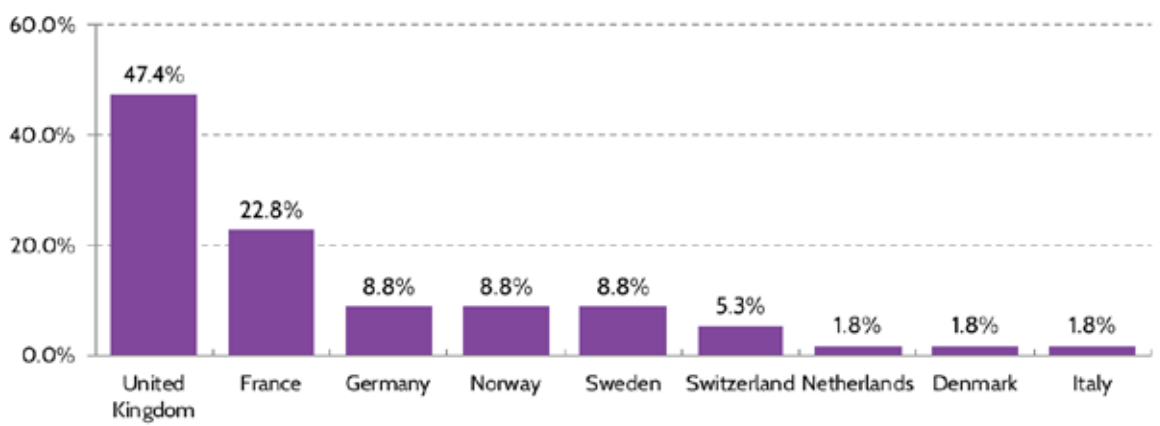


Of those who had family members in Europe, 47.4% stated that they had family in the UK. 22.8% had family in France, while smaller numbers (8.8%) had family in Germany, Norway and Sweden.

**WHICH FAMILY MEMBERS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

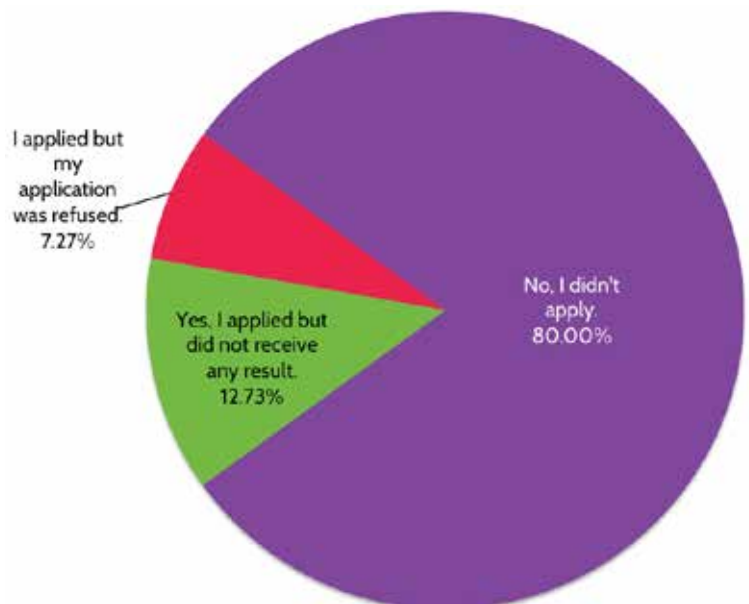


**IN WHICH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DO YOU HAVE FAMILY?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



Worryingly, 80% of those with family in Europe had not applied for family reunification under the Dublin Regulation. 12.7% said they had applied and not received a result, while 7.3% stated that they had applied but that their application was refused.

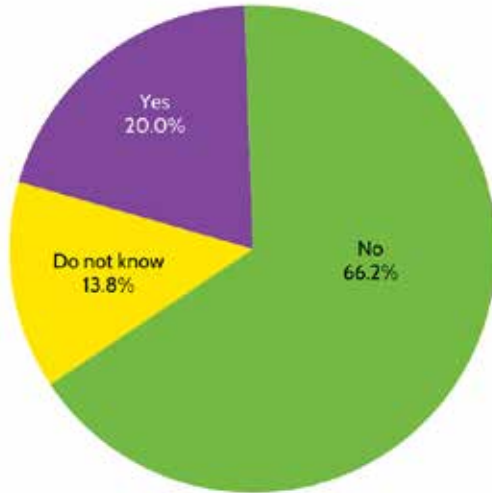
**WHICH FAMILY MEMBERS?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



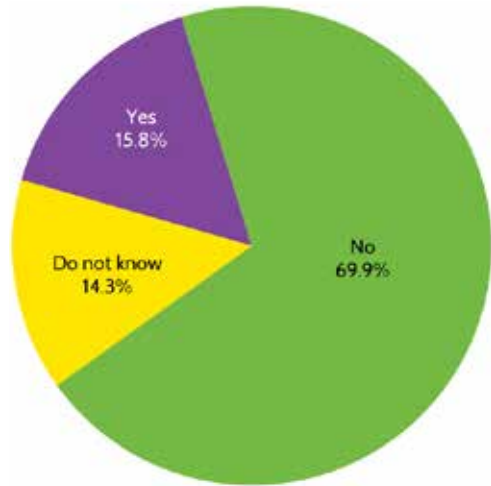
ACCESS TO INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ALTERNATIVES

A whole 66.2% of respondents were lacking access to information about their rights and opportunities, while 66.9% said they were unable to access information about European immigration and asylum rules.

**DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM RULES?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



**DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



**CAN YOU GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

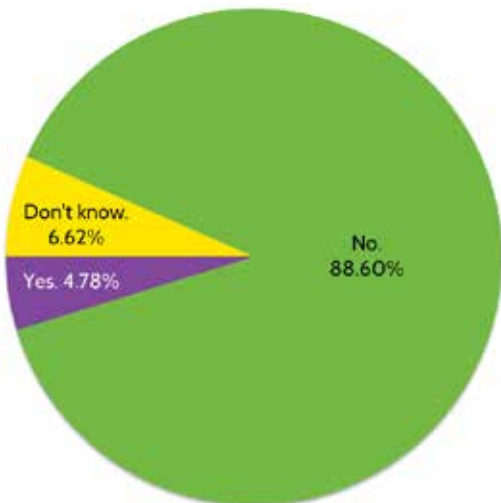
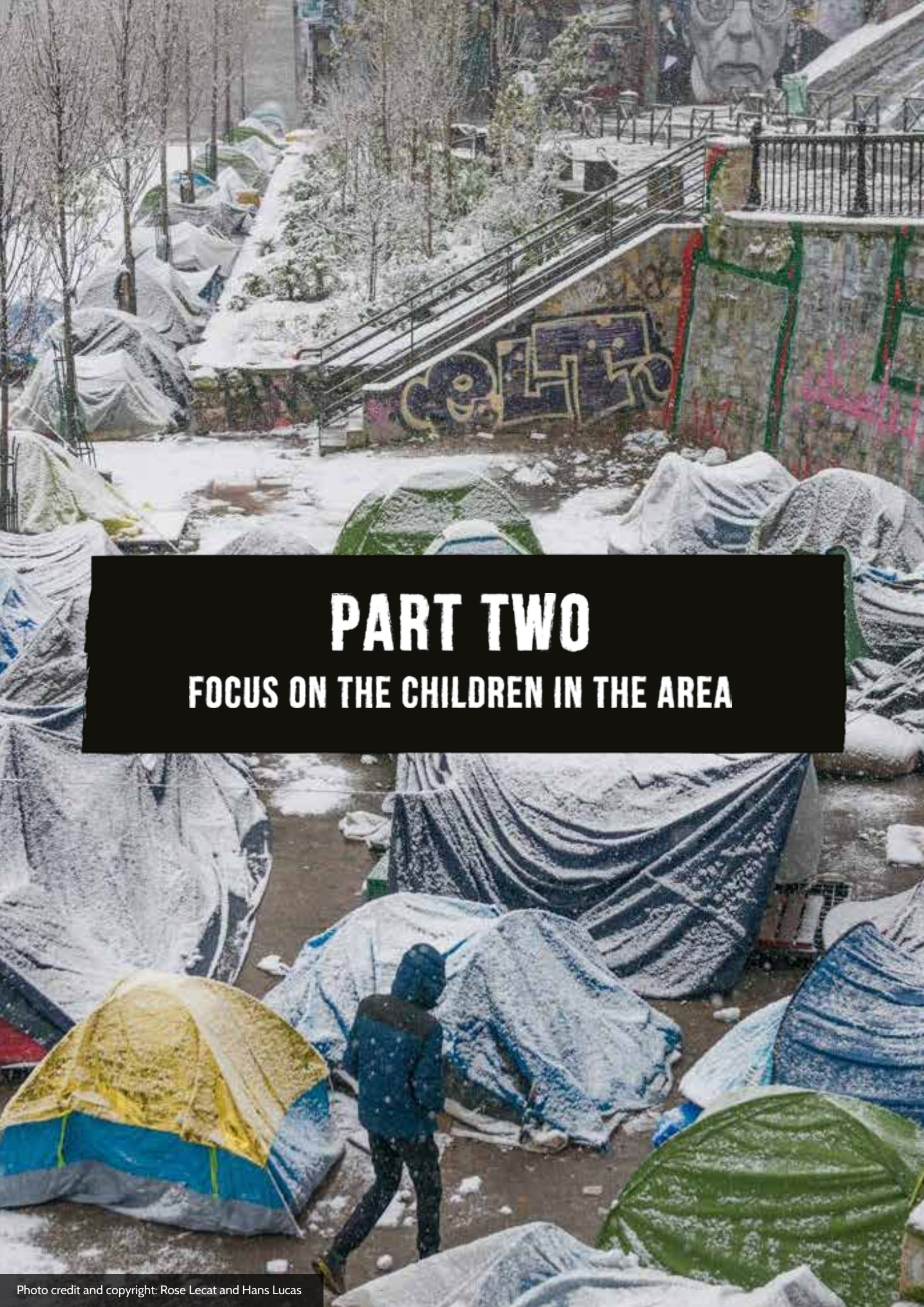


