Census of forced evictions in living areas occupied by Roma (or persons designed as such) in France

(2015)

1. Summary

An undignified, inhuman, and degrading situation

During 2015, 11,128 people were forcibly evicted by the authorities from 111 living sites. 410 persons had to leave five sites due to a fire. These figures demonstrate that 60% of those living in slums have been forcefully evicted by the authorities during 2015, half of them in the summer period.

There were 76 forced evictions in response to a summoning by the landowners for illegal occupation/establishment of squats in their properties, 31 following a notice of insalubrity or risk, taken by the local authorities (municipality) or the prefect. In 4 of the cases people left the slum themselves under the threat of imminent forced eviction. For 111 evictions executed by authorities, temporary shelter solutions have been proposed only 29 times. Following other 82 evictions, families were left in the street by the police. In regards to 5 evacuations following the fire, emergency shelter has been proposed on only two occasions.

Since the beginning of the year, the Region Ile de France continues to focus 62% of evictees. The analysis based on the type of the land’s owner shows that practically 80% of the land where forced evictions have been executed, are public. As the distribution of the slums represents an almost equal ratio between public and private land it can be noticed that the forced evictions are much more likely to happen when the slums are situated on a public land. Hence, these forced evictions are an illustration of a political willingness of State’s authorities for rejecting the evictees. Thus, a systemic discrimination against this population practiced by the State has been observed. This fact shows that the purpose of this State policy of systemic forced evictions is not being implemented for defending the private property (this is a pretext which is often used for justification) since the owners are public bodies in the majority of the cases.

We consider that the circular of 26 August 2012 remains a dead letter.

The latest international responses regarding France attitude in the field are heavy. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, as well as the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights have all been clear and forthright in their condemnation of France’s behaviour towards Roma.

"It appears more and more clear that there is a systematic national policy of forced evictions of Roma," the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein stated. This policy of eviction is disgraceful because it leads only to aggravation of the precarious situation of the evictees; it is inhuman because it left families, women and children in the street; it is degrading because since several years these persons continue to be constantly chased; they face eviction after eviction without having been proposed any alternative solutions.

On the other hand, it has been noticed that State Consul condemned the State to make "the jungle" of Callais (where live more than 6000 migrants) more dignified place in order "to stop the serious

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1Zeid Ra‘ad Al Hussein exhorte France and Bulgarie to stop forced evictions of Roma, Presse release of UN, Geneve, 11th Septembre 2015
infringement" of "the fundamental freedoms of the migrants living in that area". This juridical decision is supposed to provide a relevant jurisprudence in the field.

This is not only for Roma, but for all these people living in extreme precariousness, we continue to recommend the suspension of systematic expulsions, securing and providing sanitation of slums, the implementation of solutions for integration of families through the common law and this before any eviction, and for all families throughout the country. The monitoring of these policies should be organized in the framework of a permanent dialogue between local (municipalities, departments), regional and national authorities and the public and local associations active on the ground.

Note:

This census is the result of joint work between the League of Human Rights (LDH) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). Without pretending to be exhaustive in the situation given the lack of official data available, however this census would be the most objective expression.
2. Development from previous periods

The following tables detail the different identified numbers and their trend. This analysis shows that the number of evicted people during 2015 represents almost two-thirds of the identified persons living in slums. It demonstrates also that approximately the half of the evictees have been forcibly evicted during the third quarter of the year, which makes the summer period the most intensive for forced evictions.

Note: These estimates do not include removals from the territory following an administrative decision or repatriation by charter OFII.

3. Geographical representation of the evictees per region

Ile de France, with 62% of the total, is the region where most people were evicted by the authorities. It is followed by the Rhône-Alpes (11%), Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (9%), des Pays de Loire (8%), Aquitaine (4%), Nord-Pas-de-Calais (3%), Midi-Pyrénées (1%).
Compared with previous periods, it should be noted that Pays de Loire is the third highest region of evictions as this area was previously considered to be calmer. The region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur reappears in the rankings for this period. This shows that forced evictions have been practiced during 2015 all over the country, and were particularly intensive in the big conglomerations, especially in Ile de France.

4. Analysis of the evictions based on the type of land’s owner

This year the census includes the type of the land’s owner: public body (a municipality, department, administration, para-public body, mixt society for development) or private person. In 79% of the cases the evacuations concern slums or squats situated on land owned by public bodies against 21% owned by private person. Well, according to the census of Interministerial Delegation for access to housing and accommodation published on 15th December 2015, 55% of the lands occupied by slums are public properties compared to 43% of those located on private lands. Logically, the distribution of the evacuated lands shall be similar to that ratio, but in reality evictions are much more likely to be executed when the land is public. In addition, in only 5% of the cases, including the space defined as public land, the forced evictions are justified with a future building project.

