NEWS LESSON

The Woman Who Lost Her Home After 70 Years



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What makes somewhere feel like home?
2. Would you rather have more space or feel settled in a neighbourhood?
3. Which local place would you miss most if you moved away?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**eviction**	☐	A a written agreement between two sides
2	**contract**	☐	B when someone is made to leave their home by law
3	**stretcher**	☐	C people who show in public that they do not agree
4	**demonstrations**	☐	D starting again, and stronger than before
5	**protesters**	☐	E with too many people in a small space
6	**crowded**	☐	F a bed for carrying a person who is hurt or ill
7	**investment**	☐	G events where many people meet to show they are angry about something
8	**renewed**	☐	H money put into something to make more money

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A woman in Madrid lost the flat where she had lived for more than 70 years. Her story has led to protests about housing across Spain.

1 For more than 70 years, Maricarmen Abascal lived in the same flat in Madrid. She knew its rooms, its neighbours and the streets outside. It was more than a place to sleep. It was where she had spent almost her whole life. But in September 2026, at the age of 87, she was forced to leave after a long disagreement over her rental contract.

2 The building had been bought by new owners, and a legal battle followed. Maricarmen had an old agreement that allowed her to pay a relatively low rent. Housing campaigners stood by her as she fought to stay. On 23 September, police arrived to carry out the eviction. Neighbours and supporters gathered outside, but she was removed from the building and taken to hospital on a stretcher.

3 Maricarmen died on 7 October, about two weeks later. She had already been in poor health. Her supporters said the dispute had caused her serious stress, but the eviction has not been shown to be the cause of her death. Although an agreement had been reached that might have allowed her to return, she never went back home. Her death led to demonstrations and renewed anger about Spain's housing crisis. Protesters said no one should have to face losing a lifelong home in old age.

4 Across Spain, many people struggle with high rents and the price of buying a home. Madrid, Barcelona and other popular cities have become particularly expensive. Young adults may work full time but still be unable to afford their own place. Some share crowded flats, and others put off moving out of the family home. Holiday rentals and property investment are also part of the debate because people worry that there are fewer homes available for residents.

5 There are different views about the best solution. Housing groups want stronger protection for tenants and more affordable homes. Property owners argue that they also have rights and that Spain needs to build more housing. Maricarmen's story has become a symbol because it shows what these arguments can mean for one person. Behind every discussion about rents and laws, there is someone who simply wants a secure place to live.

Sources: ITV News. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Maricarmen lived in her flat for more than seventy years. T F NG
2. No police came to the building on 23 September. T F NG
3. Maricarmen died less than a month after the eviction. T F NG
4. The text says the eviction was shown to be the cause of her death. T F NG
5. The new owners wanted to turn the building into a hotel. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

campaigners **disagreement** **forced** **landlord** **struggle** **symbol** **tenant**

1. Rising prices have _____ many families to leave the neighbourhood where they grew up.
2. After a long _____ about the contract, the two sides went to court.
3. Local _____ organised a march to ask for lower rents.
4. Many young workers _____ to save money, as rent takes most of their pay.
5. The old tree in the square has become a _____ of the town's history.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Maricarmen Abascal _____ in the same Madrid flat for more than 70 years. (LIVE)
2. She _____ the streets and the neighbours around her flat very well. (KNOW)
3. Her supporters _____ that the dispute caused her serious stress. (SAY)
4. Maricarmen _____ on 7 October. (DIE)
5. Her death _____ to demonstrations across Spain. (LEAD)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some linking words give a reason (because), some give a result (so) and some show a contrast (although, however). Think about the idea before you choose.

although	because	despite	however	so	therefore	until

1. Rents are very high, _____ many young adults cannot move out.
2. She wanted to stay in her flat _____ she had lived there all her life.
3. The owners had rights. _____ , the protesters said an old woman should not lose her home.
4. _____ the weather was cold, many people waited outside the building.
5. Young people often wait _____ they have saved enough money to move out.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What should matter when someone has rented the same home for decades?
2. What would make a neighbourhood easier to stay in as people grow older?
3. Should a city judge its success by how many people can afford to remain?

9 Role-play: a rent rise

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the landlord

You own a flat and your costs have gone up. You want to raise the rent by 10% from next month. Explain why. You can agree to a smaller rise if the tenant offers a longer contract.

Student B · the tenant

You've lived in your flat for six years and you love the area. Your landlord wants a rent rise that you can't afford. Ask for time and a fair deal, and say what you can offer.

Useful phrases

I'd like to talk about the rent.
I've lived here for six years.
I'm afraid I can't afford that.
Would you consider a smaller rise?
We're willing to sign a longer contract.
That's fair, so let's agree on it.

Tell the class what you agreed and whether both sides were happy.

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 A · 3 F · 4 G · 5 C · 6 E · 7 H · 8 D

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 F · 5 NG

5 Vocabulary

1 forced · 2 disagreement · 3 campaigners · 4 struggle · 5 symbol

6 Verb forms

1 lived · 2 knew · 3 said · 4 died · 5 led

7 Language focus

1 so · 2 because · 3 However · 4 Although · 5 until

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