Photo credit: Samer Mustafa





# PART TWO

**FOCUS ON THE CHILDREN IN THE AREA**



# ARTICLE ONE

**ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS. THEY ARE ENDOWED WITH REASON AND CONSCIENCE AND SHOULD ACT TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD.**

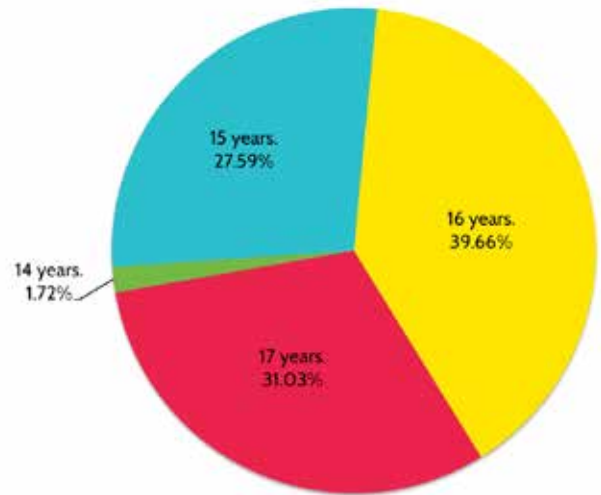
## ABOUT THE CHILDREN

The situation in Paris for children is particularly worrying, as many are still forced to sleep on the streets every night. As far as we are aware, there are no available figures for the number of children on the streets of Paris. Refugee Rights Europe spoke to 58 minors during the research process.

### REFUGEE RIGHTS EUROPE SPOKE TO 58 MINORS DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS.

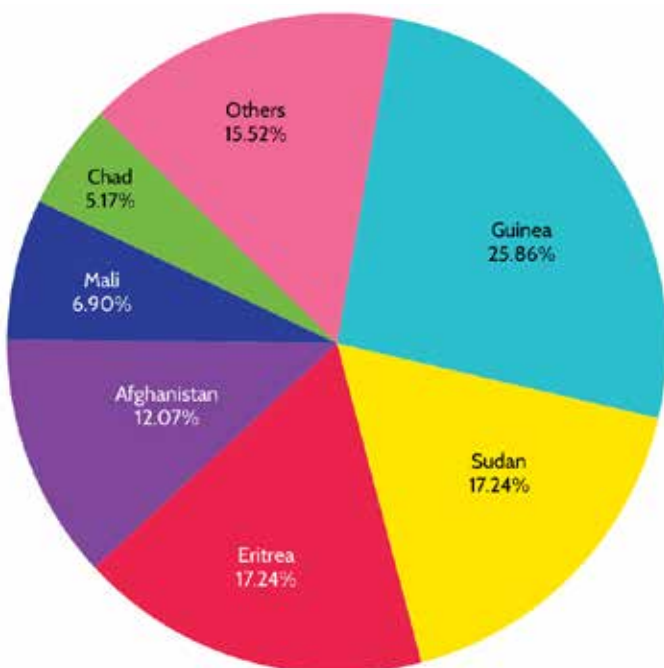
Of the minors we interviewed, 39.7% were aged 16-years-old, 31% were 17-years-old, and 27.6% were 15-years-old. 1.7% told researchers they were aged 14-years-old. The highest number of minors came from Guinea (25.9%), while 17.2% were from Sudan, 17.2% Eritrea, 12.1% Afghanistan, 6.9% Mali and 5.2% from Chad.

### HOW OLD ARE YOU? MINORS ONLY

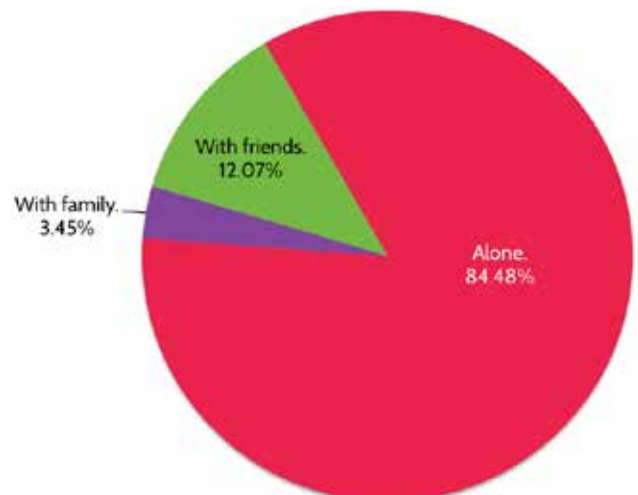


84.5% of the children we spoke to were unaccompanied, while 12.1% said they were with friends. Only 3.5% said they were in Paris with family.

### WHERE ARE YOU FROM? MINORS ONLY



### WITH WHOM ARE YOU IN PARIS? MINORS ONLY



LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN DISPLACEMENT

31% of minors had spent between six months to more than two years in Europe, while the average time minors had spent in Europe was 6 months. The majority (91.2%) had been in France for one to six months.

94.8% of the minors we spoke to had been in another European country before France, with 70.4% had spent time in Italy. 18.5% had been in Spain, while 5.6% had been in Germany. 3.7% had been in either Greece or Hungary respectively, while other minors

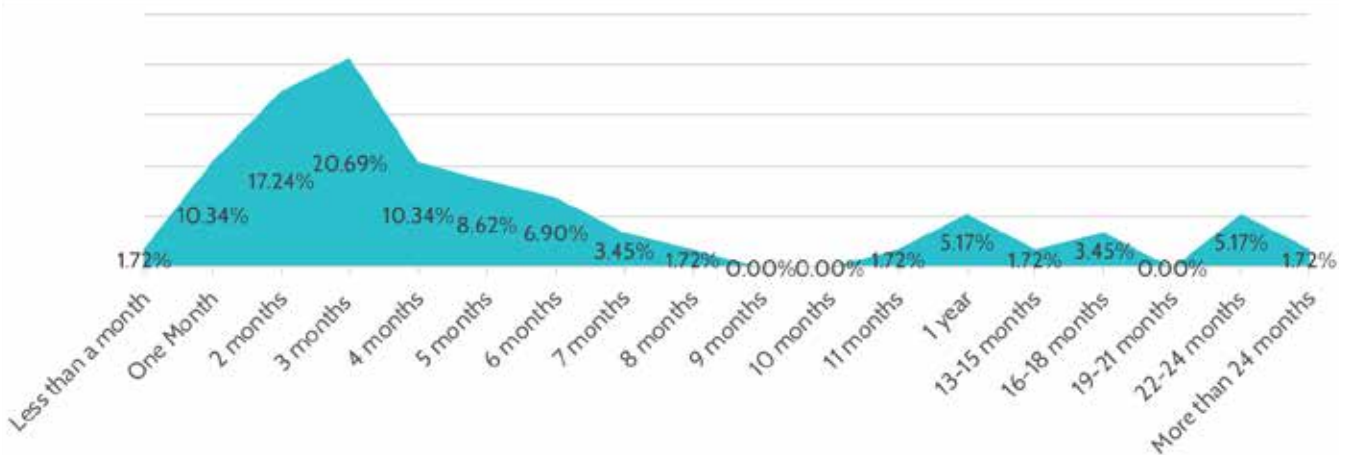
reported being in Austria, Serbia, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Slovenia and Romania before their arrival in France.

