

**Statement of LAB (Basque Abertzale Left trade union) to the international community on the sentence passed by Spanish judiciary on our ex-General Secretary and on another four members of the Basque pro-Independence Left and their imprisonment**

Last Friday, 16th September, the Spanish National Court announced its judgement and sentence on the five accused in that which has been called the 'Bateragune case'. Among those condemned is the ex-General Secretary of LAB, Rafael Díez Usabiaga, who has been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. The others have received similar sentences, of from eight to ten years each. Yesterday, September 20, Rafa Díez was again imprisoned.

Firstly, we wish to express our solidarity in LAB with Rafa Díez and with the others sentenced. Everyone recognizes the importance of the contribution of these brothers and sisters to the present politics of hope that we have seen in the Basque Country and for that reason LAB considers the judgement to be serious and deserving of condemnation.

We in LAB place this judgement and sentence within the context of the confrontation which the Spanish State carries out. At a time when the Basque working class, political, trade union and social activists make a bid for a democratic solution, this sentence has clear political consequences:

- The Spanish state continues to put shackles on the open process
- Partisan and electoral interests have been prioritised by the PSOE (main Spanish social-democratic party) and the PP (main Spanish conservative and right-wing party)
- Once again the incapacity and irresponsibility of the Spanish Government has been laid bare, which has been incapable of facing the political juncture and the future with political maturity
- Once again the wish of the majority of Basque society has been disrespected and dismissed

These judgements, sentences and imprisonments have been made exclusively on the basis of political criteria and ignoring the large number of expressions of international solidarity with the accused.

In its political blindness, the Spanish state once again chooses to jail the trade union and political leaders of the Basque people, just as is done by dictatorship regimes.

LAB demands the setting in freedom of Rafa Díez and their comrades, and calls on Basque society, on the Basque working class, to give a firm and democratic response to this political sentencing and these imprisonments, which is a direct attack on the process opened up in the Basque Country for the resolution of the current political conflict.

In this sense, we make a call to support the different mobilizations and, especially, to go to the manifestation that has called next Saturday against this sentence and these imprisonments, September 24, in Bilbao and that it is supported by most of Basque unions.

Consequently, we call upon all trade union branches and trade union organizations on the international level to URGENTLY express their solidarity with the condemned, among them our ex-General Secretary Rafael Diez Usabiaga, that each one its own country and to the extent of its possibilities denounces this new attack of the judiciary and of the Spanish Government on the Basque people, also against a just and democratic resolution of the political conflict experienced by our people.

In the Basque Country, on the 20th of September, 2011.

**NB: Please send your messages of solidarity to the following electronic address: [nazioartea@labsindikatua.org](mailto:nazioartea@labsindikatua.org)**