Spain's PSOE-Podemos regime intensifies expulsions of refugees to Morocco

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After Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez deployed the army, special forces and thousands of police to Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta, bordering Morocco, a savage manhunt of refugees is underway. Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government is rounding up and deporting thousands of desperate men, women and children after denying them food and medical care.

Spanish security forces are throwing migrants into the sea and marching through streets, parks and warehouses to search for migrants who may have escaped. Once they are found, migrants are forced into police vans and then taken to detention centres for deportation. A record 5,700 migrants in 24 hours were deported earlier this week as Spanish forces now expel 50 migrants every 2 hours.

The PSOE-Podemos government is acting in blatant violation of Spanish law, which grants migrants the right to be processed individually, so they have the opportunity to claim the right to asylum. Summary deportations, or "hot returns"—a reactionary measure the PSOE and Podemos earlier promised to revoke once in power—were legalised by Spain's Constitutional Court last year. However, even this reactionary law does not allow for mass expulsions from Ceuta, but only for migrants captured at the border fence separating Moroccan and Spanish territory.

The PSOE-Podemos government is detaining and expelling refugees, including children, in conditions that amount to a horrific violation of elementary human rights. They are effectively working in tandem with the fascistic Vox party, whose leader Santiago Abascal visited Ceuta on Wednesday to receive military salutes and whip up anti-immigrant hatreds.

One widely circulated video shows a Moroccan boy swimming with empty plastic bottles to Ceuta, saying he would rather die than go back to Morocco. He is shown crying as he reaches the beach, only to be led away by soldiers and thrown back on the other side of the border. The young Spanish soldier, speaking the local Arabic dialect, said: "He didn't want to go back, he didn't have any family in Morocco, he didn't care if he died from cold; he preferred to die … than go back to Morocco." He added, "I never heard that from someone so young."

Hundreds of hungry minors continue are now roaming and sleeping on Ceuta's streets. Others are in a large warehouse, with excessive crowding and broken toilets. Al Jazeera interviewed a 14-year-old boy who fled this warehouse. He said his parents had agreed to his attempt to cross into Spain. "They see that if I come here I can have a future," the boy, "You see your parents can't work, the education system is very weak. What can I say? I cannot even tell you what people eat."

A policeman deployed to Ceuta who spoke to *El País* on condition of anonymity reported the horrific conditions endured by children in the warehouse. "I am also a father," he said, noting that many were kept over 15 hours without any food. "Some were diabetic, I found them fainting, literally. I had a few nuts on me, and we had to give them food and water ourselves."

These illegal mass deportations testify to the breakdown of democratic rights across Europe. The ruthlessness with which Madrid tramples basic democratic rights underfoot, with the full support of the European Union, is a warning to the working class. Faced with the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s and amid millions of preventable deaths due to capitalist mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ruling class is rapidly turning to dictatorship.

Spain's barbaric treatment of refugees testifies to how the fascistic Vox party increasingly sets the policy of the PSOE-Podemos government. In December, Vox reacted to the arrival of migrants in the Canary Islands by calling the PSOE-Podemos government to send in the army to block the arrival of refugees in make-shift boats. Now, in Ceuta, the PSOE carried out the exact policy Vox had demanded that they implement in the Canary Islands.

Vox leader Santiago Abascal travelled on Wednesday to Ceuta, where he was welcomed by his sympathisers. Aiming to stoke an atmosphere of murderous hatred of refugees, Abascal told the press that this "is not a migratory crisis. It is a genuine invasion of Spain's national territory of the neighbouring country. Many of them are men of military age and we see how Morocco is also throwing minors, children and women, being used as human battering rams."

Abascal then travelled to the border fence where he met with soldiers who stood firm to salute him as if he was a higher-ranking officer and took selfies. Soldiers were heard saying, "Long live Spain."

Abascal has called a demonstration in Seville tomorrow to agitate against the region accepting 13 refugee children from Ceuta. He has already threatened to withdraw Vox's support from the regional government if it proceeds to accepting the children.

His activities are a further warning of the financial aristocracy's rapid turn to dictatorship. Eighty-five years since the fascist coup hatched in Spanish Morocco by General Francisco Franco launched the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Abascal, who defends that coup, is being saluted by soldiers and police. Abascal also talks with fascist retired generals who have discussed killing "26 million" leftists and their families in a coup amid strikes against the PSOE-Podemos government's pandemic policies.

A class gulf separates the sympathy towards the migrants felt by millions of workers from the anti-refugee policy of the PSOE-Podemos government and the European ruling class. On Wednesday, the hashtag #GraciasLuna (Thank you, Luna) became a trending topic, after Luna Reyes, a 20-year-old Red Cross volunteer, hugged an exhausted Senegalese man moments after he arrived on the beach. Tens of thousands thanked Luna for her humane gesture after Vox supporters targeted her with a torrent of abuse,

forcing Luna to delete her social media accounts.

Nothing could be more disgusting than feigned support of PSOE-Podemos officials for Luna's actions. Spanish Economy Minister Nadia Calviño, busy drafting mass austerity measures against workers, tweeted, "Thank you Luna for represent the best value of our society." As for Podemos, its de facto leader since the recent retirement of its former General Secretary Pablo Iglesias, Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Díaz, commented: "Much more than a photo. A symbol of hope and solidarity."

These ministers are responsible for implementing the EU's politically criminal Fortress Europe policy, that is, sealing the EU's borders to force desperate migrants to risk their lives to travel to Europe. Tens of thousands have died making this risky journey. Last year, over 2,000 migrants died trying to reach the Canary Islands. For those who reach the islands, they are interned in concentration camps built by the PSOE-Podemos government.

The barbaric treatment of refugees is an unanswerable political indictment in particular of Podemos. This petty-bourgeois party, promoting postmodernism and "populist" politics and rejecting socialism and the working class, was launched in 2014, promising "radical democracy." After implementing austerity and war and opposing a scientific social-distancing policy during the pandemic, costing over 100,000 lives in Spain, their savage abuse of defenceless refugees in alliance with Vox shows how they ended up also trampling up democracy and elementary decency underfoot.

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