

Spanish far-right use Ceuta crisis to seek downfall of PSOE-Sumar government

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6 September 2026

The desperate attempt by tens of thousands of migrants to reach the Spanish north African enclave of Ceuta is being seized on by the right-wing Popular Party (PP) and neo-fascist Vox to topple the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Sumar government.

In July, around 70,000 people crossed or attempted to cross into Ceuta, in the hope of escaping poverty. At least 140 are reported to have drowned in the deadliest mass attempt to reach European territory in recent history.

What followed exposed the brutal machinery of the European Union's Fortress Europe enforced by the PSOE-Sumar government. Madrid deployed the army alongside police units, sealed off any possibility of reaching mainland Spain, and worked with the Moroccan authorities to carry out mass expulsions. Tens of thousands were trapped without accommodation and with restricted access to food and water. Soldiers and police swept through the city, pushing migrants over the Moroccan border.

The Sánchez government later boasted that around 90 percent of migrants had been expelled. Around 5,000 people remained in Ceuta, including roughly 1,500 minors. They have faced a pogrom-like atmosphere, with far-right vigilante groups and armed men pursuing migrants through the streets and mobs attempting to descend on the makeshift camps.

The entire Spanish political establishment has responded by declaring in unison an "invasion". Sánchez, on arriving in Ceuta on July 31, denounced the crossings as an "attack" and a "violation of the territorial integrity of Spain," declaring that the government would use "all the resources of the State" to defend Ceuta.

Racist reports in the Spanish media have portrayed those arriving in Ceuta as responsible for a wave of sexual violence and as carriers of disease. *El Español*, a digital newspaper with 20 million users a month, posted "The death of an invader with diabetes and the flight of another with chickenpox, the latest symptoms of the health crisis in Ceuta." The "invader" was a 17-years old boy.

Vox and the PP have seized on the tidal wave of anti-migrant xenophobia to try and topple the government. Vox leader Santiago Abascal has repeatedly called the arrival an "act of war," demanded the permanent militarisation of the Moroccan border and accused Sánchez of "treason" and submission to Rabat. The PP has accused the government of having received advance warnings but deliberately failing to act.

Last Wednesday, the PP and Vox organised racist demonstrations across the country, which included the

participation of neo-Nazi National Nucleus (Nucleo Nacional). More than 160,000 people were reported to have demonstrated across Andalusia, including around 50,000 in Málaga and 40,000 in Seville. In Madrid, estimates ranged from approximately 50,000 to 150,000, while sizeable demonstrations were also reported in Valencia, Zaragoza, Ceuta and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. In Madrid, Francoist and neo-Nazis made fascist salutes, carried Francoist and neo-Nazi symbols, and sang the Franco anthem *Cara al Sol* outside the parliament.

The right-wing press has joined the far-right chorus, centring its coverage on allegations of a Moroccan-orchestrated "invasion" and government foreknowledge. The liberal press, *El País*, *Eldiario.es* and *Público* have adopted the same line, a crisis of sovereignty, national security, intelligence failures and the defence of Ceuta and the related North African territory of Melilla. Indeed, the language of an "attack on territorial integrity" did not originate with Vox but with PSOE-Sumar government.

At the centre of the crisis is a bitter dispute over what Spain's intelligence (CNI) and security agencies knew in advance and whether Morocco played any role. Defence Minister Margarita Robles told parliament that CNI agents in Ceuta had warned of an online call for people to swim into the enclave, while Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska and the Government Delegation in Ceuta denied receiving such intelligence. The police then leaked a document to *El Español* alleging that Moroccan gendarmes had directed people toward the border. Marlaska demanded explanations from police chiefs, who insisted that no report had established Moroccan government responsibility.

The PSOE-Sumar government's parliamentary allies have responded to the PP-Vox offensive by tacking to the right themselves. Enrique Santiago of the Sumar group declared that "Spain has suffered an attack by Morocco using vulnerable people". He characterised the mass crossing into Ceuta as an operation of destabilisation with geostrategic objectives led by the US and Israel.

Gabriel Rufián, spokesman for the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), accused "Morocco of sending 80,000 people to its border to bring down the Spanish government," in collaboration with "Washington, Tel Aviv" and the Spanish right and far-right. He called King Mohammed VI of Morocco a "murderer" and told the PP and Vox that they were "traitors to their fatherland," arguing that "if police and judges knew it—your police and your judges—you knew it too." He added that Mohammed VI "neither

dresses, eats nor breathes without Trump knowing.”

