

## "Liars and Cheats"

Expat pressure group blasts Spanish journalist for "defamatory" comments on Brits living in Almanzora valley

By Richard Torné, Costa Almeria News, 11th September 2009

EXPAT pressure group AUAN is up in arms after a Spanish journalist branded retired Brits living in the Almanzora valley as "liars and cheats" and that they knowingly bought illegal properties in Spain.

Javier Salvador penned two inflammatory opinion columns last week in Teleprensa - an online news website which normally limits itself to printing press releases - in which he slammed the British community in Almería, claiming they bought illegal properties well below the market price with undeclared money to avoid paying taxes to the Spanish state.

According to the regional government's inspection plan, there are believed to be a staggering 10,000 illegal buildings in the Almanzora valley - 4,100 in Albox alone.

In the first article Salvador made reference to the ITV documentary 'Paradise Lost', broadcast earlier this year about a protest march organised by retired expats in Cantoria in September 2008. Salvador rounded on the makers of the programme, accusing them of distorting the truth about the illegal property scam. He said: "(The programme) hid truths such as the knowledge buyers had that the properties were being built in non-urban areas, using black money with the sole aim of obtaining homes at very low prices."

Salvador, who is also the head of Global Solutions House, a consultancy and real estate company, went on to accuse home owning Brits of coming to Almería of "swindling those who provide free services" in clear reference to the health care system. "Lying on the escritura (title deeds) and not paying taxes is, literally, sticking a finger in the eye of their new neighbours," he railed.

He also accused the local British community of causing 'britanophobia' (sic). "Before they were seen as chirpy guiris (foreigners) who didn't now a word of Spanish, but now they are starting to be viewed as those foreigners who came here thinking they're smart and expecting the rest of us to act like fools," he ended.

Although he conceded that Spain's judicial system was slow and that developers and politicians had also played a major role in the affair, the head of Teleprensa has been heavily criticised for focusing mostly on Brits.

The AUAN's response to Salvador's outburst has been swift. The group's president, Maura Hillen, said the group was considering taking legal action against Salvador. "These are totally unsubstantiated and unproven statements. It's libellous, in fact. Name your source, prove your facts or withdraw the comments," she warned.

Read the full story in the printed edition of the Costa Almería News

[Costa Almeria News Online](#)

Also See AUAN Press Release 3rd September (below)