

# THE DEPORTATION AND DETENTION BUSINESS



a bad investment

### Introduction

In all European countries, since more than a decade, actions and campaigns take place against the enterprises taking part in the deportation and detention of illegal migrants. The first campaigns focused mainly on airlines: several actions were taken against different airline companies (Lufthansa, Air France, Swissair, Sabena, British Airways, Iberia...).

In several countries actions took place at the airports to prevent deportations, especially by talking to the passengers into imposing that the migrants be disembarked. Some airlines renounced, at least officially, to accept forced deportations on their flights, or reduced the acceptance of deportees on board; concrete examples are Sabena, France Air Afrique, Switzerland Swiss Air, KLM and Lufthansa<sup>12</sup>.

In the last years, there is an ongoing outsourcing process concerning the detention facilities and the deportation services, which increasingly sees private companies taking responsibility for tasks that were before carried out by state bodies. Also for this reason, anti-deportation campaigns have broadened their spectrum and started to concen-

trate on construction companies and architects studios which build and repair detention centres, companies and charities which manage detention facilities, companies which provide guards and other services like catering and logistics.

Several actions and statements took place against these companies which are labelled as profiteers. They range from public statements, press releases and communication strategies aimed to ruin the reputation of those companies, demonstrations and public sit-ins, illegal actions - including vandalisms and sabotages - aimed at causing direct economical damage to these companies. Sometimes managers of these companies received home visits or some hacking actions had taken place. Blacklists of involved companies were made available on public websites, and some large companies heavily involved in the business were specifically targeted by public campaigns or by several direct actions.

The economical damage produced by these blacklisting campaigns is relevant. First of all the shaming of a company damages its public reputation - what is usually called reputational risk. Second, direct actions cause a direct negative economic impact on a company and disrupt its activity (economic risk). Blockages,

sabotages, disruptions negatively affect the daily function-

list some campaigns and direct actions directed against com-



ing of the company, cause property losses, etc. Furthermore, campaigns and direct actions cause indirect damage, that is as relevant as the direct one. Companies have to reorganize their daily routines in order to improve their security, increase their time of delivery and are less reliable in the eyes of their customer.

The aim of this report is to illustrate which risks a company exposes itself to choosing to participate to the deportation and detention business.

This report starts briefly by illustrating the shameful detention of illegal migrants in European detention centres. In the second chapter, we discuss and

panies involved in the sector. In the third chapter, we present some European blacklists published on detention profiteers. We finally analyse the economical and reputational impact of these campaigns, basing our considerations mainly on a detailed report of the Dutch Institute for Security and Crisis Management.

### Migrants detention in Europe

Every year in the European Union more than 150 000 migrants with an irregular residence status experience a period of freedom deprivation in a detention centre. Many of them are deported back to their country of

1 //http://www.statewatch.org/news/2003/aug/03deport.htm//  
2 http://noborder.org/avia/display.php?id=14

## The deportation and detention business

origin or to a third part transit country.

Generally speaking, foreign nationals are placed in these centres due to their illegal status relative to the entry and residence laws in the country. They can be

detention system is prison-like: confinement to small cells for most of the day, restriction of time in the open air, limited visiting rights, very strict disciplinary rules, handcuffing, frequent use of solitary confinement.



detained at different points in the migratory process upon arrival in the country, during their stay if arrested and without a legal residence permit, or at the end of their migration to enable expulsion (removal or expulsion). Unauthorised and rejected asylum-seekers can be detained in these centres.

The detention conditions are harsh and often dramatic. The

Access to a medical and psychological examination is not systematically and sufficiently guaranteed. Medical services are available in limited capacity in relation to the number of people involved. The need for an independent diagnosis is ignored.

