

# GZ.I Galiza International



## The BNG defends Galizan sovereignty and social justice in a massive **Galizan National Day** demonstration

'Galiza, The Nation We Share' was the slogan chosen by the BNG to commemorate Galizan National Day on the 25 of July. This year's demonstration organised by the Patriotic Front (BNG) was attended by more people than ever, with over 20,000 people taking to the streets calling for the right of the Galizan people to build a future of freedom for itself.

The lead up to Galizan National Day 2017 was marked by a year-long round of arduous struggles where the BNG defied all of the commentators who forecast failure at the Galizan Parliamentary elections in September 2016, relegating us to a marginal position. But this year has shown that the BNG still remains the only political force capable of mobilising society under the joint demand of the right of the Galizan people to sovereignty and the defence of the rights of the working classes, steadfastly defending the interests of our people in day-to-day social conflicts, both in the institutions and on the streets, with our sights firmly set on sovereignty for Galiza as the only true means of paving the way towards social justice for our country.

As the national spokesperson, Ana Pontón, said in her speech at the final rally in the main square: "Galiza must arise as a nation, tracing out our own path and avoiding becoming a politically void region... We must aim high, aspiring to nationhood and availing ourselves of the real

political power and tools necessary to build the Galiza that we dream of."

This year's demonstration was also attended by grassroots and labour organisations, workers from the metal sector, fishermen, émigrés who have returned to Galiza, etc., all marching behind the BNG with their own banners and political demands, demonstrating the BNG's steadfast support.

As usual, the demonstration was also attended by delegations from around the world, including EH-Bildu, Sortu and the Nationalist Party (PNV) from the Basque Country, the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP), the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), Més per Menorca and Més per Mallorca from the Catalan Countries, the Communist Party and the Left Bloc from Portugal, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Aragonese Union (CHA), the Castilian Left (IzCa), Plaid Cymru from Wales, the Breton Democratic Union (UDB), the Polisario Front from Western Sahara, the Patriotic March from Colombia, the European Free Alliance and the Venezuelan Consulate. The BNG expressed its solidarity with all of the delegations, especially the independence process underway in Catalonia and the on-going fights of the peoples of Venezuela, Colombia and Western Sahara.

## BNG National Assembly

The BNG held its XVI National Assembly on 25-26 March, attended by over 2,000 people, strengthening the BNG as a solid project with internal unity and cohesion and the only real alternative to the ruling People's Party (PP) in Galiza.

The Assembly elected a new National Council headed by Ana Pontón with an overwhelming 98.23% of the votes. The newly-elected National Council has continued the process of renewal set on motion the previous year with almost 70% new faces in the BNG's political direction.

As well as the massive backing for the new National Council, the membership also gave their overwhelming approval to the report presented by the out-going National Council (98.57% in favour), the political manifesto (96.8%) and the new statutes (97.34%). This massive support once again stands to show the positive internal climate within the BNG, as well as the organisation's internal unity and cohesion.

The National Assembly also marked the end of the Forwards Process following twelve months of debate assessing our strong points and correcting weaknesses, updating the BNG and its organisation in order to gain a better foothold in society with a new set of statutes and an overhaul of the founding principles originally set out during the creation of the BNG 35 years ago. The Assembly introduced a series of key updates at all levels, from analysis to organisation and policy, without altering our defining characteristic, i.e. an independent nationalist project dedicated to serving the interests of the Galizian people and working for the social majority with our sights set on achieving national sovereignty and a fairer society.



### INTERNATIONAL MEETING

An international meeting was also held within the framework of the National Assembly entitled 'Internationalist Solidarity, Sovereignty for the Peoples', with representatives from the PNV, EH-Bildu, Esquerra



Republicana and other political organisation from the Spanish State, as well as the Portuguese left-wing organisations BE and PCP and including for the first time the German left-wing Die Linke, together with representatives from Palestine, Kurdistan, Western Sahara and the Cuban and Venezuelan Consulates.



### International roundtable

A roundtable debate was held on 25 July as part of the FESTIGAL Festival under the heading "The Political Scenario for Stateless Nations Before and After the Catalan Referendum", moderated by the representative of the BNG in the European Parliament, Ana Miranda, and with the participation of Marian Beitialarrangoitia Lizarralde, spokesperson for EH-Bildu in the Spanish Parliament, Xavier Castellana, Senator for ERC, Rubén Cela, member of the BNG National Executive, and David Grosclaude for the European Free Alliance (EFA).

## TTIP SEMINAR

With the declaration entitled “The Peoples of Europe in the Face of the Free Trade Agreements”, the BNG, ERC, EH-Bildu, Sinn Féin, the UDB (Brittany) and Ecolo (Wallonia) expressed their intent to continue strengthening the ties between the peoples of the world in order to build up a counter-offensive against the current globalised model which only serves to further strengthen the on-going strong-hold of the big transnational companies. The TTIP seminar was organised by the Galiza Sempre Foundation (FGS) in collaboration with the University of A Coruña. The BNG and the other organisations used the declaration to speak out against the free trade agreements such as those negotiated between the EU and Canada (CETA) and the USA (TTIP), which give free range to the transnational corporations and financial conglomerates in order to legally perpetuate their power and their privileges at the expense of protecting and promoting of the interests of our peoples.