5. Harassment, rejections, endangers, threats

The list below is not exhaustive, but presents some examples of acts of violence, hate speech and discrimination during 2015. Exacerbation of the tensions and increase of acts of violence, hate speech and cases of rejection of Roma or people identified as such, have been noticed. This clearly illustrates an alarming rise of anti-Gypsyism which has already shown to be at high level in France.

During the 1st quarter:

- In early January, the mayor of Champlan refused to bury a Roma child in the cemetery of the town.

- "The January 1, Francesca, a Roma baby two months old, died in her mother’s arms, in the Lille-Flandres station. The cause of death has not been identified. But beyond that, what is worrying defenders of the Roma community, is how the infant died: on the street.”

- On February 8, a Roma slum was attacked by gunmen, police officers of the BAC, according to a testimony published by Mediapart.

- The Mayor of Limeil-Brévannes has launched a petition to the population of the municipality requesting the evacuation of a Roma slums installed near a new neighborhood. The petition is entitled "To the Prefecture evaucates the Roma settlement, I defend my quality of life.”

- What was circulated in a leaflet (one of many) during the departmental elections demonstrates a rise of anti-Gypsyism: "Insecurity, burglary, antisocial behavior detrimental to the tranquility of the neighborhood. We are committed to halting the extension of the halting/sedentary area

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2 Roms: le maire de Champlan est un récidiviste, Carine Fouteau et Ellen Salvi, Mediapart, 6th of January 2015
3 Mort du bébé rom, début janvier à Lille : une pilule qui a encore du mal à passer, 8th of January 2015, Clément Landouzy, La Croix du Nord
4 Camp de Roms attaqué de nuit par des hommes armés : les policiers de la BAC tirent sur les victimes, 9th of February 2015, Tieri Briet, Mediapart
5 La maire de Limeil lance une pétition pour évacuer le bidonville de Roms, C. Dubois, 94.citoyens.com, 25th of February
for Travellers in Croix Léonardoux street and its surroundings. We are committed to fight against the creation of new zones of lawlessness.  

During the 2nd quarter:
- "The Metropolitan has initiated the digging of trench two meters deep and wide along a Roma settlement in the municipality of Saint-Priest, a suburb east of Lyon," creating de facto a real ghetto.
- Syndicates of Transportation of Montpellier conglomeration decided to "raise the issue of odors on the bus line number 9". They claim discriminatory measures by the establishment of a "special bus". These words echo the behavior of some bus drivers who refuse to mark stops up or leave some children living in slum who go to school in the morning. Faced with the outcry of the reactions, the initiative was abandoned.
- According to a study of the University Paris 13, interdisciplinary research institute on social issues (IRIS), "young Romanian girls" - so named and identified by professionals in the juvenile justice system - has emerged as a borderline case. Escaping the gendered patterns that lead usually juvenile justice, these girls are widely and frequently experience penalized prison for simple pickpocketing. One can say they undergo judicial handling of exception, revealing multiple discrimination experienced by Roma on French territory.
- In Haubourdin (59), the municipality has discharged manure on Busignies slum to chase out the Roma living there.
- In April 2015, in the municipality of Sète (34), in Mas Coulet slum "the air and border police check multiplies Romanians illegally and distributes OQTF (obligation to leave French territory document) to all of them". Paradoxically, Mas Coulet is also the place where Ricardo was born in a caravan Bialiardo (Manitas de Plata).
- "After the request of the city of Mouscron (Belgium), the town of Wattrelos will erect a wall two meters high to separate the village of Balloons Herseaux (Belgium) docking area for the Travellers living on French territory." It seems that the protagonists have withdrawn the project after the wave of protest has occurred.
- Tensions with neighbors appeared when they welcome the evacuation of slum Argenteuil (95) May 4, 2015, or when they blocked the access to the commune with their caravans evicted form Saint-Herblain (44) April 29, 2015.
- The Prime Minister continues to insist that "the circular was applied for there to be a social diagnosis before dismantling of any slum" and that the slums must continue to be dismantled.

