# Britons and Europeans face eviction amid Tenerife housing crisis and contested resort plans



The unfolding saga in Tenerife highlights the struggles faced by many individuals who have sought a better life in Spain, particularly after the traumatic upheavals of the Covid-19 pandemic. The encampment, often referred to derogatorily as a ‘shanty town’, is in stark contrast to the luxury hotels that dot the landscape of Costa Adeje, just minutes away from the opulent resorts that cater to tourists. Increasingly, Europeans, including many from the UK, find themselves caught in a cycle of financial instability, exacerbated by a surge in short-term rental properties that have driven up local housing prices, leaving them with few alternatives.

The environment surrounding the encampment is reflective of broader tensions in the region. On one hand, the local government advocates for developments like the controversial Cuna del Alma macro-resort, arguing that such projects will stimulate economic growth and job creation. Conversely, a burgeoning movement of ‘anti-tourism’ activists fiercely opposes these developments, asserting that they contribute to environmental degradation and exacerbate housing shortages. This discord has escalated to violent confrontations, underscored by not only the destruction of archaeological sites but also acts of vandalism against construction equipment, raising serious questions about the management of such projects.

Among the residents of the encampment is Sharon, a 63-year-old British mother of two. Her story illustrates the daily challenges that have driven many to seek refuge in this community. After being ensnared in a rental scam and subsequently left homeless after the landlord refused to return her deposits, Sharon found refuge in a campervan. She now shares her story of resilience; her makeshift home is crafted from repurposed materials with solar power, where she cultivates her own vegetables and produces herbal remedies. “We do love living here, it is a beautiful place, but almost none of us are here by choice,” she expressed, revealing the harsh realities behind her choice to live in the encampment.

Indeed, many residents share similar stories of hardship. The rising cost of living, accelerated by rampant Airbnb-style rentals, has rendered traditional housing unaffordable. With local estate agents demanding several months' rent upfront—a practice deemed illegal yet widely unregulated—individuals are left with fewer viable options. The encampment has become a temporary haven for various nationalities, including Italians, Germans, and Poles, all grappling with the same financial difficulties that have brought them to this corner of Spain.

Simultaneously, the Cuna del Alma project has galvanised public response, with over 50,000 individuals signing a petition against its construction. Critics argue that it threatens protected species and natural habitats, clashing with local conservation efforts. In fact, the implications of such developments extend beyond just immediate environmental concerns; they challenge the sustainability of the local community, raising alarms about the potential loss of both cultural and ecological heritage. The European Commission has even opened a preliminary investigation, reflecting the urgency of these issues on a wider legislative scale.

The encampment's existence, while technically illegal, receives a degree of tacit acceptance from authorities so long as order is maintained. However, uncertainty looms large over the residents' future as construction on the Cuna del Alma continues apace, leading many to fear the very real possibility of eviction. Sharon articulated this anxiety, stating, “I do feel a bit more stable here but there’s still that worry that we might not have somewhere to live.”

Tensions between residents, local authorities, and developers are compounded by incidents of clashes between eco-activists and security forces, indicating that the situation is a microcosm of a larger debate surrounding tourism, environmental conservation, and housing in Spain. The ramifications of the choices made today will echo through the lives of both the encampment’s inhabitants and the broader community for years to come, laying bare the urgent need for solutions that balance growth with sustainability and affordability.

