

# Podemos joins Sumar in a pro-war alliance for Spain's July 23 snap elections

**Alejandro López****13 June 2023**

On Friday, Podemos, its recently-founded electoral rival Movimiento Sumar (Unite Movement), and the Stalinist-led Izquierda Unida (IU, United Left), agreed to a common platform for the July 23 Spanish elections. The platform will be led by Sumar's leader, acting Deputy Prime Minister and Labour Minister Yolanda Díaz.

Podemos, Sumar and IU are all part of the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government recently dissolved by its leader, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, after its debacle in the May regional elections. They are all led by tested, pro-NATO ministers and politicians who have pursued the PSOE-Podemos government's policies of imperialist war on Russia abroad, and class war on workers at home. Their common electoral platform clearly signals that Podemos, Sumar and IU will run on pledges to continue and intensify the right-wing policies they implemented in office.

Above all, it is clear Podemos, Sumar and IU all intend to justify continued attacks on workers' living standards and social rights by escalating the US-NATO war on Russia. This is reflected in the names included in the Sumar-Podemos-IU electoral lists that are now being finalised. This list includes:

- Yolanda Díaz, head of Sumar and acting Deputy Prime Minister. Díaz was the most visible leader of Podemos after Podemos founder Pablo Iglesias left government in 2021, before she founded Sumar earlier this year. Sumar helped formulate Podemos' ultra-reactionary domestic policies, including pension cuts and a labour reform; pumping €140 billion of EU bailout funds into Spanish corporations and banks; a profits-over-lives policy in the COVID-19 pandemic leading to over 160,000 deaths; the barbaric incarceration and murder of migrants, including the infamous massacre of 37 refugees at the borders of the

Spanish enclave of Melilla in Africa; and violent crackdowns on striking metalworkers and truck drivers.

- Agustín Santos, Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN, a long-time representative of Spanish imperialism. Previously, he held important embassy positions in Beijing, La Habana, Washington, Canberra and Brussels. He was chief of staff for PSOE Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos from 2008-2011, as Spain increased its troop deployment in Afghanistan and Lebanon. The army awarded him the Grand Cross of Military Merit for his role in Madrid obtaining the command of the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon. Santos had pledged "to raise not only the name of Spain but also that of its Armed Forces."

- Ernest Urtasun, recently nominated as Sumar's spokesperson. A Member of the EU Parliament since 2014, he has worked closely with the pro-war German Greens in the Greens-European Free Alliance. In 2019, he was re-elected as a Podemos candidate. Urtasun is a fervent advocate of sending weapons and tanks to NATO's Ukrainian proxy to wage war on Russia.

- Pablo Bustinduy was Podemos' former foreign affairs spokesperson in parliament, before quitting the party in 2019 for an academic post in the US. He has called for European "strategic autonomy" vis-à-vis the United States.

- Tesh Sidi, a Sahrawi nationalist activist and founder of the news channel Sahrawi Today. Sidi's nomination comes amid rising discontent within sections of the Spanish army with the deal reached between the PSOE-Podemos government and Morocco recognising Rabat's annexation of Spain's former colony of Western Sahara. The deal was done at the expense of gas-rich Algeria, the main backer of the Sahrawi-nationalist Polisario militia.

- Íñigo Errejón, a founder of Podemos who broke with

it to found Más Madrid (More Madrid) and Más País (More Country). A friend of anti-Marxist “Left Populist” theoretician Chantal Mouffe, he supported sending arms to the Ukraine and the EU’s escalation against Moscow, demanding Brussels do more to cut off imports of Russian gas. His party notoriously welcomed last year’s NATO war summit in Madrid with “pleasure and pride.”

Ione Belarra, general secretary of Podemos. She has played a cynical role, making empty protests against arming Ukraine while sitting in the government of an imperialist country playing a leading role in prosecuting the NATO war on Russia. She supported the PSOE-Podemos government’s increase in the military budget to a record €27 billion a year.

Significantly, Podemos has signed up to the removal of its top leaders as part of the electoral lists: acting Minister of Equality Irene Montero and its parliamentary spokesperson, Pablo Echenique. Both have been targeted by far-right press campaigns close to Vox. Both are also close to former Podemos leader and Deputy Prime Minister Pablo Iglesias, who was violently attacked by Sumar after he called for EU independence from Washington.

By agreeing on this rogues’ gallery as the head of their joint election list, Sumar, Podemos and IU are making clear they will make no shift to the left in response to their election defeat. Rather, they will intensify the policies of imperialist war, social austerity, and police repression that has discredited the PSOE-Podemos government and bolstered Spain’s far-right Vox party.

In last month’s elections, Podemos lost all its councillors in Madrid, Valencia, Zaragoza, Tenerife, Burgos, Valladolid, Vigo and Coruña. It lost 10 regional lawmakers in the Madrid region, and eight in the Valencian parliament. In Barcelona, Yolanda Díaz’s Sumar party did not run but instead backed mayor Ada Colau, who lost her mayorship after eight years in office. Errejón’s More Madrid lost seven councilors in Madrid city, falling to 12, while in the region of Madrid it lost 100,000 votes.

As the WSWS explained, Podemos and its allies reacted to this debacle not by campaigning to win back support from Vox and the right-wing Popular Party (PP), but by running an essentially right-wing campaign aiming to hand over power to the PP and

Vox. At the heart of this reactionary strategy is the support of Podemos, Sumar, IU and the entire pseudo-left milieu in Spain for the NATO war with Russia.

Over the past weeks, the PSOE-Podemos government has escalated its looting of the Spanish working class at the behest of the financial aristocracy. Last Wednesday, it sent an addendum to the EU Bailout Recovery Plan to receive €94 billion to disburse to banks and corporations, to be paid for through mass austerity. If re-elected, the government has already promised Brussels to make €24 billion in social cuts and tax increases for 2024.

Military spending hikes will also continue. PSOE-Podemos Defence Minister Margarita Robles said the record investment in the army would not be changed, irrespective of who rules Spain, declaring: “The armed forces belong to all Spaniards, they do not belong to any political party.”

Stopping a catastrophic escalation that could lead to nuclear war requires mobilizing the working class against Sumar, Podemos and similar pseudo-left parties internationally. Terrified above all of mounting working class opposition to their reactionary policies, Sumar is tobogganing towards World War III. An anti-war movement must be built in the working class in direct opposition to the pro-war, pseudo-left parties of the affluent middle class such as Podemos.



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