Of the minors we interviewed, 39.7% were aged 16-years-old, 31% were 17-years-old, and 27.6% were 15-years-old. 1.7% told researchers they were aged 14-years-old. The highest number of minors came from Guinea (25.9%), while 17.2% were from Sudan, 17.2% Eritrea, 12.1% Afghanistan, 6.9% Mali and 5.2% from Chad. 84.5% of the children we spoke to were

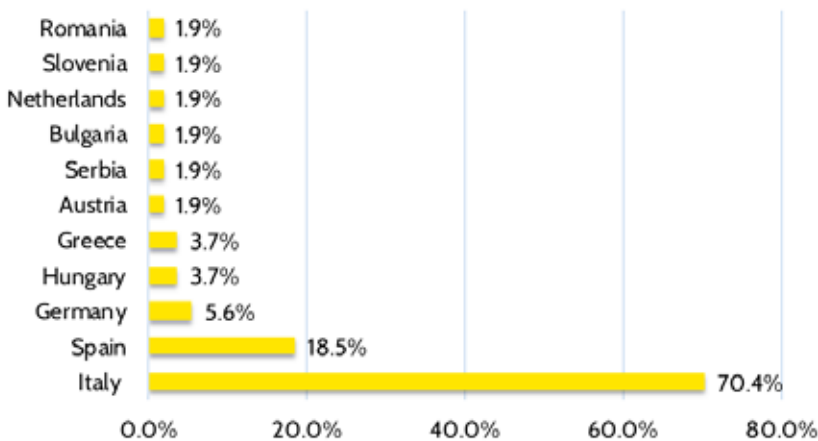
unaccompanied, while 12.1% said they were with friends. Only 3.5% said they were in Paris with family.

When asked whether they applied for asylum there, 74.5% told researchers they had not applied for asylum in another country.

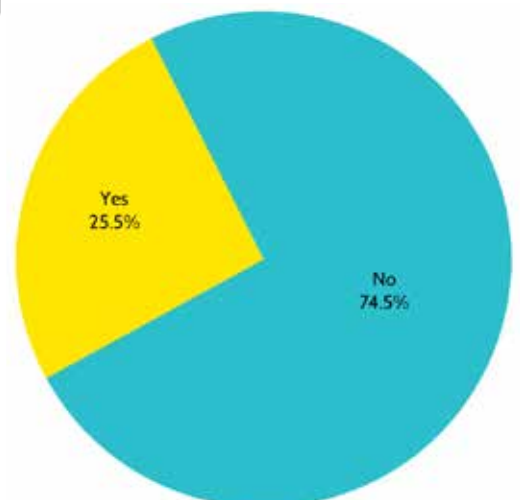
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN EUROPE?  
MINORS ONLY



WHAT EUROPEAN COUNTRY WERE YOU IN BEFORE YOU CAME TO FRANCE?  
MINORS ONLY



DID YOU APPLY FOR ASYLUM THERE?  
MINORS ONLY



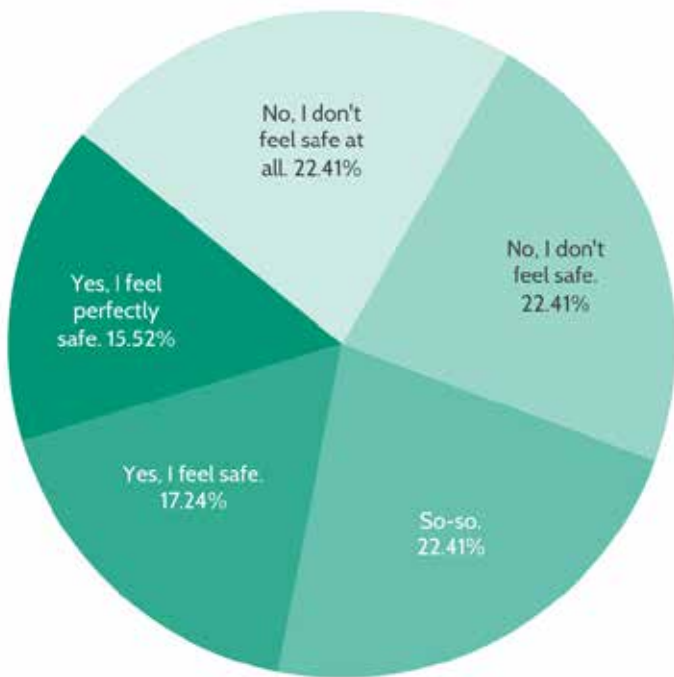


# ARTICLE THREE

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.

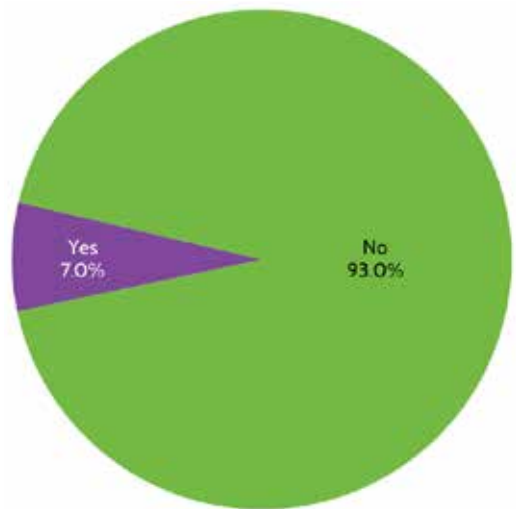
## SAFETY AND SECURITY

### DO YOU FEEL SAFE IN FRANCE? MINORS ONLY

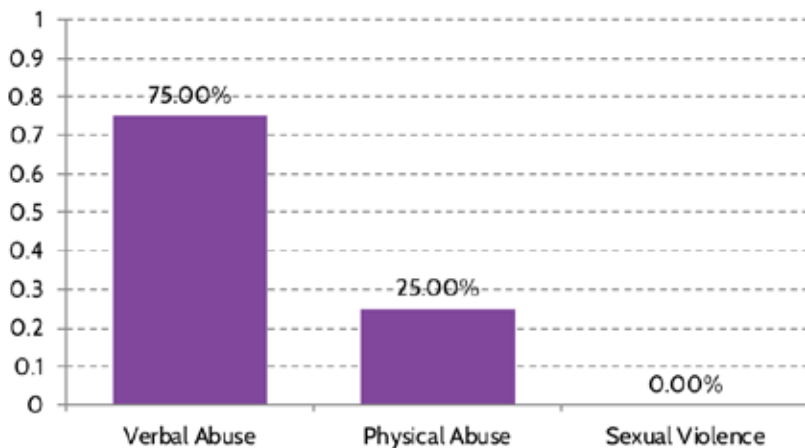


Of the minors surveyed, 44.8% said they 'don't feel safe' or 'don't feel safe at all'. 7% had experienced violence by French citizens, with the majority stating that this violence took the form of verbal abuse.

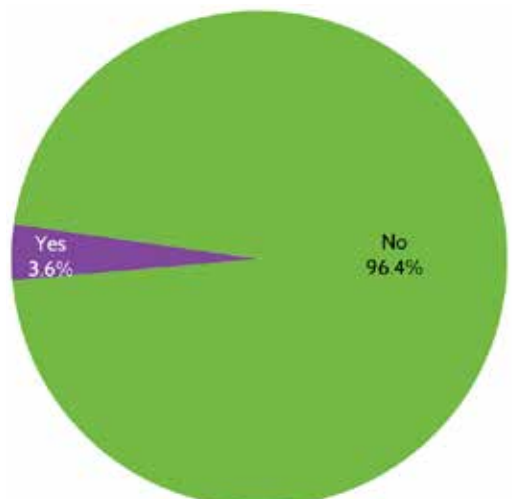
### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE BY CITIZENS IN FRANCE? MINORS ONLY



### WHAT TYPE OF CITIZEN VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN PARIS? MINORS ONLY



### HAVE YOU WITNESSED A REFUGEE DIE WHILE IN PARIS? MINORS ONLY



# ARTICLE FIVE

**NO ONE SHALL BE SUBJECTED TO TORTURE OR TO CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.**

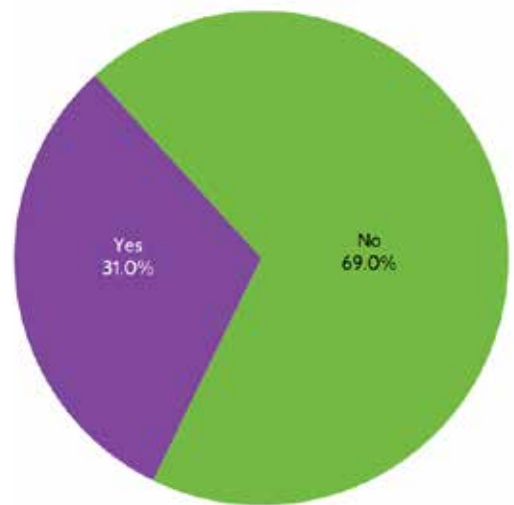
## POLICE TREATMENT

Strikingly, 31% of minors reported having experienced police violence while in Paris. Of these, 83.3% said this took the form of tear gas, while 27.8% reported verbal abuse and 22.2% physical abuse. The use of tear gas appears to be a widespread issue amongst minors in the area.