According to a STEPS/CIMADE report “the detention in a centre leads to the creation or to the worsening of psychological



troubles of detainees, that may turn out dramatic in the case of detained children”. The detention conditions, the opacity of procedures, the lack of information of detainees on their rights, the problems in accessing an adequate legal assistance constitute further factors of stress. The frequency of violences acted by detainees against themselves (suicide, self-harming, hunger strike) shows the difficult psychological situation of detainees.<sup>34</sup>

## Campaigns and Direct actions - an overview

Many campaigns against deten-

- 3 STEPS / CIMADE (2007) The conditions in centres for third country national (detention camps, open centres as well as transit centres and transit zones) with a particular focus on provisions and facilities for persons with special needs in the 25 EU member states
- 4 Migreurop (2009) Atlas of migrants in Europe

tion profiteers took place in several countries, but it is worth to present the cases of the Netherlands and Belgium, where these campaign took the larger extent.

In the Netherlands in 2010 a campaign against Bam, the construction company which is building the new large detention complex in Schipol, was launched. A website of the campaign (imitating the graphic style of Bam) was published, and several actions were undertaken against this company.<sup>5</sup> Some noise demonstrations in front of the offices and a fake disinfection (with the presence of media) in the head quarter of the company took place<sup>6</sup>. The fake disinfection drove quite some media attention: 20 activists dressed in white biohazard suits acted to clean up the whole building from the dirty business of the company. One night, 3

- 5 [http://www.jcschiphol.nl/Laatste\\_nieuws.html#witteveen](http://www.jcschiphol.nl/Laatste_nieuws.html#witteveen)
- 6 [http://www.bambesmetbedrijf.nl/BAM\\_ontsmetting.html](http://www.bambesmetbedrijf.nl/BAM_ontsmetting.html)

## The deportation and detention business

different offices of the firm were glued and tagged. The director of BAM PPP received a home visit with red paint and tags on the wall of the house, and several small communicative actions and small sabotages took place (like tags on offices and construction sites, diffusion of stickers sham-

in different construction sites of the company<sup>89</sup>. Even an unusual hacking action took place: the day before the official announcement of the annual financial result, a fake press release of Bam presenting a financial statement with terrible annual economic results was e-mailed (from the



ing the company). In October 2011 the construction site of the Schiphol complex was blocked by activists who locked to the gate from 5 to 10 am, until they were removed by a special unit of police<sup>7</sup>. Other militant actions took place: 3 trailers were burnt

7 [http://www.bambesmetbedrijf.nl/BAM\\_blokkade\\_bouwterrein.html](http://www.bambesmetbedrijf.nl/BAM_blokkade_bouwterrein.html)

official Bam mail address) to a large list of financial actors and press<sup>10</sup>. The mainstream press of-

8 [www.at5.nl/artikelen/64413/linkse-activisten-slopen-bouwketens](http://www.at5.nl/artikelen/64413/linkse-activisten-slopen-bouwketens)

9 <http://www.indymedia.nl/nl/2011/09/78165.shtml>

10 [http://www.jcschiphol.nl/pdf/Cobouw\\_valse\\_jaarcijfers\\_bam\\_in\\_omloop.pdf](http://www.jcschiphol.nl/pdf/Cobouw_valse_jaarcijfers_bam_in_omloop.pdf)



ten reported about those actions and the Dutch Metro defined the activists as a relevant problem ("a pain in the ass") for those companies<sup>11</sup>.

This is not the first large campaign in the Netherlands: from 2007 to 2010, the DC16 campaign was active. It was directed against the construction and the management of the new detention and deportation centre in Rotterdam by the consortium DC16, and it targeted the firms involved in the consortium. A website including information on the companies participating to the consortium and on actions against them was created<sup>12</sup>. The campaign

11 [http://www.jcschiphol.nl/pdf/20110630\\_MetroHolland.pdf](http://www.jcschiphol.nl/pdf/20110630_MetroHolland.pdf)

12 <http://www.dc-16.nl/>

included tens of public actions like noise demonstrations and die-ins, targeting on one hand the construction site and on the other hand the offices of the profiteers (mainly architects, engineers and developers), including some home visits to the managers of these firms (houses were tagged and coloured with red paint, and some cars had their tires flattened)<sup>13</sup>. The head quarter of a company was occupied. On the 25th of March 2010, the construction site of the detention centre was blocked by half an hundred activists<sup>14</sup>. Also more militant actions took place: two arsons were set respectively to the

13 [http://www.dc-16.nl/gevoerde\\_acties.html](http://www.dc-16.nl/gevoerde_acties.html)

14 [http://www.dc-16.nl/blokkade\\_bezetting\\_bouw.html](http://www.dc-16.nl/blokkade_bezetting_bouw.html)

construction site of the detention centre itself in August 2009, and to the offices of Strukton, a civil engineering company participating to the consortium, in June 2010<sup>1516171819</sup>.

