

## Legacy of Franco: Human Rights organizations take the spot in Madrid

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Photo taken at the event in Madrid [Image: Carla Torres]

It only takes a simple tour to the Plaza Mayor in Madrid. Places where torture and enforced disappearances were committed by Franco's regime have little importance as memory sites for the Spanish Government nowadays. This is the case of the current building facing Plaza Mayor: where the actual Madrid local government is placed, during the dictatorship of Franco, was the place of the Security Secretariat where crimes were committed against members of the Spanish Republic. No sign or memorial is placed to address this issue in Plaza Mayor.

It is a busy November for Madrid. Two important mobilizations took the center of Plaza Mayor in this city. The first one addressed the lack of justice for the families of the victims of the Spanish Civil War. The Platform Against the Impunity for Franco's crime is holding a weekly march in Plaza Mayor demanding the recognition of the victims of the regime, according to the last resolutions of United Nations in this matter.

This is done with no help at all from the government and in a hostile climate: Nazi salutations from people passing by were made while the march was taking place. The legacy of Franco's regime cuts deep across Spain's current politics, but it seems that denial within the state, Rajoy's government and part of the society represents a major challenge for Human Rights organizations. Furthermore, unlike other truth and justice movements, activists in this matter are in advanced age which raises the question of how to empower the next generation to take upon these demands.

At the same time, a camp in defense of Human Rights is to be witness in Plaza Mayor, *"until the police evict us"* according to the activists. Although the general claim for Human Rights may seem too broad, the camp and the Platform share a natural concern: the impossibility of reforming the Spanish Constitution. And this, they assure, is a straight inheritance from Franco's regime. The Constitution was agreed after a military coup in 1978 and enforced by the militaries to restore the Monarchy once and for all. For these organisations, people weren't consulted on the restoration of the Monarchy when the referendum was held in 1978.

The camping in defense for human rights also campaigns for the “Vía Asturiana”: This is a bill presented to Congress in 2016 that aims to reform three articles of the Spanish Constitution concerning fundamental rights, public freedom, electoral regime and the possibility of calling for a referendum.

Although 78 years have passed since the end of the Spanish Civil War, it seems that the Spanish transition to democracy remains for some, an open question.



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