**THE USE OF TEAR GAS APPEARS TO BE A WIDESPREAD ISSUE AMONGST MINORS IN THE AREA.**

One 16-year-old boy from Guinea told researchers: *“They found me under the La Chapelle bridge, there the police found us lying down and they started spraying tear gas. Then I asked the police to ask where I can sleep, they took my papers and they didn’t give them back, they said they had lost them.”*

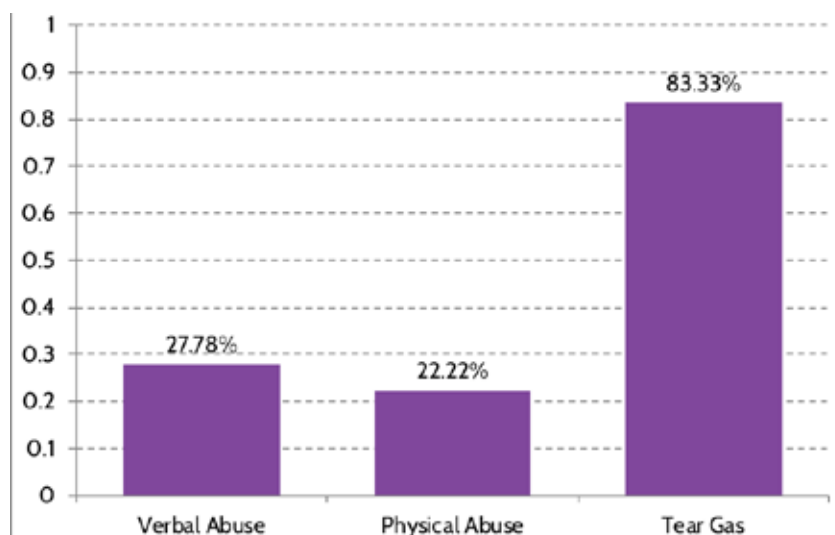
**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF POLICE VIOLENCE IN PARIS?  
MINORS ONLY**



**“THEN I ASKED THE POLICE TO ASK WHERE I CAN SLEEP, THEY TOOK MY PAPERS AND THEY DIDN’T GIVE THEM BACK, THEY SAID THEY HAD LOST THEM.”**

16-year-old boy, Guinea

**WHAT KIND OF POLICE VIOLENCE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN PARIS?  
MINORS ONLY**

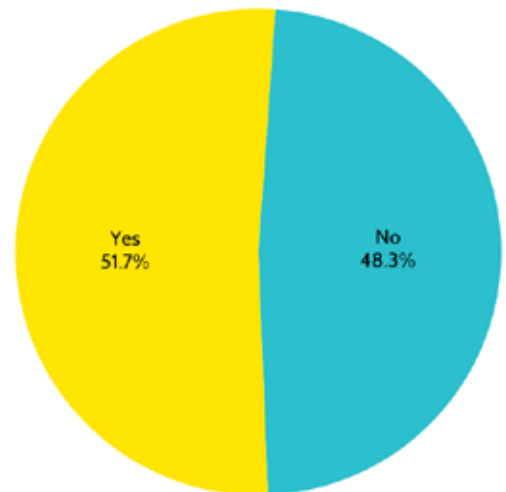


**“THEY FOUND ME UNDER THE LA CHAPELLE BRIDGE, THERE THE POLICE FOUND US LYING DOWN AND THEY STARTED SPRAYING TEAR GAS. THEN I ASKED THE POLICE TO ASK WHERE I CAN SLEEP, THEY TOOK MY PAPERS AND THEY DIDN’T GIVE THEM BACK, THEY SAID THEY HAD LOST THEM”.**

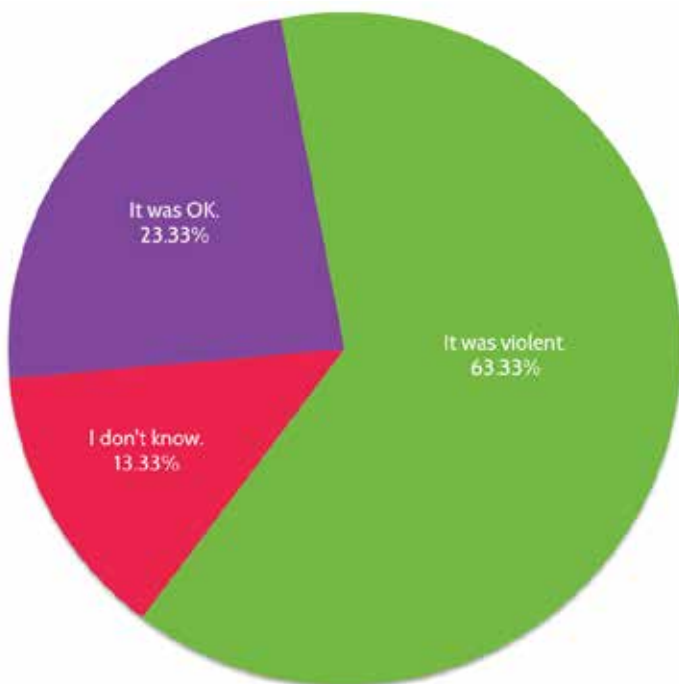
Anonymous

A high number (51.7%) of respondents reported being told to move from where they were sleeping. Of these, 63.3% described the incident as violent, while 80% were not told where they could go instead. One 15-year-old minor from Afghanistan told us: *“It was close to the metro, we were sleeping in tents, the police wanted us to leave, then when people didn’t leave they used tear gas”.*

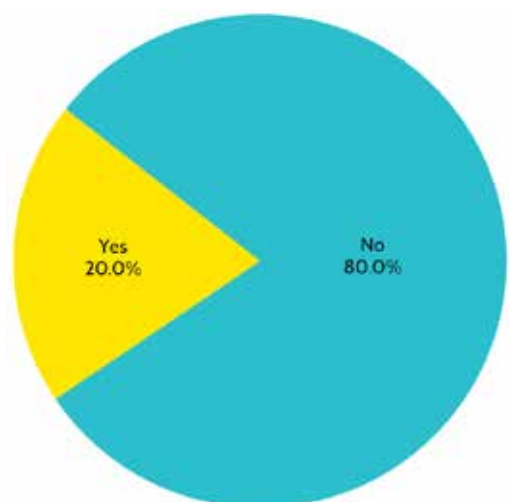
**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TOLD BY POLICE TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?**  
MINORS ONLY



**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT OF BEING ASKED TO MOVE FROM WHERE YOU WERE SLEEPING?**  
MINORS ONLY



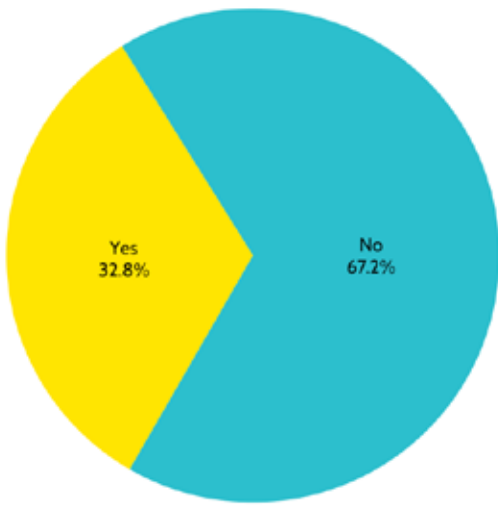
**DID THE POLICE TELL YOU WHERE YOU COULD GO INSTEAD?**  
MINORS ONLY



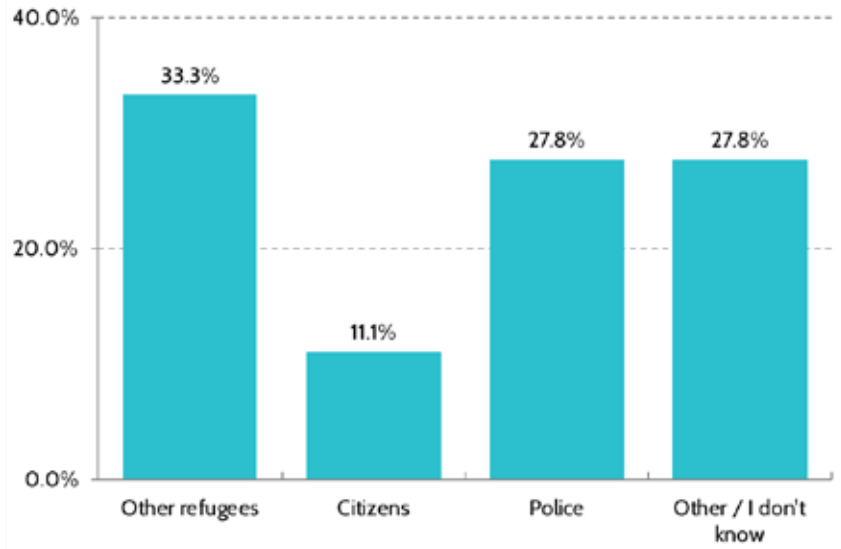


32.8% reported having belongings taken from them while they were in Paris, with a third said items were taken by other refugees. 27.8% stated the police took their belongings, while 11.1% believed it to be citizens.

