

Supporting people in Detention

If people get arrested by the police around Calais and they do not carry valid documents with them (in some cases even those who have valid documents) the chances are high that they get detained with the goal to deport them either to their country of origin or to where they have been fingerprinted when arriving in Europe.

Where are people brought to?

There are different possibilities for where a person will be detained. Most likely, the person will be brought to the detention centre in Coquelles, a town outside Calais. The other option is that a person will be brought to the detention centre in Lesquin, next to the airport near Lille.

The third option is that people are brought to the airport in Marck, next to Calais, and are flown to any deport centre in France or even directly brought there by car.

If a person is not in Coquelles or Lesquin (Lille), contact either someone from the Legal Team in Calais or call the other deport centres in France in order to see if the person you try to find has been directly brought or transferred to another deport centre.

Location for Coquelles and Lesquin (Lille):

Calais/Coquelles: Hôtel de Police, Bd du Kent, 62231

Bus Nr. 1 from Calais Theatre to Cité Europe

The detention centre is in a compound with the police station and tribunal on the outskirts of Calais. It has capacity for around 100 people. There are 3 different zones where people are held.

Lesquin (Lille) (next to the airport): Route de la Drève, 59810

Shuttle Bus from Lille train station to Airport. From there 15min walk. Shuttle bus back and fourth 10 Euro!

The detention centre has capacity for around 135 people. There are 4 different zones where people are held.

How to contact someone in detention:

- Personal telephone:
People who are detained are normally allowed to keep their telephone as long it does not have a camera. That means if you have a person's telephone try to call that first.
- Phone straight into the detention centre:
You can phone straight into the detention centre. Every zone has its own telephone that can (only) receive phone calls.
The numbers for Coquelles are:
Zone 1: 03 21 00 91 55 – Zone 2: 03 21 00 82 16 – Zone3: 03 21 00 96 99

The numbers for Lesquin (Lille):

Zone A: 03 20 32 76 20 – Zone B: 03 20 32 70 53 – Zone C: 03 20 32 75 31 - Zone D: 03 20 32 75 82 (women and families)

- This number takes you through to the part of the centre where people are detained. Any of the people detained can answer the phone and they may not speak English so it may be hard to get through to the right person the first time you phone.
PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE PERSON DETAINED MAY NOT HAVE GIVEN THEIR REAL NAME TO THE POLICE, ASSUME THAT ANY CONVERSATION YOU HAVE ON THE PHONE CAN BE HEARD BY THE POLICE.

- Contact the organisation working in the detention centre
In every detention centre is one association based there, that should help the people detained with legal support. Sometimes they can as well provide you with information if you are looking after a person.

Contacts for Coquelles are:

France terre d'asile: Tél : 03.21.85.28.46 – Fax : 03.21.85.88.94

Contacts for Lesquin (Lille)

Ordre de Malte: 03 20 85 25 59/06 88 36 89 20 – Fax: 03 20 85 24 92

How to visit someone in detention:

What you need

To visit a person in detention you have to know the name, family name, and nationality of the person. Again, it is possible that the person gave another name to the police rather than the name the person is using outside the police station. If there is any possibility to contact the person by phone, ask specifically about the name and the nationality she/he gave to the police.

The second thing you need is a valid id card or passport. During your visit the police will keep your document. It is possible that they will make a copy of it. If you prefer to stay anonymous in and around Calais, visiting people in the detention centre might not be a good idea.

In the detention centre

Call the association inside the detention centre to check the visiting hours.

You have to either speak with the police or the reception. Maybe they will tell you that the person is not there. Don't trust them. If you can, call the person you want to visit to verify if she/he really got released or transferred. If you verified that the person is indeed in the detention centre and the police still refuse you to access to visit her/him, you can try to contact the association inside the detention centre. Maybe they can facilitate between you and the police.

After, it very much depends on the cops how many people you can see and for how long. Before you will see the person, you and your bag will probably be searched by police. So be

careful about what you bring with you.

