

PSOE-Podemos silent on Spanish reporter Pablo González jailed in Poland

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With staggering hypocrisy, Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government is protesting *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich's arrest in Russia on espionage charges, while maintaining silence on jailed Spanish-Russian reporter Pablo González, fraudulently accused of espionage for Russia.

On March 29, Gershkovich was detained by Russian authorities on charges of espionage. This is an attack on democratic rights which all workers must oppose, and the *World Socialist Web Site* has called for his release.

The arrest also sparked a furious reaction from the imperialist powers, however, who called for his immediate release. At the initiative of the US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield, a statement requesting the release of Gershkovich was supported by members of NATO and the European Union, together with New Zealand, South Korea and Honduras.

"The detention of journalists under the guise of espionage charges is troubling and undermines the basic principles of democracy and rule of law," the statement said. "It is imperative that journalists are able to work independently and without fear of spurious charges being brought against them."

This cynical propaganda shows how all the NATO powers present their reckless war on Russia as a war to defend democracy, based on hypocrisy and lies. The United States and Britain claim to be defenders of freedom of expression and press, and yet they allow Julian Assange to rot in a harsh British prison because WikiLeaks made public military files documenting US atrocities in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Spain's PSOE-Podemos government and the right-wing Polish government also signed the statement demanding the release of Gershkovich. But they have both worked together to arrest and jail Spanish-Russian

journalist Pablo González without any trial.

González was detained by the Polish government on February 28, 2022 in the border town of Rzeszów while covering the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. Without any evidence, he was accused of spying for Russian military intelligence (GRU).

Polish authorities have refused to disclose any material justifying his detention. Among the Polish state's unsubstantiated allegations are that González obtained information during his journalistic work. Not a single piece of evidence has been presented that he actually handed any information to the GRU or even that he ever had any intention to do so.

The main claim is ludicrous. Polish authorities allege that González was in possession of two passports bearing different names, one Russian and one Spanish, implying that one was a false identity used for espionage.

In reality, this proves nothing. González's Russian passport names him as Pavel Rubtsov, using his father's surname; his Spanish document identifies him as Pablo González Yagüe, using his mother's two surnames and with Pablo being the Hispanicised version of the Russian name Pavel. González has lived in Spain since he was nine years old.

González's pretrial detention has been renewed four times without justification, and he will remain imprisoned until May 24 when a Polish judge will reassess his situation. To date, there are no judicial proceedings or trial date, and his lawyers have yet to have access to the case file.

Polish authorities are imposing extremely harsh conditions. González remains in a state of isolation, classified as "a dangerous prisoner." Constantly watched by cameras, he is handcuffed whenever he leaves his cell and stripped and subjected to intrusive

searches several times a day. Until two months after his arrest, he was unable to have a lawyer of his own choosing until one year after his arrest.

His wife Oihana Goirinea has only been able to visit him once. She recently told *Público*, “Pablo still does not have the right to speak on the phone with his children, with his three children, three boys who have been, as I said, 14 months without hearing their father and without understanding what is happening.” He can only communicate with his family by letters since Polish prison authorities have unfulfilled their promise to allow Skype calls.

The NATO powers are all maintaining a complicit silence on his detention. Last August, in a clear sign that González’s arrest was part of a broader NATO campaign against antiwar sentiment, the head of British secret services MI6, Richard Moore, defended expulsions and arrests of alleged Russian spies from Europe. He said such measures have allowed the Russian invasion of Ukraine to “run out of steam.”

In a speech at the Aspen Security Forum in the United States, Moore said: “Two of them [Russian spies] have recently been arrested. One of them pretends to be a Spanish journalist, a guy named González Yagüe. He was trying to enter Ukraine to be part of Russian efforts at destabilization.”

The PSOE-Podemos government played a key role in his arrest. On February 25, 2022, the day after Russia invaded Ukraine, González was sent to the Polish town of Rzeszow, on the border with Ukraine, to report on the refugee crisis.

After he was interrogated and then released by the notorious SBU, Ukraine’s intelligence services, and before he was arrested by Polish police, the Spanish National Intelligence Centre (CNI) visited the homes of his family members in the Basque country and Catalonia. The CNI asked them about González’s life and views to establish if he was “pro-Russian.”

Since then, Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares has remained silent. When forced to make a statement, he came out in defense of the Polish government, ignoring that there is not the slightest evidence against González.

At the height of cynicism, PSOE and Podemos have signed the declaration of support for Gershkovich; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs even issued its own statement. It cynically deplored “the continuous deterioration of human rights and political freedoms in

Russia” and called for “the release of all people unjustly imprisoned in Russia.”

González’s wife responded by bitterly declaring: “We did not ask [the government] for a public and official declaration for the immediate release of Pablo, because we believe it would have meant exceeding its powers. But with a lot of frustration and anger, we have seen that the government can do exactly that.”

This case is yet another example of the reactionary politics of the pseudo-left Podemos party. Since the war began, Podemos has given full support to NATO’s war, sending at least €320 million in armaments and €350 million to the Ukrainian state. It doubled the presence of Spanish troops to the borders of Russia.

In the case of Pablo González, after more than a year of silence, Podemos demanded that a “minimum of rights be guaranteed” for González, while the Stalinist United Left called “that there be a fair trial and clarification publicly what is happening with this person.”

Both refused to request González’s immediate release, though he has been imprisoned for a year without charges. These are empty requests aimed at covering their pro-war policy. The reality is that all the ministers, senior officials and deputies of Podemos have supported the US-NATO war.

The WSWS reiterates its demand that Pablo González, Evan Gershkovich and Julian Assange be immediately released. As we explained in the Gershkovich case, this is a matter of principle: The arrest of journalists in any corner legitimizes the arrest of journalists throughout the world.

The defence of freedom of expression, however, cannot be left in the hands of pseudo-left parties like Podemos, which are appendages of imperialism. They support intimidating journalists and silencing opposition to official, state-sanctioned narratives on NATO’s war against Russia. This is a task that can only be carried out by the working class, on the basis of a socialist programme against imperialist war.



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