**HAVE YOU HAD ANY OF YOUR BELONGINGS TAKEN WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN IN PARIS?**  
MINORS ONLY



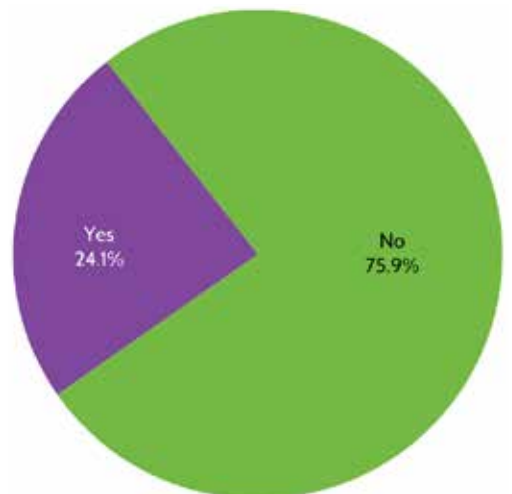
**WHO TOOK YOUR BELONGINGS?**  
MINORS ONLY



**ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS**

24.1% of minors reporting having been arrested or detained in France.

**HAVE YOU BEEN ARRESTED OR DETAINED IN FRANCE?**  
MINORS ONLY



## ARTICLE TWENTY-FIVE (1)

**EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A STANDARD OF LIVING ADEQUATE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS FAMILY, INCLUDING FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSING AND MEDICAL CARE AND NECESSARY SOCIAL SERVICES, AND THE RIGHT TO SECURITY IN THE EVENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT, SICKNESS, DISABILITY, WIDOWHOOD, OLD AGE OR OTHER LACK OF LIVELIHOOD IN CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL.**

## LIVING CONDITIONS

Living conditions facing minors, the majority of whom were unaccompanied, appear to fall well short of international child protection standards. A striking 77.6% of minors we interviewed were sleeping on the streets of Paris, where minors are at increased risk of developing health conditions and subject to exploitation and trafficking.

**MINORS ARE AT INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING HEALTH CONDITIONS AND SUBJECT TO EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING.**

### WHERE DO YOU SLEEP? MINORS ONLY

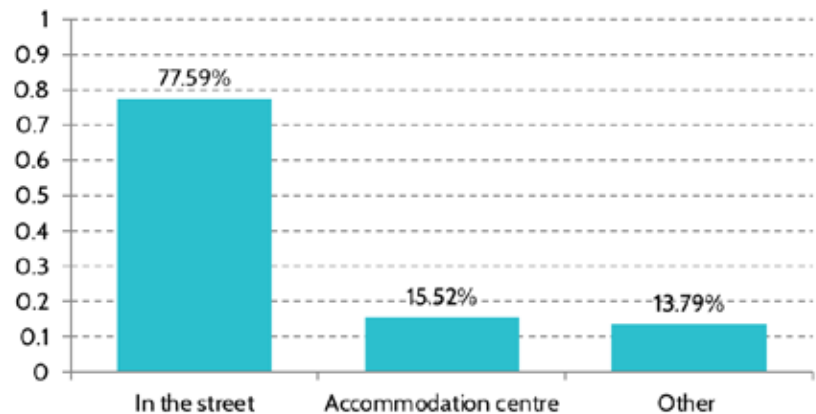


Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

Organisations on the ground told us that authorities often disputed the age of minors. In Paris, all minors are age assessed by the Red Cross. However, we understand there is growing concern that not all are being given the opportunity to have a fully fledged interview, but are rather assessed within five minutes based on their size and how old they look. This would appear to be a very worrying trend which leaves vulnerable minors on the streets. One minor from Darfur told us that he had no document to prove his age and therefore could not access accommodation for minors. He told us he had been living on the streets of Paris for three months.

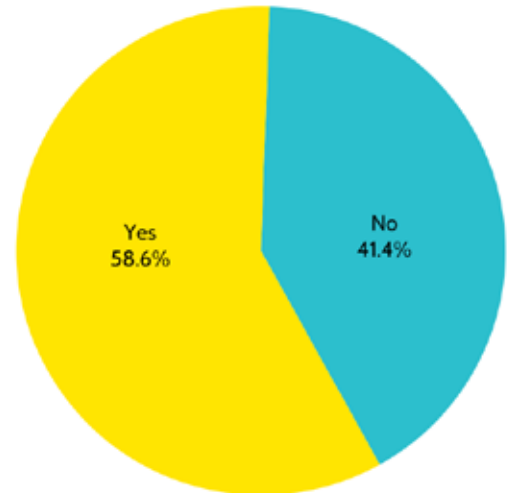
Refugee Rights Europe understands that certain minors, who have already undergone an age assessment and been found to be underage, are still sleeping on the streets due to a lack of accommodation. Organisations on the ground have organised citizen hosts in an attempt ensure that vulnerable minors are not left on the streets overnight.

We understand that those who are accepted to be minors aged over the age of 15 by the French authorities are placed into accommodation in hotels. A number of respondents raised concerns about these hotels and the opportunities available for minors there, in particular those located outside of Paris. One 16-year-old boy said he had left his accommodation outside Paris where there were no educational opportunities available, and instead ventured to the city to try and go to school. At the time of our research, he was living on the streets of Paris.

**MINORS ALSO REPORTED BEING TOLD TO LEAVE THE ACCOMMODATION AT 7AM AND COME BACK IN THE EVENING.**

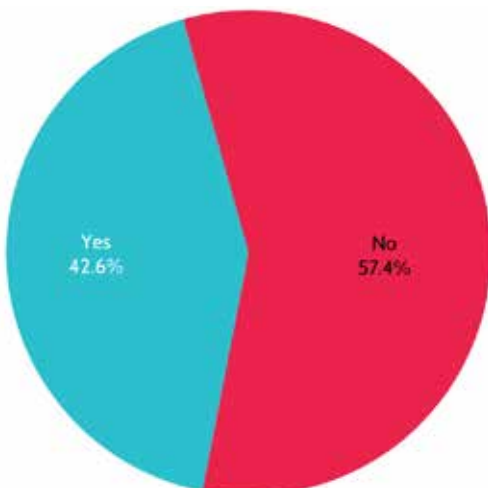
A number of minors also reported being told to leave the accommodation at 7am and come back in the evening, during which time they would be roaming the streets. Respondents also reported issues with the quality of the food received and told researchers they often go to food distributions around the city to eat instead. 41.2% of minors reported that they did not have enough food to eat every day.

**DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT EVERY DAY?  
MINORS ONLY**



**PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY HEALTH PROBLEMS IN FRANCE?  
MINORS ONLY**



42.6% of minors reported suffering from a health problem in France. Of these, 39.1% stated that their health problem was a result of their unhealthy living environment. 8.7% of respondents reported that their health problem was a mental health issue, rather than a physical ailment. A whole 73.9% of minors had not received any medical care in France.



