

PROXY OBSERVER

SEÑALAMOS A LOS CULPABLES DE LA VIOLENCIA

Report on Human Rights Violations at protest Known as “Rodea el Congreso” (Madrid)

Prepared for:

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe OSCE
Permanent Mission of Spain to the OSCE
Argentinierstrasse 34A
1040 Vienna
Austria

Prepared by: Emilio Esteban, Madrid (Spain)

Reference: Latest Human Rights Violations by Spanish Police during Peaceful Protest.

INTRODUCTION

Since the Madrid government banned OSCE observers from monitoring a protest in 2012, we have seen a dramatic increase in the use of unlawful violence on the part of Spanish police.

The latest violation of basic Human Rights occurred during a peaceful protest in central Madrid, which both peaceful and constitutional.

This report aims to inform the OSCE of the events which took place during that protest, describing the backdrop to these violations and to make recommendations.

We have included both photographic and video evidence of police aggression against members of the public.

THE ORGANISERS:

The protest was organised by a social group known as @Coordinadora25S, and was scheduled for the 4th of October 2014.

The protest, known as “*Rodea el Congreso*”, was perfectly legal and well within the Spanish Constitution which allows citizens to gather in peaceful protest, without notifying the authorities.

The authorities in Madrid however, often violate this basic legal right by insisting that all protests must be communicated to the police beforehand. This, however, is not a legal requirement as the Constitution does not require it.

THE EVENT:

The objective of the protest was to gather in a central Madrid plaza known as *Puerta del Sol*, and for protestors to then make their way to Spain’s parliament known as “El Congreso”, which being a Saturday, was closed and therefore represented no threat to anyone.

The lack of any threat to public order, was evidenced by the fact that at no point during the protest was the parliament sealed off. No barriers were put up, and few riot police were present.

THE LOCATION

The organisers had arranged to meet in central Madrid (*Puerta del Sol*) at 19:00. Spanish riot police (known as UIP or *antidisturbios*) were waiting at the location, proving that the authorities were aware that a protest would take place.

From there, the organisers had hoped to march peacefully towards the parliament building in an orderly way, and with the police to protect them and their right to protest, as the law requires Spanish police to do.

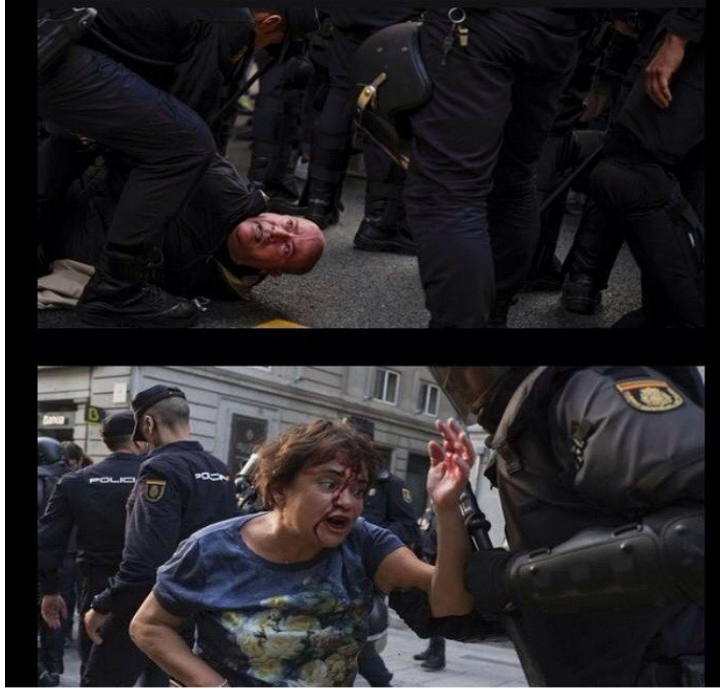
POLICE CHARGES AND AGGRESSIONS

A mere 15 minutes into the gathering, Spanish police charged violently into the head of the march with little or no warning, and with terrible consequences for the organisers standing at the front of the march holding the banner.