Pseudo-left Podemos leader Ione Belarra accused Sánchez of deliberately shielding Rabat. Speaking in Congress, she described Morocco as “a totalitarian regime” and “a dictatorship,” adding that the Moroccan people were victims of King Mohammed VI. She demanded of Sánchez, “Why do you protect Morocco? Why are you denying what is obvious?” Podemos has called for breaking of diplomatic and commercial relations with Morocco until it “is a democracy”.

Belarra’s intervenes as an imperialist politician. Her denunciations of Rabat omit any reckoning with Spain’s own historic responsibility for the conditions confronting the Moroccan masses and treat Ceuta and Melilla as Spanish territory.

Morocco was partitioned between French and Spanish colonial rule in the early twentieth century. The present social and political crisis there cannot be separated from this colonial legacy and from the subsequent integration of the monarchy into the strategic interests of the major imperialist powers, including Spain.

Podemos helped sustain the PSOE government after Sánchez came to office in 2018 and then entered government itself in January 2020, remaining as its coalition partner until November 2023. To date, it continues to back the minority PSOE-Sumar government.

During those years in power, the PSOE-Podemos government implemented the EU’s fascistic “Fortress Europe” policy which has claimed thousands of lives. With the Spanish ruling elite shutting off any legal migration route into Spain, the Canary Islands crossing 100 kilometres west of Morocco, became the deadliest route in the world. At least 13,000 migrants drowned. Those who reach the islands are interned in concentration camps built by the PSOE and Podemos pending deportation.

The deadly legacy of the Podemos in power continued last week, when 83 more migrants died after a boat bound for the Canary Islands drifted for 27 days in the Atlantic.

In June 2022, the PSOE-Podemos government presided over one of the deadliest massacres of refugees on a European border in recent history. Spanish border police fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets to drive thousands of desperate refugees from the fences of Melilla. At least 100 refugees died in the ensuing stampede. Podemos opposed a parliamentary inquiry into the massacre, joining the PSOE, PP and the neo-fascist Vox party to block any investigation.

Belarra’s attempt to explain the present crisis primarily through the actions of Mohammed VI and Washington serves to cover the role of Podemos for nearly four years in the government of imperialist Spain.

Nevertheless, the Trump administration’s hostility toward the Sánchez government as overt and suggestions of US involvement in the crisis are credible. Its National Security doctrine seeks to break up the European Union and install far-right parties in power across Europe.

Sánchez has emerged as the EU leader most openly at odds with Washington. His government refused to allow the US to use the jointly operated bases at Rota and Morón to support its war on Iran. At the NATO summit in Ankara, Trump called Spain a “terrible partner” and announced that he was ordering a halt to

trade with the country. Sánchez has increased Spain’s orientation to China, making his fourth trip there in four years in April calling for expanding economic relations.

Also in April, the US provided \$40 million in security-related assistance to Rabat, declaring that the “Spanish-administered cities of Ceuta and Melilla are located in Moroccan territory” and promising US diplomatic efforts over their “future status.” In March Michael Rubin, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, writer for the Middle East Forum and a former Pentagon adviser, publicly urged Morocco to organise a “Green March” against Ceuta and Melilla, proposing mass civilian mobilisation at the frontier, bulldozers at the border and the raising of Moroccan flags inside the cities.

These events pose fundamental political questions for the Spanish working class.

Millions of workers are understandably alarmed by the possibility that the far-right could bring down the government and come to power. The Vox and PP seek to channel mounting social anger against migrants, in order to ultimately target the entire working class, demanding a vast expansion of military expenditure and subordinating every aspect of social policy to rearmament and the interests of Spanish and European capitalism. But the record of the PSOE, Sumar and Podemos demonstrates that the far-right cannot be defeated by subordinating the working class to parties that implement the same agenda.

PSOE-led governments and their pseudo-left allies have enforced the EU’s fascistic anti-migrant border regime, presided over falling living standards and increased military expenditure to record levels. This is what strengthens the far-right—creating the political framework on which it feeds.

The fight against the far-right requires the political independence of the working class from the PSOE-Sumar government and from Podemos. It requires the construction of a new political party based on socialism, internationalism and the unity of workers across national, ethnic and religious divisions. Spanish, Moroccan, African and immigrant workers have common social interests that are fundamentally opposed to attempts to divide them along national or racial lines.



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