**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HEALTH PROBLEM?**  
MINORS ONLY

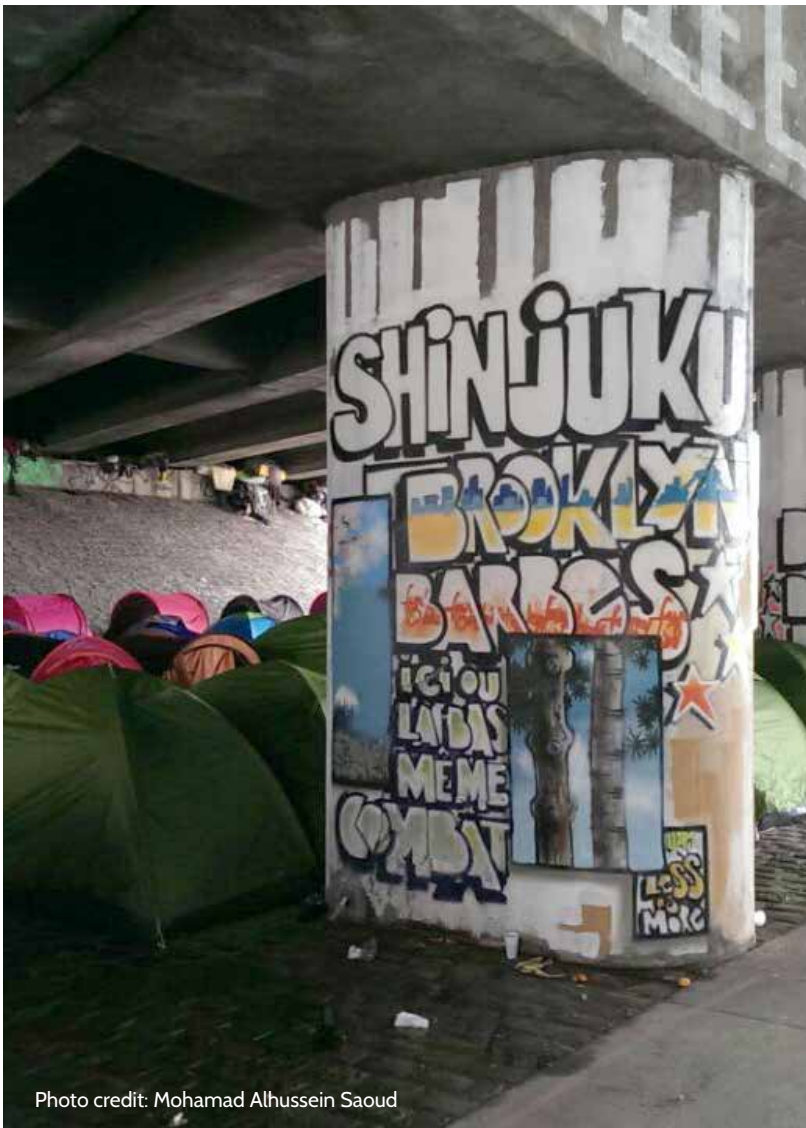
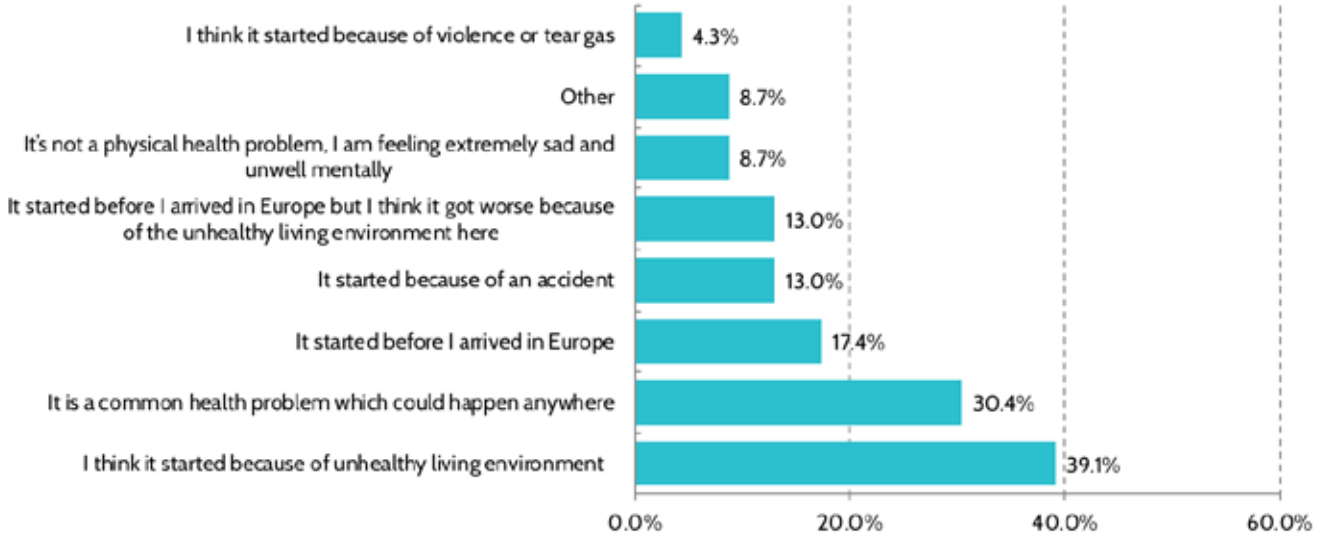
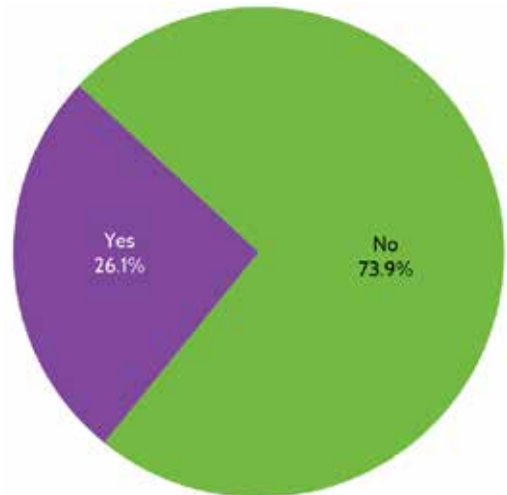


Photo credit: Mohamad Alhussein Saoud

**HAVE YOU RECEIVED MEDICAL CARE IN FRANCE?**  
MINORS ONLY



# ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHT

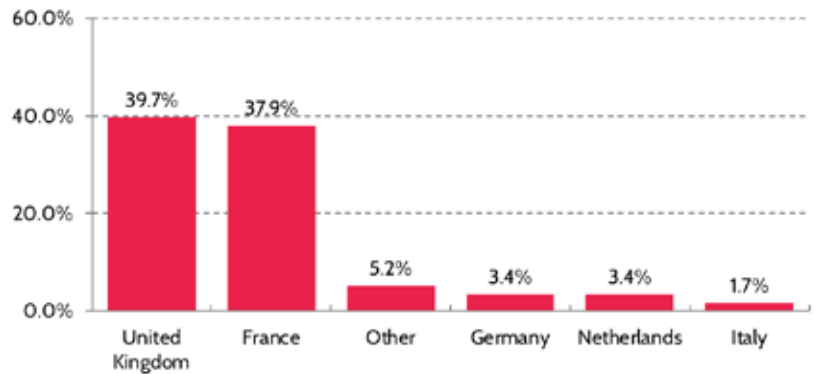
**EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO A SOCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER IN WHICH THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS SET FORTH IN THIS DECLARATION CAN BE FULLY REALIZED.**

## ONWARD JOURNEY

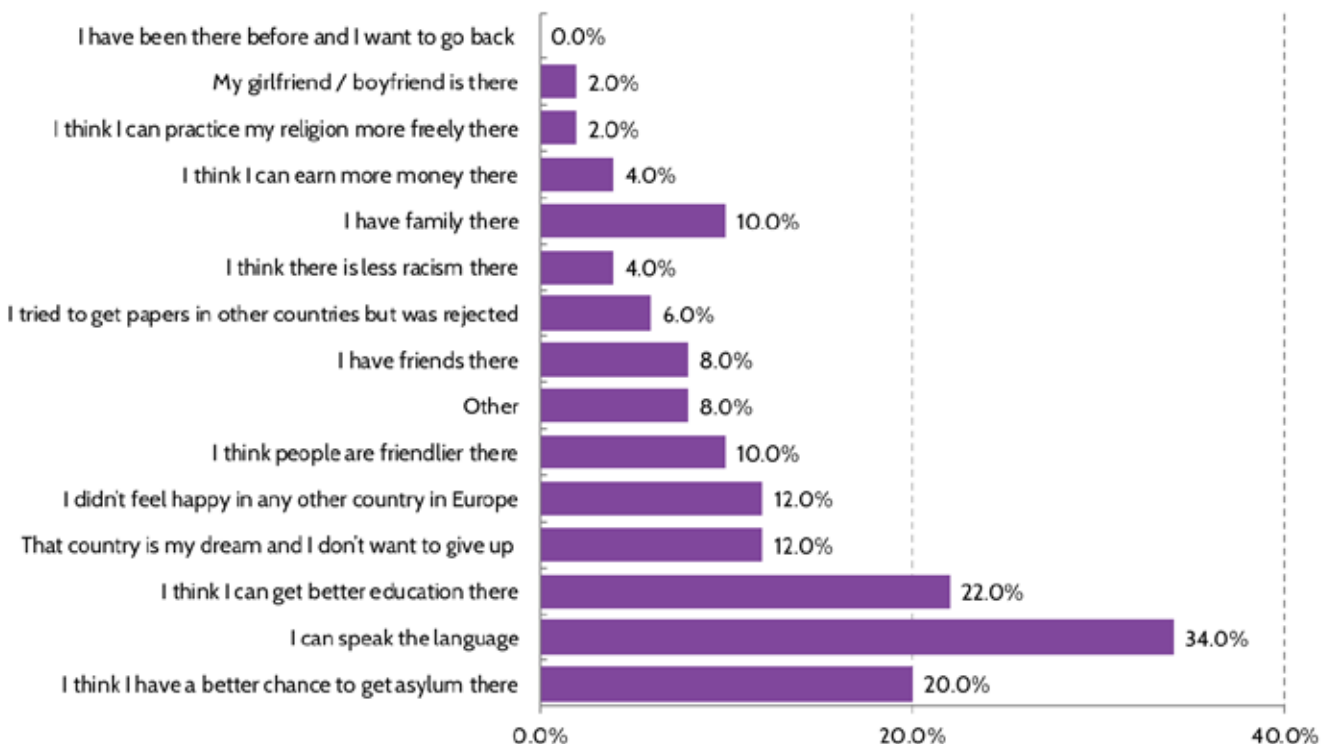
Of the minors we spoke to, 39.7% thought that the UK was the best country for them, while 37.9% believed that France was the best country for them. The most cited reason for wanting to go to a particular country was because they could speak the language. 22% of minors believed that they could get a better education in their preferred country, while 20% believed they had a better chance of getting papers.

52.7% of minors wanted to stay in France, while only 26.3% had claimed asylum in France. One reason for this could be the lack of information available to minors about their rights and European asylum law.