As the quest for a comfortable life continues to be sidelined by economic pressures, the community's response to these challenges will be pivotal in shaping the future of Tenerife, not only for its residents but for the environment that sustains them.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Over-50%2C000-people-sign-petition-to-stop-the-construction-of-Cuna-del-Alma-in-Adeje)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Salvar-La-Tejita-file-legal-complaint-in-Court-against-the-developers-of-Cuna-del-Alma), [[5]](https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/15/el-denunciante-de-los-danos-arqueologicos-del-iter-y-cuna-del-alma-destruir-el-patrimonio-sale-barato-radio-club-tenerife/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/13/el-gobierno-sanciona-a-cuna-del-alma-con-mas-de-229000-euros-por-un-dano-arqueologico-irreversible-radio-club-tenerife/), [[6]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Courts-start-proceedings-against-activists-who-camped-at-Cuna-del-Alma)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Over-50%2C000-people-sign-petition-to-stop-the-construction-of-Cuna-del-Alma-in-Adeje), [[4]](https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/13/el-gobierno-sanciona-a-cuna-del-alma-con-mas-de-229000-euros-por-un-dano-arqueologico-irreversible-radio-club-tenerife/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Over-50%2C000-people-sign-petition-to-stop-the-construction-of-Cuna-del-Alma-in-Adeje), [[7]](https://tenerifeweekly.com/2023/09/22/the-european-commission-will-open-a-preliminary-investigation-into-the-processing-of-the-cuna-del-alma-project/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Salvar-La-Tejita-file-legal-complaint-in-Court-against-the-developers-of-Cuna-del-Alma), [[6]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Courts-start-proceedings-against-activists-who-camped-at-Cuna-del-Alma)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Over-50%2C000-people-sign-petition-to-stop-the-construction-of-Cuna-del-Alma-in-Adeje)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/13/el-gobierno-sanciona-a-cuna-del-alma-con-mas-de-229000-euros-por-un-dano-arqueologico-irreversible-radio-club-tenerife/), [[5]](https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/15/el-denunciante-de-los-danos-arqueologicos-del-iter-y-cuna-del-alma-destruir-el-patrimonio-sale-barato-radio-club-tenerife/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14764743/The-Brits-left-home-dream-life-Spain-left-penniless-living-shanty-town-changing-facts-life-sun.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. [https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Over-50,000-people-sign-petition-to-stop-the-construction-of-Cuna-del-Alma-in-Adeje](https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Over-50%2C000-people-sign-petition-to-stop-the-construction-of-Cuna-del-Alma-in-Adeje) - Over 50,000 individuals have signed a petition urging authorities to halt the construction of the Cuna del Alma luxury tourism project in Puertito de Adeje, Tenerife. Critics argue that the proposed 420-villa complex, covering 437,000 square metres, poses a severe threat to protected species and habitats in the area, as well as violating European environmental regulations. The petition highlights the project's impact on the surrounding natural areas, including the Special Conservation Zone (ZEC) Franja Marina Teno-Rasca. Environmental activists assert that the development contravenes Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive, which prohibits projects that could significantly affect protected ecological sites.
3. <https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Salvar-La-Tejita-file-legal-complaint-in-Court-against-the-developers-of-Cuna-del-Alma> - Environmental group Salvar La Tejita has filed a legal complaint in the Arona Court against the developers of the Cuna del Alma tourism complex, Segunda Casa Adeje SL, for an alleged crime against historical heritage. The group also submitted an administrative complaint to the Directorate-General for Culture and Historical Heritage of the Canary Islands Government regarding the same issue. In 2023, the regional government allowed a sanctioning procedure to expire despite multiple severe violations that could have resulted in fines of up to €600,000. According to Salvar La Tejita, in 2022, an archaeological site of significant historical value, featuring engravings and hut structures, was destroyed despite two negative reports from the Heritage Department of the Tenerife Cabildo. Additionally, an archaeological report by ArqueoCanarias SL, commissioned by the developer in 2019, was allegedly concealed from authorities. The report identified the archaeological site, later destroyed, yet Salvar La Tejita claims that the developers knowingly allowed excavation machinery to demolish it. Furthermore, the group alleges that at least three panels of engravings, archaeological findings with the highest level of protection, were ignored in the assessment. The site, officially recorded as PA 4, was reportedly damaged a second time by heavy machinery, even after being fenced off by the authorities. The environmental association argues that the statute of limitations has not yet expired, meaning sanctions can still be imposed. It has called on Miguel Ángel Clavijo, Director-General for Culture and Heritage, to reopen the sanctioning file, which lapsed when he assumed his position in the summer of 2023. If the government fails to act, Salvar La Tejita has warned that it may pursue legal action against the institution, believing that allowing the case to lapse could constitute misconduct in favour of the construction company, which they claim is already under strong suspicion of criminal activity.
4. <https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/13/el-gobierno-sanciona-a-cuna-del-alma-con-mas-de-229000-euros-por-un-dano-arqueologico-irreversible-radio-club-tenerife/> - The Government of the Canary Islands has imposed a fine of over €229,000 on the luxury tourism project 'Cuna del Alma' in El Puertito de Adeje, after confirming irreversible archaeological damage to a site of high heritage value registered in 2018. The General Directorate of Heritage, following a detailed inspection, found partial destruction of dry stone structures and the dispersion of archaeological materials such as obsidian, ceramics, and bone remains, especially in two key areas. The promoting company incurred three serious infractions according to the Canary Islands Cultural Heritage Law: alteration of the site, absence of archaeological control during the works, and disobedience to precautionary measures imposed by the Cabildo of Tenerife. The sanction also includes the obligation to restore the site as much as possible. The promoter has appealed the decision, alleging lack of intent. The President of the Government of the Canary Islands criticised the management of the previous Executive concerning the project. Technical reports recommend the collection of the remaining remains, the integration of the site into the urban planning with conservation measures, and mandatory archaeological supervision in the future.
