

Bot 158 Hollow Victory for the Priors

Much will be written this week about Leonard and Helen Prior, unwillingly become, through circumstance, the most famous Britons living in Spain. The couple whose house was demolished in a cowardly and stupid miscalculation back in Vera (Almería) in January 2008. The Priors lived in a house which was not on a flood-plain. Their house was not in a place of singular beauty, nor on the beach, nor near the road or the railway tracks. It wasn't on any plan for expropriation. The Priors were - and are - a simple British couple who had retired to Spain, after a professional life in England, to enjoy their twilight years with a glass of red as the sun sank each evening over the hills before them.

It's not clear why their house was chosen and not one of the others that loosely surrounded them.

Perhaps they were foreigners, who would simply disappear back to the *extranjero*.

But they didn't. They moved into the garage, making a home in a small space, with hose-pipe water and a generator for electricity - as so many other retired foreigners have been forced to do in Andalucía.

They appeared on British TV, repeatedly. They were in all the British newspapers, repeatedly. They were recorded on the BBC and in other European Media, repeatedly. Millions read about what the Spanish had done to an innocent couple in the final years of an uneventful life.

Now, once again, Leonard and Helen Prior are in the news. This time, even the Spanish news. A happy event: the judicial system here has blamed the local town hall. Not the perpetrators of the assault, but the local authority, who gave permission for the home to be built. They must pay around half of the money claimed by the couple, and failing an appeal (which will be made, sure enough), the Priors will be awarded enough to buy a smaller house somewhere - maybe in another more welcoming area! Unfortunately, the 'costs' - the gigantic legal fees (after over eight years) to be shared.

Press release: [AUAN](#) SAYS 'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH' IN THE PRIOR'S CASE'

In what could prove to be a hollow victory, Contentious-Administrative Court number 3 in Almería has ordered the Town Hall of Vera to pay compensation of 425,185.43 Euros, plus interest, to Helen and Len Prior whose home in Vera was demolished in 2008 despite having planning permission from Vera Council, when the regional authorities challenged and revoked the permission and sent in the bulldozers.

The problem, according to AUAN, is that this judgement can be appealed and the possibility of future legal actions by the Town Hall could further delay compensation for Mr and Mrs Prior.

Faced with this, AUAN is once again demanding justice for the Priors. According to Maura Hillen, president of AUAN, 'Enough is enough. The Calvary of the Priors had lasted for nearly ten years.

They did nothing wrong except to trust the Spanish State and its legal system. Now is the time to pay them and to put an end to their odyssey, which is so harmful and damaging for them and for everyone who lives here. Whilst fortunately things have changed for foreign investors as a result of legislative changes in the last year, those changes have come too late for Helen and Len Prior'.

Added Mrs Hillen, 'We ask that the Priors be compensated once and for all. It is not acceptable that they must continue to live in their garage suffering continuous moral damage. The house of their dreams was demolished before their eyes, they had to empty it of furniture in a few hours with the support of their neighbours, Mr Prior collapsed due to the stress of the demolition, he had to spend some time in a wheelchair and as if that wasn't enough some lowlifes recently stole their belongings from the garage in which they live.' 'Enough really is enough.' She repeated.

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