

PROXY OBSERVER

SEÑALAMOS A LOS CULPABLES DE LA VIOLENCIA

Spot Report: Nazi Foods Banks, Illegal Social Centres and Government Impunity

Prepared for:

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INTRODUCTION:

This report has been prepared with the aim of updating the OSCE / ODIHR on an issue which was the subject of a previous **spot report**, namely, the continuing protests in Madrid at the presence of a Nazi controlled "social centre" in an area of the capital known as Chamberí.

The objective of the report is to provide a brief description of the latest protest, background information, and an analysis of the event; including police tactics and organisers' aims. The report will include recommendations on the issue at hand for the OSCE / ODIHR to consider.

LOCATION & DATE OF PROTEST

As with the first of the protests against the occupation of a building by a group of Neo-Nazis in Chamberí (Madrid), the organisers chose the weekend (Sunday 15th February, 2015) to march peacefully on the social centre. The route on this occasion was identical to the first protest, as was the time the protest was scheduled to start 17:30 (CET).

BACKGROUND TO THE PROTEST

The harsh economic situation in Spain, has seen many food banks and social centres being established by neighbours and local social groups. These centres provide much-needed help to poor families and anyone in need of help, regardless of their ethnic background.

According to *20Minutos* a total of 21 districts in Madrid have now opened their own food banks, providing help to 4,000 needy individuals without resources. Many of the families who use these services are victims of forced evictions by greedy Spanish banks.

Attempts by extreme right-wing groups to cash-in on the social unease created by the economic crisis, has seen them move into this sector. A Nazi group known as *Movimiento Social Republicano* (MSR) has now established itself in Chamberí providing basic foodstuffs to local families - but only if they're Spanish and white.

THE MSR GROUP:

The MSR group is well known to local neighbours. Soon after occupying an empty building in Tetuan (Madrid), reports flooded in of racist attacks against foreigners. Once they were thrown out of Tetuan, they quickly moved into a vacant building in Chamberí, currently owned by the *Ministry of Employment*.

Government impunity on this critical issue, means that MSR Nazis are unlikely to be evicted for at least two more months, until the building is sold. Meanwhile, neighbours and anti-fascist associations are organising themselves to ensure this violent group is evicted before the attacks on foreigners begin again.

PROTEST ORGANISERS:

As with the first of the anti-fascist **protests** directed against the MSR centre in January of this year, the organisers of this event are a social group especially created for this purpose. The platform known as **@ChamberiEnLucha**, is made up of concerned local neighbours and younger, more politically active students, who are committed to the fight for social justice.

MEDIA PRESENCE:

A significant number of reporters and TV crews turned up at the usual meeting point, including several large news agencies and television channels. Among those present were *La sexta*, a Spanish TV channel and *Europa Press*, who never record images of heavily armed police: perhaps in readiness for the *Ley Mordaza* (gag law) which prohibits such subversive activities.

Alternative reporters, meaning those not accredited by any particular newspaper, TV channel or news agency, were also present in large numbers. The resulting images and reports from official and non-official sources, often differ sharply, with accredited journalists appearing to follow a strict editorial line based on the newspaper's own political ideology.

THE EVENT:

The meeting point for this protest was a busy roundabout in *Quevedo*, located approximately an hour away from the MSR "social" centre. On arrival, we

counted eight large police vans known as *lecheras*. That number of vans is a ridiculous show of strength on the part of the UIP (riot police), baring in mind that many of the neighbours participating in the event were pensioners.

While we waited for the anti-Nazi march to start, we distributed **leaflets** among the ever-growing crowd of an upcoming protest. This is scheduled for Saturday 28th February, and is organised by **@Coordinadora25S**. *Proxy Observer* will compile a detailed report on this event for the OSCE, as this group is the same which organised the *Jaque al Rey* protest in 2013 which resulted in the OSCE being unceremoniously **expelled** from Spain.

