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## **French authorities forcibly evict 150, including 60 children**

The French authorities' evictions of Romani communities across the country continue to flout international law a year after the government published an inter-ministerial circular on the issue, Amnesty International said from the scene of a forced eviction of 150 people outside Paris this morning.

Amnesty International's France researcher witnessed how, beginning early this morning, police carried out the forced eviction of Romani families, including some 60 children, from a camp in Bobigny where some families had been living for up to three years. Half the camp's children attend school locally, and have now been made homeless as school starts next week.

Today's eviction was just the latest in a series of such actions by the authorities, which have left hundreds homeless across France.

"I woke up at 6 am this morning, the police came and it scared us. I knew we would have to leave, my mother had told me so. I don't know where my family and I will go now. I don't know if we will be able to go to school, but we definitely want to go. Today I was supposed to go to a refreshers course because next week I will start secondary school, but now I can't go," said David, aged 12.

This is the fifth time David and his family – five brothers and sisters aged 4 to 28 – have been evicted.

Nadka, a 46-year-old Bulgarian woman who has lived in France for a decade was evicted from her makeshift home in the camp this morning, along with her husband and 16-year-old daughter.

She was crying and was very scared, because her home was situated on the part of the camp for which there was no eviction order, and so she didn't know if she would be able to return to her home tonight, or if she would be able to find her belongings again. She said she is ill with asthma and has received no offer of an alternative housing solution. Along with other evicted people, she waited in front of the camp to see if she could return to her home, not knowing what would happen.

The informal settlement forcibly evicted in Bobigny today belonged to three different owners. Eviction orders had been rendered for two of the three plots of land, yet the entire settlement was evicted. No one received adequate notice and information, no consultation was carried out with the families, and only three families received temporary shelter. The rest were made homeless.

Today's eviction comes a year after the French authorities agreed a new action circular "related to anticipating and accompanying the evacuation of illegal [settlements]" on 26 August 2012 giving discretionary best-practice guidelines on how to carry out evictions .

This morning the Bobigny's prefect of police said: "We work strictly in accordance with the circular. In the 93rd department we conduct eviction operations every Tuesday."

"This morning, I saw entire families being rendered homeless and forced to leave everything behind.

People did not know what to do or where to go,” said Marion Cadier, Amnesty International researcher on France.

“It is unacceptable that a year on from the inter-ministerial circular, hundreds of Roma families up and down the country are made to face the same fate over and over again. It's time for France to stop forcibly evicting people, and to respect international human rights law.”

Amnesty International has been researching forced evictions in greater Paris and other regions of France. Under international human rights law, evictions can only be carried out when appropriate procedural protections are in place; adequate alternative accommodation provided; and relocated residents offered compensation for all losses.

The organization’s 2012 report *Chased Away: Forced Evictions of Roma in Ile-de-France* examined the repeated forced evictions faced by Roma people in greater Paris. On 26 September it will publish a second report looking into forced evictions in Lille and Lyon.