The visit have to happen in a visitors cabin where you have to be alone even if it happens that police try to be present and refuse to give you access to those cabins and let you anywhere else.

If you want to bring things

The best might be to speak with the person detained and ask if she/he has any needs. In general telephones without cameras, telephone credit, tobacco, card games, pen & paper, food, letters from friends, etc. have been appreciated. It is unlikely that you can bring anything that is not closed (e.g. packets tobacco that are open). You can as well bring money or documents but you have to be aware that police will take the documents and maybe the money, so you have to check that they register what you brought.

Questions about the conditions / testimonies

Please understand if the person detained doesn't want to talk too much about what had happened to them but only want to have 10 minutes to think about something else. As well, the person might not be in very good emotional condition. Please be very careful about what you are asking and saying. It is likely that the person you meet will not trust you easily.

But if you and the person feel comfortable, you can ask about the conditions in the detention centre. You can also note questions the person has and try to find answers. You can ask questions about the personal situation and the situation in the centre in general. For example:

- If the centre is full/if many new people arrived
- If there are people who are there for more than 25 days
- The nationalities of other people detained
- If other people detained get transferred to another detention centre in France
- If there are people who got deported back from the UK

If the person wants to write a testimony about the repression she/he faced in the detention centre, and wants it to be published, there is the Belgium blog that collects voices from people detained. You can find them on <http://www.gettingthevoiceout.org> or you can contact calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com who can put it on their blog as well. But be 100% sure that the person detained wants to publish the text.

How to go to the tribunal

On the 5th and 25th day of detention, the person will probably pass in a court, often either in Lesquin (Lille) or directly in Coquelles. The trial can happen in the administrative court (Tribunal Administratif) or in regular court (Tribunal de Grande Instance). Ask the association inside to get this information.

You can go to see the trial but you will be searched and maybe ID checked at the entrance of the court.

The Court of Coquelles is next to the CRA and it happens very often that the cops prevent people to enter inside, which is something you can also testify about. It can be useful to send your testimony either to the Legal Team, to the association in the deport centre, or to the person's lawyer.

The court of Lille (Tribunal Administratif) is at : 5 Rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 59000 Lille

The other court of Lille (Tribunal de Grande Instance) is at: 13 Avenue du Peuple Belge, 59000 Lille

Legal advice

There is only little you can do to help the person to be released. So be very careful in making promises about getting the person out, which you might not be able to keep. As well, be careful to not give any legal advice if you are not 100% sure about it.

Normally it is the job of the people who work for the association inside the detention centre to help with all legal questions, appeals, etc. There is no guarantee that they really have been speaking to all the people detained.

There are some very important points you should tell the person you visit:

- ask the police to have an interview with the association if it didn't happen yet
- ask the association inside the detention centre to call against the deportation notice if it is not done yet
- distrust the advice of claiming asylum to counter the deportation notice, it is very difficult to do so and the reject rate inside the deport centres is very high. Even though it is sometimes the only way to prevent a deportation, it is often done at the last minute when all the other ways failed.
- not sign any document that the person doesn't fully understand. The police often try to set up a meeting between the person under deportation notice and the ambassador from her/his country of origin in order to make her/him sign a voluntary return agreement, and they rarely translate this document as a common strategy to deport people without a legal process.

The people can only be detained 45 days in a detention centre, or more precisely 5 days plus 25 days plus 15 days with a trial between each step.

The office of the association inside the Coquelles detention centre is open, Mon-Fri 9am-1pm and 2pm-5.30pm. If you want more information on the asylum process they have an office both in town and in the detention centre. If anything is unclear you can contact them at:

Office in Coquelles detention centre: 03 21 85 28 46

Office in town: 03 21 19 66 09

At the time of writing France Terre D'Asile were happy for us to call at any time with questions. If you are unsure of the person's full name in detention it may be worth asking them. They may or may not be willing to give it!

While a lot of the details listed here are specific to Coquelles and Lesquin (Lille), the process for supporting people in detention and rules for contacting/visiting/asylum are mostly the same for other detention centres across France.