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17 hurt in boat people move

FIFTEEN officers from the Correctional Services Department (CSD) and two Vietnamese boat people were injured yesterday when 107 boat people were cleared from the Shamshuipo detention centre after a 12-day sit-in.

A CSD spokesman said although most of the boat people were persuaded to board six waiting trucks for the journey to Whitehead

detention centre, some of the boat people had to be forcibly removed.

The operation, which lasted about 50 minutes, involved about 100 CSD officers. Staff from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were present.

The group had to be moved because Shamshuipo is to be cleared to make way for a housing project.

Meanwhile, a last-ditch

attempt by the boat people to gain visas to enter Japan has failed.

During a visit by the Government's Refugee Coordinator, Mr Mike Hanson, last week to persuade the boat people to move, the Vietnamese requested that he ask the Japanese Consulate to grant them visas.

Mr Hanson said Japanese officials had rejected the request.