In UK mainly the companies managing detention centres were targeted by activists. Between them the large corporations G4s, Serco, GEO Group Inc. and the charity Barnardo's. G4s manages five detention facilities in the UK, Serco three, GEO Group Inc. one<sup>20</sup>. Protests and sit-ins took place against these companies, and GEO Group Inc was victim of a hacking action which defaced its websites<sup>21</sup>. Barnardo's was the target of a campaign, including demonstrations, press releases, occupations of offices, disruption of public events and a phone

15 <http://www.indymedia.nl/nl/2009/08/61170.shtml>

16 [http://www.blikopnieuws.nl/bericht/101679/Grote\\_brand\\_op\\_terrein\\_Rotterdam\\_Airport.html](http://www.blikopnieuws.nl/bericht/101679/Grote_brand_op_terrein_Rotterdam_Airport.html)

17 [http://binnenland.nieuws.nl/566364/actiegroep\\_stichtte\\_brand\\_bij\\_rotterdam\\_airport](http://binnenland.nieuws.nl/566364/actiegroep_stichtte_brand_bij_rotterdam_airport)

18 <http://www.indymedia.nl/nl/2010/06/68319.shtml>

19 <http://www.rtvutrecht.nl/nieuws/192167>

20 <http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3751>

21 <http://network23.org/bristolnoborders/2012/02/24/lutz-antsec-hackers-take-down-asylumprison-profiteers-website/>

blockage<sup>22</sup>.

In Belgium, even though no official campaign was launched, several actions took place mainly against the companies involved in the construction of the new detention centre 127 ter, especially against the main developer Besix. The Belgian Security Service reported that only in 2010 dozens of actions took place against the construction of the centre. Much property damage occurred on the site, a demonstration arrived to the site, the construction site was blocked for a day by 50 activists. The construction eventually was finalized, but with a delay of one year and a half. During the proceeding of the works unexplained inconvenience came up slowing down the ending of the building, like doors that were delivered with handle at the wrong side<sup>23</sup>. A



22 <http://london.noborders.org.uk/barnardos>

23 [http://www.standaard.be/artikel/detail.aspx?artikelid=DMF20120203\\_16](http://www.standaard.be/artikel/detail.aspx?artikelid=DMF20120203_16)



blog listing all the companies and professionals involved in the construction of the centre was published on the web. Several actions against these companies took place, far from the 127 ter site, throughout the country, targeting mainly Besix. They ranged from tagging to more serious property damage. Few examples: in October 2010, two arson attacks took place simultaneously on a Besix construction site and on the Bon-tinck architect studio (which designed the 127 ter) in Ghent<sup>24</sup>; in October 2009, around twenty masked people raided the Besix offices in Ghent, causing serious damage<sup>25</sup>.

24 <http://ovl.indymedia.org/news/2010/10/30800.php>

25 <http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/989/Binnenland/article/detail/1016191/2009/10/15/Vandalen-vernielen-bedrijf-dat-nieuw-transitcentrum-bouwt.dhtml>

## Existing blacklists

Here is an overview of European existing blacklists.

### The Netherlands

We extensively discussed before on the main campaigns which took place in the Netherlands. A very large and detailed blacklist is available on: [www.aagu.nl/PDF/De\\_schandpaal\\_2.pdf](http://www.aagu.nl/PDF/De_schandpaal_2.pdf)

### Belgium

In Belgium, an extensive list including many companies and institution involved in the deportation system was published on: <http://blackliststeenokkerzeel.blogspot.com/>

## Impact of campaigns

These campaigns have a relevant impact on the affected companies. According to a report of the Dutch 'Instituut voor Veiligheids- en Crisismanagement', there are several ways in which companies are affected<sup>26</sup>.

