

Speech of the Very honourable President, Mr Carles Puigdemont

Thursday, November 2, 2017

The Spanish State has decided to imprison the Vice President and Counsellors of the legitimate government of Catalonia, as voted by the people in the elections of 27 September 2015.

This is a serious, very serious mistake. In fact, it is an extremely serious attack on democracy. Imprisoning political leaders for having fulfilled their electoral commitment and for following the mandate laid out by the Parliament of Catalonia, backed by a huge majority of the Catalan people, is an act that goes against the basic principles of democracy.

By doing so, the Spanish Government has renounced a much-needed dialogue. Dialogue that is essential to solve political problems, and this most certainly is a political problem. Instead of opting for dialogue, the Spanish Government has chosen police violence, as witnessed on 1 October, imprisonment, and repression. This is a blow for the elections on 21 December, which will now take place in an unprecedented climate of political repression and imprisonment. This is unacceptable in a democratic Europe of the 21st Century.

It is no longer a Spanish internal affair. The international community, and especially the European Community, must be aware of the danger posed by the measures taken by the Spanish Government.

As President of the legitimate Government of Catalonia, elected in 27 September 2015, I demand the release of the Counsellors and the Vice President. I demand respect for all political options. And I demand the end of political repression. I would like to reiterate that, imprisoning a government for having fulfilled its mandate as approved by the Parliament of Catalonia, is a direct violation of the Rule of Law.

I would like to convey two final messages:

The first, of course, is to the families of my colleagues and friends. Families of people unfairly imprisoned for a non-existent crime. All my support is with you. My

heartfelt sympathy and that of the rest of the members of the Catalan Government, as well as millions of people from all over the world, who have been astonished by these recent events. The second, a message to the entire people of Catalonia. Ahead is a long and fierce crackdown. The fury with which the Spanish State has struck against a beautiful nation in Europe is out of control. And it threatens everything.

But not only can we not give up, we must fight it. But we have to fight in the way in which the Catalans have always done: how we do things that have made us great as a country, as a society, as a nation: without violence, in peace, with respect for opinions of all people.

The freedom of Catalonia is not possible if there are Catalans who are not free to defend their ideas, and to fulfil their democratic commitments. Behind bars, the legitimate Government of Catalonia is infinitely more honourable than its delusional prisoners.

Long live Catalonia!