Eventually, the organisers and police agreed to start the event, walking at a steady pace towards the MSR centre where the organisers intended to read out a manifesto. We are not in a position to confirm if on this occasion, a security cordon was arranged, but the organisers ensured that the situation was under control the whole time.

We continued distributing leaflets along the route while activists stuck stickers on **lampposts**. Neighbours looked down from their balconies attracted by the noise, and before we knew it, we turned right down *Bretón de los Herreros* Street, where the MSR Nazi centre is located. Half way down this street, the policemen who had been accompanying us suddenly disappeared.

We hardly had to wait long to discover where the police had gone. They were all **lined up** a few yards ahead of us, helmets on, shields and batons at the ready, some menacingly holding **rubber bullet rifles** in an attempt to frighten the older ones. We stopped, stood firm, and continued chanting *¡NO PASARAN!* at the Nazis who were clearly visible on the **roof** of their "bunker".

MANIFESTO:

In a well coordinated but childish stunt, MSR radicals released dozens of coloured **balloons** and set off flares producing a vivid blue smoke, not unlike the blue tone of the governing *Popular Party* logo. A clue perhaps, as to who is behind the funding of this racist group. Meanwhile, protestors continued chanting.

A local neighbour read out a manifesto condemning the presence of violent far right groups in Spain and continental Europe. She was continuously interrupted by a radical on the roof, who had a similar megaphone but a very different message. At approximately 7pm, as the sun was beginning to set, the protest ended.

Concerned organisers warned protestors about the possibility of violent attacks against us and instructed everyone to leave the area in large groups for our own safety. Cowardly attacks on minorities are the hallmark of fascist groups such as MSR, so we heeded the organisers' advice.

LUCRECIA PERÉZ:

During the protest, the name Lucrecia Pérez was called out loudly on several occasions. This 33 year old immigrant from the Dominican Republic, is acknowledged as being Spain's first victim of a **racist attack**. Lucrecia was shot through the heart and killed by a Guardia Civil, Merino Luis Perez, in November 1992 for racial motives.

The killing came soon after a confrontation between immigrants and Spanish police, who harassed them on a daily basis with unwarranted ID checks. A process of criminalisation by the media then ensued. Social groups claim a link between far right groups and Spanish security forces exist.

Certainly, institutional racism in Spain cannot be denied: thousands of foreigners have been denied a **health card** and many so-called "*sin papeles*" (undocumented foreigners) wind up in CIE's (prisons for immigrants).

It is clear that in Spain today, anti-foreigner sentiments are running high due, in part, to distortions about the economic crisis. Neo-Nazis have been quick to make political hay of the situation, organising themselves with funds from unknown sources, and operating from government-owned buildings such as the one in Chamberí.

POLICE PRESENCE:

The presence of heavily armed, **hooded police** officers has an unsettling effect on citizens. The worry has always been that one of them may suddenly snap with deadly consequences for the public. The potential threat these highly-strung riot police officers pose to the public should not be underestimated. Ample **video evidence** exists to show just how erratic their behaviour can be in stressful situations.

Equally worrying is the failure by senior police chiefs to enforce the law with regard to ID numbers. Once again at this protest, practically all the UIP officers wore their ID numbers under their bullet-proof vests. This makes it impossible to correctly identify individual police officers, denying victims of police wrongdoing the right to gather the necessary evidence to bring a legal prosecution.

ARRESTS & INJURIES:

It is in the interest of protest organisers to ensure that citizens are able to exercise their right to peaceful protest, without the risk of injury or arrest. Large scale police violence at protests has a dissuasive effect on citizens. This may explain why the delegation in Madrid and UIP chiefs act the way they do.

On this occasion however, due entirely to the excellent planning and security measures put in place by protest organisers, no arrests or injuries were reported. The organisers should be congratulated for their responsible attitude.