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6Tract de l’UMP, l’UDI, le Mouvement Démocrate et le CNIP, Élections départementales du 22 et 29 mars 2015, Canton de Clermont-Ferrand 2, Press release of departmental federation of the League of the Human rights of Puy-de-Dôme
7Roms : une tranchée de deux mètres de haut creusée le long d’un campement à Saint-Priest, 9th of April 2015.
9« Aux frontières de l’Europe, les jungles », Les jeunes Roumains sont des garçons comme les autres, Arthur Vuattoux, Article taken from the review Plein droit n° 104, March 2015
10Haubourdin: la municipalité déverse du lisier sur le campement de Roms de Busignies, La Voix du Nord, 16th of April 2015
11Mas Coulet, la chasse aux Roms est ouverte, la Marseillaise, Emmanuelle Stange, 23rd of April 2015
12Un mur anti-Gens du voyage et Roms entre Wattrelos et Mouscron, FR3 Nord Pas de Calais, 16th of May 2015
13Roms : Valls juge nécessaire de « démanteler » les campements, Libération, 18th of May 2015
- A 4 year old child died in a fire at the crossroads of the slum Pasteur in Lille on June 8\(^\text{14}\).
- "A 5 years old girl died in a fire at a Roma slum in Carrières-sous-Poissy, in Yvelines" on June 7, 2015\(^\text{15}\).

During the 3rd quarter:
- "Aline Archimbaud, Senator of Seine-Saint-Denis, wishes to express her deep concern about the restarting of the evictions of Roma settlements in Seine-Saint-Denis\(^\text{16}\)."
- The children, in particular, suffer tribulations caused by the constant expulsions which experience their families". Roma child was freed after being sheltered in a hotel after eviction from a slum. His family will be evicted again on Tuesday\(^\text{17}\).
- "Close to Grenoble, in Saint Martin D'Herès, a Roma family was dislodged due to the mobilization of local residents. They squatted a private house, located Romain-Rolland Avenue, which was about to be sold\(^\text{18}\)."
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights specifically condemns the expulsion that occurred August 27, 2015 in La Courneuve: "The expulsion was carried out without warning, while the normal procedure requires at least 24 hours. It occurred early in the afternoon while people were away. Property belonging to them as well as certain identification documents was destroyed. Only a small number of families were offered accommodation and for three nights only. Therefore, most of these people have become homeless\(^\text{19}\)."
- More and more explicit and increasing the rejections such as those in Saint-Genis-les-Ollières (Rhône) on 25 September have become: "On Friday morning, at 8:00, residents, industrialists, artisans and merchants organized a blockage of the access of the Chapoly path. Thus they wanted to show their disapproval of the project aiming to shelter 160 Roma in the area\(^\text{20}\)."
- A mayor has organized a meeting called "Romani slums in Wissous: The review" which provoked tensions between the participants: "I intend to hold the State accountable", announced the local politician (the mayor of Wissous). But on that Monday evening it were the activists (volunteers) helping Roma which were holden accountable\(^\text{21}\). The volunteers attending the meeting were taken out by other participants in the meeting.

During the 4th quarter:
- As part of rejection movement, "identity defenders from Lyon occupying a halting area designed to shelter Roma […]", have been joined by Christophe Boudot, a local politician on the top list of the National front party for the regional elections in Auvergne-Rhôme-Alpes\(^\text{22}\)."

\(14\) La Madeleine, incendie dans un camp rom : un enfant décédé, FR3 Nord Pas-de-Calais, 8th of June 2015
\(15\) Une enfant de cinq ans meurt dans l'incendie d'un camp rom, Marie Piquemal, Libération, 7th of June 2015
\(16\) Press release, Aline Archimbaud, 20th of July 2015, Pantin
\(17\) « Je ne peux pas rester sans école, je dois apprendre », Marie Piquemal, Libération, 20th of July 2015
\(18\) Des habitants se mobilisent pour déloger une famille rom d’un squat à Saint-Martin-d’Hères, FR3, 12th September 2015
\(19\) Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein advise Franceand Bulgaria to stop forced evictions of Roma, UN press release, Geneva
\(20\) Saint-Genis-les-Ollières : la venue de 160 Roms entraîne un mouvement de contestation, Le Progrès, 25th of September 2015,
\(21\) A Wissous, les bidonvilles roms mettent le feu aux poudres, Marie D’Ornellas, Le Parisien, 29th of Sept. 2015
\(22\) Identity defenders occupy a futur halting area for Roma, Mediapart, 24th of October 2015
- How far to go in order to enroll her/his child to school? A Roma family have introduced a case to the Court in order to enroll their children to school and defend their rights. The mayor of the municipality is the ex-minister, socialist, Alain Richard.

- After having been evicted from their informal settlement called Samaritan, Roma families camping in front of the City hall of La Courneuve municipality organized a diner in honor of the victims of Paris attacks of 13th November. "Two men and one teenager, members of the community, have been injured during the suicide-attacks near stadium of France".

