

Official Statement by the President on the Spanish state's anti-referendum operation

Barcelona, 20 September 2017

The Government of Catalonia has been the target of a coordinated aggression by the Spanish government's interior ministry police with the aim of impeding Catalans to freely and peacefully exercise democracy on October 1, and suspending the activity of the Government that was elected through the ballots on September 27, 2015. A Government, which has a broad majority of the citizens and parliament behind it, and one which has the democratic legitimacy to defend the interests of the citizenry and its self-government.

This aggression has no legal basis. It was perpetrated by violating the rule of law, all constitutional guarantees and violating the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights. In these last hours, and especially today, the Spanish state has suspended *de facto* Catalonia's self-government and has applied a *de facto* state of emergency. Liberties are being suspended and repressed. Mayors are being interrogated without having committed any crime, only as a measure of intimidation just as the very same state attorney has acknowledged, who has confused his authority with a 'free-for-all' to bypass all the guarantees and procedures he has the duty to protect.

The police incursions in various government buildings, the detaining of various officials and government workers, indiscriminate police searches, even in private homes, intimidation of the press, extrajudicial actions of the prosecutor's office, an attempt to block the Generalitat's accounts without a judicial order, the breach of secrecy in the postal correspondence, the closing and blocking of websites, and the threat to all citizens wishing to express themselves and decide on their future have created an unacceptable situation in democracy. One in which a government intends to resolve a demand by the vast majority of the Catalan people through the suspension of the rule of law and siege against democracy and their freedoms.

In this context, the Government of Catalonia wants to address a clear message to its citizens:

- We condemn and reject this totalitarian and anti-democratic attitude by the Spanish state. The government has shown us its intolerant side, which has been displayed throughout a large part of Spain's political history.
- We give our full political, legal and personal support and protection to all members and civil servants of the Government who have been detained.
- We denounce the illegitimate suspension and intervention of the Government of Catalonia by a Spanish government that does not respect the fundamental principles of democracy.



- We reaffirm our democratic and peaceful approach to these aggressions and anti-democratic threats that intend to violate our coexistence.
- We consider that the Spanish government has overstepped the red line that separated it from authoritarian and repressive regimes and has become a democratic embarrassment.
- The Government of Catalonia will examine the appropriate response with the economic, social and civil agents of the country.
- On October 1, the citizens are called to defend democracy against a repressive and intimidating regime, and we must give a massive and civic response. We must prepare ourselves to defend democracy and to defend Catalonia with the only weapons we have: the citizen's response and a peaceful and civilized attitude that has characterized us throughout this process.
- We will assert the legitimacy of the democratic election by Catalans on September 27, 2015. We will not regress because we have no right to do so, and we will defend the right of Catalans to freely decide their future, as was instructed by the citizens and the Parliament.
- From today until the 1st we will need to have an attitude of firmness and at the same time of peacefulness, while staying alert and denouncing the abuses and illegalities committed by the Spanish state. But on the 1st we will leave our houses, we will bring a ballot and we will use it. And this democratic action must contrast with the actions of those who only speak in the language of the authoritarianism, which for too long has conditioned the State's policies.
- The Government of Catalonia will always take its decisions under the legitimacy of the September 27, 2015 elections. And it will be faithful to the purpose of the legislature and the government program approved by Parliament and cannot be suspended by any court.

No other member of the European Union is going through what Catalonia is going through. To all democrats, in and outside of Catalonia, who today feel indignation about the events of these last few hours, the Government of Catalonia reaffirms its commitment to them and will always ensure their protection. We will not accept a return to former times and we will not accept them preventing us from deciding on our free and democratic future.

Carles Puigdemont Casamajó
President de la Generalitat de Catalunya