

# *Barricades and marches as protesters prepare for general strike in Catalonia*

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Barcelona, October 17 (RHC)-- Spain's Interior Minister sent about 2,000 police officers to Catalonia to control demonstrations which started when nine pro-independence leaders were sentenced to jail terms ranging from 9 to 13 years.

On Tuesday night, Barcelona became a battle ground when the police tried to repress protesters who entrenched themselves in the streets and built more than 150 burning barricades. As a result of the police repression, some 30 people were arrested and at least 125 people were injured, as reported by the regional Medical Emergency System.

On Wednesday morning, the Barcelona-Figueras high-speed train was interrupted due to the sabotage of various points along the route. In addition, several mass marches of protesters will place along Catalan roads to Barcelona, where they will concentrate on Friday, when a general strike is called throughout Catalonia.

On October 14, the Spanish Supreme Court sentenced pro-independence leaders to 9 to 13 years in prison for their responsibility in the 2017 referendum process, whereby the Catalans rejected the Spanish

Constitution, preventing the separation of any part of the national territory.

Catalonia's President Quim Torra, who supports the independence of his country, convened an emergency meeting to discuss the situation with the main advisers of his government, which manages the public safety powers in this autonomous region.

Spain's Minister of Development Jose Luis Abalos questioned Torra for having "no interest" in controlling "the disorder" and accused him of calling for protests.

The Spanish government, which is headed by the socialist Pedro Sanchez, hopes that the Catalonia President will condemn and repress the protests. If that does not happen soon, the Spanish government could apply the National Security Law to halt the ongoing protests, which are becoming increasingly massive and determined.

So far, however, the Spanish authorities have tried to maintain a more prudent approach. Interior Minister Fernando Grande indicated that it would be "absolutely imprudent" for the Sanchez administration to take control of the Catalan Police.

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