

Mr F. M. interviewed in Tinca, Romania, 23 September 2010

Since 2008, my family and I have moved to France several times. We stayed each time for up to three months. Most recently I lived in France from July – 7 September 2010 with my wife and 4 children. We lived in Marseille in an abandoned house with around 50 other people who were lived in the house and in improvised shacks around it. I collected and sold iron from materials left in the street and earned between 400-700 EUR per month. This summer, we were told that we would be sent back home by the French police. I decided to leave earlier than the date given by the police and avoid an expulsion order. Around two weeks before I decided to leave, between 10 to 15 policemen came to our home in three minibuses and jumped over the fence surrounding the house. The police began destroying the improvised shacks while the children were inside. The parents started yelling at the police that the children were inside so they stopped. The police told us that the municipality owned the land and that we should not build on it. The police checked our identity documents and told us that they would send us home on 25 September. They asked us to give statements that we agreed to go home to Romania. There was no official translation provided. Our family refused to give statements or sign anything because we were afraid to be given expulsion or interdiction orders. After a week, the police came again saying that they would send us home and again asked us to give statements that we agreed to go home to Romania but we refused. We did not want to wait to be sent home by plane and risk an expulsion or interdiction order so we decided to come home earlier by car with other people. My sister remained there. In the meanwhile, we spoke on the phone and she told me that the police have prolonged their return by two more weeks.