SECRET POLICE & INFILTRATORS:

No sightings of "*secretas*" or infiltrators were reported. No mass ID checks were carried out. No video evidence of those present was gathered for unspecified use.

THE AUTHORITIES:

It has to be said from the offset, that the authorities in Madrid are partly responsible for the situation in Chamberí. The building which houses the illegal MSR food bank, is a government owned property, said to belong to the *Ministry of Employment*. As such, the only obvious factor preventing an eviction is the lack of will on the part of the government.

The main worry of the protest organisers, is the potential for another outbreak of racist violence against local immigrants, as happened with this group in Tetuan. The authorities should take these worries seriously and not simply wait for it to happen before taking action.

The delegation in Madrid is aware that the MSR centre only provides food to Spanish families and white people. The Nazi organisers of the *Hogar Social Madrid* have made this clear in their propaganda **videos** on *Youtube*. Yet, the authorities in Madrid remain silent, despite strong indications that such racist actions could constitute illegal discrimination under EU legislation.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS:

Our conclusion is that the authorities in Madrid continue to ignore increasing calls for a solution to this problem. They simply limit themselves to controlling protests against the MSR centre, appearing in the process to be condoning the illegal occupation of their building for racist purposes.

The delegation in Madrid is wrong to use police resources to silence and intimidate local people who are worried about the presence of a radical right-wing group in their neighbourhood. Especially as this group already has a violent reputation which is well documented.

The rooftop taunting incident, the coloured balloons and silly flares, are an indication of the impunity with which this group of nasty thugs are allowed to act by the authorities in Madrid. The government should consider the damage being done to racial relations in Chamberí.

There is growing resentment in Chamberí at the increasingly apparent link between this radical far right group, the owners of the building (ie: the government) and the security forces who appear to "protect" them. Action needs to be taken to correct this situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As this [video](#) demonstrates, the *Hogar Social Madrid* is receiving food from a [European Food Scheme](#) and distributing it with a racist criteria. We urge the OSCE / ODIHR to put an end to this abuse.

We further recommend the OSCE / ODIHR take up the question of MSR with Madrid as a matter of urgency.

We ask the OSCE / ODIHR to clarify with Madrid exactly when they intend to evict the MSR occupants from this public building.

We urge the OSCE / ODIHR to contact Cristina Cifuentes, the delegation chief in Madrid, to express concern at the apparent lax attitude towards racism and racist groups in the capital.

We suggest the OSCE / ODIHR transmit to Madrid the concern felt by local neighbours at the potential physical risk to immigrants living in Chamberí.

We urge the OSCE / ODIHR to encourage the EU to launch a full investigation to establish how Spain is using resources from the EU Food Scheme, and whether these distribution methods comply with EU regulations.

We also urge the OSCE / ODIHR to ask Amnesty International / Human Rights Watch to launch a full investigation to establish possible links between far right groups (such as MSR) and Spanish security forces.

We suggest the OSCE / ODIHR ask Madrid to explain the purpose of the tactics used by Spanish police during peaceful protests by local people.

We recommend the OSCE / ODIHR work closely with police authorities in Madrid to design an anti-racist awareness programme for UIP police officers.

We suggest the OSCE / ODIHR encourage Spain's Guardia Civil to work in immigrant run centres, and receive social training under the instruction of immigrants, as part of their basic training.

We suggest the OSCE / ODIHR ask the government in Madrid to provide a clear plan of action with regard to the MSR centre.

Finally, we ask the OSCE / ODIHR to clarify with Madrid whether it feels the presence of this Nazi group is damaging race relations in the Chamberí community.

Report date: 25th February 2015

RELEVANT VIDEOS & PHOTOGRAPHS:

VIDEO summary of the anti-fascist protest

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

Photographs of UIP (antidisturbios) with rubber bullet rifle

<http://goo.gl/p1FR5G>

Additional photographs and videos of this protest

<http://proxyobserver.weebly.com/chamberi2.html>

For more reports on past and future protests

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