- In a municipality near Lyon, the mayor refused to accept a "village for integration" for Roma, a project created by the Prefecture. In addition he threatened to not organize the regional elections in the municipality on 6th and 13th December 2015. "In that municipality of 4800 inhabitants the mayor threatens to boycott the elections on 6 and 13th of December. What reason motivates his decision? A village for integration for Roma families is planned to be created by the Prefecture".

6. Results for the first quarter of 2015

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<tr>
<th>Address of the site</th>
<th>Municipality(ies)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total number of cases</th>
<th>Number of cases, decided by the authorities</th>
<th>Number of cases, decided by the other party</th>
<th>Not for announcing</th>
<th>Prefecture's decision on the registration</th>
<th>Judgement issued</th>
<th>Public body involved</th>
<th>Other parties involved</th>
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23 One Roma family has presented their case to the Court : "Our child has the right to be enrolled at school", Michael Hajdenberg, Mediapart, 17th of November 2015.

24 La Courneuve : a diner have been proposed in honour of the victims of the attacks, Le Parisien, 17th of November 2015.
## 7. Results of the 2nd quarter of 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forced evictions of Roma migrants, occupied a living site in France (2015)</th>
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<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
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<td>11 janvier 2016</td>
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| 7. Results of the 2nd quarter of 2015

**Notes:**
- **Forced eviction:** Includes evictions carried out by the authorities, police, or other entities.
- **Occupied living site:** Sites where Roma populations have been living in an unauthorized manner, often for long periods.
- **Dates:** Indicate the specific times during which the evictions occurred.
- **Locations:** Include the names of the municipalities and regions involved in the evictions.
- **Departments:** Provide further geographical context within the regions.
### 8. Detailed results for the 3rd quarter of 2015

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom d'Organisation</th>
<th>Lieu</th>
<th>Nombre de Migrants</th>
<th>lieu de Prise de Contact</th>
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#### Forcible evictions of Roma migrants, occupied a living site in France (2015)

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### 9. Detailed results for the 4th quarter of 2015

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Annex 1

Description of the data used in the study

The study identified the name of the living site, the municipality, the number of evictees, the causes of the forced evacuation, rehousing proposals, the legal basis for the eviction (deportation proceedings initiated by the owner the living site, or order issued by the mayor or the prefect) and the sources of information in each case. Each evacuation is described by the most comprehensive manner and only verifiable information obtained from reliable sources, listed below, is recorded.

2) Definition
The vocabulary should be clarified: a land is evacuated and the person is evicted. In terms of law a land is evacuated as well as building when this measure aims the area; an eviction is a process in which this measure concerns the person. On the other hand the term of "living site/area" designs the place where live persons, which might a slum, a squat, a disused hangar … or a functional or not caravan. The denomination of the living area is the same as mentioned in the source of information for instance "le Hanul". Obviously the address is noticed when there is information about. The municipality is that one where the living site/area is situated. Cases are frequent when the area overlaps several municipalities for example: Noisy-le-Grand/Bry-sur-Marne. These cases lead often to a confusion: many different reports appear regarding, in fact, the same living area. A particular attention has been paid to this fact in order to guaranty the information in.

The date mentioned in the study is the day in which the forced eviction took place. The number of the evicted persons is that one mentioned in the source of information. The forced eviction might result from expulsion for illegal occupation or unhealthy living, or an accident (fire). Many cases can be cumulative. For instance in Massy (Essonne) in 2010, there was a distribution of OQTF (Obligation to leave the French territory document), fire, an expulsion order, confinement, voluntary returns (ARH) and forced returns and destruction of what remained of the living area by the municipal authorities.

When solutions for housing are mentioned in the source of information, it is mentioned also in the figures. They are usually partial, because in most of the cases, they separate families and concern only mothers with young children which are subject of emergency accommodation for a few days. For this reason, they are often denied by those concerned.

The nature of the decision certifying the evacuations is recorded. It can be taken by the Court (Magistrate’ Court, Regional Court, Administrative Court, Court of appeal), or can be provoked by a notice for unhealthiness or danger ordered by a municipality of a Prefect. The number of unforced leaving is recorded as well. In general they are provoked by a police harassment or threat.

The owner of the land might be either private person or public body. The category "public body" includes municipalities, departments, local or national authorities, as well as any other body under the State authority (for example Réseau Ferré de France). The category "Private" includes private legal entities or physical persons.

The "source" is the origin of the information. The same case can be presented in many sources. Each source is recorded. Only the most reliable and the most accurate were selected: press and media articles, press release, direct testimonies transmitted and broadcast by an ONG.