



This site uses cookies to help improve your online experience. [Find out more](#) →

Amnesty International UK

## Press releases

# Spain: leading Catalan figures Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart should be freed

15 Oct 2018, 05:18pm



The Catalonia independence referendum saw numerous incidents of heavy-handed policing © David Ramos/Getty Images

**A year on from their pre-trial detention, the pair languish in jail charged with ‘rebellion’**

**‘Their continued detention constitutes a disproportionate restriction on their rights to free speech and peaceful assembly’ - Fotis Filippou**

A year after two leading Catalan figures - Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart - were detained on “sedition” charges relating to the Catalan independence referendum and protests last year, Fotis Filippou, Amnesty International Europe Deputy Director, said:

“There is no justification for keeping Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart in pre-trial detention and we reiterate our call for their immediate release.

“Amnesty International believes their continued detention constitutes a disproportionate restriction on their rights to free speech and peaceful assembly.

“Instead of taking the opportunity to end the detention of Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart, the judicial authorities have perpetuated this injustice.”

## Longstanding calls for release

Amnesty has called for the immediate release of Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart since it first learned of their detention.

According to the information available to Amnesty, the charges against the two men are unfounded and must therefore be dropped. If it can be shown that they called on demonstrators to prevent police from carrying out a lawful operation, this could constitute a prosecutable public order offence. But accusing them of such serious crimes as “rebellion” or “sedition” and detaining them for a year is disproportionate and an excessive restriction of their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Recently, Spain’s Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court rejected two petitions for the release of Cuixart and Sànchez, while the Constitutional Court has also refused on at least three occasions to provisionally suspend the detention of Jordi Sànchez.

## Charged with sedition

On 16 October 2017, the National Court issued an order for the pre-trial detention of Jordi Sànchez and Jordi Cuixart, the then presidents, respectively, of the Catalan National Assembly and Òmnium Cultural, on charges of “sedition”. Subsequently, on 24 November, their cases were combined with another lawsuit (Extraordinary Case #20907/2017) and brought before the Supreme Court.

On 21 March, following an examination by the investigating judge, the two men were charged with “rebellion”. In the indictment they are accused of responsibility for participation in the referendum held on 1 October in Catalonia, despite the Constitutional Court decision suspending the referendum law. They are also charged with calling on people to gather in front of government buildings on 20 and 21 September in order to prevent police from carrying out a lawful operation ordered by a Barcelona court to search several government buildings.

[View latest press releases](#)