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Calais refugees

Aid convoy to Calais turned back

- News from around the world -

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This statement was made by the People's Assembly (anti-austerity movement in Britain) at 4.15 pm (British time) on Saturday 18 June. That morning a convoy of 250 vehicles had left London carrying aid for the refugees in camps around Calais, France.

The Convoy to Calais is making its way to the French Embassy in London to protest at the refusal to allow them across the Channel to deliver much needed aid to refugees.

A demonstration at Dover shut the ferry terminal for two hours following a protest at the decision to block the vehicles from crossing. As British police halted the Convoy at border control, they were met with chants of 'We've got aid, let us through, refugees are people too'.

Hundreds of vehicles that had arrived with aid were turned back after negotiations with the French authorities failed. Although they agreed to allow a 38 tonne truck loaded with aid on to the EuroTunnel they refused to allow the Convoy on to the ferry.

Earlier Kent Police were caught taking down number plates of vehicles that had grouped in a Service Station just outside Dover. When questioned they stated that they were doing it at the request of the French authorities.

While a vehicle of aid from UK charity War on Want made the crossing, a group from Doncaster also delivering aid were detained and banned from France for 24 hours. The port at Calais was shut for 7 hours as refugees tried to swim out to reach boats.

"This is a disgraceful attack on both the refugees, some of the most desperate people on the planet, but also an attack on our rights. The truth is the French and British government are embarrassed by the situation in Calais and their response to the crisis reflects the utter contempt they have for the refugees. We won't let the refugees be forgotten & this decision to ban the aid convoy will only fuel the anger that so many people already have about this unnecessary humanitarian crisis." - Sam Fairbairn - National Secretary, People's Assembly

"An operation to thwart solidarity and aid to refugees should be utterly condemned we should be welcoming refugees in and letting aid out. We will not stop until refugees are treated with dignity, humanity and respect. Much of the EU referendum debate has been toxic and aimed at scapegoating migrants and refugees. Today we showed there is huge support for refugees. Cameron should listen to the public and let refugees in." - Weyman Bennett - Stand Up To Racism