

## Youth everywhere stands together for Democracy

Democracy in the Spanish State has undergone an alarming regression since the death of the dictator in 1975. The violation of fundamental rights has placed the country in a context of democratic and political reversion and increasingly repressive trends.

The Spanish State has attacked the very heart of Democracy, principally political pluralism and freedom of expression. The most basic individual and collective civil rights are being challenged, namely those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Spanish Constitution itself. These are the rights to demonstration, meeting, freedom of expression, association and participation in public life. The State has acted in accordance with a spirit of repression, ranging from inordinate violence on the part of the police to the judicialization of non-violent political actions and the imposition of prison sentences on artists, thinkers and other peaceful individuals. What is more, at hearings such fundamental rights have been violated as the right to a fair trial, the right to defence and presumption of innocence; moreover, the principles of legality and proportionality have been disregarded, thereby directly affecting the dignity of individuals and seriously threatening justice as a universal value.

The Spanish government has transformed a political conflict into a judicial cause, as a result of which Catalonia has become a laboratory for state-wide persecution of those who question the status quo. In both Catalonia and Spain the foundations are at risk on which every democratically fair society is built. Consequently, those of us who defend Democracy feel that we are called upon to act across all borders and regardless of our political opinions. Therefore, given such repression on the part of the Spanish State and the lack of response on the part of the European Union, we stand together with the youth of Catalonia.

Solidarity is indispensable to constructing democratic society models. We firmly believe that it is the citizens who have the strength and power to decide in what kind of society they wish to live. And in times such as these, organised youth must be a driving force for change and transition towards a fairer, more democratic world. Our attitude as today's youth will mark the societies of tomorrow.

Thus, since the current issue in Catalonia is *Democràcia sí o Democràcia no* (Democracy yes or Democracy no) we, the youth of the world, stand on the side of Democracy and of the defence of fundamental rights and freedoms.

It is for these reasons that:

- Given the extreme seriousness of judicial and police repression unleashed against the people of Catalonia, their institutions and their political and social representatives;
- Given the arbitrariness of the Spanish legal apparatus, which imprisons its political adversaries and forces other militants and representatives of the pro-independence political and social forces into exile;
- And against the fiction created by the examining magistrate at the Spanish Supreme Court, Pablo Llarena, who issues biased rulings to criminalize non-violent actions;

We, organised youth committed to the democratic values of political pluralism, of non-violent struggle against oppression and of social progress:

1. Demand the immediate release of Catalan political prisoners and the return from exile of institutional representatives and militants, as well as the termination of reprisals against the remainder of people currently being persecuted by the Spanish State.
2. Express our warm support for all those people who have been and continue to be the victims of repressive action on the part of the Spanish State: elected representatives, artists, thinkers, members of organised civil society and individuals who have been repressed by police violence, denounced, detained and/or unjustly imprisoned for political reasons or have been forced into exile.

3. Urge the authorities of different European countries not to abet an unfair judicial system and actively to show their disagreement with the current situation of judicial persecution in the Spanish State not only of political leaders but also of artists and ordinary citizens.

4. Recognise the full sovereignty of the Catalan people and their right democratically to decide their future as a people.

5. Recognise the legitimacy of the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya, which can be appointed only by the Catalan Parliament, in response to the will of the people, and which has been illegitimately and illegally dissolved by the Spanish Government through imposition of Article 155 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution.

6. Denounce that, subsequent to the elections of December 21 2017 at the Catalan Parliament, the parliamentary activity of elected representatives is being obstructed, which constitutes violation of the political rights of members, as well as of citizens as a whole (active and passive rights).

7. Denounce the impunity with which fascist ultra-right-wing groups perpetrate acts of violence in the streets, while critical voices that peacefully oppose abuse of power are repressed, judicialized and otherwise punished.

8. Demand that an investigation be made into and responsibilities determined for the police brutality that took place in Catalonia on October 1 2017 against defenceless citizens who merely sought peacefully to exercise their right to vote.

9. Are committed to collaborating with a network of permanent observers whose task is to defend the human rights of people either imprisoned or indicted and to ensure that freedom, democracy and the sovereignty of the Catalan people and institutions become a reality in Catalonia and the Spanish State in the near future.

Organised youth everywhere express our solidarity with the struggle for Democracy, rights and freedom currently taking place in Catalonia and join in the cry against the democratic regression currently taking place in the Spanish State.

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