



STATEMENT FROM THE ROMA PARTICIPATION GROUP OF THE FUNDACIÓN SECRETARIADO GITANO

International Roma Day - 8 April 2022

Phenjalipén – Solidarity

As every 8 April, today we want to continue making visible the wishes for recognition of the Roma community and the memory of its victims throughout history.

This year, as we commemorate the International Roma Day, we cannot forget the serious situation that Roma families in Ukraine are experiencing, especially women and children, due to the devastating situation that they are suffering.

From the Roma Participation Group of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, today we would like to remember the Ukrainian people, and especially the Roma community in Ukraine, our brothers and sisters, who need all our support and solidarity.

Our small contribution, regardless of how small it may be, can be very significant, especially when it comes to such terrible situations. As denounced by some organisations that are on the front line, solidarity is not reaching the most vulnerable citizens, including many Roma.

In addition, some situations of discrimination and antigypsyism have been detected, encountering obstacles to crossing borders to neighbouring countries, or in the treatment they receive once they have managed to cross borders: discrimination by border police, segregation in reception centres and worse conditions than non-Roma refugees, or even cases such as those reported from Hungary, where Roma children are given less food than non-Roma children.

Today, 8 April, our solidarity, our *phenjalipén*, which is how we say it in Romani, the Roma language, must become more visible than ever and must reach out to those in need. Let our solidarity with the Roma people of Ukraine be our way of claiming and commemorating this International Roma Day.

The 8 April is a date on which Roma celebrate the unity of our people, because we are united by a shared history and a series of values that make us raise our voices against situations of injustice and social inequality.

We therefore call on the European Union and the Council of Europe, on civil society organisations and on the international community in general, to ensure that no one is left behind in a society as fractured as it is by a war of this scale.

This year, as the Fundación Secretariado Gitano celebrates its 40th anniversary, we will continue working to contribute to the reduction of the social disadvantages and discrimination that many Roma are still suffering in our country.



The current context, with the recent approval of the new “National Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation”, the launching in the Congress of the Subcommittee for a “State Pact against Antigypsyism and for the Inclusion of the Roma Community”, as well as the presence of three Roma deputies in the Congress, creates an excellent opportunity for the Spanish society to become more inclusive and respectful towards Human Rights.

“Whoever has the most, should contribute the most” is a phrase often used among Roma, and it symbolises the fact that today, more than ever, we must exercise our **phenjalipén**, our Roma solidarity, with those who are suffering the most. Sadly, situations such as the ones that this extract from the Roma anthem *“Gelem Gelem”*, reminds us of, are still happening:

“I walked, I walked, along long roads.

I found lucky Roma

Oh, Roma, where do you come from

with tents and hungry children?”

Sastipen thaj mestipen - Health and Freedom

Opre Roma! - Up Roma People!

#8April #InternationalRomaDay #StandWithUkraine #StandWithTheRomaPeople