At this meeting the National Spokesperson, Ana Pontón, reiterated the commitment of the BNG to combat these treaties by all means available: “Rather than free trade, what they represent is a free hand for big multinationals and banking corporations, whilst at the same time binding the hands of the peoples, small and medium companies, the working class and the majority of society”.

## Support for the Catalan referendum

### Support for Carme Forcadell

The National Executive of the Galizan Nationalist Bloc (BNG) issued a statement of solidarity with Carme Forcadell and the others indicted in the spate of harassment they are suffering at the hands of the Spanish Government which has once again used the judicial system to fly in the face of the clearly expressed determination of the Catalan people to take up the reins of its own destiny.

### Galizan support for the Catalan National Assembly

The BNG was one of the political and grassroots organisations to back the event organised by the delegation of the Catalan National Assembly (ANC) in the centre of Santiago de Compostela on 10 June where the members of the BNG National Executive, Ana Miranda, Montse Prado and Rubén Cela, symbolically cast their vote in the ballot box.



### Reactivation of the “Galiza with Catalonia Platform”

The ‘Galiza with Catalonia Platform’, made up of Galizan nationalist organisations of which the BNG is an active member, has already organised events over recent years, but with the forthcoming referendum on 1 October it announced that it will become more active in solidarity with the independence process underway in Catalonia.

### Symbolic action of the “Galiza with Catalonia Platform”



As part of the Galizan National Day celebrations, the ‘Galiza with Catalonia Platform’ held a symbolic event in solidarity with Catalonia in the capital, Santiago, reading out a manifesto in support of the Catalan people and its legitimate political institutions which have committed themselves to allowing the people to decide its own future despite the violence and threats unleashed by the Spanish State. The action also underlined our commitment to the defence of the right to self-determination as one of the central pillars of our internationalist work.

## POPULAR UNITY CANDIDACY (CUP)

Together with 19 other international delegations, the BNG took part in the international conference organised by the CUP in Barcelona on 12-20 May entitled "Sovereignty for the People and Self-determination".

## MÈS PER MENORCA

On 20-21 May the BNG attended the constitution of Més per Menorca as a political party.

## EH-BILDU

The BNG attended the Congress in which EH-Bildu finalised its constitutive process following a period of grassroots participation involving assemblies and informative meetings throughout the Basque Country. The policy document approved at the Congress is based on a program geared to social progress, sovereignty, peace, democracy and internationalism.

## TRIBUTE TO FIDEL CASTRO

The BNG took part in the national tribute to Fidel Castro held in the theatre in Pontevedra organised by the Francisco Villa-mil Galiza-Cuba Friendship Association.

## SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELA

The BNG congratulated the people of Venezuela on the turn-out at the ballot to decide on their future, demonstrating that they are not afraid to exercise their right to vote in a context of international pressure, threats from three different states, economic and diplomatic pressure and media manipulation, voting in favour of the Constituent National Assembly based on Art. 348 of the Constitution. The legality of the election was fully supported by the Venezuelan people who mobilised en masse against the acts of violence and assassinations, including one of the candidates to the Constituent Assembly.

In an official communiqué addressed to the Government of Venezuela via the consulate in Vigo and the embassy in Madrid, the BNG expressed its solidarity with the Venezuelan people threatened throughout the whole process by imperialist pressures owing to the economic and strategic interests of the country's gas and oil reserves.

## SUPPORT FOR THE SAHARAWI PEOPLE

The BNG took part in the different events and symbolic actions organised by the Galizan solidarity organisation SOGAPS in support of the Saharawi prisoners, ranging from a symbolic rally in the heart of Santiago and a solidarity march ending in the capital on 17 May coinciding with the Galizan Language Day demonstration, to a large rally with Saharawi children taking part in the "Holidays in Peace" programme.

## THE GDEIM IZIK TRIAL IN RABAT

In June, in the role of international observer, the BNG attended the political trial of the Saharawi prisoners detained at the Gdeim Izik protest camp. A sham trial held in Sale (Rabat) where the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment. Invited by SOGAPS and the International Sahara Foundation and with the support of the EFA, Ana Miranda denounced Morocco for this political trial against the self-determination of the Saharawi people as a violation of the UN Convention against torture on the grounds that the prisoners were accused without evidence or guarantees and under clear signs of torture.



## SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN PRISONERS

The BNG took part in the different events organised in solidarity with the fight of the Palestinian people and in support of the hunger-strike by the political prisoners, including a rally in front of the Galizan Parliament organised by BDS-Galiza denouncing the situation of the Palestinian prisoners on hunger-strike and the symbolic tent for solidarity and the rally held in the capital, Santiago, in support of the hunger-strikers organised by the Jenin Galiza-Arab Association.

## KURDISTAN

As an international observer in the Kurdish city of Amed (Diyarbakır), the BNG Secretariat for International Relations oversaw the Turkish Constitutional referendum held in April 2017, the controversial ballot by the dictator Erdoğan intended to curb the rights and freedoms of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples. The persecution of members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) with which the BNG has friendly ties, was addressed at several meetings with the representative of the BNG who also talked to the families of political prisoners, journalists and elected councillors of the areas under siege since 2015.



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