

# Spain's neo-fascist Vox party launches anti-Muslim campaign

Alejandro López  
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Spain's Vox party, the third-largest parliamentary force with 33 seats, has launched a vicious anti-migrant campaign targeting Spain's 2.5 million Muslims. Exploiting the PSOE-Sumar government's anti-migrant policies, Vox is reviving the most reactionary traditions of the Spanish ruling class.

Last month, Vox national spokesperson Rocío De Meer demanded the mass deportation of migrants, including naturalised citizens, declaring: "All the millions of people who have recently arrived and have not adapted to our customs and in many cases have contributed to insecurity in our neighborhoods ... will have to return to their countries."

Vox leader Santiago Abascal called to deport "everyone who came to commit crimes, who tries to impose a foreign religion [i.e., Islam], who mistreats or demeans women, who wants to live off the work of others, and all unaccompanied minors."

Within weeks, fascist violence escalated. In July, several hundred far-right militants launched a pogrom in Torre Pacheco, Murcia, attacking Moroccan agricultural workers with bats and pepper spray, smashing cars, and vandalising immigrant-owned shops. Abascal reacted by blaming "mass immigration," claiming it had "stolen our borders, stolen our peace, and stolen our prosperity." In Catalonia, a mosque ready to open its doors was set on fire, burning it down.

The campaign continued in August. Last week in Jumilla, Murcia, a Vox-sponsored motion was passed prohibiting the use of public sports facilities "for religious, cultural or social activities that do not reflect the identity of the city, unless they are organised by the local authorities." The measure was aimed at Muslims, blocking them from celebrating their two main annual festivities: Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha.

Vox tweeted: "Thanks to Vox, the first decree

prohibiting Islamic celebrations in public spaces in Spain has been approved. Spain has been and will continue to be the land of the Christian people."

Amid public outcry, even the Catholic Church was forced to rebuke Vox. Abascal responded by accusing the Church hierarchy of being compromised by "public funds they receive" from the state, by their role in administering aid for migrants and even suggested that the paedophilia scandals had "gagged" it.

On Wednesday, Jesús Sanz, Archbishop of Oviedo, aligned himself with Vox. On X, he referred to Spanish Muslims as "little Moors" (*moritos*)—a racial slur dating back to the Inquisition—and railed against Muslim celebrations in public spaces. He demanded "reciprocity" for Christians murdered in "their territories," and denounced those "citing ecclesiastical texts to look good, so they keep killing us."

Vox is whipping up a campaign to ban the hijab and halal food in public schools. In Parla, a working class suburb of Madrid, two schools have already banned the hijab, with at least two more expected to follow. These prohibitions are rarely made explicit. Instead, they are camouflaged in regulations banning "head coverings," whilst Christian symbols such as crosses, medals, or images of the Virgin Mary are permitted.

Spanish bourgeois media are echoing Vox's campaign. *El Mundo* recently declared, "It's the time to talk about Islamism in Spain." *Libertad Digital* published a piece titled, "Islamisation of Spain: the Muslim population exceeds 2.5 million and there are already more than 1,700 mosques." *El Debate* joined in with, "This is how Islam is advancing in Castile and León: two out of every five practitioners already have Spanish nationality."

Islamophobia in Spain has deep historical roots. The expulsion of Muslims and Jews during the Reconquista and the Inquisition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a cornerstone in the formation of the modern Spanish

nation-state, used to justify imperial conquest in the Americas and wars against the Ottoman Empire and North African Muslim states.

This chauvinist tradition was revived under Franco, who was backed by the Catholic Church, mobilised Catholic nationalism against the working class while deploying colonial Moroccan troops to crush revolutionary uprisings during the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War.

In the 21st century, the ruling class again resorted to Islamophobia, after the September 11, 2001 attacks and the 2004 Madrid train bombings, to legitimise imperialist wars in the Middle East, impose police-state measures, and divide workers along religious-ethnic lines. To justify joining in the illegal 2003 US-led war against Iraq, then-Prime Minister José María Aznar infamously declared: “[T]he problem of Spain with Al Qaeda began with the invasion of the Moors.”

An assault on Muslims is unfolding internationally. In the US, Donald Trump is escalating a war on migrants, deploying the military to Los Angeles to round up immigrants, erecting concentration camps, and unleashing immigration officials (popularly known as the “ICE Gestapo”) to terrorise entire communities. In Europe, EU interior ministers agreed in July to escalate a coordinated assault on refugees, triple Frontex’s budget to €34 billion, expand border closures, and accelerate deportations.

Incitement against Muslims, refugees and migrants in Spain is designed to divide the working class and divert explosive anger over falling wages, austerity, and the collapse of social services onto the most vulnerable. Refugees fleeing wars instigated by NATO, many of them from Muslim countries in the Middle East, are being scapegoated for a social crisis rooted in skyrocketing military budgets and the looting of society by the financial oligarchy.

Vox is gaining increasing support. According to the July CIS poll, Vox surged in elementary occupations with 20.2 percent, far ahead of PSOE (7.9 percent) and PP (10.2). Among skilled trades and artisans, it scored 25.8 percent, edging out PSOE (23.9). Among machine operators and assemblers, Vox reached 41.2 percent, dwarfing PSOE (17.3) and PP (10.7). It is also strong among agricultural and fishing workers (27.5 percent), service and sales employees (17.7 percent), and the unemployed (23.2 percent).

Vox’s rise is the product of the betrayals of the social democratic and pseudo-left parties: PSOE, Podemos and Sumar. In office since 2018, they have imposed austerity, waged NATO wars, and repeatedly mobilized riot police

to assault strikes. This left millions of workers and youth without any clear outlet for their opposition, letting Vox demagogically exploit deepening social despair.

PSOE, Sumar and Podemos have all condemned Vox’s campaign and anti-Muslim measures like those in Jumilla town. However, they themselves spearheaded some of bloodiest attacks on migrants in recent years. In May 2021, the PSOE-Podemos government was the first to mobilise the army against refugees, targeting migrants crossing from Morocco—shortly after Vox’s Abascal demanded the navy be deployed against migrants.

In June 2022, PSOE and Podemos pressured NATO to declare migration a “hybrid threat” to be combated. Soon after, the Moroccan gendarmerie and the Spanish Civil Guard massacred migrants at the Melilla border, killing as many as 100 according to Amnesty International. Prime Minister Sánchez (PSOE) cynically justified the slaughter as “proportional.”

In line with EU directives, PSOE and its pseudo-left allies have advanced the “externalisation of borders,” outsourcing the dirty work of repression to Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, and Gambia. Migrants are arbitrarily detained, stripped of belongings, bussed into desert areas and abandoned, practices openly supported by the Spanish government, which even deploys the Civil Guard abroad to train local police in repression.

These measures, which would once have been associated with the far right, are now central to PSOE-Sumar’s NATO objective to increase military spending to 5 percent of GDP to prepare for great-power wars.

The persecution of immigrants and the repression of workers both at home and abroad in imperialist war are two sides of the same class offensive. Only the independent mobilisation of the working class in Spain and internationally, in a struggle for socialism against the PSOE, Sumar and Podemos, can defeat the far right and the capitalist system that spawns it.



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