5. <https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/05/15/el-denunciante-de-los-danos-arqueologicos-del-iter-y-cuna-del-alma-destruir-el-patrimonio-sale-barato-radio-club-tenerife/> - The Government of the Canary Islands has imposed fines on the Cabildo of Tenerife (€304,500) and the promoter of the Cuna del Alma tourism project in Adeje (€229,000) for the destruction of archaeological heritage during construction works. The infractions were reported by Sixto García, founder of the archaeological collective Imastanen, who criticises that destroying heritage 'is cheap' and that the sanctions do not halt the works or restore the damages. In the case of ITER in Arico, 1,912 square metres of land with ceramic remains were destroyed, while in Adeje, a pre-Hispanic 80-square-metre lithic workshop was completely eliminated. García laments the irreversible loss of historical value and questions the absence of archaeological surveillance during the works. The Cabildo of Tenerife has announced that it will appeal the sanction and has requested an internal investigation into the omission of the site in the previous reports. From the previous Government, former councillor José Antonio Valbuena has responded that the responsibility always lies with the project promoter, who is responsible for assessing the environmental impact.
6. <https://www.canarianweekly.com/posts/Courts-start-proceedings-against-activists-who-camped-at-Cuna-del-Alma> - The Arona Courts in Los Cristianos have opened proceedings against environmental activists who staged various incidents at the construction site and offices of the Cuna del Alma developers in Puertito de Adeje in the south of Tenerife. According to judicial sources consulted by SER, the complaints filed by the developers have been unified and ratified by a judge. The investigation will continue with the summons of the denounced ecologists so that they can testify in the next few weeks. The proceedings refer to a confrontation in the morning of September 25th last year, when a group of activists camped on the Puertito de Adeje construction site to protest against the Cuna del Alma project, who claimed that members of a ‘security company’ hired by the developers tried to forcefully evict them. Following this, the protestors moved to the Cun del Alma show apartment, where the project director, Andrés Muñoz, was based. The activists protested loudly outside the building but two of them went inside and videos show them shouting insults and slogans accusing Muñoz of corruption and publicly shaming him. Muñoz tried to get one of the activists out, which sparked a struggle that the environmentalists described as assault, as during the altercation a young woman was grabbed by her neck and ended up falling to the ground. Eventually, the Guardia Civil managed to get the young woman to leave the building, while the others continued shouting outside and banging on the windows. However, in an unusual turn of events, the activists have also filed a lawsuit against the project's director. For now, the judicial proceedings are still ongoing both in the courts of Granadilla de Abona and in Arona (Los Cristianos). Regarding the Cuna del Alma project, after receiving two unfavourable reports and a sanction proposal from the General Directorate of Heritage of the Government of the Canary Islands due to possible damage to archaeological sites, the Department of Ecological Transition ordered the temporary suspension of the works.
7. <https://tenerifeweekly.com/2023/09/22/the-european-commission-will-open-a-preliminary-investigation-into-the-processing-of-the-cuna-del-alma-project/> - The European Parliament has accepted for processing a complaint presented by the Salvar La Tejita Association against the tourism project Cradle of the Soul, which aims to develop a ravine and a beach in the south of Tenerife with more than 400 luxury villas and residences. The European Commission will now initiate a preliminary investigation into the processing of the tourism project, located in the town of Adeje port in the south of Tenerife, and which is provisionally paralyzed by the Government of the Canary Islands after various irregularities were detected and an 'imminent threat of environmental damage' due to the presence of the sad viper, a protected plant. Previously, the works had already been paralyzed on a part of the plot after technicians from the Cabildo de Tenerife confirmed that an archaeological site had been irreversibly destroyed, which constituted a 'very serious violation', so an extensive report about the matter to the General Directorate of Heritage of the Government of the Canary Islands, which ordered the work to be stopped. The Salvar La Tejita association presented its complaint to the Petitions Committee of the European Parliament about the development of this project and the destruction it was causing to the flora and sites. These complaints were admitted for processing last Tuesday by its president, the MEP of the Popular Group Dolors Monserrat, as they entered 'within the scope of action' of the EU. The association criticizes in a statement the position of the new Minister of Ecological Transition of the Government of the Canary Islands, Mariano Hernández Zapata (PP), which recently opened the door for the works to continue through the expiration of the file and the transplantation of threatened species, such as the sad viper, despite the fact that this species is included in the Canary Islands Catalog of Protected Species, which legally prevents its transfer. 'All of this without mentioning how the absence of an environmental impact assessment, which is mandatory in projects of this nature as established by two European directives, would be resolved,' he points out. Furthermore, it points out that the construction of this tourist development goes against the declaration of energy emergency approved by the Canary Islands Government itself, given that it would 'further complicate' the demand for energy in the south of the island and would consume more than a million liters of water every day if the more than 3,600 planned beds are built in their entirety. The Adeje City Council, governed since 1989 by José Miguel Rodríguez Fraga (PSOE), presented an appeal against the stoppage of the works, but this September the Superior Court of Justice of the Canary Islands (TSJC) rejected it.