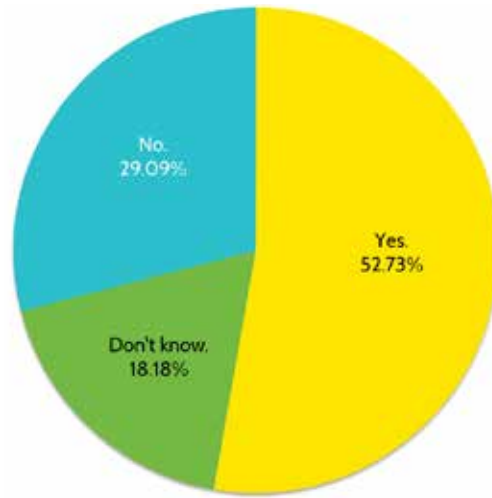
### WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU? MINORS ONLY



### WHY DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE BEST COUNTRY FOR YOU? MINORS ONLY



**DO YOU WANT TO STAY IN FRANCE?**  
MINORS ONLY



**HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR ASYLUM IN FRANCE?**  
MINORS ONLY

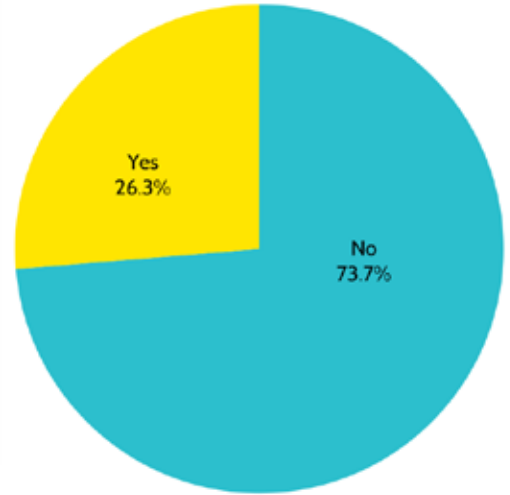


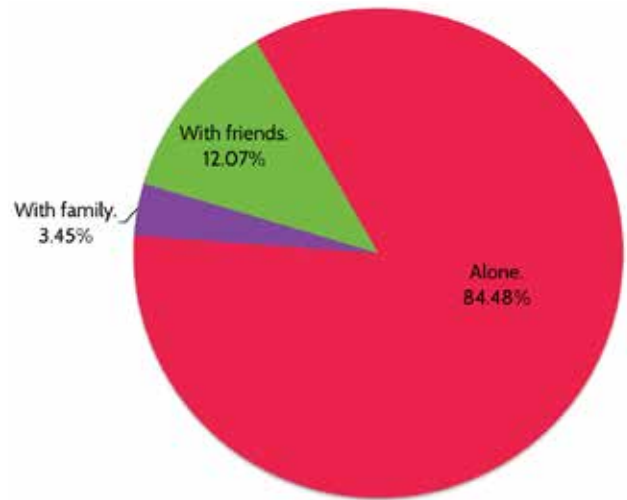
Photo credit: Mohamad Alhusein Saoud



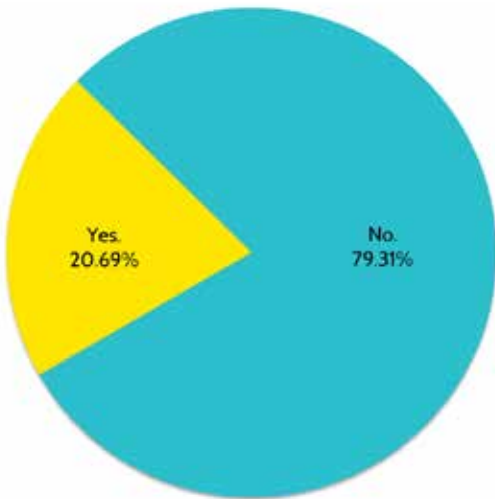
FAMILY RELATIONS

84.5% of the minors we spoke to were unaccompanied. 20.7% of minors stated that they had family in Europe, including cousins, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters and other family members. By far the largest number of minors said they had family in the UK (66.7%), while others reported having family members in Switzerland, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands.

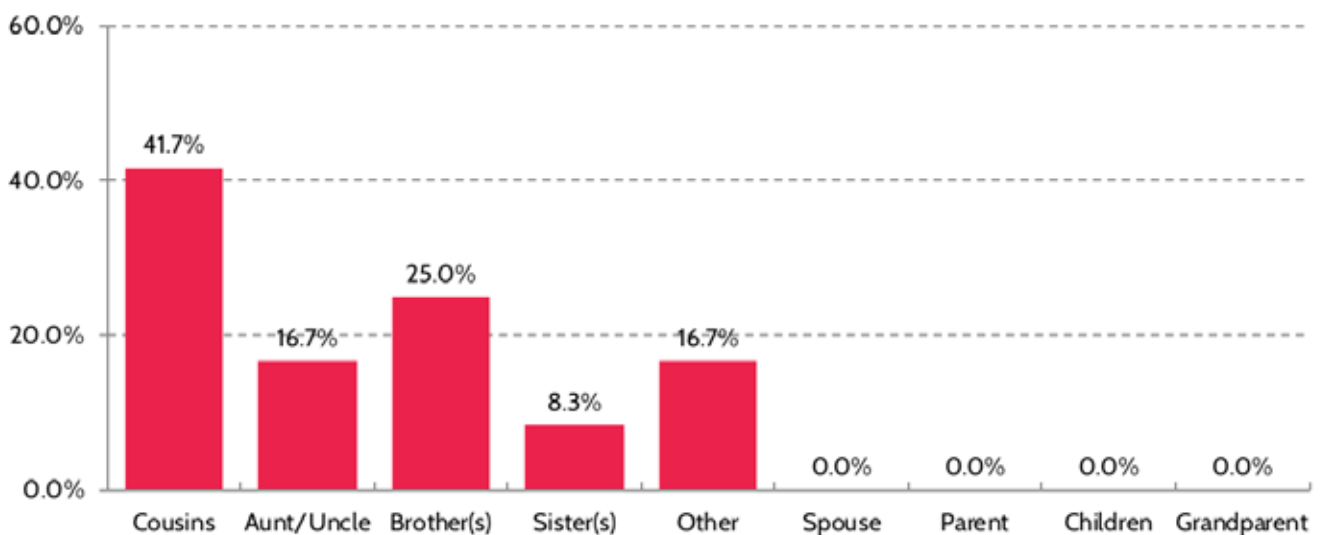
WITH WHOM ARE YOU IN PARIS?  
ALL RESPONDENTS



