

Christian organizations on the Sentence issued by the Spanish Supreme Court on Catalan social and political leaders

Following the sentence of the Spanish Supreme Court that condemns different Catalan social and political leaders, the undersigned Christian entities want to state the following:

1. We believe that this sentence is a serious attack on the essential democratic principles of our society and a serious violation of the human rights of those affected. This is due to the improper application of criminal laws to acts that are not criminal and cannot be considered criminal, imposing sentences of great cruelty. In addition to above, there have been violations of the procedural guarantees in the judicial process, as has already been ruled by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations Human Rights Council, as well as multiple national and international human rights NGOs have denounced (International Federation for Human Rights, Euromed Rights, International Amnesty, World Organisation Against Torture, International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture, Front Line Defenders...).

2. In our view, this sentence is a serious step backwards in resolving the political conflict that affects Catalonia and endangers coexistence and democracy. Therefore, as entities committed to service to society, we will join civic and peaceful initiatives that express a rejection of this judicial decision. Likewise, we call on the political institutions of the State to seek a legal solution that leads to the release of unjustly convicted people and to allow a climate of dialogue to face the existing political conflict.

3. We express our deep concern and disappointment that the repeated calls to the dialogue in recent years have not yielded any results. We regret that it has not been possible "to move forward in the path of dialogue and understanding, respect for rights and institutions and non-confrontation, helping our society be a space for brotherhood, freedom and peace" (Note by Conferència Episcopal Tarraconense, 15th May 2017).

4. For all these reasons, we call on all institutions and political parties to put an end to the judicialization of this situation and urgently and immediately initiate a multilateral process of political dialogue that will allow move forward for a fair, democratic and lasting resolution of this conflict that leads to concord and social Peace (*"In a culture which privileges dialogue as a form of encounter, it is time to devise a means for building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society"*. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 239).

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