



We condemn the anti-Roma attacks suffered by some Roma families in Peal de Becerro (Jaén) after the alleged murder of a young man from the town

At the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) we wish to express our outrage at this crime and we send the deceased man's family our condolences.

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Last Sunday, 16 July, a young man aged 29 died of stab wounds in the discotheque in Peal de Becerro, Jaén, where he worked as a security guard. Following this tragic event, a demonstration was held the following day, Monday 17 July, by local community members, to show their outrage and to demand that the relatives of the alleged murderer should be expelled from the neighbourhood.

After the demonstration, various violent incidents occurred in which some members of the local community, along with others from nearby towns, threatened the Roma families in an attempt to force them to leave their houses. Several vehicles were overturned and one of the families' houses was even burned down.

At the Fundación Secretariado Gitano we wish to state the following:

- First, we regret the death of the stabbing victim and we trust that justice will be done in convicting the person or people responsible.
- It is unacceptable for a group of people to take justice into their own hands, to ask for the Roma families to be expelled from the town, or to burn down the houses or overturn the vehicles of these families. Faced with this situation of insecurity and vulnerability, the public authorities must protect the rights of all individuals. We ask for protection, from the security forces and from the Town Council, for the families who have been suffering and have been the victims of attacks and threats over the last few days.
- We wish to express our concern at the focus on the ethnicity and the families of the suspect or suspects. Under the rule of law, responsibility lies with the individual, not with their family or their ethnic group. However, this identification of ethnicity and family has been repeatedly used against the Roma community when a criminal act may have been committed by one of its members, as seen in incidents occurring in Estepa, Castellar, Martos and most recently el Pozo. This type of ethnic identification is only made in the case of Roma people, who thus suffer a completely unacceptable form of persecution, and an antigypsy practice for which the authorities must remain vigilant.
- We also call upon the communications media to avoid the dissemination of expressions like "gypsy clans" when referring to suspected criminals, or the mentioning of ethnicity in their reporting of incidents. These practices stigmatise and criminalise the Roma community and Roma culture as a whole for criminal acts which some of its members are suspected of committing.

We will express our concern to the governmental sub-delegation by means of a letter, expressly requesting protection for the Roma families living in Peal de Becerro who are affected by this situation, and asking that the authorities remain vigilant.

Statement of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano regarding the anti-Roma attacks suffered by some Roma families in Peal de Becerro (Jaén) after the alleged murder of a young man from the town