

Spain Briefing: April and May 2024

Reporting period: 1st April – 26th May 2024

Spain National Developments

Spanish government continues to maintain supportive, but limited, stance towards Palestine, while left pushes them further and far-right parties vocally support Israel

- Spanish President Pedro Sánchez, as well as EU foreign Minister Josep Borrell¹, have taken the middle road on Palestine, admitting the [impossibility](#) of having it both ways. While making symbolic [gestures](#) and [press](#) conferences supporting the occupied people, it has not divested from nor sanctioned Israel.
- European Parliament candidate and former minister Ione Belarra² and EU parliamentarian [Manu Pineda](#)³, have been more forthright, with concrete [demands](#).

Last year, Belarra was accused of anti-Semitism, but now “the Supreme Court [archives](#) the complaints against Ione Belarra for accusing Israel of genocide” as an example of freedom of expression

- Israeli leaders and the Spanish extreme right no longer hide their [friendship](#).

Historically anti-Semitic, and today, without ceasing to be so, the ideological heirs of fascism have understood that Israel is not an enemy, but a profitable ally.

In the far-right event in that took place in Madrid, [EuropaViva24](#), the far-right VOX⁴ gathered Amichai Chikli (Netanyahu's minister of Israel's Diaspora and the fight against Anti-Semitism), Marine Le Pen (France), André Ventura (Portugal), Victor Orban (Hungary) and Javier Milei (Argentina), among others.

The content of the speeches was essentially fascist, Zionist, anti-immigration and Islamophobic.

¹ PSOE: is the Socialist Workers' Party of Spain. The center-left party is currently head of the ruling coalition government of Spain.

² Podemos: Podemos (in English “we can”) left wing political party in Spain, currently in the opposition.

³ Izquierda Unida (in English “United Left”).

⁴ VOX: Vox is a far-right national conservative political party, currently in the opposition.



Updates on Spanish civil society on the ongoing genocide on Palestine

Students join encampment movement, and battle smears from Zionist students

- From mid-April pro-Palestine students [encampments](#) against genocide began to spread across state campuses. Some of these have already achieved some [wins](#).
- During the student [encampment](#) at the University of the Balearic Islands, an [extreme](#) far-right [mob](#) attacked some students.
- A press release was published in several media outlets and sent to the Senate of Rectors of Spanish Universities titled “Jewish communities and [50](#) associations denounce anti-Semitism in Spanish universities” organised by a state-sponsored NGO⁵.

The next day, the claim was [disproven](#), mainly because there aren't 50 Jewish Associations in Spain (the Jewish community makes up 0.09% of the overall population).

NGOs accused regional government-linked agency with of links with Israel

- Catalanian NGOs have accused ACCIÓ⁶, a Catalan public agency attached to the Department of Business and Labor of the Government of Catalonia, of complicity with apartheid and genocide in Palestine in [their report](#) “*The inACTION of Catalonia in the face of the violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people*”. When anti-genocide protesters gathered in the ACCIÓ [headquarters](#) to protests, the Mossos police force broke up the event with [baton blows](#).
- Meanwhile, a journalistic [investigation](#) titled “*University of Zaragoza: boycott or complicity with Israeli colonialism?*”, is based on open sources and demonstrates that the University “has agreements with four Israeli entities [...] that have organic relations with the army, the security services and the Israeli administration.”

Police crackdown in Catalonia against Palestine solidarity demonstrators

- “The Mossos⁷ [detained](#) ten people in Barcelona in March on a Day of Solidarity with Palestine. The arrests are related to the mobilisations on February 7, in which thousands of people protested in Catalonia against the genocide.

Nine of the detainees, who are members of an anarchist collective defence group,

⁵ Movimiento contra la Intolerancia (Movement against Intolerance).

⁶ Agència per la Competitivitat de l'Empresa (Catalonia Trade & Investment)

⁷ Mossos: Catalonian police forces



are accused of crimes of public disorder, damage, illegal demonstration and pertaining to criminal groups, which can lead to prison sentences.

Attacks and disruption of pro-Palestine activity by Zionists

- The collective Citizens for Palestine denounces the “criminalization” of the movement and the “banalization of anti-Semitism” in an [event](#) in Mallorca, through a focused workshop called ‘Combating Zionist propaganda’.

At the end of the training, which was attended by over 50 people, a far-right journalist, Octavio Cortés, demanded “that they condemn Hamas” and accused the participants of “denying the Holocaust and of being anti-Semitic.”

- A Zionist group [threatened](#) long-term Javier Arjona, a militant with the group Asturias with Palestine.

He was sent a letter in Hebrew signed by the Spanish Pro-Israeli Movement, stating that “An eye for an eye, as The Torah says”. The letter also mentions his partner.

National Security & Counter-terrorism

- At the end of March, the National Security Council [approved](#) a new National Strategy against Terrorism, which continues to identify ‘jihadism’ as the main threat to Spain.

The Council [warned](#) that the Hamas operation on October 7 and the subsequent Israeli invasion could ‘radicalise’ individuals towards acts of terrorism domestically and internationally.

One of the components of this new version of the Strategy [focuses](#) on ‘lone wolves with mental health problems’.

At the European level, Spain has also led on the European [plan](#) against ‘the spread of terrorist propaganda and radicalism on the Internet’.

- Fernando Reinares from Elcano Institute issues the [report](#) “Third generation terrorists”, which highlights the predominance of “second-generation - mainly Moroccan immigrants among jihadists arrested or killed in Spain between 2012 and 2023”.

Mr. Reinares is often [disproved](#) by renowned analysts, like Marc Sageman, but this material is used and [funded](#) by public institutions, like the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior.

- 11 years after its arrival, the EU military training mission, known as EUTM [Mali](#), currently led by Spain, officially concluded May 18th. [During that time](#) this mission has been used by politicians and pundits as a tool to stir alarm within Spanish society.
- The Constitutional Court (TC) agreed to grant [protection](#) to ‘AA’ a Spanish citizen of Moroccan and Belgian nationality



AA claims to have suffered torture in Morocco after being extradited by Spain, following his arrest in 2008.

The UN acknowledged his mistreatment in Morocco in a 2014 resolution, determining that Spain "did not adequately evaluate the risk of torture and severe ill-treatment".