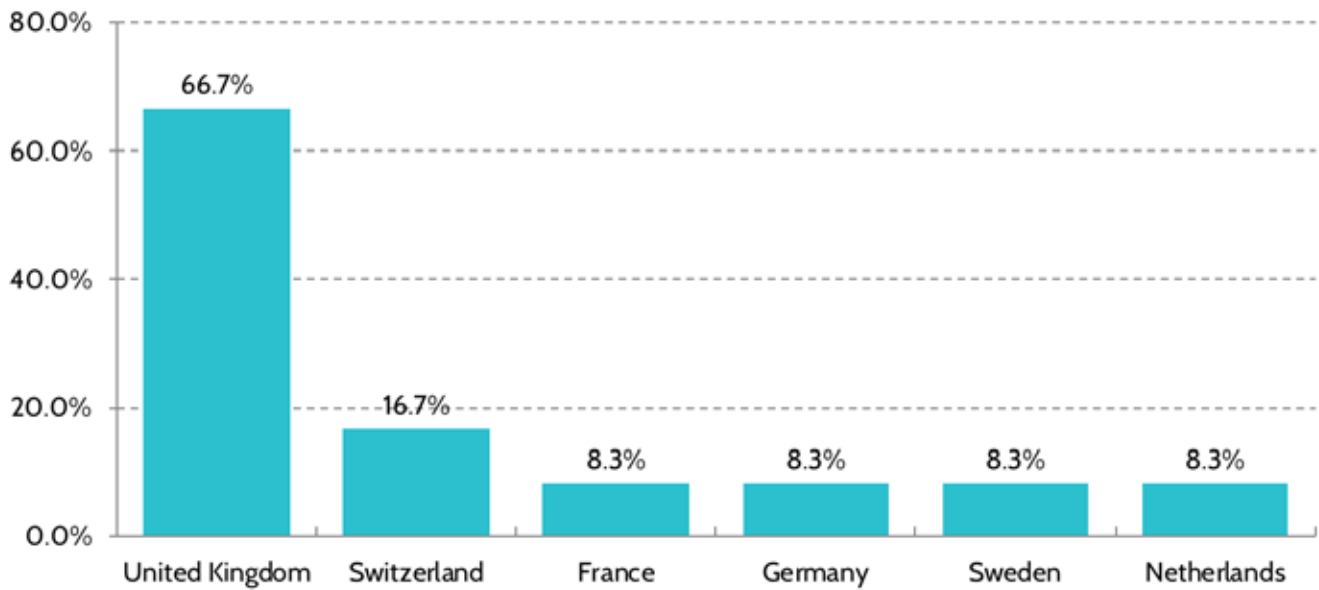
DO YOU HAVE FAMILY IN PARIS?  
ALL RESPONDENTS



WHICH FAMILY MEMBERS?  
ALL RESPONDENTS



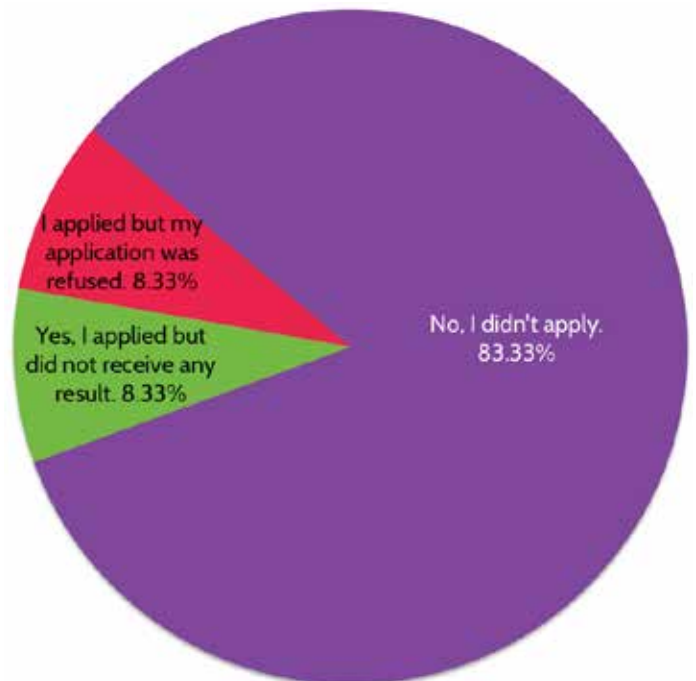
**IN WHICH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DO YOU HAVE FAMILY?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



The high number of minors who said they had family in the UK suggests they could be eligible for transfer under the Dublin Regulation. Worryingly, only 83.3% of minors had applied for family relocation under Dublin. 8.3% reported that their application had been refused, while the same number had applied but not yet received a result.

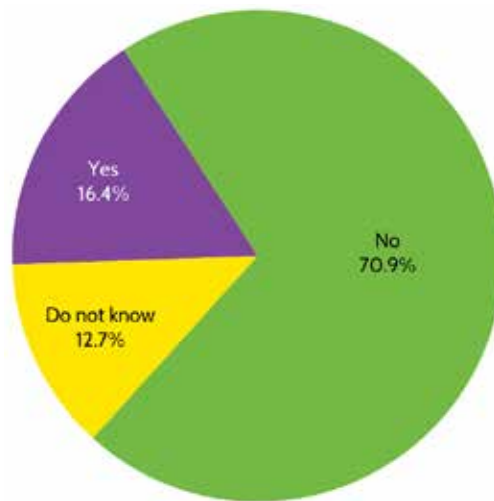
**THE HIGH NUMBER OF MINORS WHO SAID THEY HAD FAMILY IN THE UK SUGGESTS THEY COULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSFER UNDER THE DUBLIN REGULATION.**

**DID YOU APPLY FOR THE DUBLIN PROCESS TO JOIN YOUR FAMILY THERE?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

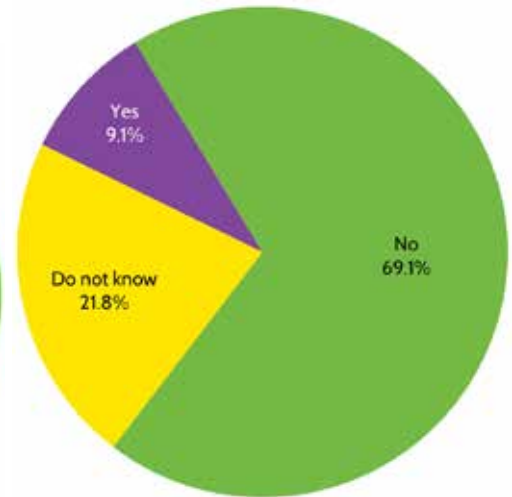


ACCESS TO INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ALTERNATIVES

**DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE YOUR SITUATION?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS



**DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM RULES?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS

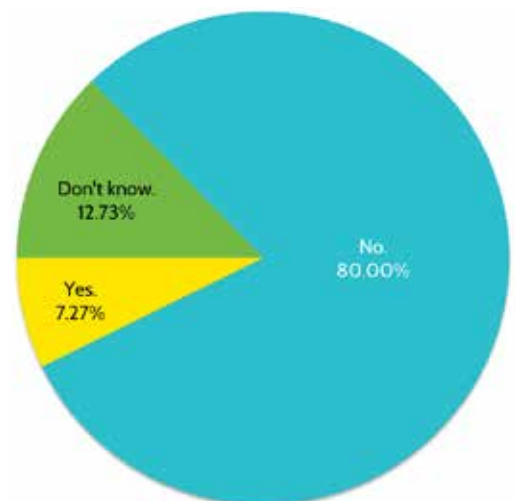


A whole 70.9% of minors we spoke to did not have access to information about their rights and opportunities to change their situation, while a similar figure (69.1%) did not have access to information about European immigration and asylum rules. This is particularly alarming given the number of minors who reported having family in Europe.

**THE LACK OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO MINORS IS LIKELY TO COMPOUND THE UNSAFE AND UNCERTAIN SITUATION IN WHICH MANY CURRENTLY FIND THEMSELVES**

The lack of information available to minors is likely to compound the unsafe and uncertain situation in which many currently find themselves, including extending the amount of time they are living on the streets of Paris.

**CAN YOU GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY?**  
ALL RESPONDENTS





# CONCLUSION

The research findings outlined in this report highlight the extent of the human rights crisis and child protection failure taking place on the streets of Paris.

Specifically, the research findings highlight the following key concerns:

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

A large number of respondents reported feeling unsafe on the streets of Paris, in large parts due to the uncertain living environment in which many displaced people find themselves. Respondents reported abuse by French citizens, which often took the form of verbal, racial abuse. There appears to be little to no support for refugees in Paris wishing to report safety concerns, including a lack of safeguarding procedures for unaccompanied minors in the area.

## POLICE VIOLENCE

While reports of physical violence are indeed lower than the levels reported in Calais, the majority of respondents said they had been subjected to regular tear gassing by the police. This often appeared to take the form of intimidation tactics, in order to try to uproot people from their sleeping spots. Respondents also reported that the police would also occasionally destroy their tents or take their belongings, including shoes and clothes.

## LIVING CONDITIONS

There is no doubt that the living conditions in Paris remain well below international humanitarian standards. Large numbers of refugees remain on the streets in freezing temperatures with little to no access to appropriate sanitation facilities, despite many of them having claimed asylum in France. A number reported not having enough food to eat. Researchers also interviewed a number of unaccompanied minors in the area, many of whom remain on the street despite claiming to be, or having been accepted as, underage.

## HEALTH

As a result of the unsafe and unsanitary living conditions experienced by refugees and displaced people in the area, it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of respondents reported experiencing health issues during their time in France. The extended period of time spent living in displacement is likely to be conducive to poor health, and there appears to be little to no support for a number of displaced people suffering from mental health problems.

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Across Paris, refugees and displaced people have very little access to information about how to change their current situation or of European asylum rules. Nearly half wanted to stay in France. Yet, a large number of respondents reported that they believed the UK was the best country for them but did not know how they could go about reaching the UK. The situation is particularly acute for minors. Of those that had family in the UK, the majority had not applied for family reunion under the Dublin Regulation.

Based on these research findings, the following recommendations are made:

### 1. HUMANE LIVING CONDITIONS

Urgent provision of shelter is required in order to uphold the human rights of displaced people in Paris. The current state response, which appears to centre around creating an unwelcoming environment for refugees and displaced people in Paris, is leaving the majority in inhumane and unsafe conditions that fall short of international standards. Additional accommodation centres are needed, not just in emergency situations such as during extremely low temperatures, to ensure that asylum-seekers are offered basic shelter and food.

### 2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND LEGAL ROUTES TO SAFETY

Information and resources must be made available in order to provide clear and transparent guidelines on French and European asylum rules, in languages that refugees and displaced people can easily make sense of. Moreover, the French government must ensure that displaced people are able to access safe, legal routes, which may further serve to ensure that refugees are not forced to locate to Calais where they may attempt to make the dangerous crossing to the UK. The current situation in which refugees and displaced people are dispersed throughout the city without access to information means many who may be eligible for family reunion under the Dublin Regulation are stuck in sub-standard conditions.

### 3. ENSURING CHILD PROTECTION

The French government must ensure that all children are appropriately age-assessed in a timely and transparent manner. Those who qualify for protection must be granted safe and secure accommodation immediately. Safe accommodation must also be provided for those who are challenging the decision. Given the direct relevance of the situation to the UK government, decisive action ought to be taken in relation to the vulnerable children on the streets of Paris. The implementation of safe legal routes should be considered a matter of priority for the UK Government; many of these children could be granted protection in the UK under the 'Dubs' scheme or may be eligible for family reunification under the Dublin Regulation. Safe legal routes are integral in combating the growing power of traffickers known to exploit vulnerable children and adults in the area, and must not be delayed any further.



Photo credit and copyright: Rose Lecat and Hans Lucas

**In short, effective and long-lasting policy action is urgently needed to secure the human rights of refugees and displaced people on French soil.**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be at the centre of any policy initiative to ensure that refugees and displaced people are given the protection and opportunity expected by international standards.





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