First of all, the extra costs caused by the campaigns: the targeted companies have to make relevant investments for security measures, for training

26 [www.nuansa.nl/documentatie/onderzoeken/een-verkennend-onderzoek-naar-links-en-dierenrechten-activisme-en-extremisme-in-rotterdam](http://www.nuansa.nl/documentatie/onderzoeken/een-verkennend-onderzoek-naar-links-en-dierenrechten-activisme-en-extremisme-in-rotterdam)

## The deportation and detention business

their staff according to the new procedures, for cleaning and fixing after a direct action, etc. According to the report, a company had to support extra costs for around 100 000 Euro over a period of two years.

The public image of a firm can be seriously deteriorated by continuous actions, with several implications:

- \* companies have to be more secret about their projects, partners and staff information;

- \* companies have to adopt a more strict access control to their buildings, which leads to customer unfriendly situations;

- \* searching for the companies on the Internet yields more negative results (i.e. actions against them) than positive ones.

Finally, these campaign put companies in a situation of constant fear and uncertainty: harder actions are never announced before, and so this situation leads to a feeling of insecurity about possible future retaliations, as each blacklisted company could be a target any time.

One aspect which is scarcely explored by the Dutch report but still quite relevant for the business of companies operative in the sector is the reputational impact. The reputation of a company is damaged when people who had never questioned the companies' practices witness an action or read about it in the media, and start to associate the company with a negative image.

Furthermore, there is a risk related to the trustworthiness of business toward customer. The threat (real or imaginary) posed by a direct action campaign to the daily function of a company may lead customers to question the reliability and the security of the company as a partner.

So, if you still feel like wasting your time by investing your money in the most profitable way, think again about investing in this sector.



## A bad investment

In Annex to this report the Belgian and Dutch blacklists of firms involved in the detention and deportation business. Nouveau centre fermé / Nieuw gesloten centrum STEENOKKERZEEL

De volgende bedrijven werken mee aan de bouw van een nieuw gesloten centrum in Steenokkerzeel. De werken begonnen in mei 2009 en zouden 300 werkdagen duren.

## The Black List Steenokkerzeel

### Nieuw gesloten centrum in aanbouw / Nouveau centre fermé en construction



Monday, 3 August 2009

### Nouveau centre fermé / Nieuw gesloten centrum STEENOKKERZEEL

De volgende bedrijven werken mee aan de bouw van een nieuw gesloten centrum in Steenokkerzeel. De werken begonnen in mei 2009 en zouden 300 werkdagen duren.

Les entreprises suivantes participent à la construction d'un nouveau centre fermé à Steenokkerzeel. Les travaux ont commencé début mai 2009.

### Categories

- A. Nouveau centre fermé / Nieuw gesloten centrum STEENOKKERZEEL
- B. centres fermés/gesloten centra
- C. prisons/gevangenissen

### Blog Archive

- ▼ 2009 (4)
  - ▼ August (4)
    - Nouveau centre fermé / Nieuw gesloten centrum STEE...
    - Centres fermés / Gesloten centra
    - Prisons / Gevangenissen
    - empty

THE BRUSSELS AIRPORT COMPANY (BIAC)  
*Eigenaar van het bouwterrein / Propriétaire du terrain*



BESIX  
*Groep van bouwondernemingen / Groupe d'entreprises de construction*



omvat/englobe :  
BESIX R.E.D.  
SANOTEC  
COBELBA  
JACQUES DELENS  
LUX TP  
SIX CONSTRUCT  
SOCOGETRA  
SUD CONSTRUCT  
VAN BRITSOM & VERHEYE  
VANHOUT  
WUST

Gemeenschappenlaan 100  
Woluwe

Tel. 02/402 62 11  
Fax: 02/402 62 00

Leiding: Johan Beerlandt