A 16-YEAR-old Italian girl whose claim that she was raped by Gypsies prompted a furious mob to launch an arson attack on a Turin Roma camp has admitted to police that she invented her story.

Hundreds of residents of the deprived Turin suburb of Vallette took to the streets on Sunday to protest after the girl, who has not been named, claimed she had been dragged behind a building and raped by two Gypsy men.

A splinter group of about 50 residents then marched towards a nearby camp where they reportedly called for all women and children to leave before throwing firecrackers and setting fire to caravans, shacks and cars.

Police evacuated the camp moments before the group arrived and no injuries were reported, but fire crews were unable to prevent the camp being destroyed.
The girl's brother, who initially backed her story, arrived with police as the flames grew to say his sister had confessed to inventing the episode, but his appeal to call off the attack came too late.

Italian daily *La Repubblica* reported the girl had promised her family she would remain a virgin until she married and lied about the rape after sleeping with her boyfriend.

Built during Italy's postwar boom years to accommodate southern Italian migrants arriving to work in Turin's factories, the Vallette neighbourhood is fringed by fields and sits next to a new football stadium opened this season by Juventus.

Paola Bragantini, Turin secretary for Italy's centre-left Democratic Party, said the mob was made up of hardcore Juventus supporters, who gained notoriety for yelling racist abuse at black footballer Mario Balotelli.

**GUARDIAN**