

# French police dismantle mobile phone hacking ring

September 27 2010

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Three people were still in custody Sunday following the arrests across the country that came after a year-long investigation into the network, which had been operating for a decade and is the first of its kind in France, according to officials in an investigative unit of the Marseille gendarmerie.

Investigators explained that fraudsters purchased codes to unlock SIM

cards for three euros (four dollars) each from high-ranking [phone company](#) employees, who had access to company databases.

The network subsequently sold the codes on the Internet for 30 euros. The money earned from these sales were put into tax-free overseas bank accounts.

One of the employees was allegedly earning up to 25,000 euros a month from the fraud.

With the codes, individuals could access any [SIM card](#), even foreign cards, with their mobile phones.

"From there ensued a cascade of fraud. The pirates work for the (phone company) operators, they do whatever they want," an investigator said, adding that the "impressive" network was "very well set-up."

The investigation began at the end of 2009 after a complaint at French phone company SFR in the southern city of Marseille about discrepancies in its [security system](#). Two other companies, Bouygues Telecom and Orange were also affected by the [fraud](#).

The prosecutor in Marseille is expected to hold a press conference Monday on the investigation.

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Citation: French police dismantle mobile phone hacking ring (2010, September 27) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-09-french-police-dismantle-mobile-hacking.html>

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