

Beat: Politics

Prosecutor asks for 25 years in prison for the leaders of Catalan secessionism

Maintains the crime of rebellion

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USPA NEWS - The Prosecutor of the Spanish Supreme Court presented on last Friday its findings after the investigation of the independence process in Catalonia and accused the main leaders of the secessionist attempt, who are in prison, of rebellion, embezzlement of public funds and serious disobedience of the laws in force. In total, the prosecutor accuses 18 Catalan leaders, for which he asks for sentences of between eight months and 25 years in prison.

The prosecutor's letter contradicts the guidelines of the Socialist Government chaired by Pedro Sanchez, who ordered the state's lawyers not to accuse the Catalan leaders of rebellion but to sedition, an offense that carries a lower penalty. The Office of the Prosecutor wanted to demonstrate its independence from political power and its strict observance of the current Penal Code. In the opinion of the prosecutor, all the defendants are responsible for a crime of rebellion to varying degrees and several of them, other crimes of embezzlement of public funds. All are also responsible for a crime of gross disobedience of the laws in force, says the prosecutor.

For the former vice president of the regional government of Catalonia and leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC in its initials in Catalan), Oriol Junqueras, the prosecutor asks for a sentence of 25 years in prison and 25 years of absolute disqualification for the exercise of charges public. For the former president of the regional Parliament of Catalonia, Carme Forcadell, the prosecutor asks for 17 years in prison and seventeen years of absolute disqualification, the same penalty he requests for social leaders Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart.

For the former regional government councilors of Catalonia Jordi Turull, Raul Romeva, Joaquin Forn, Josep Rull and Dolors Bassa, the prosecutor asks for sentences of 16 years in prison and 16 years of absolute disqualification. For the also former counselors Carles Mundo, Meritxell Borrás and Santiago Vila, the penalty requested is 7 years in prison and 16 years of absolute disqualification. For five other defendants, the sentences requested are 10 months, and for the last accused, eight months.

The prosecutor considers it proven that the 18 accused "encouraged and sought direct confrontation between crowds of citizens and security forces, which not only supported the act of harassment, intimidation and violence but, from the constituted power, gave explicit and express support for the strategy of preventing the actions of the State and the judicial organs." The Office of the Prosecutor refers to October 1, 2017 and the previous days, when an illegal referendum was promoted by the regional government of Catalonia and, through violence, the action of the National Police and the Civil Guard was impeded to prevent their celebration, prohibited by the Constitutional Court.

The prosecutor's brief details the harassment of the police and civil guards, the aggressions they suffered and the passivity of the regional police of Catalonia (the Mossos d'Esquadra) in the face of these events. According to the Prosecutor's Office, the Mossos had received orders from the regional government of Catalonia not to intervene and facilitate the holding of the referendum, preventing the intervention of the State security forces if necessary.

Faced with the accusations of the Prosecutor's Office, the State's lawyers will only contemplate the crime of sedition, punishable by a maximum of 15 years in prison. The change of position is a consequence of ongoing negotiations between the Spanish Government and the Catalan authorities, with which Moncloa hopes to reduce the tension and open a fluid dialogue. In the brief of the Prosecutor's Office there is no mention of the former president of the regional government of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, who is fled in Belgium, who is considered the last responsible for the independence attempt.

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