

Beat: Politics

Sentenced to 98 years in jail the Catalan independence leaders

Spanish Supreme Court dictates sentence

Madrid, 14.10.2019, 22:51 Time

USPA NEWS - After four months of deliberations, the Supreme Court of Spain made public on Monday the sentence against the political and social leaders of the secessionist attempt in Catalonia, in the fall of 2017. In total, nine defendants have been sentenced to 98 years in prison for crimes of sedition and embezzlement of public money. Three other defendants have been convicted of disobedience to the judges and must pay fines of 60,000 Euros.

The former vice president of the regional government of Catalonia and leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC in its acronym in Catalan), Oriol Junqueras, was sentenced to 13 years in prison. Former counselors Jordi Turull, Raul Romeva - who led the international relations of the Catalan secessionist government - and Dolors Bassa were sentenced to 12 years in prison. The former president of the regional Parliament of Catalonia Carmen Forcadell was sentenced to 11 years and six months in prison, while former counselors to the independence government Joaquín Forn and Josep Rull were sentenced to 10 years and six months in jail. Finally, social leaders Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart were sentenced to nine years in prison.

The Court considers it proven that there was violence in the days before and after October 1, 2017, when the illegal referendum on the independence of Catalonia was held, but considers it insufficient to provoke a conviction for rebellion, as requested by the Prosecutor. On the contrary, the Supreme Court allies with the thesis of the State's lawyer, in favor of the crime of sedition. For the judges of the Spanish Supreme Court, the violence must be "instrumental, functional, directly preordered, without intermediate steps, to the ends that encourage the action of the rebels." In this sense, he considers the actions of the separatist leaders "absolutely insufficient" to effectively impose effective territorial independence and the repeal of the Spanish Constitution in the Catalan territory." Against this, the Court believes that the events that occurred on October 1, 2017 were aimed at forcing a negotiation with the Government of the then Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

For the judges, "the excited citizens who believed that a positive result of the so-called self-determination referendum would lead to the desired horizon of a sovereign republic, did not know that the right to decide had mutated and had become an atypical right to press."

After the sentence was made public, the streets of Barcelona were filled with independence protesting the sentences. From Belgium, where he is fleeing, former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont called the sentences "barbaric" and called for keeping the independence process alive. But Puigdemont does not have a clear horizon. The judge who instructed the summary of the process against the independence leaders, Pablo Llarena, reactivated the European arrest warrant against Puigdemont and two of his accompanying counselors. In the afternoon, the Belgian Prosecutor's Office confirmed the reception of the Euro order and announced that it will present it to the Justice. The sentences published Monday gives arguments to the prosecutor to request the extradition of Puigdemont to Spain.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-16008/sentenced-to-98-years-in-jail-the-catalan-independence-leaders.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSIV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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