



Sevilla, January 11, 2021

Since January 6, several Roma families in homes surrounding Plaza del Platanero within the Torreblanca neighborhood of Seville, Spain, have had **low electricity**, and in some cases **zero electricity**. Some families have had to leave their homes because of the extreme cold. Both **children and elderly individuals cannot survive** the low temperatures that Sevilla has experienced over the last few days. Those who are ill are living without heat, and those that depend on electricity for respiratory devices are in crisis. Neighbors have been forced to buy costly prepared food outside the home because they cannot cook, as well as invest their money in candles so that they can have light during evenings.

In Torreblanca and Polígono Sur, Roma families are experiencing chronic energy poverty. This situation violates the human right to dignified housing conditions, which in turn affects their right to health. This situation is contextualized in the midst of upcoming restriction that will urge people to stay home to prevent further spread of COVID-19. **The Roma neighbors are living with fear**—fear of being blamed by their neighbors for calling attention to the situation, fear of being blamed by the media and fear of those who seek to silence the situation for individual interests. This also follows the recent August 2020 heat wave that devastated this community.

On November 19, 2020, a representative of our organization, YILÓ, attended a plenary session at City Council. There, we expressed our concerns about the disproportional destructive effects of COVID-19 on Polígono Sur and Torreblanca. During our intervention, **City Council committed to supporting the neighbors** within regional plans titled “Areas of Social Transformation”, with the goals of alleviating immediate problems with short-term solutions and working collaboratively to seek long-term solutions.

Since that November session with City Council, nothing has changed. **We declare this situation a violation of rights.** These families continue to live in unjust environments under extreme weather conditions. The families of the Plaza del Platanero have a right to decent housing that includes electricity so that they can provide food for their families and have warm homes, especially now with restrictions that force Sevilla citizens to remain in their homes.

We urge **City Council** and relevant institutions to give a rapid response to this situation. We demand a response and resources from **Mayor Espadas**. We ask the **Ombudsman** for protection at this time. We call on the **State Council of Roma People** and the **Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality** for collaboration. Only together will we provide the aid this community so desperately needs.

Signed,
YILÓ