It is at this point that many of those who were attacked by Spanish police were pinned to the ground and arrested as they lay bleeding in pain on the ground.

The video links included with this report, bare witness to the brutal aggressions against peaceful protestors and the role played by the UIP (*antidisturbios*) in these aggressions.

It is evident from the video footage, that at no point did the protestors pose any threat to the general public or to police officers themselves. The excessive use of force left six people injured and two hospitalised.



THE INJURIES

Several of those beaten by police had severe head injuries, including one of the organisers (Luis Ocampo) and a woman who was left with a gash on her head caused by the impact of a police truncheon.

Not surprisingly, no police officers were hurt during the clashes, as it had never been the intention of the organisers to cause any injuries and alter public order.

MANIPULATION OF THE PRESS

In the weeks leading up to the protest, the authorities in Madrid, led by Cristina Cifuentes, ran many false reports in the national press claiming that “*violent elements*” would be present at the protest.

This distortion of the facts had the effect of criminalising the event before it had even begun, making it all the easier for the UIP to justify their violence against unarmed peaceful protestors.

The Spanish press followed the same line, publishing distorted headlines the morning after the event, in an effort to justify the aggressions suffered by the victims of police violence.

THE AUTHORITIES

Since OSCE diplomats were banned from observing protests in Spain, police brutality has been a common feature at these protests, with no regard for public safety.

Spanish citizens wishing to exercise their rights in a peaceful manner, are at the mercy of the authorities who have demonstrated a willingness to use disproportionate force to crush all peaceful dissent.

It is worth noting that Madrid authorities are spending huge amounts of public money buying extra protection for their police officers, as well as providing them with military style training.

CRISTINA CIFUENTES

As previously mentioned in this report, the person responsible for the violent actions of the UIP is Cristina Cifuentes. Mrs Cifuentes has the ultimate say in the actions of the UIP *antidisturbios* and is responsible for the events of October 4th.

It is no coincidence that on the same week as the organisers of the “*Rodea el Congreso*” took legal action against Cifuentes over a previous violation of their rights, two of the members of *Coordinadora25S* were arrested and beaten during the protest.

The decision by Cristina Cifuentes to use excessive violence against peaceful protestors, appears to have been motivated by personal reasons. Our evidence is that Cristina Cifuentes has taken the law into her own hands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The increasing use of police violence as a means of controlling crowds at peaceful protests, is damaging Spain’s international reputation and putting innocent lives at risk. The OSCE themselves recently placed Spain on a “*black list*”.

Unfortunately, placing Spain on a black list of nations which do not allow OSCE observers to monitor protests, is allowing Spanish authorities to act with total impunity.

We ask the OSCE to take the following measures:

1. Condemn the Spanish government for the violent actions of the police during “*Rodea el Congreso*” against the *Coordinadora25S* and members of the public.

2. Demand that the authorities in Madrid respect international Human Rights treaties signed by Spain with regard to freedom of speech and right to protest.

3. Inform the *United Nations Security Council* of this breach of Human Rights which has taken place in Spain.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION

In the absence of official OSCE diplomatic observers in Spain, I ask the OSCE to authorise me to act temporarily as a proxy volunteer observer for the OSCE, in order to help monitor the situation in Spain until OSCE monitors are allowed to return.

Date: 14/ October/ 2014



Posters advertising the “*Rodea el Congreso*” protest were displayed throughout Madrid, and were clearly visible for the authorities to see in the run up to the event. The location and time were made public by the Coordinadora25S in advance.

Videos of police aggressions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dewMPWCIN48>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wtzfkWajGc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ma7dqhPvgGY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mZo5n2hgzY>

Photographs and additional videos:

<http://proxyobserver.weebly.com/informes.html>