



## Catalonian Separatism Examined Anew

**OE Watch Commentary:** The question of Catalonian separation from Spain returned to the front page this month, and with an interesting twist. Quim Torra is the President of Catalonia and an avowed separatist. He was elected in May 2018. During the campaign he openly displayed pro-independence symbols in his campaign advertising, which the national election board had forbidden. As reported in the first accompanying reference, the Spanish Supreme Court upheld a lower court's ruling that Torra had been disobedient, and in its decision the court stripped Torra of eligibility to continue to serve in office for the next year and a half. This means new elections will almost certainly be held within a few months. Those elections are likely to once again turn into a referendum on separation and Torra's punishment is likely to be used as a rallying call for protests.

The second accompanying reference is a useful review of the Catalonian separatism issue. It uses the Spanish King's travels as a vehicle to express the significance of events in terms of Spanish identity. The King of Spain (Philip VI or 'Felipe Juan Pablo Alfonso de Todos los Santos de Borbón y Grecia') is the official head of state and living symbol of Spanish unity and political coexistence among the various autonomously governed entities within the Spanish republic, some of those entities being more autonomous than others. In what the article's author calls an unprecedented move, the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, has forbidden the King to travel to Catalonia. The order is quite a significant symbolic accommodation to the Catalonian separatists and a slight to the Monarchy. As our past reporting has noted, Catalonia is a significant and complex European hotspot. (See: "Catalonia Not Well," *OE Watch* December 2019; "Iberia Culture War," *OE Watch*, June 2019; "Spain and Catalonia," *OE Watch*, August 2018; "Is Catalonia an Irregular Warfare Battleground?" *OE Watch*, May 2018; "Catalonia: Police Rebellion Deflates," *OE Watch*, December 2017.) **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Joaquim 'Quim' Torra, ex-President of Catalonia  
(photo circa 2015).

Source: Omnium Cultural, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quim\\_Torra\\_2015\\_Foto\\_%C3%92mnium\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quim_Torra_2015_Foto_%C3%92mnium_(cropped).jpg)

***“...sentenced the still President of the Generalitat, Quim Torra, to a year and a half of disqualification...”***

**Source:** “El Tribunal Supremo inhabilita a Torra por desobediencia (The Supreme Court disqualifies Torra for disobedience),” *ABC*, 28 September 2020. [https://www.abc.es/espana/abci-tribunal-supremo-inhabilita-torra-desobediencia-202009281303\\_noticia.html](https://www.abc.es/espana/abci-tribunal-supremo-inhabilita-torra-desobediencia-202009281303_noticia.html)

*“The criminal chamber of the Supreme Court agreed this Monday to confirm the sentence of the Catalonian Superior Court of Justice which this past December sentenced the still President of the Generalitat, Quim Torra, to a year and a half of disqualification to hold elected public office...”*

*Only a couple of hours after the notification of the decision, the Catalonian Superior Court has ordered its execution with a resolution according to which ‘the disqualification for the government position that he currently holds is effective immediately.’”*

***“...Pedro Sánchez...has prohibited the king from traveling to Barcelona...”***

**Source:** “El Rey, solo ante el separatismo (The King, alone against the separatism),” *ABC*, 26 September 2020. [https://www.abc.es/espana/casa-real/abci-solo-ante-separatismo-202009262033\\_noticia.html](https://www.abc.es/espana/casa-real/abci-solo-ante-separatismo-202009262033_noticia.html)

*“Ten years ago, the king could stroll peacefully down the streets of Gerona/ ABC was witness to of one such stroll on 11 December 2009, when he toured the historic center of the city...the separatists had not yet destroyed coexistence ...The last amiable act between the King and the Catalonian authorities was lived the 25th of July 2017. That day Barcelona celebrated its 92nd anniversary and Puigdemont [separatist], who became the president of the Generalitat [Catalonian government] and Ada Colau, who became the mayor of the city, posed smiling together with Don Felipe [the King]. But it was all a farse...Neither the slights of the president of the Generalitat, nor the threats of radicals, nor the violence on the streets had ever been able to deter the presence of the King in this Spanish territory. However, it has been Pedro Sanchez [current Spanish Prime Minister and President of the Administration] who, in an unprecedented decision, has prohibited the king from traveling to Barcelona. For the first time during the democracy, the president of the administration has sold out the royal crown...”*