

Beat: Politics

## The Spanish political left breaks down

### Application of law confronts government

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**USPA NEWS** - Spain is experiencing a convulsive political period, six months before a regional elections that are announced as an examination of the work of the Government and a year before legislative elections that all polls predict as those of change.

To the extraordinary delay that accumulates the renewal of the main organs of the judiciary - the General Council of the Judiciary, the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court -, the reform of the Penal Code is added to eliminate the crime of sedition, replaced by another of disorder aggravated public; another announced reform to eliminate the crime of embezzlement of public funds, and the recent approval of a law that equates the crime of sexual assault with that of sexual abuse. Promoted by the most controversial minister of the coalition government, in practice this new law lowers the penalties for rapists and opens the doors of prisons by reducing their sentences.

That was not the objective of the law prepared by the Ministry of Equality, whose head, Irene Montero, a member of the extreme left coalition Podemos, in coalition with the Socialist Party in the Government of Spain, has staged a striking confrontation against everyone. The objective of the law was to simplify the tangle of crimes that until now made it difficult to judge with justice the acts committed against women.

The first applications of the new law have brought almost thirty people convicted of rape to the streets, who have seen their sentences reduced. Spanish law allows that when a new rule is beneficial for the convicted person, it is applied retroactively. For Minister Irene Montero, who does not admit the possibility that her law contains errors, the release of convicts is an example of the sexism that exists in the judiciary and in the media, which leads the magistrates to pass sentences against the women, and the media, to justify these sentences.

Before the approval of this controversial law, the organizations of judges and prosecutors, the opposition parties and not a few women's associations had warned the minister of the perverse effects of the new law. But the minister ignored the warnings and her determination to blame everyone rather than admit her alleged mistakes has led the Government of Spain to an unprecedented crisis.

Abandoned by everyone, except for her far-left coalition, whose top leaders have closed ranks around her, the Minister for Equality has been left alone. The Podemos coalition itself presents fissures that threaten to break it. Izquierda Unida, heir to the Communist Party of Spain, which joined Podemos, remains silent while the leaders of the coalition demand a clear public defense of their minister. And another minister of the Spanish Government, the Vice President and Minister of Labor, Yolanda Díaz, who has created a separate platform from Podemos to compete in the elections, came out in defense of the judges and asked for caution in the public statements of the political leaders.

Many analysts agree that Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will keep the head of Equality in office until the budgets are approved. In the Government, nobody confirms it but, a year before the legislative elections, socialists and Podemos are beginning to disassociate themselves with their eyes set on the polls.

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