

Spain's Socialist Party-Sumar government unveils €1 billion military aid package for Ukraine

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Just weeks after Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez revived the “No to war” slogan associated with the mass anti-war movement against the 2003 Iraq invasion, and declared that Spain would refuse the use of US-Spanish military bases for the war against Iran, Madrid has signed off on €1 billion (\$1.1 billion) in military aid to Ukraine.

The commitment was formalised following a bilateral meeting in Madrid between Sánchez and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, exposing the anti-war rhetoric of the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Sumar coalition government.

Announcing the package at the Moncloa Palace, Sánchez pledged that Spain would continue backing the far-right regime in Kyiv “for as long as necessary”. He presented Russia’s invasion, a response to years of NATO’s eastward expansion and the transformation of Ukraine into a proxy against Russia, as a defining test of the “international order.”

“We will stay on your side as we always have,” Sánchez said, citing “coherence and trust in an international order that, despite its shortcomings, has helped humanity enjoy a long period of peace and prosperity”.

These words obscure the direct complicity of Spain, the US and the European powers in the ongoing Gaza genocide, which has claimed over 70,000 lives, as well as their support for the illegal war now being waged against Iran that has led to thousands of deaths.

Sánchez then warned that the US-led war against Iran was distracting from NATO’s war against Russia. “We cannot deny that the crisis in the Middle East is monopolising conversation,” he said, “and precisely for that reason... nothing and no one will make us forget what is happening in Ukraine.” He pledged that Spain would “keep our support for the Ukrainian people with the same

intensity,” as Madrid and Kyiv signed agreements to coproduce military equipment including drones, radar systems and missiles.

He confirmed that the latest €1 billion package is part of a longer-term commitment, adding, “In total, Spain’s assistance in this war has reached €4 billion.” This support goes beyond direct transfers of weapons, he said, noting that it “provides for joint production of defense products” alongside Spain’s participation in financing mechanisms such as the SAFE programme to sustain Ukraine’s military needs.

Madrid is following the same trajectory as the other major European powers, which are being inexorably drawn into an expanding imperialist war across the world. While early last week European governments were still claiming that the US-led assault on Iran was “not our war”, within days Britain, France, Germany, Italy and others moved toward direct involvement, pledging future participation in securing the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of global oil supplies pass. London has authorised the use of its bases for US strikes.

Spain deploying its most technologically advanced frigate to the eastern Mediterranean supports the US-led war effort by shielding key Western military infrastructure and enabling Washington to intensify its bombing campaign against Iran.

On Saturday, Sánchez’s government rushed through a series of limited social and economic subsidies to preemptively contain social discontent arising from the war in the Middle East. The €5 billion package includes temporary tax cuts on electricity, fuel and gas, modest subsidies for vulnerable households, and targeted support for selected sectors such as transport, agriculture and industry. It introduces a temporary rent freeze and minor labour protections tied to companies receiving state aid.

These measures are a drop in the ocean compared to the scale of the economic crisis that is rapidly unfolding.

The passage of these measures exposed the role of the PSOE's coalition partner, Sumar. Its leadership staged a political stunt on Friday, with its ministers refusing to enter the Council of Ministers that was set to pass the measures until the PSOE agreed to include a temporary rent freeze. Confronted with opposition from the right-wing Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), whose parliamentary support is essential for the minority government and which had made clear it would reject any decree containing housing measures, the government split the package in two, ensuring that one would pass while effectively dooming the other. This enabled Sumar to posture as advancing a social measure it knew lacked the votes to succeed.

An anonymous government source close to Sumar commented on the rent freeze in remarks to *Público*, stating, "that people can continue living in their homes is not exactly a maxim of Lenin."

The remark reveals how deeply the spectre of socialist revolution is haunting the ruling class. The PSOE-Sumar government's response came amid a sharp intensification of the class struggle.

From January through March, a wave of strikes has swept healthcare, transport, education, industry and the public sector. This includes the nationwide strike by doctors and medical staff, involving more than 175,000 workers, one of the largest in the sector in recent decades. Organised in rolling stoppages since February and set to continue through April, May and June, the strike has led to widespread cancellations of consultations, tests and surgeries across multiple regions.

In the transport sector, over 34,000 railway workers participated in a three-day national strike in February. Meanwhile, ongoing and upcoming strikes in airport ground handling services, covering companies with workforces exceeding 6,000 employees, threaten to paralyse air travel during the Easter holidays. The aviation sector is experiencing continuous disruption, with an indefinite strike affecting more than 3,500 workers across multiple airports since late 2025 and continuing into this year.

Additional strike calls in meteorological services, involving around 1,000 workers, and in the rail manufacturing firm Talgo, where approximately 2,700 workers are set to strike over wage disputes, illustrate the breadth of the unrest. General strikes have also taken place on March 8 across several regions and again on

March 17 in the Basque Country, demanding a minimum wage of €1,500 in response to soaring living costs.

The scale of opposition was seen on the day the PSOE-Sumar passed the measures, when the Catalan education strike, supported by 90 percent of educators, culminated in more than 100,000 people joining the central demonstration in Barcelona. Teachers, students and families filled streets and blocked roads across the region, expressing unified opposition to deteriorating conditions and rejecting agreements reached by the major unions with the education authorities. A key slogan was "less weapons, more education".

This growing movement is intersecting with an intensification of class struggle internationally. In Turkey, thousands of warehouse workers and miners have launched strikes. In the US, 6,000 DHL logistics workers have voted overwhelmingly to strike, while over 68,000 education workers in Los Angeles are preparing for industrial action. In Mexico, nearly 7,000 workers at General Motors are moving toward a strike, threatening production at one of North America's key auto manufacturing hubs.

This movement of the working class constitutes the decisive social force that must be mobilised to put an end to war and its root cause, the capitalist system. Its development in Spain requires a conscious political break with the PSOE-Sumar government and its backers in the trade union bureaucracy, which have worked systematically to suppress these struggles while supporting the government's pro-war policies. Only through the independent mobilisation of the working class, armed with a socialist and internationalist perspective, can the struggle against war be carried forward.



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