



Unión General de Trabajadores
COMISIÓN EJECUTIVA CONFEDERAL

Comunicado de Prensa

Information about the prosecution of the right to strike in Spain

(Rubén Ranz and José Manuel Nogales' case)

Madrid, 16th June 2017

Two trade unionists from the General Workers' Union (UGT), Rubén Ranz and José Manuel Nogales, who were prosecuted for defending the right to strike on 29th March 2012, day of the general strike, will be judged on 21st June in Madrid. The Prosecutor's office requests a 7-year prison sentence for each of them.

The right to strike is being strongly questioned in Spain in many ways, including through the application of an article of the Criminal Code (315.3), drafted during the Franco dictatorship and which has not been implemented ever since. But the pressure of the most conservative forces of Mariano Rajoy's government has caused the Prosecutor's office to often turn to this article and, as a consequence, more than 300 trade unionists are involved in criminal proceedings for exercising their legitimate right to strike while taking part in different acts.

Rubén Ranz and José Manuel Nogales, affiliates to Spanish major union UGT, were present in a concentration of workers in the Plaza de la Lealtad square, Madrid, in the night of the general strike of March 29th, 2012. The concentration brought together many trade union delegates in this square and was intended to inform workers about the reasons of the general strike; after a tense situation with police and government forces, a brutal police charge followed, after which colleagues Rubén and José Manuel were arrested and imprisoned for more than 24 hours.

For UGT, this arrest and consequent prosecution responds to the attack of the right to strike conducted by the Popular Party conservative government, through the State Prosecutor Office and through legal measures against civil liberties, as well as continuous and systematic attacks to the whole trade union movement. The Popular Party government, taking advantage of their absolute majority at that time, passed a number of reforms to silence social protests (as the so-called *Gagging law*) throughout the previous term in office and also tried to criminalize and punish the right to strike, under the context of a no longer used article, as it is the 315.3 of the Penal Code.

This issue affects not only trade unions but every worker and citizen. Society must be aware that this is an attack against their freedom and rights and their ability to claim





Unión General de Trabajadores
COMISIÓN EJECUTIVA CONFEDERAL

Comunicado de Prensa

and defend their interests. Attacking these rights means weakening our democratic system.

On June 21st, our UGT colleagues Rubén Ranz and José Manuel Nogales will be judged for crimes they did not commit; as they only took part in an informational picketing action five years ago. These trade unionists and their families have been suffering for five years of pressure and condemnation from certain sectors of society, of lack of any legal defence and fear of the trial on the 21st.

UGT wants to present the case of these two colleagues as sad example of the situation of the right to strike not only in Spain, but in many countries in Europe (as the latest proposal from the European Commission shows) and in the world, and calls for your attention and follow up on this example of antidemocratic behave.

For more information, please contact: comunicacion@cec.ugt.org