

Synopsis:

MANY STATISTICS, ONE FACE!

Photography report by
Bertrand GAUDILLÈRE / item

France - 2011

« Many Statistics, one face », is above all a story of a battle. That of a man, Guilherme, an illegal Angolan migrant who fights to continue to live in France. That of hundreds of anonymous people who have decided to rise up together against the politics of statistics. It is also the work of photographer Bertrand Gaudillère who set out to expose the many experiences that make this one story, where the determination of the administration is matched only by the collective determination to fight against its arbitrariness.

In France, under the presidency of the UMP, the number of foreigners arrested for violation of the residency laws went from 62 233 in 2002 to 119 761 in 2008, an increase of 92%.

The Statistics*:

24 : the number of retention centres in France.

1693 : the number of places in the retention centres.

32 268 : the number of people retained in a year.

29 796 : the number of deportations in a year

230 : the number of children placed in retention centres with their parents.

32 : the average age of those retained.

10,71 jours : the average length of retention period.

32 days : the maximum length of retention.

533 millions euros : the annual cost of deportation

17 000 euros : the average cost of one deportation.

160 000 euros : the estimated cost of the attempts to deport Guilherme.

*According to the Cimade's annual report for 2008

A face :

That of Guilherme H. Azanga, illegal Angolais worker aged 45, father of two children who were born in France.

A face among others, a reminder that there are people behind the statistics. A reminder that there are many people who do not accept this policy of statistics. This policy has existed since 2003, for the first time in history demanding annual quotas of deportation.

The solidarity, commitment and determination that animates the committee of support for Guilherme is proof of this defiance. Their actions and their pugnacity serve as a reminder of people's indignation when faced with unbearable situations where injustice is met with arbitrariness.

Together, they join in civil objection, saying no to what they believe is violence against a man. It is a battle of what is legal versus what is just, where citizens are faced with an administrative machine, where they denounce their neighbour or their friend, whose fault is simply not having been born in France.

« Statistics, one face » puts this mobilization of citizens in images so that the urgency and precariousness of the situation is not forgotten. The story of Guilherme and his supporters is not unique. It is simply the result of a political will to apply precepts which are always more numerous and more restrictive in regards to the entry and regularisation of foreigners on French soil. A tightening of laws is justified by a political discourse on security which, with the successive ministers of immigration, Brice Hortefeux, Eric Besson and Claude Guéant, under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, has the tendency to make immigration responsible for insecurity, even though the number of migrants has remained almost unchanged for 10 years, which makes 75000 migrants.

The Besson law, voted 11th May 2011, plans to extend the length of retention from 32 to 45 days, to create temporary waiting zones in France, to create the notion of « grey » marriages instead of mixed marriages, to ban those who have been deported to return to French territory, to defer the intervention of the « juge des libertés » (a judge specialized in deciding if someone has to be put in custody during the investigation of his case) to five days instead of two, as well as a tightening of the right of residence for foreigners who are ill.

The CESEDA (laws of entry and residency for foreigners and the law of asylum) has been changed five times in seven years.